

Live Healthier and Get Closer to
Nature....

Green Your Cleaning



Non-toxic, environmentally friendly cleaners
work better and make you feel better too!

Morongo Environmental Protection Department
Pollution Prevention Program

The Case for Green Cleaning



Everyone likes a clean home, but not the fumes, harsh chemicals, itchy eyes, irritated hands, and post-cleanup headaches. Many modern household cleaning products contain harmful chemicals that are poisonous, corrosive, flammable, and/or chemically reactive. Though easily purchased at the store, these products can have serious adverse effects on the health of our families, pets and environment!

One of the **most common poisons** for children and adults, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, are **household cleaning products!**

According to the U.S. EPA, the air inside a typical home is 2-5 times more polluted than the air outside and in extreme cases, 100 times more contaminated! This is largely due to household cleaners and pesticides!

Harmful Ingredients Exposed:

- Ammonia is poisonous when swallowed. It irritates respiratory passages when inhaled and can burn the skin on contact.
- Chlorine Bleach irritates lungs and eyes. In waterways, chlorine is toxic. Never mix Chlorine and Ammonia together, they form a deadly gas.
- Phosphates in detergents soften water but contribute to algae blooms in waterways which can kill off fish populations.
- Sodium hydroxide, found in drain, metal and oven cleaners is extremely irritating to the eyes, nose, and throat. It can also burn human tissue causing permanent damage.
- Triclosan, a component in antibacterial products, contributes to the rise of antibiotic resistant germs.
- Fragrances frequently contain phthalates. These chemicals are linked to asthma in children. They are also linked to reproductive abnormalities and liver cancer in lab animals.
- Alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEs) found in detergents and disinfectants are suspected hormone disruptors.

Less is More: Essential Green Supplies

You only need a few non-toxic and versatile cleaners to make your entire home sparkle. The healthiest and least-toxic cleaners are the ones you make yourself! *(See recipes on pages 4 and 5!)* Although you can make most of your cleaning products, you may still need to purchase a few non-toxic commercial cleaners such as automatic dishwashing detergent, soap, and laundry liquid. *(See page 6 for green purchasing tips!)*

Green cleaners will work better than chemical products; however, it may take a few cleanings to see the sparkling effects as commercial cleaners usually leave behind a film on surfaces.

Essential Green Cleaning Tools

- Microfiber Cloths
- Natural Cellulose Sponges
- Old Toothbrushes
- Scrub Brush
- Rags (reuse old T-Shirts!)
- Reusable Gloves
- Buckets/ containers
- Spray Bottles

Essential Ingredients

These items make up the basic ingredients for nearly all do-it-yourself green cleaning recipes!

- Baking Soda
- Borax
- Distilled White Vinegar
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Lemons
- Olive Oil
- Soda Water
- Table salt
- Vegetable based liquid soap
- Essential Oils
- Vegetable based bar soap (non antibacterial or moisturizing)

Make Your Own Green Cleaners!

All Purpose Cleaner

Mix 1 quart warm water, 1 dab liquid vegetable-based soap, 1 teaspoon borax and 2 tablespoons vinegar. Add a few drops of essential oils for a pleasant fragrance and/or added disinfecting power.

Disinfectant/ Sanitizer

Spritz countertops, cutting boards, vegetables, or fruit with vinegar. Then, spritz with hydrogen peroxide. Rinse with water. This combination will kill virtually all salmonella, shigella, and E.coli.

Glass Cleaner

Mix 2 tablespoons white vinegar with 1 quart water. For stubborn, hard water spots and streaks, use undiluted white vinegar.

Metal Polish

Copper and Brass : Create a paste out of 2 tablespoons salt and white vinegar, apply with a rag and rub clean (adding flour will reduce abrasiveness). Stainless Steel: Apply baking soda with a damp cloth, using vinegar to eliminate spots.

Oven Cleaner

Mix 1 part vinegar to 4 parts water in a spray bottle. Spray onto a cool oven surface and scrub. For stubborn spots, use a water and baking soda paste.

Floor Cleaner

Wash slate, ceramic tile, and no-wax floors with 1/2 cup white vinegar mixed with 1/2 gallon warm water.

