

Green Household Hints that can Save You Some Green



In order to save the environment, one must THINK GREEN. So what does it mean - think of products to use that are more environmentally friendly. Let's look at some of the products we have around the house that can be used to clean and are not toxic. Baking soda, vinegar, salt, lemon juice and borax are common products essential for green cleaning. Not only are they common, they are inexpensive. They also work as well as chemical cleaners. So, I have these products. What can I use them for? Uses for these products include:

Baking Soda: can be used as an air fresher, drain opener, polish and scouring powder. Keep a box of soda in the refrigerator to help eliminate odors, sprinkle on carpet to deodorizer (always vacuum up after a few minutes), polish chrome appliances or bathroom and kitchen fixtures. Use dry baking soda and a dry cloth to polish chrome. Clean black heel marks and crayon marks by rubbing with baking soda and a damp rag. Baking soda shouldn't remove the paint or floor finish.

Vinegar: can be used on all types of surfaces and is excellent for cutting grease. It works well to clean kitchen appliances as well as glassware and pots and pans. Cleaning glass such as windows and mirrors is another favorite use for vinegar. Mix equal parts of water and vinegar in a spray bottle to use on windows and mirrors. One cup of vinegar in the rinse cycle serves as a fabric softener.

- *To clean a steam iron* add one tablespoon white vinegar to one cup of water. Pour into the iron and set heat to steam setting. Let steam until solution is gone. Rinse.
- Vinegar and soda work well together to *declog drains*. To use for this purpose put ½ to 1 cup baking soda and one cup of white vinegar down the drain. Rinse with hot water.
- *To clean linoleum and tile floors* mix ½ cup white vinegar with one gallon hot or warm water.
- Remove *hard water stains and cloudiness* from vases and glass utensils by filling them with a hot water and vinegar solution. Allow the solution to stand in the utensil until it cools. Wash and rinse. Straight vinegar can be used for bad problems.
- *To clean an automatic coffee maker* run one cup of vinegar through the cycle. Rinse by running a couple pots of plain water through the cycle.

Lemon juice: contains acid to help cut grease. It can be added to vinegar to help cut the smell. The rinds can be put down the garbage disposal to clean and deodorize.

Salt: Pour salt over spills on stove or in the oven immediately. When cool, lift off.

For an all-purpose cleaner mix 1 quart warm water, 1 teaspoon liquid dish soap, 1 teaspoon borax and ¼ cup white vinegar. Put in a spray bottle. This mixture can be used on floors, walls, carpets, etc. Borax is typically found in the clothes washing section of your store.

CAUTION: When mixing household cleaning solutions, be sure to follow the recipe. Do not substitute ingredients. Mixing incorrect ingredients can create hazardous fumes. Always clearly mark mixtures that you put in spray bottles or other containers for use at a later time.

In case of a possible accidental poisoning, call the National Poison Control Center Hotline 1-800-222-1222. The operator can tell you what to do and whether or not you need to go to the emergency room.

Bathroom

Bathtub film: Bathtub film can be removed by wiping with white distilled vinegar and then with soda. Rinse clean with water.

Toilet bowl cleaner: Stubborn stains can be removed from the toilet by spraying them with white distilled vinegar and brushing vigorously. The bowl may be deodorized by adding 3 cups of white distilled vinegar. Allow it to remain for a half hour, then flush.

Unclog the showerhead: Corrosion may be removed from showerheads or faucets by soaking them in diluted white distilled vinegar overnight. This may be easily accomplished by saturating a terry cloth towel in vinegar and wrapping it around the showerhead or faucet.

Floors

No-wax floors: To wash no-wax floors, add ½ cup of white distilled vinegar to a half-gallon of warm water.

Carpet stain removal: A mixture of 1 teaspoon of liquid detergent and 1 teaspoon of white distilled vinegar in a pint of lukewarm water will remove non-oily stains from carpets. Apply it to the stain with a soft brush or towel and rub gently. Rinse with a towel moistened with clean water and blot dry. Repeat this procedure until the stain is gone. Then dry quickly, using a fan or hair dryer. This should be done as soon as the stain is discovered.

Windows, Walls & Furniture

Furniture Polish: Mix olive oil and vinegar in a one-to-one ratio and polish with a soft cloth. Try in an inconspicuous place first.

