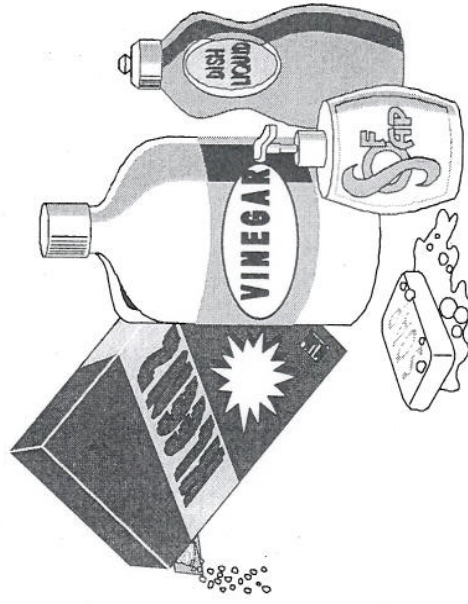


A Guide To Safer Household Cleaners



Provided by the DuPage County
Environmental Committee

This brochure is brought to you by the
DuPage County Environmental Committee.

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INTRODUCTION

It seems that we are all leading busy lives these days. Time is scarce and there are few opportunities for household chores. Manufacturers have responded to our busy lifestyles by making convenient products that offer instant results and promises to make our lives much easier.

But many commercial cleaners contain mixtures of complex and synthetic compounds. Some of these chemicals are highly hazardous when improperly used or disposed. They could burn skin or eyes on contact. Without proper ventilation, chemicals can also produce harmful fumes. Some chemicals in products are so harmful that even a small amount could be deadly if swallowed.

Thoughtless disposal of hazardous products can have harmful impacts on people and the environment. Disposal in the trash, or pouring them down the drain, can disrupt waste water systems, seriously injure waste handlers, and contaminate local air and water resources. Used motor oil, antifreeze and other hazardous wastes - even small amounts - have a profound effect on the environment, which in turn will affect you and future generations. Remember - it's all connected!

Many household chores can be accomplished by using products that are commonly found in our homes. This brochure offers non-toxic and safer, less toxic cleaning recipes. They can work just as well as their commercial counterparts, but you may have to use a little more elbow grease. Best of all, you know what is going into them, and they tend to cost less than ready-made products.

A word of warning: even common household products can be hazardous, especially if mixed together. Use published recipes according to directions.

NEVER MIX PRODUCTS WITH AMMONIA AND CHLORINE (BLEACH), THEY FORM A DEADLY GAS!

GROUT CLEANER

3 cups baking soda
1 cup warm water
Mix into paste, scrub into grout with a toothbrush. Rinse with clean water.

MOLD & MILDEW

Equal parts white vinegar and water
Mix and apply. Wipe clean.

SCOURING POWDER

1 cup baking soda
¼ cup white vinegar
Mix in small bowl and rub on surface with damp sponge. Let stand a few minutes. Rinse well.

SHOWERHEAD

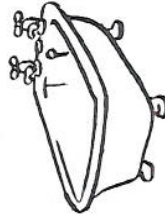
½ cup white vinegar
1 quart water
Submerge metal showerhead in solution and boil 15 minutes. Submerge plastic head in 1 pint white vinegar and 1 pint warm water for one hour.

TOILET BOWL

Baking soda and white vinegar
Sprinkle baking soda into the bowl, then drizzle with white vinegar and scour with a toilet brush.

TUB & TILE CLEANER

Baking soda
Sprinkle baking soda like you would scouring powder. Scrub with a damp sponge. Rinse with water.



½ teaspoon washing soda
¼ to ½ teaspoon vegetable oil-based
3 tablespoons white vinegar
2 cups hot water
Mix ingredients into a spray bottle or pail. Apply and wipe clean.

KITCHEN

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER

1 teaspoon vegetable oil-based liquid soap, squeeze of lemon or splash of white vinegar, 1-quart warm water. Mix, apply then wipe clean.

DEPOSIT CLEANER

Cover mineral deposits around faucets with strips of paper towel soaked in white vinegar. Let it set for 1 hour.

DRAIN CLEANERS

If the drain is clogged, use a plunger or rent a mechanical snake to manually push the clog away.

½ cup salt

½ cup baking soda

Pour salt down drain, follow with baking soda and 6 cups boiling water. Let sit overnight and then flush with water.

FLOOR CLEANERS

Tile Floors

1 cup white vinegar

1 pail hot water

Mix and apply. Wipe clean.

Wood Floors

¼ cup olive oil

¼ cup white vinegar

drop of lemon oil

Mix and apply. Wipe clean.

