

Earth Friendly Solutions: Low Cost Cleaners from your Kitchen

Many \$\$\$ are spent each year for household cleaning products containing hazardous ingredients. If used, stored or disposed of improperly, these could threaten your family's health or harm the environment. Fortunately there are basic ingredients in your kitchen cabinets that will do just as good of cleaning and will save you money.

Safer alternatives include:

Ammonia is a strong cleaner and should only be used in well-ventilated areas. It can be used to wash windows, clean ovens and bathrooms and remove wax from floors.

Baking Soda may be used for cleaning and freshening refrigerators, porcelain enamel and for general cleaning.

Vinegar and lemon juice are good basic cleaners that also give a shine. They may be used to clean glass, chrome fixtures, to remove rust, hard water spots and mildew.

Chlorine Bleach will help kill germs as well as clean bathrooms, kitchens, disinfect garbage pails and remove mildew.

Never mix chlorine bleach or cleaner containing chlorine with ammonia, toilet bowl cleaner or rust remover. A deadly gas will be produced.

Recipes for Safer Household Cleaners from your Kitchen:

All-purpose cleaner

- Baking soda
Dissolve 4 tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge to clean all kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

Window Cleaner

- Use 1 cup vinegar in 1 quart water or 2 Tablespoons ammonia, ¼ teaspoon and 1 quart water. Rub dry with crumpled newspapers or soft lint free cloth,

Drain cleaner

- Prevention
To avoid clogging drains, use a strainer to trap food particles and hair, collect grease in cans rather than pouring down the drain.
- Baking soda and vinegar
Put 1/2 cup baking soda and then 1/2 cup white vinegar down your drain and cover the drain. Let set for a few minutes, then pour boiling water down the drain. A handful of salt followed by boiling will also help disinfect and clean the drain.

Lime and mineral deposit remover

- Vinegar
Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked rags or paper towels. Leave rags or paper towels on for about 1 hour before cleaning. Cleans and shines chrome.

To remove deposits clogging metal shower heads, combine 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1 quart water. Completely submerge the shower head and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic shower head, combine 1 pint white vinegar and 1 pint hot water. Submerge the shower head and soak for about 1 hour.

Metal cleaner/polish

- Creme of tartar
To remove stains and discoloration from aluminum cookware, fill cookware with hot water and add 2 tablespoons cream of tartar to each quart of water. Bring solution to a boil and simmer ten minutes. Wash as usual and dry.
To clean brass, make a paste of cream of tartar and lemon juice. Apply to surface with soft cloth. Leave on 5 minutes. Wash and dry.
- Vinegar and Salt
Polish copper by rubbing with vinegar and salt. Rinse with warm water.
- Lemon juice and baking soda
Polish brass by making a paste. Rub onto brass with a soft cloth. Rinse and dry.

Spot removers

- Club soda
Rinse or sponge blood and chocolate stains immediately with club soda. Repeat as necessary. Wash as usual.
- Creme of tartar and lemon juice
To remove ink stains, put creme of tartar on the stain and squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it. Rub into the stain for a minute, brush off the powder, and sponge with warm water or launder.

Pests

- Boric acid
Boric acid will kill ants and roaches when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.

Remember to mark all containers of homemade products with: 1) type of product (example: window cleaner), and 2) a list of ingredients. Store these and all other cleaning products out of the reach of children.

Resource: WM 6003 Household Hazardous Products. For more information contact: Rebecca Blocker, University of Missouri Extension (573)756-4539, blocker@missouri.edu.