

SP 776

# Make Your Home Healthy – Keep It Clean

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## Green Cleaning



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FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES  
**U**EXTENSION  
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE



# Make Your Home Healthy – Keep It Clean

## Why Use Green Cleaners?

Of the hundreds of cleaning products on the market today, most contain ingredients you can't even pronounce. While it is likely that manufacturers have conducted extensive testing on these consumer products, the risks posed by their chemical content are uncertain, and, in many cases, probably low. Nevertheless, human health is always well-served by reducing exposure to chemicals. Decreased chemical use is also a pollution prevention measure. In short, green cleaning is good for you *and* good for the environment!

## Reasons to Make and Use Your Own Green Cleaners:

- Most of the ingredients you may already have in your home.
- You save money.
- Generally, green cleaners work as well as those with harsher chemicals.
- Green cleaning keeps dangerous toxins out of your home.

**Keep booklet with your green cleaning supplies.**

## Where to Find Ingredients:

- Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) — baking aisle of grocery store.
- Washing soda (sodium carbonate) — laundry aisle of grocery store.
- Borax (sodium borate) — laundry aisle of grocery store.
- Vegetable oil-based liquid soap (common name: Castile Soap) — big box stores (Target, Walmart, large grocery stores, home improvement stores, natural food stores).
- Essential oils — health food, natural food stores, drug stores, and some big box stores.

**If your home was built before 1978, it's really important to keep it clean to protect children from lead poisoning.**

# Make Your Home Healthy – Keep It Clean

## How Clean Is Clean?

Most cleaning jobs only need soap or detergent, water, and a little elbow grease.

Some surfaces may need extra attention to control germs:

- **Sanitizers** reduce, but do not totally eliminate germs but are usually safer to use.
- **Disinfectants** destroy or inactivate germs but tend to be more toxic and must be used with care.

**Always label all cleaners clearly!!!**

## All-Purpose Cleaner

2 tablespoons borax

¼ cup vinegar

2 cups hot water

- Mix ingredients in a spray bottle or bucket.
- Apply and wipe clean.

## Furniture Polish

1 lemon

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon water

*This polish should be made fresh for each use.*

- Cut and squeeze juice from lemon into small container, using a strainer to remove pulp and seeds.
- Add oil and water. Mix well. (A container with a lid makes mixing easy.)
- Apply a thin coat on wood surface, then buff with a soft cloth to a deep shine.

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## Refrigerator Cleaner

1 tablespoon baking soda

1 quart warm water

- Dissolve baking soda in water.
- Wipe all surfaces inside and out.
- For stubborn spots, rub with a paste made from baking soda and a little water.
- Rinse well with a clean, wet cloth.

## Tub and Tile Cleaner

White vinegar

Baking soda or non-iodized salt

- Apply full-strength vinegar to a sponge and wipe surface.
- Next, use baking soda or salt as a scouring powder.
- Rub with damp sponge and rinse well with clean water.

## Scouring Powder

1 cup baking soda

1 cup borax

1 cup non-iodized salt

- Put in container.
- Sprinkle on area to be cleaned.
- Wipe with a sponge and rinse well.

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## Grease Remover

Vinegar

Baking soda

Vegetable oil

- 1) Put full-strength vinegar on surface and let set for a few minutes. Wipe clean with dishcloth or nonabrasive scrubber. *If grease remains:*
- 2) Put baking soda on a damp sponge and scrub surface. Rinse well with clean wet cloth. *If grease remains:*
- 3) Remember, grease removes grease. Put vegetable oil on paper towel and scrub. Follow up with methods (1) and (2).

## Toilet Bowl Cleaner

1 cup borax

½ cup vinegar

- Flush toilet to wet the sides of the bowl.
- Sprinkle borax around the toilet bowl.
- Spray vinegar on top of borax.
- Leave for several hours or overnight.
- Scrub with a toilet brush.

## Glass Cleaner

¼ cup white vinegar

1 tablespoon cornstarch

1 quart warm water

Mix ingredients.

- Apply with a sponge or spray bottle.
- Wipe off with cotton or microfiber cloth.

