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Karen Siegel Maier, Storey Publishing, 2008

Resources

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

2105 1st Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55404

612-870-3424 | www.iatp.org

Restore the Earth Cleaning Products

79 13th Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413

612-331-5979 | laurie@restoreproducts.com

www.restoreproducts.com

Seventh Generation Cleaning Products

212 Battery St., Suite A, Burlington, VT 05401-5281

802-658-3773 | www.seventhgeneration.com



StrongerTogether.coop is a consumer website developed by National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA) for our “virtual chain” of over 120 retail food co-ops, operating more than 160 store fronts, nationwide.

StrongerTogether.coop is a place for people to gather on their food journeys. It’s a place to find out more about what’s in your food, where it comes from, where to find great food, how to prepare it, and a whole lot more. It’s also a place to talk with others about food topics you’re exploring, are passionate about, and even want to get involved in.

Learn more about co-ops, and find food co-ops all across the U.S. at www.strongertogether.coop. Follow [@strongertogether](https://twitter.com/strongertogether) on Twitter and like us on Facebook; we’re at www.facebook.com/coop.strongertogether.

ALL ABOUT

Natural Cleaners



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Printed on elemental chlorine-free, 10% post-consumer
recycled paper using soy ink.

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There are alternatives to toxic cleaning products

Some of the worst culprits contributing to environmental pollution are found right under our noses. Petroleum-based household cleaners can contribute to air and water pollution during manufacturing and disposal as well as in our homes. Consumers are sometimes concerned about potential environmental and health problems stemming from their use. There are alternatives to petroleum-based cleaners that are safer, cheaper and just as effective.

Vegetable-based detergents containing acetic or citric acids have been used successfully for centuries, and are based on renewable resources, can biodegrade quickly, and are gentle on the environment.

In addition, consider using safe concentrated cleaning products (usually you need a fraction of the amount you would with other products) and seek out bulk packaging that is environmentally sound and cost-effective.

The label reader's guide to toxic cleaning product ingredients

Ammonia is toxic when inhaled in concentrated vapors and is considered a hazardous waste. Ammonia is found in all-purpose cleaners, glass cleaners, laundry detergents and metal polishers. Chlorinated cleaners can be especially toxic. Some cleaners contain dioxin, a known carcinogen that can build up in the food chain, is stored in fat, and is believed to affect the endocrine system. Chlorinated materials are used in bleach, dishwasher detergent, and toilet bowl cleaners.

CLEAN AND GREEN HOME

With a minimum of effort, you can easily make your own cleaning products from inexpensive and common household ingredients. Essential oils are an optional addition to homemade cleaning products, and many of them, like lavender and tea tree oil, have antifungal, antibiotic and antibacterial qualities. Essential oils also help you make a naturally-scented cleaning product if you prefer to add their aroma to your household environment.

Alice's Wonder Spray™

Use this recipe for sink, tub, toilet, tile and floors.

1/4 cup white vinegar
2 teaspoons borax
32 ounces hot water
1/4 cup liquid dish soap (added last)
20 drops essential oil (optional)

Dissolve borax in hot water (otherwise the spray will be grainy). Add vinegar, borax and water to a 32-ounce spray bottle. Add the liquid dish soap and essential oil if desired. Shake ingredients to mix.

Scouring Powder

1 cup baking soda
1/4 cup borax
drops of essential oil of your choice (optional)

Mix baking soda and borax together in a bowl or plastic tub with optional essential oil. You can also put the powder in a shaker and shake onto the surface to be cleaned.

Drains

For slow drains, pour one cup each of baking soda, salt and vinegar down the drain. Wait 15 minutes and flush drain with boiling water. Pour boiling water down the drain every two weeks to prevent build up.

Glass Cleaner

Add 1/4 cup of vinegar to one quart warm water in a spray bottle. Spray windows, rub with a clean rag and dry with newspapers.

Your local co-op carries some or all of these pre-made, quality cleaning products. They are made with nontoxic and biodegradable ingredients, and not tested on animals. Some brands offer a wide range of cleaners for the laundry, kitchen and bath.

Ecover

Dr. Bronner's

Citra-Solv

Bi-O-Kleen

Seventh Generation

Earth Friendly

Country Save

Lifetree

Glycol ether is a central nervous system depressant and can poison the kidney or liver. It is often found in all-purpose cleaners and some laundry detergents.

Oxalic acid is caustic and corrosive to skin and mucous membranes. It is commonly added to cleanser, toilet bowl cleaners and metal polishes.

Petroleum-based detergents contain neurotoxins and central nervous system depressants. Exotic-sounding chemicals like nonyl phenol and alkyl phenol ethoxylates (APEs) are found in detergents, furniture polish, cosmetics and household cleaners, and contain environmental impurities that contribute to pollution.

Phosphates are added to dishwashing and laundry detergents because it acts as a water softener. Phosphates are released into the environment through waste water, and are not removed by sewage treatment systems. Phosphates can cause algae overgrowth and suffocation of aquatic life.

Sodium Hydroxide or lye is in most oven cleaners. It is a corrosive poison and hazardous waste.