

## Green Cleaning Recipe Guide: *Less-Toxic Cleaning Solutions for Your Home and Office*

These green cleaning recipes can help you save money and protect your family and the environment. Recipes can be adjusted as needed. Test solutions on small area before using extensively. For information about wood, leather, and metal polishers, and other green cleaning recipes go to: [www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=1400](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=1400)

### INGREDIENTS

#### **Baking Soda (Sodium Bicarbonate):**

Absorbs odors and is a mild abrasive. Found in the baking section of the grocery store.

**Liquid Soap:** Vegetable-oil-based soap sometimes referred to as castile soap (e.g. Dr. Bronner's). It can be found in most health food stores.

**Vinegar:** Removes soap scum, grease and mineral deposits and acts as a deodorizer. Use only white distilled vinegar for most of these recipes. You can try apple cider vinegar for windows, since it has a more pleasant scent.

**Washing Soda (Sodium Carbonate):** It is slightly caustic and a great grease cutter. Don't use it on waxed floors (unless you want to remove the wax), fiberglass or aluminum. Found in the laundry section, made by Arm & Hammer.

**Liquid Detergent:** Try purchasing vegetable oil-based soaps, which can be more environmentally friendly than petroleum-based products. Vegetable oil-based soaps can be found in health food and many grocery stores.

**Glycerin:** Found in pharmacies or health food stores, this water-loving liquid has antiseptic qualities and moisturizes the skin.

**Hydrogen Peroxide:** Disinfectant. Use the household concentration (3 percent) typically found in pharmacies.

### GENERAL CLEANERS

**All-Purpose Cleaner:** Mix the following, but the soap, in a spray bottle and shake. Add soap last. Mix gently. Apply and wipe clean. Good for countertops, woodwork, appliances, etc.

- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 teaspoon washing soda
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 cup liquid soap

**Grease Cleaner:** Mix vinegar and salt together for a good surface cleaner. Will remove grease if vinegar is at full strength

**Glass Cleaner:** Combine 1 quart warm water with 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar or 2 tablespoons lemon juice (use both vinegar and lemon if you want the cleaning abilities of vinegar with the scent of lemons). Mix ingredients and store in a spray bottle. Use as you would any glass cleaner.

**Dish Soap:** Use non-phosphate soap. Phosphates act as fertilizer – when they go down the drain, they are discharged into waterways and can cause a rapid growth of algae, which pollutes water. Tip: Use half the amount suggested for your automatic dishwasher.

**Scouring Powder:** Pour baking soda into a shaker and sprinkle in sink or on pans. Scrub with a rough pad and rinse.

To make a heavy-duty scouring powder, combine 1/2 cup each baking soda and washing soda. This formula may scratch fiberglass. **Use gloves;** washing soda is caustic.

**Scouring Paste:** Mix 2/3 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup liquid soap and enough water to make a paste. Add 2 tablespoons vinegar and stir. Keep paste in a tub at the kitchen sink for scouring pots and pans or the kitchen sink itself.

**Tip:** Use a wet pumice stone to remove tough stains from porcelain or enamel without scratching.

**Stain Remover:** Liberally sprinkle surface with salt and squeeze lemon or lime juice over the area. Let sit and rub out. This can even remove rust if allowed to sit a few hours.

### KITCHEN CLEANERS

**Drain Cleaner:** For best results, use these drain cleaners regularly to prevent clogs.

• Pour 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain, followed by 1/2 cup vinegar. To create pressure, immediately cover the drain and let it sit for 15 minutes. Follow with a kettle of boiling water (about 2 quarts). Use this treatment regularly to prevent clogged drains and keep them smelling fresh.

• There are a number of products that use compressed air instead of chemicals to open clogs that are available at grocery or hardware stores: CLR Power Plumber, Liquid Plumr Power Jet, Kleer Drain Instant Opener.

• For stubborn clogs, use a mechanical snake.

**Cutting Board Deodorizer:** Rub cut lemon onto the washed cutting board to eliminate lingering odors.

**Garbage Pail Deodorizer:** Periodically rinse pail with vinegar and dry in the sun. Sprinkle 1 cup baking soda in bottom of pail after liner is removed.

#### **Oven Cleaners:**

• Mix equal parts salt and baking soda in a bowl and add water to make a paste. Apply paste to walls of oven. Let stand five minutes, then wipe clean with a damp cloth. Use a brush on heavy spills. Do not allow baking soda to touch heating elements or wiring.

• For heavier cleaning, sprinkle the bottom of the oven with baking soda to cover soiled area. Spray with water until very damp and keep moist by spraying every few hours. Let it set overnight. In the morning, scoop out the baking soda – all the grime will be loosened; rinse the oven well. Washing soda can be substituted for 1/2 the baking soda for really tough jobs, but requires more rinsing and is more caustic (wear gloves).

• Or use a non-chlorinated scouring powder such as Bon Ami, a pumice stick or a copper or steel wool scrubbing pad.

• Keep oven enamel wet if using a pumice stick. Scrubbing pads may scratch enamel, test first on a small area. A blunt knife is useful for prying up large crusty materials.

**Tip:** Prevention is the key to a clean oven. Line your oven with foil or an aluminum oven liner found in the baking section of grocery stores

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## BATHROOM CLEANERS

### Toilet Bowl Cleaners

- Combine 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar and 2 cups water in a labeled spray bottle. Spray along the inside rim of the toilet. Leave on for 15 minutes before you scrub with a toilet brush.
- Pour a cup of white vinegar into the toilet and toss in a handful of baking soda to soak about 10 minutes. Swish with toilet brush.
- Scrub regularly with toilet brush & non-chlorinated scouring powder (Bon Ami)

**Tip:** Clean bowl thoroughly and often.

Drain water from toilet bowl for better cleaning. For serious stains or rust, empty water out of bowl and scour with a wet pumice stone. When wet, the stone will not scratch porcelain.

