

SustainAbility Stars Program



Natural Cleaning Ideas





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Credits

Thanks to Helen Beaver for compiling the information for this booklet. We also acknowledge the following sources of information used in this resource:

www.back-to-basics-cleaning.com

www.thenewhomemaker.com

www.bosistos@fgb.com.au

“The Lemon Remedy Book” by Amelie Laigneau, 2008, Willow Tree Press

Health & Safety Notes

Risk assessment

- It is important to remember that whilst these ingredients may be in your pantry and used in cooking they are being used as a cleaning product and should be handled with care.
- Risk assessment strategies such as the use of personal protective equipment (e.g gloves) should be utilised. Users should be aware of any allergies of people using the cleaning product or who may come into contact with the product or cleaned areas.

Ingestion and ventilation

- Please ensure that these products are not ingested and all cleaning should be undertaken with good ventilation.

Quantities and Storage

- Do not mix cleaning products in large quantities. Cleaning products that are already mixed must be stored in a sealed container and clearly labelled.

Bathroom Cleaners



- **Bathroom-toilets & drains:** Two capfuls of eucalyptus oil in toilets and drains is an excellent germ killer, antibacterial cleanser and deodoriser.
- **Tiles and showers:** Use a concentration of the “Wool Wash Recipe” (see page 10). Dampen the tiles or benches and use a scrubbing brush or wipe to clean dirty marks. Rinse and wipe dry.
- **Shower screen:** Use a spray. Wipe down with newspaper for a clear finish.
- **Bench tops & sinks:** For deodorised, germ free surfaces wipe with the “oil” or spray.
- **Remove mould:** Mix a cup of lemon juice with a pinch or 2 of salt into a spray bottle and then give mouldy areas a squirt.
- **Air freshener:** Combine 2 tablespoons of lemon juice and 2 tablespoons of baking soda in 2 cups of hot water. Pour into a spray bottle and use as you would a normal air freshener with the added bonus of being non-toxic and kind to the environment.
- **Keep the toilet sparkling:** Combine 2 parts borax with 1 part lemon juice and pour into the bowl and around the sides. Let it sit for 5 minutes before scrubbing and flushing. For stubborn stains, make a thicker paste and let it sit for as long as possible before rinsing.
- **Mildew on shower curtains:** Wash curtains in hot, soapy water. Rinse and rub ½ a lemon over the area. Don't rinse, dry in sun.
- **Mirror cleaner:** Glass can become spotty and cloudy. Cut a lemon in half, and rub the spotty area thoroughly. Buff with a soft cloth.
- **Hairbrushes & combs:** Clean in a baking soda solution.
- **Sink:** Clean sink and tub with full-strength vinegar. Simply apply with a sponge and wipe clean.
- **Tiles:** Clean you ceramic tiles with a solution of 1/4-cup vinegar to one-gallon warm water. If the grout between your tiles is looking hard, dip a toothbrush in full strength vinegar and gently scrub.
- **Clean taps:** Get rid of that nasty, grimy dirt that builds up around the taps by soaking paper towels in full strength vinegar and wrapping them around the fixtures. Let sit for one hour, and then clean as usual.
- **Soap scum & water marks:** Soak a sponge in full strength vinegar, wipe, let stand for five minutes then rinse with clean water. Water spots on sliding shower doors disappear after cleaning with half water and half vinegar solution.
- **Stubborn stains:** To remove stubborn stains from most surfaces, use a baking soda paste (3 parts baking soda, 1 part water). Apply, let stand, then wipe clean.
- **Drains:** To help avoid clogged drains, pour 1/4 cup baking soda down weekly. Rinse thoroughly with hot water.
- **Unclog the showerhead:** Mineral deposits from hard water can cause a sputtering, clogged shower head. Place the showerhead in a pot; add enough vinegar to completely cover it. Heat the vinegar to just below boiling, and then remove from heat. Allow to sit for at least 6 hours. The acid in the vinegar will eat away the deposits. Rinse the showerhead well, and it's ready to go again.

Kitchen Cleaners



- **All purpose cleaner:** Make up a mixture combining ½ cup of pure soap, ¼ cup of lemon juice and 4 litres of hot water. Spray on the surface to be cleaned and rinse with a fresh damp cloth. Don't let it sit too long or the soap will set.

- **Oven cleaner:** Make a paste of one-cup vinegar and ¼ cup powdered laundry detergent. Heat your oven for 5-minutes at 350 degrees and turn off.

Spread the paste around the oven, applying it more heavily to very greasy areas. Leave paste on for an hour, and then use a plastic spatula to gently scrape the dirt away.