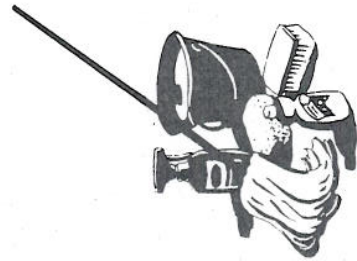
No-Wax Floors

¼ cup vegetable oil-based liquid soap

¼ cup lemon juice

2 gallons hot water

Mix and apply. Wipe clean.



FLOOR WAX

1 part lemon juice

2 parts food grade linseed oil

Apply with a rag. Let rest until floor is dry. Buff completely smooth.

6 tablespoons beeswax

3 cups food grade linseed oil

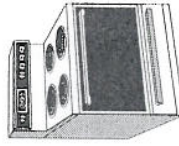
Put ingredients in the top of a double boiler (over water), and heat slowly until wax is melted. Stir and pour into a heat-resistant container then apply.

Linoleum Floors

Add a small amount of skim milk to the rinse water. This will shine the floor. (Don't worry, it doesn't smell)

OVEN CLEANERS

Small box of baking soda, water, a few drops of vegetable oil-based liquid soap and a mild abrasive pad. Sprinkle water over bottom of oven. Cover with baking soda. Let sit, preferably overnight. Wipe with pad. After bottom is cleaned, put a few drops of liquid soap on a sponge and wash the sides and top.



BRASS & COPPER

Flour (enough to make a paste)

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup white vinegar

Mix ingredients to form a paste. Rub onto the brass and let sit for 30 minutes. Rinse with water and dry with a cloth dampened with a little vegetable oil.

CHROME CLEANER

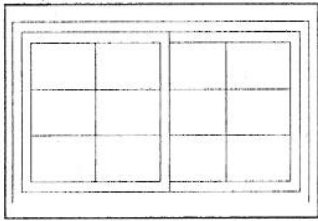
3 tablespoons baking soda and water

Mix the baking soda and water to make a paste. Apply then rinse.

LIVING ROOM

GLASS CLEANER

1/8 cup white vinegar
1 cup water
Mix ingredients in a spray bottle.
Shake and apply. Wipe clean.



Film will

CARPET DEODORIZER

Box of baking soda
Sprinkle baking soda over carpet and
Let it sit overnight. Vacuum.

1 cup borax
2 cups cornmeal
Mix ingredients in a bowl, sprinkle over
carpet. Let stand for an hour. Vacuum.

CARPET STAIN REMOVER

Club soda
Apply to stain and scrub.

1/4 cup white vinegar
1/4 cup water
Mix and rub. Rinse with water.

1/4 cup liquid detergent
1/4 cup glycerin
1 1/2 cups water
Mix and pour into a squirt bottle.
Use sparingly and rub on stains.

FURNITURE CLEANER

For Wood

1/8 cup linseed oil
1/8 cup white vinegar
1/4 cup lemon juice
Mix ingredients. Use a soft cloth
to rub into wood.

3/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup white vinegar
Mix ingredients. Use a soft cloth
to rub into wood.

1/4 cup olive oil
1/8 cup lemon juice
Mix and apply a thin coat.
Rub with cloth.

For Leather

1/4 cup olive oil
a few drops of lemon oil
Mix ingredients.
Saturate cloth
and apply.



1/2 cup olive oil
1/4 white vinegar
Mix in a squirt
bottle and shake before each application.
Rub with cloth into leather for cleaning
and conditioning. **Do not use on suede.**

For Vinyl

1/4 cup white vinegar
1/4 teaspoon vegetable oil-based
liquid soap
water
Mix ingredients. Saturate cloth and apply.

LAUNDRY

FABRIC SOFTENER

Add 1 cup of white vinegar or ¼ cup baking soda to final rinse.
(Do Not Use With Chlorine Bleach – it will produce a harmful vapor).

LAUNDRY BLEACH

Add ¼ cup of lemon juice to wash.

LAUNDRY SOAP

Use non-phosphate liquid detergents or laundry soaps.

LAUNDRY STARCH

1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 pint cold water
Place in spray bottle and shake to dissolve cornstarch.

FABRIC STAIN REMOVAL

Grease

Apply a paste of cornstarch and water. Brush off when dry or scrub spot with toothbrush.

Ink

Saturate stain with milk or sponge with alcohol. Apply a paste of cream of tartar and lemon juice. Let set for 1 hour.

