

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Homemade Chemical Free & “Green” Cleaning Products

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Today's modern home is loaded with toxic and polluting substances designed to make domestic life easier. The cost of these commercial, chemical-based products can be high -- long term health concerns for the family and environmental pollution caused by their manufacture and disposal. In the US, for example, 1 in 3 people suffer from allergies, asthma, sinusitis or bronchitis (US National Center for Health Statistics). Treatment for these conditions should include reducing synthetic chemicals in the home environment.

For many home-cleaning chores, you can make your own cleaning products using the formulas listed below.

A growing number of commercial non-toxic home cleaning products are also available, as healthier and environmentally responsible alternatives. Your use of these products helps promote the growth of green businesses which are contributing to a sustainable economy.

All-Purpose Cleaner: Mix 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda (or 2 teaspoons borax) into 1/2 gallon (2 liters) water. Store and keep. Use for removal of water deposit stains on shower stall panels, bathroom chrome fixtures, windows, bathroom mirrors, etc.

Another alternative is microfiber cloths which lift off dirt, grease and dust without the need for cleaning chemicals, because they are formulated to penetrate and trap dirt. There are a number of different brands. A good quality cloth can last for several years.

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Air Freshener: Commercial air fresheners mask smells and coat nasal passages to diminish the sense of smell.

- Baking soda or vinegar with lemon juice in small dishes absorbs odors around the house.
- Having houseplants helps reduce odors in the home.
- Prevent cooking odors by simmering vinegar (1 tbsp in 1 cup water) on the stove while cooking. To get such smells as fish and onion off utensils and cutting boards, wipe them with vinegar and wash in soapy water.
- Keep fresh coffee grounds on the counter.
- Grind up a slice of lemon in the garbage disposal.
- Simmer water and cinnamon or other spices on stove.
- Place bowls of fragrant dried herbs and flowers in the room.

Bathroom mold: Mold in bathroom tile grout is a common problem and can be a health concern. Mix one part hydrogen peroxide (3%) with two parts water in a spray bottle and spray on areas with mold. Wait at least one hour before rinsing or using shower

Dishwashing Soap: Commercial low-phosphate detergents are not themselves harmful, but phosphates nourish algae which use up oxygen in waterways. A detergent substitution is to use liquid soap. Add 2 or 3 tablespoons of vinegar to the warm, soapy water for tough jobs.

Furniture Polish: For varnished wood, add a few drops of lemon oil into a 1/2 cup warm water. Mix well and spray onto a soft cotton cloth. Cloth should only be slightly damp. Wipe furniture with the cloth, and finish by wiping once more using a dry soft cotton cloth.

For unvarnished wood, mix two tsps each of olive oil and lemon juice and apply a small amount to a soft cotton cloth. Wring the cloth to spread the mixture further into the material and apply to the furniture using wide strokes. This helps distribute the oil evenly.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner: Mix 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour into basin and let it set for a few minutes. Scrub with brush and rinse. A mixture of borax (2 parts) and lemon juice (one part) will also work.

Window Cleaner: Mix 2 teaspoons of white vinegar with 1 liter (qt) warm water. Use crumpled newspaper or cotton cloth to clean. Don't clean windows if the sun is on them, or if they are warm, or streaks will show on drying. The All-Purpose Cleaner (above) also works well on windows. Be sure to follow the recipe, because using too strong a solution of vinegar will etch the glass and eventually cloud it

Tub and Tile Cleaner: For simple cleaning, rub in baking soda with a damp sponge and rinse with fresh water. For tougher jobs, wipe surfaces with vinegar first and follow with baking soda as a scouring powder. (Vinegar can break down tile grout, so use sparingly.)

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