To prevent greasy build up in the first place, dip a sponge in full-strength vinegar and wipe down all sides of the oven.

- **Unpleasant odours:** To stop unpleasant cooking odours from permeating through the house, boil a cup or two of vinegar in a pot in the stove. The vinegar will absorb the odours.

When cooking cabbage, add a few drops of vinegar to prevent the unpleasant odours.

Accidentally burnt the roast? Soak a towel in vinegar, wring it out, and wave it around the room. No one will know what you did to dinner!

- **Microwave:** Boil ¼ cup of vinegar in a bowl of water to keep it grease free and smelling as fresh as the day you bought it.

- **Coffee maker:** Get rid of the sludge in your automatic drip coffee maker by running full-strength vinegar through a normal brew cycle. Rinse by running plain water through the cycle two or three times.

- **Tea pot:** Remove the lime coating on your teapot by filling it with water and adding a half-cup of vinegar. Let it stand overnight, then rinse with clean water and dry.

- **Bench tops & sinks:** Use either the "oil" or spray to wipe down bench tops to give a germ free, deodorised surfaces.

- **Lime scale on sink or tap:** Use half a lemon to clean the lime scale off a sink or tap. Rub the cut end over the lime spot firmly, squeezing and rubbing as necessary.

- **Smelly hands:** Working with fish or chicken often leads to stinky hands. Just squeeze fresh lemon juice into your hands and rub together firmly then rinse in cool water.

- **Onion smell on your hands:** Squeeze lemon juice onto them and rub together, then add a shake of mustard and rub again.

- **Garlic smell:** Cut a lemon in half and rub your hands thoroughly, then dig your nails into the lemon to force the garlic smell from your fingernails. Wash your hands with soap.

- **Stained hands from cooking:** beetroot, carrot or other a good rub with lemon juice will get rid of the stain and the smell. Rinse in cool water to avoid "setting" the stain.

- **Wooden utensils/cutting boards:** Rub your wooden utensils with lemon after a normal wash and let to dry before rinsing off the lemon residue. It will get rid of the odours and provides an antibiotic treatment too.

- **Copper utensils:** Combine 1 tablespoon of salt and 1 cup of white vinegar in a litre of hot water. Soak a cotton cloth in the mixture, rinse and then sprinkle some drops of lemon juice on the cloth before wiping the copper.



- **Stainless steel:** Halve a lemon and sprinkle salt on the cut surface. Use this to rub any stains or spots on your steel sinks, pots or pans. Rinse off the residue with warm water.
- **Stains in aluminium pots and pans:** Fill the pot with 1 tablespoon of lemon juice per litre of water and then simmer for 10 minutes or until the stain has gone. If a slight stain remains, scour with a pot cleaner and it should be removed quickly.
- **Non-stick pans:** Chop a lemon in half and use that to rub the dirty surface. If the stain persists, fill the pan with about 1 cm of water and place on the stove. Set the heat to low and sprinkle in 1 teaspoon of baking soda. Squeeze in some lemon juice and then put in a slice of lemon. Let the mixture simmer gently for 10 minutes. The stain should rinse out or it may need a little help from a scrubbing brush.
- **Kitchen benches:** Clean your kitchen bench and then disinfect with a good rub down with $\frac{1}{2}$ a lemon. If you have a stubborn stain, squeeze a full lemon over the surface and the rub with the cut surface of a lemon. Put the lemon halves aside. Let sit for 30 minutes then sprinkle baking soda across the surface and rub vigorously with the lemons.
- **To clean surfaces:** Sprinkle baking soda on a damp cloth. Wipe, then rinse with clean water.
- **To remove stale smells from food containers:** Rinse out with hot water and baking soda. If the smell persists, let the container soak overnight in the baking soda and water mixture.
- **Cooking smells:** Cut a lemon into segments and cook alongside the cabbage, beetroot or whatever to reduce the smell and to give a nice flavour to the dish.
- A box or small bowl of baking soda in the refrigerator, freezer, or any cupboard will keep away unpleasant odours.
- Similarly, baking soda will keep away garbage odours; sprinkle the bottom of the bin, and then sprinkle again after you put a new bag in.
- **To clean silver:** Use a paste of 3 parts baking soda to 1 part water. Rub the paste onto each item, then rinse with warm water and dry with a soft cloth.
- **Scuff marks or grease spills from the floor:** Sprinkle with baking soda and then wipe with a warm, damp cloth. This is even safe for no-wax floors.
- **Burnt-on food in the bottom of pots:** Sprinkle with baking soda, and then add hot water. Let soak overnight; the dried on food will come loose much more easily.
- **Sink:** Clean sink with full-strength vinegar. Simply apply with a sponge, wipe clean to a sparkly shine.
- **Tiles:** Clean you ceramic tiles with a solution of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar to one-gallon warm water. If the grout between your tiles is looking hard, dip a toothbrush in full strength vinegar and gently scrub.
- **Taps:** Get rid of that nasty, grimy dirt that builds up around the taps by soaking paper towels in full strength vinegar and wrapping them around the fixtures. Let sit for one hour, and then clean as usual.