*Hint: For lint-free results, wipe dry with crumpled black and white newspaper.*

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## Floor Cleaner

½ cup white vinegar

1 gallon warm water

- Mix ingredients.
- Avoid overwetting the floor by using a spray bottle to apply the cleaner to the floor.
- Mop as usual.
- Rinse with clean water.

## Heavy-Duty Floor Cleaner

1 cup white vinegar

½ cup washing soda

1 tablespoon vegetable oil-based liquid soap

2 gallons hot water

- Combine all ingredients in pail, stirring well to dissolve the washing soda.
- Mop as usual.
- Rinse with clean water.

## Drain Cleaner

½ cup baking soda

1 cup white vinegar

1 gallon boiling water

- Pour baking soda down drain.
- Follow by pouring vinegar down drain.
- Allow the mixture to “foam” for several minutes.
- Pour the boiling water down the drain to flush out the pipe.

*This cleaner is safe for garbage disposals.*

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*Warning: Do not clean mold if you are allergic to mold or have asthma.*

## Mold and Mildew Cleaner

1 cup borax

1 gallon warm water

- Mix ingredients.
- Dip sponge into solution.
- Scrub moldy area.
- Rinse well with clean water.
- Dry well.

*Hint: A mold problem is a moisture problem. Keep surfaces dry.*

- This is only intended for small areas of mold, such as in the bath-tub/shower.
- Use only on surfaces that do not absorb water.
- Wear gloves.
- Throw away sponge to prevent the spread of mold.

## Copper and Brass Cleaner

*Not for use on lacquered surfaces*

Lemon juice

Non-iodized salt

Cornstarch

- Mix equal parts of salt and cornstarch with lemon juice to make a paste.
- Apply to surface with soft cloth.
- Rub gently.
- Rinse with warm water and mild dish soap.
- Dry with soft cloth.



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## Sink and Appliance Cleaner

*Use to clean stainless steel, chrome, fiberglass, ceramic, porcelain or enamel.*

2 tablespoons baking soda

1 quart water

- Dissolve the baking soda in the water.
- Wipe on fixtures.
- Rinse with clean water.

## Water Rings on Wood Remover

*Water rings on a wood surface are the result of moisture that is trapped under the top coat but not the finish. Preventing water rings is the easiest solution. Use coasters.*

Non-gel regular toothpaste or

Mayonnaise

- Rub toothpaste or mayonnaise gently onto ring.
- Once ring is removed, use furniture polish.

## Laundry Detergent

*Always follow manufacturer's laundry directions, found on all clothing and household textiles.*

1 cup ivory soap (powder)

½ cup washing soda

½ cup borax

- Mix ingredients and store in sealed container.
- Use 1 tablespoon for light loads.
- Use 2 tablespoons for heavy loads.

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## Oil and Grease Cleaner for Concrete

Baking soda

- Sprinkle baking soda on grease or oil spot.
- Scrub with wet brush.
- Rinse well.

## Oven Cleaner

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup baking soda

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup non-iodized salt

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup water

Steel wool, if needed

- Make a paste of the first three ingredients.
- Spread over inside of oven (do not put on metal parts or openings).
- Leave overnight.
- Remove with plastic spatula and wipe clean.
- Rub stubborn spots gently with steel wool.

## Fragrant Kitchen and Bath Cleaner

2 tablespoons white vinegar

2 pints water

4 drops essential oil (lavender, tea tree oil, lemon, lemongrass, or rosemary)

- Combine ingredients in spray bottle.
- Use as a final rinse after cleaning kitchen/bath surfaces.
- Store in a cool, dark place.

## Garbage Can Deodorizer

2 cups baking soda

1 teaspoon tea tree oil

- Mix together in small bowl, working out all the lumps with a fork.
- Sprinkle mixture in the bottom of trash can after removing liner.
- Replace new liner.
- Periodically rinse container with white vinegar and let dry in the sun.

Contact your local county Extension office:  
[utextension.tennessee.edu/Places/offices.aspx](http://utextension.tennessee.edu/Places/offices.aspx)  
For more information to help you and your family, go to  
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