

Introduction and Resource Links

Getting Started

The ingredients below serve as the building blocks for safe home cleaning.

- **Baking Soda** - Cleans and deodorizes. Softens water to increase the sudsing and cleaning power of soap. Good scouring powder.
- **Borax** - Cleans and deodorizes. Softens water. Available in the laundry section of grocery stores.
- **Liquid Soap** - Look for soap with non-synthetic, plant-based ingredients such as olive oil-based.
- Available in grocery stores and health food stores.
- **Washing Soda** - Cuts grease and removes stains. Softens water. Available in the laundry section of grocery stores or in pure form from chemical supply houses as “sodium carbonate.”
- **White Vinegar or Lemon Juice** - Cuts grease and freshens.
- **Vegetable Oil** - Works well when polishing and cleaning wood.

Resource links

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehhm/greencleaning.html>

<http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/cleaning/tips/a24885/make-at-home-cleaners/>

<http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/cleaning/tips/a25577/baking-soda-cleaning-uses/>

<http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/cleaning/tips/a20505/dont-use-vinegar-cleaning/>

http://www.ehow.com/how_2212471_clean-lemon-juice.html

<http://www.mrsjanuary.com/simple-living/cream-of-tartar-uses/>

General Purpose Recipes

All-Purpose Cleaner

2 cups white distilled vinegar

2 cups water

20-30 or more drops of essential oil (optional)

suggested uses: hard surfaces like countertops and kitchen floors, windows and mirrors

Tip: Warming in microwave until barely hot will boost cleaning power for tough jobs. Only microwave in a glass container.

Furniture Polish

-- Lemon

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar

20-30 drops lemon essential oil (2 teaspoons lemon juice may be substituted for lemon oil but then must be stored in refrigerator)

Shake well before using

Dip a clean, dry cloth into the polish and rub wood in the direction of the grain. Use a soft brush to work the polish into corners or tight places.

Tips: To remove water spots rub well with toothpaste. To remove scratches use 1 part lemon juice and 1 part oil, rub with soft cloth.

-- Cedar & Patchouli

1/2 Cup of oil soap (Murphy's) or Liquid Castile Soap

3/4 Cups of water

10 drops of patchouli essential oil

15 drops of cedar essential oil

This is a all-purpose spray that can be stored and used for everyday cleaning. Mix ingredients and store in a spray bottle. Label the spray bottle for future use.

Drain Opener

½ cup baking soda

½ cup vinegar

Pour baking soda down the drain and follow with vinegar. Cover and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Flush with boiling water.

Laundry Detergent

1 cup soap flakes

1/2 cup washing soda

1/2 cup Borax

This standard recipe can be adjusted for soft water by using 1 cup soap flakes, 1/4 cup washing soda and 1/2 cup borax. For hard water, use 1 cup soap flakes, 1 cup washing soda, and 1 cup borax.

Note: Borax should not be ingested.

Tips: Add 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar to rinse as a fabric softener. For a whitener, use hydrogen peroxide rather than bleach. Soak your dingy white clothes for 30 minutes in the washer with 1/2 cup 20% peroxide. Launder as usual.

Vinegar to Clean Mold and Mildew Naturally

Fill an empty spray bottle with white vinegar. Spray the area effected with mold and mildew. Use a scrub brush or wash cloth to scrub the area. Repeat until the mold and mildew is gone

Remove copper oxidation

Remove by rubbing it with a soft rag soaked in either white vinegar or lemon juice.

For tougher jobs that require scrubbing, mix together equal parts of salt and flour. Add enough vinegar

to the mixture a paste-like consistency. The salt provides abrasiveness and the flour helps to form the paste.

Rinse well and dry thoroughly

Glass Cleaners

-- Recipe 1

1/2 cup vinegar

4 1/2 cups water

Mix ingredients in a spray bottle. Shake and apply. Wipe clean.

-- Recipe 2

1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon plant-based liquid soap

3 tablespoon vinegar

2 cups water

Mix and spray. Wipe clean.

Floor Recipes

Carpet Refresher

1 cup baking soda

2 tbsp ground allspice

Mix together baking soda and allspice and sprinkle over carpet. Allow to sit for 15 minutes, then vacuum it up!

Mop Bucket

1 cup vinegar

2 tbsp Castille soap

For no-wax floors: Start with a half-bucket full of hot water and add the vinegar, washing soda, and Castille soap. Mix with mop and start slopping!

Floor Wax

2 cups vinegar

2 cups mineral oil

Mix together and apply with a clean mop.

Hardwood Cleanser

1/4 cup Murphy's oil soap

1/4 cup vinegar

2 lemon balm tea bags

Mix together in a half-full bucket of warm water and use with clean cotton mop.