Lipstick

Rub cold cream or shortening to dissolve color; rinse area with solution of washing soda and warm water. Then wash in soapy water.

Perspiration

Sponge stain with a weak solution of white vinegar or lemon juice; or soak fabric in water with two dissolved tablets of aspirin.



KITCHEN/METAL CLEANERS

PESTS

HOUSE

Ants

Equal parts white vinegar and water. Mix and apply to countertops, cabinets and floors.



Pour a line of red chili powder, cayenne pepper, paprika, or dried peppermint at points of entry.

Fleas and Ticks

1 teaspoon white vinegar
1 quart water (per 40 pound of pet weight)
Mix and add to pet's drinking water to keep your pet free of fleas and ticks.

Flies

Scratch the skin of an orange and leave it out; the citrus acts as a repellent.

Plant mint around the home to repel flies.

Set a pot of basil on a windowsill or hang dried ground basil leaves in muslin bags.

Moths

Place cedar chips in closets, drawers or closed containers to moth proof garments.

Make sachets of dried lavender or equal parts of rosemary and mint and place with garments.

PESTS (Continued)

GARDEN

Aphids, Mealybugs, Mites, and White flies

3 tablespoons of liquid soap and 1 gallon of water
Mix and spray plants with solution.

Moles

1 tablespoon castor oil and 2 tablespoons liquid soap
Mix in blender until creamy, add 6 tablespoons water and blend again. *Fill a garden sprinkling can with warm water and add 2 tablespoons of mixture and stir. Sprinkle immediately over infestation area. For best results apply after rain or thorough watering.*

Mosquitoes

Plant basil around house or burn citronella candles.

Slugs and Snails

Fill a jar with stale beer and place the jar below ground level near garden. The fermented liquid will draw them and they will drown.

SHOPPING FOR ALTERNATIVES

How To Choose Products Wisely

Adopt a new way of thinking about potentially hazardous household products. Try to buy less or use non-hazardous products as much as possible. The best way to tell if a product is hazardous is to read the label.

Look for these signal words:

WARNING! CORROSIVE! Keep out of reach of children

DANGER! POISON! Dispose of properly

IRRITANT! FLAMMABLE! Harmful if swallowed

DANGER indicates the product is extremely hazardous; a taste could be fatal. **WARNING** and **CAUTION** signal a somewhat lesser hazard. Select products with a **CAUTION** label over those with **WARNING** or **DANGER**.

PROPER DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

DuPage County offers programs to properly dispose of household hazardous materials. Residents can bring unwanted hazardous materials to the County's Mobile Household Hazardous Waste Collections or to the Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility located at Fire Station Number Four, 1971 Brookdale Road in Naperville. Brookdale Road runs east off of Route 59 and the fire station is on the north side of the road. From the East-West Tollway (I-88), go ¾ mile south on Route 59 to Brookdale Road, which is two miles north of the Fox Valley mall.

DuPage County is not responsible for any injury or damage resulting from the use or effect of any product or information specified in this publication.

This publication is available on our website at www.co.dupage.il.us

BATHROOM

INGREDIENTS

Baking Soda (sodium bicarbonate): Excellent odor absorbent and mild abrasive. Found in the baking section of the grocery store.

Borax* (known as 20-mule team Borax): This is a strong alkaline, eye irritant and toxic if swallowed. Keep all Borax-containing cleaners out of reach of children. Found in the laundry detergent section of the grocery store.

Essential Oils*: Mostly used for deodorizing or scenting cleaners. Essential oils, such as mint, eucalyptus, lavender, and lemon can be found in health food stores or herbal supply shops.

Glycerin: Found in pharmacies or health food stores.

Linseed or Flaxseed Oil (food grade): Found in health food stores.

Liquid Soap: Vegetable-based soap sometimes referred to as castile soap. Found in most health food stores. Dr. Bronners is a popular one.

Liquid Detergent: Detergents are made from synthetic materials that form less soap scum when combined with minerals in hard water. Most dishwashing liquids are detergents. Try purchasing vegetable oil-based detergents, which can be less toxic than petroleum-based products. Vegetable oil-based detergents can be found in health food stores.

Vinegar: Removes soap scum, grease and mineral deposits and acts as a deodorizer. Use only white distilled vinegar for these recipes.

Washing Soda (Sodium carbonate): It is slightly caustic and a great grease cutter. Don't use it on waxed floors (unless you want to remove the wax), fiberglass or aluminum. Found in the laundry detergent section, made by Arm & Hammer.

***Note: These ingredients may be toxic in their concentrated form. When used in small amounts in these cleaning recipes, they are non-toxic.**