

Your Healthy House

Cleaning Recipes

The following recipes were taken from CBC's Marketplace website.

TIPS FOR NON-TOXIC CLEANING

There are many ingredients in your own kitchen or bathroom cupboard that could easily be substituted for cleaners. More and more people are looking for natural ways of cleaning as their concerns grow over chemicals in cleaners that can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches and dizziness. Many common household cleaners contain alcohol, ammonia, bleach, formaldehyde, and lye, substances that can cause nausea, vomiting, inflammation and burning of the eyes and throat. Environmentalists have linked these ingredients with neurological, liver and kidney damage, asthma, and cancer. There are hundreds of homegrown recipes for green cleaning; here are some of the basic ingredients and combinations you can try:

FIVE BASIC INGREDIENTS

Any of these ingredients can be safely mixed together. Experiment and find out what works best for you. Store mixtures in spray bottles and label them.

White Vinegar: Mix with water and you can clean windows, any glass, countertops, and tile.

Baking Soda: Mixed with water this becomes an all purpose cleaner. Scour sinks, tubs, and even sprinkle over carpets as a deodorizer.

Salt: great as an abrasive for cleaning pots and pans.

Lemon Juice: use as bleach in laundry and on kitchen surfaces. Combine with vinegar and water and you have a nice de-clogger.

Olive Oil: Mix with vinegar and use as furniture polish.

COOK UP SOME GREEN CLEANERS

Drain cleaner: Pour 125 ml [4-5 ounces] of baking soda down the sink and add at least a cup of vinegar. Put the cover on the drain and wait a few minutes. Finish by rinsing through with a mixture of boiling water and salt.

Oven cleaner: Make a paste of baking soda and water. First, scratch off burnt spots with a scouring brush and then apply paste and scrub.

Kitchen cleaner: Use baking soda on non-scratch surfaces and vinegar and water mixture on all others.

Window cleaner: Put 75 ml [2½ ounces—approx. 1/3 of a cup] of vinegar for every liter/quart of water in a spray bottle.

Glass cleaner: Blend 75 ml [2½ ounces] of vinegar with a spoonful of cornstarch and a liter/quart of warm water. Apply with a sponge and wipe dry. No streaks!

Toilet bowl cleaner: Sprinkle baking soda around the inside of the toilet bowl and clean with toilet brush. Also drop some white vinegar into the bowl and let sit a few minutes before cleaning with the brush.

Tub and tile cleaner: Mix 400 ml [13-14 ounces—approx. 1¾ cups] of baking soda, 125 ml [4-5 ounces] liquid soap, 125 ml [4-5 ounces] water, and a few spoonfuls of vinegar. Apply, scrub, wipe.

Mildew remover: Vinegar and salt.

Silver polish: Put a sheet of aluminum foil into a plastic or glass bowl. Sprinkle the foil with salt and baking soda and fill bowl with warm water. Soak your silver in the bowl and tarnish migrates to the foil. Dry and buff.

Crystal: Try a mixture of vinegar, water, and a small amount of baking soda. Pour on a soft cloth and rub.

Brass cleaner: Cut a lemon in half, sprinkle it with salt, and rub the lemon on the metal. Buff with a cloth.

Copper cleaning: Make a paste with equal parts white vinegar, flour, and salt. Leave on for an hour then buff with a cloth.

Rust removal: Vinegar can help remove rust on nuts and bolts, and other mineral deposits such as calcium deposits.

Toothpaste: Diminishes glass scratches, lifts crayon marks off the floor.

The following recipes were taken from Athena Thompson's book, *Homes That Heal and Those That Don't*, New Society Publishers, c. 2004, www.homesthatheal.com. Reprinted with permission.

KITCHEN CLEANER

- baking soda
- essential oil (optional)

Half-fill a plastic flip top or stainless steel shaker with baking soda. Add 15-20 drops of essential oil (try lemon, thyme, or lavender). Stir. Fill the shaker almost to the top with more baking soda. Put the lid on tightly and shake to mix.

To use: sprinkle on counters or sink, then wipe with a damp rag or cellulose sponge. Rinse well. Don't use too much or you will need to keep rinsing and wiping.

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER

- 2 tbsp white vinegar
- 1 tsp borax
- 16 ounces hot, filtered water
- ¼ cup liquid soap
- 10-15 drops of essential oil, such as lavender or lemon (optional)

First, mix the vinegar with the borax in a 16-ounce, clean squirt bottle. Fill with hot, filtered water and shake until all the borax has dissolved. Next, add the liquid soap, followed by the essential oil. Shake again to mix. To use: squirt and wipe.

TUB AND TILE CLEANER

- 1-2/3 cups baking soda
- ½ cup liquid soap
- ½ cup filtered water
- 2 tbsp white vinegar

Mix the baking soda and liquid soap in a bowl. Dilute with ½ cup water. Add the vinegar last. Mix with a fork until any lumps are gone. It should have a pourable consistency; if not, add more water. Pour into a 16-ounce squeeze container (the kind with a squirt flip-top cap). Keep the cap on, as this mixture will dry out easily. Shake well before using. Add more water if it dries out.

To use: squirt onto tile, tube, sink, or toilet bowl and scrub. Rinse well. If any baking soda residue remains (which will look like powder), use a little vinegar and water to rinse, and next time use less baking soda in the recipe.

ANTIBACTERIAL SPRAY

Here is a great non-toxic and very effective way to rid your bathroom (or any room) of germs.

- 1 cup filtered water
- 1 tsp pure essential oil of lavender

Place water in 16-ounce clean squirt bottle, add lavender oil, shake vigorously to mix.

To use: squirt on surfaces and allow to stand for at least 15 minutes, or don't rinse at all. This recipe keeps indefinitely. Use on toilet seats, countertops, doorknobs, and cutting boards - anywhere germs like to lurk. Lavender is more antiseptic than phenol, which is the industry standard.

The following recipes were collected by Building Biologist Jeanne McLaughlin. More recipes are on her website.

SOAPY GARLIC GARDEN SPRAY FOR WEEDS

- 1 head of garlic and 2 cups of boiling water—let it sit overnight
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp liquid soap

For Ants – use apple cider vinegar, lavender, baking soda or powdered sugar applied to ant hills and trails.

Blood, Chocolate, Mud, Coffee Stains, Mildew – borax

Wine Stains – baking soda and corn starch

Ink Stains – use salt, then lemon, and then rinse

Grease Stains – use baking soda

Unclogging Drains – ½ cup baking soda and ½ cup vinegar and pour down the drain. Plug the drain. Wait 10 minutes and pour boiling water down to flush.

Fabric Softener – 9 ounces of vinegar or baking soda with water

Disinfect Toilets – vinegar, lemon or tea tree oil

Bleach – use apple cider vinegar instead

Furniture Polish – 1-part lemon juice with 2-parts olive oil

Moths – lavender or cedar

Flies – pot of basil in the kitchen

Chemicals Out of New Clothes – powdered milk and warm water for soaking new clothes before washing