Kitchen Recipes

Green Dishwasher Tips

Use vinegar in your rinse aid dispenser instead of the more expensive, less ecological rinse agents sold in stores!

Pot & Pan Soak

Baking soda

Vinegar to dampen

Sprinkle baking soda in your pots and pans with stuck-on food. Pour in enough vinegar to dampen the baking soda and let it bubble. Even after the bubbling stops, let it do its work for an hour or two - overnight for stubborn, burnt-on food. The next day you should be able to simply wipe the dirt off - no hard scrubbing needed!

Scouring Cleanser

1/4 cup baking soda

water to dampen

Works well for a light scrub over faucets and light soil. You must rinse thoroughly, though! Baking soda can cling to surfaces.

More Abrasive Scouring Cleanser

1/4 cup salt

1/4 cup lemon juice

This is a great scouring cleanser for wood-block cutting boards, sinks, even stove tops. Try to keep lemons on hand and just squeeze a halved lemon onto the surface to be cleaner (you'll get about 1-2 tablespoons of juice per lemon half). You can also use prepackaged lemon juice, but be aware that there are preservatives such as sodium benzoate, which is not healthy to eat, so isn't really healthy to clean with, either!

Kitchen Sink Drain Deodorizer

1/4 cup salt

1/4 cup baking soda

1 tablespoon cream of tartar

Mix these dry ingredients together and sprinkle into drain. Pour a kettle-full of boiling water down the drain to activate the cleansing, removal of debris, and odor. (This works well in shower and bath drains, too!)

Bathroom Recipes

Shower Floor Mitigation

Baking soda

Dr. Bronner's liquid castile soap

In a large bowl, add several scoops of baking soda. Mix in Dr. Bronner's liquid castile soap until the resulting paste has the consistency of frosting. After a shower, while the floor is still wet, liberally apply a layer of paste to the floor. Allow to sit and dry for at least 24 hours. The following day, rinse off before showering to avoid slipping on the paste.

Shower Door Soap Scum Remover

Lemon oil

No recipe needed here - many people use caustic cleaners or even steel wool to clean that stubborn soap scum on shower doors. But all you really need is a clean, cotton rag and a bottle of lemon oil. It cuts through that scum so easily, you don't even need to scrub - just wipe!

Prevent Soap Scum!

Castile soap

Almost every soap, when broken down in water, will leave a scum residue as the water evaporates. But there is one soap - castile soap - that does not leave a residue. Dr. Bronner's is a good brand, but health food stores and even some grocery stores carry basic castile soap.

Bathtub & Shower Cleaner

Baking Soda

Vinegar

Sprinkle a generous amount of baking soda on the shower floor, or into the bathtub (you may want to close the drain). Then, pour vinegar onto the baking soda and let it bubble. Don't pour too much; you don't want to dilute the baking soda - just wet it. Let this sit for a half hour, and then lightly scrub with a

cotton rag. Rinse with water. Letting this soda/vinegar mixture sit does help to remove stubborn stains from shower floors (especially those with a rough surface).

Shiny Mirror Spray

1 cup vinegar

3 cups water

10 drops lavender oil

Keep a batch of this in a marked spray bottle - it's better than commercial window cleaners when it comes to streaking. Use a cotton rag for wiping it down (paper towels often leave tiny bits of paper and paper dust behind). And think about it - vinegar is edible, water is healthful, lavender oil promotes a sense of well-being. This stuff is actually good for you!

Hold on to your Cleaning Tools! -- 1 - 2 denture tablets

-- One overlooked aspect of cleaning green is holding onto your cleaning tools longer. Clean your toilet bowl brush, without getting dirty yourself, by filling its container with water and dropping in one or two denture tablets. You'll produce less "cleaning tool waste" - holding onto tools longer creates less garbage, and less consumption of natural resources.

-- Drop in an inexpensive denture tablet between cleanings to release debris and remove calcium deposits.

Bathtub/Shower Drain Deodorizer

1/4 cup salt

1/4 cup baking soda

1 tablespoon cream of tartar

Mix these dry ingredients together and sprinkle into drain. Pour a kettle-full of boiling water down the drain to activate the cleansing, removal of debris, and odor.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Option 1

Sprinkle toilet bowl with baking soda, drizzle with vinegar, let soak for at least 30 minutes and scrub with toilet brush.

Option 2

Put ¼ cup borax in toilet bowl and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Swish with a toilet brush and then scrub. A few drops of pine oil can be added for increased disinfecting. (Note: some people are allergic to pine oil.)

Tip: Let ingredients soak for a while to make for easy scrubbing, especially on persistent stains like toilet bowl rings.