Removing water or alcohol marks on wood: Stubborn rings resulting from wet glasses being placed on wood furniture may be removed by rubbing with a mixture of equal parts of white distilled vinegar and olive oil. Rub with the grain and polish for the best results.

Streak less windows: Simply wash with a mixture of equal parts of white distilled vinegar and warm water. Dry with a soft cloth. This solution will make your windows gleam and will not leave the usual film or streaks on the glass.

Woodwork: You can ease the job of washing painted walls, woodwork and Venetian blinds by using a mixture of 1 cup ammonia, ½ cup white distilled or cider vinegar and ¼ cup baking soda with 1 gallon of warm water. Wipe this solution over walls or blinds with a sponge or cloth and rinse with clear water. Dirt and grime comes off easily and the solution will not dull the painted finish or leave streaks.

Kitchen

Garbage disposal cleaner: Garbage disposals may be kept clean and odor free with vinegar cubes. Vinegar cubes are made by filling an ice tray with a mixture of 1 cup of vinegar and enough water to fill the ice tray and then freezing it. Run the mixture through the disposal, and then flush it with cold water for a minute or so.

Coffee maker cleaner (automatic): White distilled vinegar can help to dissolve mineral deposits that collect in automatic drip coffee makers from hard water. Fill the reservoir with white distilled vinegar and run it through a brewing cycle. Rinse thoroughly with water when the cycle is finished. (Be sure to check the owner's manual for specific instructions.)

Clean the microwave: Boil a solution of 1/4 cup of white distilled vinegar and 1 cup of water in the microwave. Will loosen splattered on food and deodorize.

Deodorize the kitchen drain: Pour a cup of white distilled vinegar down the drain once a week. Let stand 30 minutes and then flush with cold water.

Clean the refrigerator: Wash with a solution of equal parts water and white distilled vinegar.

Brass polish: Brass, copper and pewter will shine if cleaned with the following mixture. Dissolve 1 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of white distilled vinegar and stir in flour until it becomes a paste. Apply paste to the metals and let it stand for about 15 minutes. Rinse with clean warm water and polish until dry.

Ant deterrent: Ant invasions can sometimes be deterred by washing counter tops, cabinets and floors with white distilled vinegar.

Cleaning stainless steel appliances: Apply vinegar with a soft cloth to remove streaks from stainless steel appliances. Try in an inconspicuous place first.

Miscellaneous

Cleaning Leather Shoes: Make a solution of one part water to one part white vinegar, and use it sparingly on the shoes. Dip a cloth into the solution, and dab it over the salt-streaked parts of your shoes. May have to repeat the cleaning a few times before all the salt is removed. Salt actually can damage leather, so it's best to clean shoes as quickly as possible. Don't let the salt stains build up.

Fireplaces: Wash fireplaces with a 50/50 ratio of water and vinegar to remove the blackened soot on glass front doors. If the doors have a spring-loaded clip, remove it, then take out the doors. Lay them flat on newspapers, spray with the vinegar/water solution and soak. Wipe it off with newspaper.

Laundry Hints

Freshen baby clothes: The addition of 1 cup of white distilled vinegar to each load of baby clothes during the rinse cycle will naturally break down uric acid and soapy residue leaving the clothes soft and fresh.

Clothes washing magic: Clothes will rinse better if 1 cup of white distilled vinegar is added to the last rinse water. The acid in vinegar is too mild to harm fabrics, but strong enough to dissolve the alkalis in soaps and detergents.

Blanket renewal: Cotton and wool blankets become soft, fluffy and free of soap odor if 2 cups of white distilled vinegar are added to the rinse cycle of the wash.

Deodorant stains: Deodorant and antiperspirant stains may be removed from clothing by lightly rubbing with white distilled vinegar and laundering as usual.

Hole removal: After a hem or seam is removed, there are often unsightly holes left in the fabric. These holes can be removed by placing a cloth, moistened with white distilled vinegar, under the fabric and ironing.

Keeping colors fast: To hold colors in fabrics, which tend to run, soak them for a few minutes in white distilled vinegar before washing.

Leather cleaning: Leather articles can be cleaned with a mixture of white distilled vinegar and linseed oil. Rub the mixture into the leather and then polish with a soft cloth.

Scorch marks: Lightly rub white distilled vinegar on fabric that has been slightly scorched. Wipe with a clean cloth.