



Greener Cleaners

*Better solutions for
cleaning your home*

A Lynn Canyon Ecology Centre Information Sheet

Everyday items we use in our homes - like cleaning products, paint and medicine - contain chemicals that cannot be removed by wastewater treatment plants.

Sometimes older is better

Have you been thinking about replacing your commercial household cleaning products with something less toxic but you don't want to lose the convenience and cleaning power. Replacing toxic chemicals with more enviro-friendly ingredients may not be that much of a sacrifice.

Natural cleansers have been used to clean homes for centuries because they work. They are less toxic, less expensive and better for you and the environment. Baking soda scours and removes odours. Lemon juice and vinegar are natural disinfectants. Vinegar cuts grease. Borax, a natural mineral, cleanses and removes stains.



Before you Start

- Mix your ingredients in a well-ventilated area. Even if your cleaner is all-natural the fumes may still irritate your eyes, nose and throat.
- Use containers with tight-fitting lids. **Don't reuse food containers or old containers from other cleaners.** Buy new glass containers or spray bottles for your homemade cleaners. Clearly label your cleaners.
- Never mix bleach and ammonia. It forms a toxic gas and volatile explosive.

Drain Cleaner

Pour down the drain:

1 cup of baking soda

2 cups of vinegar

It will foam briefly. Put the cover on the drain and wait 15 minutes. Rinse with a mixture of boiling water and salt.

Don't pour cooking grease or oil down the drain. It can clog your pipes. Instead, let the grease cool and put it in the garbage.

Window and Glass Cleaner

Method 1:

In a spray bottle, combine:

1 cup of vinegar

3 cups of water

Use a lint-free cloth to wipe the glass.

Method 2:

Spray glass with club soda.

Use a lint-free cloth to wipe the glass.

All Purpose Cleaner

In a spray bottle, combine:

1 teaspoon borax

½ teaspoon baking soda

¼ cup lemon juice

1 cup of hot water.

All Purpose Deep Cleaner

In a bucket, combine

1 cup household ammonia

½ cup white vinegar

½ cup baking soda

4 litres of warm water.

Microwave Oven Cleaner

In a microwave safe bowl, mix

2 tablespoons of baking soda or lemon juice

1 cup water

Microwave for five minutes or until the liquid boils and condensation builds up inside the microwave. Wipe down with a cloth.

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*Don't put
garden chemicals,
medications,
car oil,
kitchen grease,
or paint down
the drain.*

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. The tarnish will migrate to the foil. Dry the silver and buff.

Chrome Cleaner

Toothpaste

Brass Cleaner

1 half of a lemon sprinkled with salt. Rub the lemon on the brass. Buff with a cloth.



Toilet Cleaner

½ cup baking soda

¼ cup white vinegar

10 drops tea tree essential oil -optional

Sprinkle baking soda around the inside of the toilet bowl and scrub with a toilet brush. Add some white vinegar into the bowl and let sit for a few minutes before scrubbing again with the toilet brush.

Bath and Tile Cleaner

1¾ cups baking soda

½ cup liquid soap

½ cup water

2 tablespoons of vinegar

Apply, scrub and rinse. If you have mildew try vinegar and salt.



The Ecology Centre is operated by
the District of North Vancouver Parks Dept.

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Laundry

Replace bleach with 1 cup baking soda in the wash cycle.

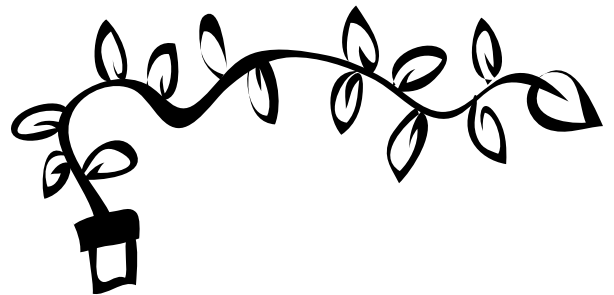
Replace fabric softener with ½ cup vinegar in the rinse cycle.

Use half the Soap!

Surfactants harm young fish and other aquatic life. If your cleaning product makes suds, it contains surfactants. The Metro Vancouver area has very soft water. Soap works very well in soft water so you can use half the amount the packaging recommends, or less, and still get good results.

In the Garden

- Pull weeds by hand.
- Use a spray bottle with vinegar to kill weeds.
- Take a GardenSmart workshop to find out how to improve your lawn and garden without chemicals. Visit www.gardensmart.ca for current workshop information.



Washing or Fixing the Car

- Soapy water poured on the street will flow into a storm drain and directly into creeks where it will hurt fish and other aquatic wildlife.
- Use less soap and wash less often. Pour the used soapy water on grass or soil to keep it from entering the storm drain system.
- When changing your car's oil, use a drop sheet.
- Recycle used oil, used oil containers, and used filters at a local garage.