**Rust Remover:** Rust stains can be removed from porcelain by scouring with cream of tartar.

### Tub and Tile Cleaner

- 1 2/3 cups baking soda
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil-based liquid soap
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons vinegar

Mix soda and soap in a small tub or bowl. Add water, vinegar and mix. Apply with sponge or other non-abrasive cloth. This cleaner works best when used on the same day it is made. Rinse surface area thoroughly to avoid leaving a residue.

- Scrub surfaces with paste of baking soda and water. This also can be used to clean fiberglass.
- Scrub tile grout with a small brush and hydrogen peroxide spray. Add soft scrub (see below) for heavy mildew grout areas.

**Soft Scrub:** Combine 1/2 cup baking soda with enough vegetable oil-based liquid soap to make a frosting-like mixture. Scoop the mixture onto a sponge and scrub the bathtub, sinks, Formica countertops or shower stall. Rinse.

**Mold and Mildew:** Use equal parts vinegar and water. Spray and wipe clean.

**Plastic Shower Curtains:** Add 2 cups vinegar to laundry soap in washing machine. Add a few towels with the shower curtain. Air dry.

## FLOOR CLEANERS

**General Carpet Cleaning:** Use a soap-based, non-aerosol rug shampoo. Vacuum when dry.

**Carpet Odor Remover:** To neutralize carpet odors, sprinkle baking soda over the entire carpet. Leave on for one hour or overnight. Vacuum up baking soda.

**Urine Remover:** Mix equal parts distilled vinegar and water. Spray or sponge onto the stain. Let stand for 10 minutes or so before blotting the mixture with a sponge or paper towel. This also can be used to remove pet urine odors from other surfaces.

**Tip:** Never use warm or hot water on stains containing sugar.

### Carpet and Upholstery Stain Removers

- Blot stain with club soda or cornstarch. Scrub with a dab of dish soap.
- Mix equal parts vinegar and water. Use to remove tough stains including grass, perspiration, rust, jam, coffee, orange juice, wine, beer, ketchup, barbecue sauce, chili, urine and pet stains.

**Tip:** You can get rid of odor and urine stains with enzymatic cleaners available at many grocery and natural food stores.

**All-Purpose Floor Cleaner:** Mix 2 tablespoons liquid soap in 1 gallon hot water. Mix, mop and wipe clean. Use less soap if streaking occurs. Wipe dry with a cloth.

**Linoleum Floor Cleaner:** Damp mop using 1/4 cup vegetable oil-based liquid soap in 2 gallons warm water.

**Vinyl Floor Cleaner:** Damp mop using 1 cup vinegar in 2 gallons warm water.

**No-Wax floor cleaner:** Add 1/2 cup vinegar to 2 tablespoons liquid soap in 1 gallon of hot water. Mix, mop and wipe clean.

**Tile Floor Cleaner:** Mix 1 cup vinegar with 1 gallon hot water. Mix, mop and wipe clean.

**Wood Floor Cleaner:** For unvarnished floors, damp mop with mild vegetable oil soap. Or try 1/4 cup liquid vegetable oil-based soap, 1/2 teaspoon glycerin, 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar and 2 gallons warm water. For varnished floors, or no-wax

floors such as polyurethane or Swedish finishes, damp mop using one part vinegar to 10 parts water.

## LAUNDRY CLEANERS

**Laundry Soap:** Commercially formulated laundry detergents that are more environmentally friendly are available: Seventh Generation, Ecover, Life Tree and Earth Friendly Cleaner provide concentrated, vegetable oil-based (not petroleum) laundry soaps without synthetic fragrances. Add 1/2 cup washing soda to the wash cycle as a booster for cleaning heavily soiled clothes.

**Fabric Softener and Deodorizer:** Add 1 to 2 cups of vinegar to rinse cycle to deodorize and soften fabrics.

**Fabric Softener and Whitener:** Add 1/2 cup of baking soda to rinse cycle to deodorize and brighten clothes.

**Stain Removers:** Try one of these recipes:

- Mix 1 part liquid vegetable oil-based soap, 1 part glycerin and 8 parts water. Pour into a squirt bottle; shake well before using. Apply to stain as soon as possible. Wash and rinse in cool water only. Do not use hot or warm water on sugary stains.
- Mix equal parts vinegar and water. Use to remove tough stains including grass, perspiration, rust, jam, coffee, orange juice, wine, beer, ketchup, barbecue sauce, chili, urine and pet stains.
- Use 3 percent hydrogen peroxide solution to spot clean. Let dry. Repeat if necessary.

**Bleach:** Look for commercial non-chlorine bleach or try using:

- 1/2 cup 3 percent hydrogen peroxide in the rinse cycle
- 1/2 cup washing soda to warm or hot water wash cycles
- 1/2 cup lemon juice in the rinse cycle
- 1/2 cup baking soda to warm or hot water wash cycles

**Tip:** After clothes have spun dry in the washer, hang them to dry in the sun. Sunshine is a natural bleach.

**Laundry Starch:** Combine 2 to 3 teaspoons cornstarch with 1 cup water in a spray bottle. Shake well. Use as you would commercial spray starches.