Furniture Polish

Mix 1/2 cup white vinegar and 1 teaspoon olive oil and apply with a clean rag to dust and polish. Reduce the olive oil if the wood looks too oily.

Make Your Own Green Cleaners!

Drain Cleaner/ Opener

Pour 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain, add 1/2 cup white vinegar and cover the drain opening. Let stand a few minutes. Pour boiling water down the drain to unclog and deodorize.

Tub and Tile Cleaner

For mold and mildew stains, wipe on full strength white vinegar and rinse. For film buildup, wipe on full strength vinegar with a sponge then use baking soda as a scouring powder with a damp sponge. Rinse with water.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Sprinkle baking soda in the bowl, drizzle with vinegar and scour with a toilet brush.

Powdered Laundry Detergent

Mix 2 cups grated soap (vegetable based, not antibacterial or moisturizing) into a resealable container. Mix in 1 cup of borax and a 1 cup of baking soda. Use 1 tablespoon for small or lightly soiled loads and 2 tablespoons for large or heavily soiled loads.

Laundry Stain Remover

Mix 2 parts hot water, 1 part baking soda, and 1 part hydrogen peroxide. Spot treat stains and soak overnight. You can also spray a mixture of 1/2 water and 1/2 vinegar onto common stains before washing.

Rug and Upholstery Cleaner

Clean stains immediately with a soda water and baking soda paste, vacuum.

Fabric Softener

Add 1/2 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle. For a homemade dryer sheet, saturate a rag with 1 teaspoon of natural hair conditioner.

Shopping for Green Cleaners

It is becoming easier to find environmentally friendly commercial cleaners at local stores, but beware, not all “green” products are created equally. The industry is not highly regulated and companies can falsely claim “green” statements and deceive even the most environmentally conscious consumers. When shopping for green cleaning products, pay close attention to the label and evaluate the green claims.

Are the Environmental Claims Specific?

Determine if the “eco-friendly” claims apply to the product, packaging, or both, and look for specific information to back up the environmental claim. For example, products may claim to be “non-toxic”. The label should provide additional information to back up the claim and why the product has earned a special seal.

Does the Label Disclose All Ingredients?

Cleaning product manufacturers are not required to disclose ingredients, look for companies that voluntarily disclose their ingredients and tell you what they do. Look for “We disclose all ingredients” on the product label.

Does the Label Tell You Where the Ingredients Come From?

An eco-friendly company should disclose whether the ingredients are synthetic or naturally derived and where they come from. Always go for naturally derived ingredients (plant based or vegetable based).

Do Those Ingredients Biodegrade?

The label should tell you if the ingredients biodegrade in the environment. Most plant or vegetable based formulas do.

Is the Product Third Party Certified?

Independent groups analyze product ingredients and certify that those chemicals don’t pose harm to your health or the environment. Look for Green Seal, Cradle to Cradle, the Leaping Bunny, or EPA’s Design for the Environment certifications.

Shopping for Green Cleaners

Is the Product Free of Toxins?

Avoid these toxic ingredients:

- ✗ Aerosol Propellants
- ✗ Ammonia
- ✗ Chlorine Bleach
- ✗ Synthetic dyes & fragrances
- ✗ Heavy Metals
- ✗ Petroleum Distillates

Sources and More Information

There are many resources available on green cleaning! Here are some which were used to compile the information found in this brochure.

U.S. Environmental Protection Department - Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
www.epa.gov/ocspp/

National Geographic: Green Guide for Everyday Living
www.thegreenguide.com

Green This! Volume 1 Greening your Cleaning (2007) by Diedre Imus

The Seven Sins of Greenwashing
www.sinsofgreenwashing.org

Green Seal Certification and Certified Products
www.greenseal.org

Planet Green
Planetgreen.discovery.com/go-green/green-cleaning/

Native Green Cleaning Products
Gonativegreen.com

17,000 petrochemicals are available for in-home use. Only 30 % of those have been tested for harmful effects on human health and the environment.

By using natural, non-toxic cleaners you can protect your family's health as well as the environment and save money at the same time!



Prepared by
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This publication is intended to provide introductory information on green cleaning.