Laundry Cleaners



- **Bleach treatment:** Use a combination of lemon and baking soda in equal measures to treat those stains and greying delicates.
- **Mildew on clothes:** Squeeze or splash lemon juice liberally over the mildew area and then sprinkle with table salt. Rub the salt in with your fingers. Dry the items in the sun and then wash as normal.
- **Whiten sports shoes:** Rub your sports shoe with $\frac{1}{2}$ a lemon.
- **Smelly sports shoes:** Squeeze lemon juice over the insoles and then dry in the sun.
- **Smelly socks:** Lemon juice in the wash with your socks and underwear can give them a sparkling clean and a lovely smell.
- **Scorched fabrics:** Rub a cut lemon over the scorched mark and then cut out segments if the white pith and press these into the scorched area. Dry in the sun, brush off the lemon pith and wash as usual.
- **Rust stains:** Pour a little cold water on the stained area and then cover heavily in salt. Squeeze lemon juice liberally over the salt and then let the item dry in the sun. Brush off the salty residue and was as per normal.
- **Laundry:** Clean and freshen by adding 2 capfuls of eucalyptus oil to each wash load or use wool wash recipe (see page 10). Ideal for overalls, sportswear, socks, nappies and especially sheets and towels. It leaves a fresh smelling linen cupboard and lowers the risk of moths or silverfish. Suitable for grey water use.
- **Glue:** Loosen the dried on glue by soaking a clean cloth in vinegar and saturating the spot until it's gone.
- **Remove stains:** Rub a small amount of vinegar gently on fruit, jelly, mustard or coffee type stains and wash as usual. No more stain!
- **Pre-wash:** Remove oil soluble grease and grass marks, spots and stains from clothes and fabric with an "oil" moistened cloth. Where possible, place an absorbent cloth under the stained area. Brush towards the centre of the mark to prevent the formation of a ring.
- **Chewing gum, paint & ballpoint ink marks:** Quickly remove chewing gum, paint and ballpoint marks from clothes, shoes and furnishings with a cloth soaked in oil. Also good for removing cleaning ink, printing ink, carbon and other marks off most plastic and vinyl.
- **Antiperspirant:** Blot the spot with paper towel dampened with a solution of baking soda and vinegar. Wash as usual in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric.
- **Grass -** Mix $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vinegar and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water. Apply the solutions to the stain and blot. Repeat the process, as needed, and then wash as usual.
- **Lint remover:** Keep lint from clinging to your dark clothes by adding $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar to the rinse cycle.
- **Mildew:** Dab vinegar on the soiled areas to kill the mildew. Let the item sit in the sun for a few hours and then wash separately from other items.
- **Fresh clothing:** Replace half of each measure of laundry detergent with baking soda to keep clothing fresh.

- **To remove grease stains:** either add baking soda to the wash load or pre treat the stains with a baking soda paste.
- **Pre-treat cloth nappies:** Place nappies in their bucket with baking soda. This will keep odours from becoming overpowering between washings.
- **Laundry hamper:** Add some baking soda every day to keep the hamper from smelling between loads.
- **Berry stains:** As soon as you see a berry stain, dab immediately with lemon juice. Rinse the fabric under cold water and then use a pre-soak detergent to soak the clothing for 30 minutes before washing. If there is still a visible stain, try dabbing a little vinegar prior to washing.
- **Prevent lint:** Reduce lint on your clothes by adding a ¼ cup of lemon juice to the wash just before turning the machine on.
- **Ink stains:** Make up a mixture of cream of tartar and enough lemon juice to create a paste. Use your fingers to rub it onto the ink stain then using a soft bristle brush to remove the drying powder. Sponge with warm water and then repeat if necessary.
- **Leather protection:** Cut a lemon in half and gently rub the cut surface over the leather. Clean off the residue with a soft, clean cloth that is lint free.



Floor Cleaners



- **Sparkling floors:** Add 2 capfuls of Eucalyptus oil to the water when washing the floors. It is great for cleaning and deodorising and leaves the house smelling fresh.
- Combine half a cup of lemon juice, an $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of liquid soap, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of a fragrant tea and 8 litres of warm water in your mop bucket. Mop your floors as per usual.
- **Clean & shine no-wax vinyl or linoleum floors:** Mix 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ litres of water with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar in a bucket, then mop or scrub your floor with the solution.
- **Ceramic tiles:** Clean with a solution of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar to one-gallon warm water. If the grout between your tiles is looking hard, dip a toothbrush in full strength vinegar and gently scrub.
- **Carpets:** Stains, grease, oil and grass stains are easy to remove. Use a eucalyptus spray or a moistened cloth with eucalyptus oil on spots and stains and wipe away with a clean absorbent cloth. Brush towards the centre of the mark to prevent the formation of a ring.
- **Carpet stains:** Combine 2 tablespoons of detergent, three tablespoons of vinegar and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of warm water. Work mixture into the stain, but don't soak. Blot with clean cloth.
- Clean up a puppy accident on your carpet by blotting up as much of the liquid as possible. Dab the spot with equal parts vinegar and warm, soapy water. Blot again with a clean, white cloth until no more liquid is absorbed.
- **Carpet smells:** Sprinkle with baking soda. Let stand for at least fifteen minutes, and then vacuum. Repeat as needed.
- **Pet urine stains & smells on carpet:** Mix about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vinegar to a litre of water. Soak a washcloth in the mixture and blot the area several times.
- **Inexpensive scouring powder:** Combine two tablespoons each of vinegar and baking soda for an effective scouring powder.
- Accidentally spilled white glue on rug or sofa? Remove it with white vinegar.



General Cleaners



- **Mirror cleaner:** For spotty and cloudy glass cut a lemon in half, and rub the area thoroughly. Buff with a soft cloth.
- **Chrome cleaner:** Peel a lemon and use the pith side to rub the chrome to remove any surface dirt. Then flip the peel over and rub with the yellow skin. The oils within the skin will restore the lustre to your chrome.
- **Glassware cleaner:** Dab your delicate crystal ware by dipping your fingers into a glass of lemon juice and rubbing the crystal all over. Rinse the lemon off and dry with a soft cloth that does not leave any fibres.
- **Window cleaner:** Use several cut lemons to rub all over the glass windows. Dry with a soft cloth and rub with newspapers to finish.
- **All purpose cleaner:** Combine ½ cup of pure soap, ¼ cup of lemon juice and 4 litres of hot water. Spray on the surface to be cleaned and rinse with a fresh damp cloth. Don't let it sit too long or the soap will set.
- **Unvarnished wood treatment:** Mix 2 teaspoons of olive oil with 2 teaspoons of lemon juice. Dip a cloth into it before rubbing across the timber, going with the grain.
- **Furniture restorer:** Mix ¼ cup lemon juice, ⅛ cup linseed oil and ⅛ cup vinegar into a glass jar. Stir well. Use a cloth to dab the mix onto the wood. Polish with a clean cloth.
- **Air freshener:** Combine 2 tablespoons of lemon juice and 2 tablespoons of baking soda in 2 cups of hot water. Pour into a spray bottle and use as you would a normal air freshener with the added bonus of being non-toxic and kind to the environment.
- **Varnished wood treatment:** A few drops of lemon oil and ½ cup of warm water and mix. Dip a soft cloth into the mixture, squeeze so the cloth is just damp and rub over the wood. Wipe with a clean cloth to remove residue.
- **Adhesive labels & bandages:** Tea tree oil or spray is excellent for removing sticky adhesive labels. Dampen a cloth and rub the area. Leave 1 minute to help peel off.
- **Polish your car:** Rub vinegar on chrome to clean and shine it.
- **Remove bumper stickers:** Soak a cloth in vinegar and lay it over the bumper sticker. Allow to soak a few minutes. The sticker should peel off. Rub vinegar over the area to remove the sticky residue, if necessary.
- **Clean your glasses:** Place a drop of vinegar on the lens, then rub with a cotton cloth.
- **Get rid of stickers, decals & sticky residues:** Rub a few coats of vinegar on the area and allow to soak. Then wash off with a wet washcloth and the sticky will rub right off.
- **Remove rust:** Soak items in vinegar (do not dilute). This will work on any metals.
- **Clean windows:** Mix 1 cup vinegar with 5 cups water for a great window cleaner. If you must have blue window cleaner, just a few drops of blue food colouring!
- **Unclog a drain:** Drop 1 cup baking soda down your drain and follow it with 1 cup vinegar. When they mix, they foam and expand, cleaning your drain. Allow a few minutes for the mixture to do its job, then flush with hot water for several minutes.

Odour Removers



- **Smoke:** If there is a smoker in the house, put baking soda in the bottom of each ashtray to keep away some of the stale smoke smell, especially in the bedroom.
- **Pet litter:** Baking soda in the litter box will help prevent odours.
- **Smelly pets:** To quickly clean pets and remove “wet dog” odour, sprinkle with baking soda and brush out their fur.
- **Pet urine:** If your animal continues to stain the place, try spraying vinegar on the spot. The smell should turn him off.

Recipes

Eucalyptus Oil Wool Wash Recipe

The following recipe is excellent for soft and fluffy woollens.

- Pure Soap Flakes ½ packet (300g)
- Methylated Spirits 1 cup (200mL)
- Eucalyptus Oil 1 small bottle (50mL)

Mix methylated spirits with soap flakes. Add eucalyptus oil and stir. Store in wide necked screw capped jar. Use one tablespoon per mixture per garment. Dissolve in a small quantity of hot water then pour into lukewarm wash water. Hand or machine wash on wool cycle. No need to rinse unless white garments are being stored for a long period - rinsing reduces the risk of yellowing. Squeeze and roll in towel to remove excess water. Keep garments in shape while drying out of direct sunlight.

Garden Spray Recipe

- Eucalyptus oil 5ml (1 teaspoon)
- Canola Oil 20ml (4 teaspoons)
- Dishwashing liquid 2ml (1-2 squirts)
- Water 1 litre (4 cups)

Spray around seedlings and at the base of plants. Repeat as necessary. Ideal for earwigs, slugs, snails, and slaters. Do not store made up spray. Thoroughly wash sprayer after use.



Ingredients in Natural Cleaners



Baking soda: Sodium bicarbonate, a naturally occurring mineral.

Uses:

- Cleans
- Deodorises
- Softens water
- Scours as a mild abrasive
- Neutralises acids
- Produces carbon dioxide when mixed with acids such as white vinegar

Borax: Sodium borate, a naturally occurring mineral composed of sodium, boron, oxygen and water.

Uses:

- Cleans
- Deodorises
- Disinfects
- Softens water
- Cleans many surfaces including wallpaper, painted walls and floors.

White vinegar: Acetic acid.

Uses:

- Cleans
- Sanitiser
- Eliminates mildew
- Deodorises
- Cuts grease
- Removes wax build-up
- Natural fabric softener

Washing soda: Sodium carbonate, in the same family as baking soda. It has a higher ph level of 11, which makes it slightly more caustic.

Uses as a laundry booster:

- Removes greasy or oily stains
- Neutralises odours as well as baking soda
- Disinfects
- Softens water

Caution:

- Keep away from kids and pets
- May irritate the skin; use rubber gloves
- Do not use on non-wax floors, aluminium or fibreglass surfaces such as sinks and bathtubs.
- Do not use to unclog drains
- Do not use on wool or silk fabrics

Where to buy:

- Can be found in the laundry section of most supermarkets.

Lemon juice: Nature's perfect "green cleaning" citrus fruit.

Uses:

- A mild, natural bleach
- Acidic cleaning agent
- Natural deodoriser
- Natural antibacterial



Essential oils: A concentrated oil extracted from a single plant, most often used with a vegetable-based carrier oil.

Uses:

- A few drops can be added to homemade cleaning products for fragrance
- Natural air freshener ingredient

Caution:

- Highly concentrated and flammable
- Keep away from kids and pets
- Never drink or consume essential oils
- Some essential oils should not be handled during pregnancy or when nursing
- People with asthma or allergies should avoid using essential oils
- Can cause skin irritations, should never be used directly on skin.

Zeolite: A naturally occurring crystallised volcanic mineral.

Uses:

- Removes odours
- Non-fragranced
- Great for pet odours
- Safe for litter boxes
- Sold in reusable pouches; after prolonged use, recharge in the sun for a few hours
- Also sold in loose granules
- Absorbs moisture, therefore can potentially reduce mould in smaller spaces
- Environmentally safe

Microfibre cloths & dusters: Microfibre cloths and dusters are made from nylon/polyester blended fibres that are microscopically split and woven together to create a fabric that traps and removes dirt very effectively.

Uses:

- Traps and removes dirt and dust
- Cleans glass, windows, mirrors with plain water
- Can be used on any surface
- Reusable many times

Caution:

- Do not machine dry using dryer sheets as chemicals will render the microfibre ineffective
- Use with caution on LCD, CRT and plasma screens as cloth can scratch sensitive surfaces.

