



## Practice Safe Disposal

Please dispose of household toxic materials in a safe manner.



### Items that are toxic include:

- Paint Products
- Automotive Products
- Household Cleaners
- Hobby/misc. (wood preservatives, glue)
- Pool Chemicals
- Yard Pesticides

Please do **NOT** dispose of such items

- into toilets,
- sinks,
- on the ground,
- into storm drains,

Take toxics to the **Household Hazardous Waste Round-up** held in Camrose in June and October.

- For time and location of the next roundup please check out the City of Camrose website at [www.camrose.ca](http://www.camrose.ca)



**WORKING TOGETHER TODAY  
TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE!**

**CITY OF CAMROSE**

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## YOUR GUIDE TO:

# SAFER CLEANING IN CAMROSE



- ◆ Many things we do every day can degrade water.
- ◆ Each of us can make small changes that, collectively, will make a big difference.
- ◆ The ripple effect of all of us working together can create a fresh wave of change!

**YOU HAVE IT IN YOU!**

**BE WISE WITH WATER!**

**DATE: 01/01/09**

## So WHAT IS “GREEN CLEANING”?

- Green cleaning is the commitment to make, use, and dispose of cleaners with people and the environment in mind.
- You are making your world greener when you:
  - use a cleaning product that is safe and effective,
  - follow all product instructions, and
  - dispose of the product properly.

### Commercial and Homemade: The ‘Dirt ‘ on Alternative Cleaners!

There are more and more people that are opting to avoid commercially produced household cleaners:

- Out of concern for human health
- Out of concern for the environment and
- To reduce costs of cleaning products

***Homemade alternatives must be researched and used wisely!***

### What is an “Alternative Cleaner”?

An alternative cleaner is a cleaning product that is not commercially produced. Usually these products are made at home using ingredients that are supposedly safer or more effective than the ones you find on store shelves.

***Safe’ and ‘unsafe’ has a lot to do with how you use a product and not just what is in a product.***

**Note:** It is never a good idea to use commercially produced cleaners to create your own “super cleaners”. Chemicals react and there are some very unsafe combinations. For example, if you mix a bleach-based cleaner with an acid-based cleaner, you will create chlorine gas, which can make you sick or even kill you.

## Quick Reference: Homemade Substitutions



There are many inexpensive, easy-to-use alternatives which can safely be used in place of commercial household products. Here is a list of common, environmentally safe products which can be used alone or in combination for a wealth of household applications.

**Baking Soda:** cleans, deodorizes, softens water, scours

**Soap:** unscented soap in liquid form, flakes, powders or bars are biodegradable and will clean just about anything. Avoid using soaps which contain petroleum distillates.

**Lemon:** one of the strongest food acids, effective against most household bacteria

**Borax:** (sodium borate) cleans, deodorizes, disinfects, softens water, cleans wallpaper, painted walls and floors.

**White Vinegar:** cuts grease, removes mildew, odors, some stains and wax build-up

**Washing Soda:** or SAL soda is sodium carbonate decahydrate, a mineral. Washing soda cuts grease, removes stains, softens water, cleans walls, tiles, sinks, and tubs. Use care, as washing soda can irritate mucous membranes. Do not use on aluminum.

**Cornstarch:** can be used to clean windows, polish furniture, shampoo carpets and rugs.

**Trisodium Phosphate (TSP):** a mixture of soda ash and phosphoric acid. TSP is toxic if swallowed, but it can be used on many jobs, such as cleaning drains or removing old paint, that would normally require much more caustic and poisonous chemicals, and it does not create any fumes.

***You have it in you! Be wise with water!***



**Scouring Powder:**

For top of stove, refrigerator and other such surfaces that should not be scratched, use baking soda. Apply baking soda directly with a damp sponge.

**Shoe Polish:**

Olive oil with a few drops of lemon juice can be applied to shoes with a thick cotton or terry rag. Leave for a few minutes; wipe and buff with a clean, dry rag.

**Stickers on walls:**

To remove, sponge vinegar over them several times, and wait 15 minutes, then rub off the stickers. This also works for price tags (stickers) on tools, etc.

**Toilet Bowl Cleaner:**

Mix 1/4 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar, pour into basin and let it set for a few minutes. Scrub with brush and rinse. A mixture of borax (2 parts) and lemon juice (one part) will also work.



**Wallpaper Remover:**

Mix equal parts of white vinegar and hot water, apply with sponge over the old wallpaper to soften the adhesive. Open room windows or use a fan to dissipate the pungent vinegar smell.

**Water Rings on Wood:**

Water rings are the result of moisture that is trapped under the topcoat, but not the finish. Try applying toothpaste or mayonnaise to a damp cloth and rub into the ring. Once the ring is removed, buff the entire wood surface.

**Window Cleaner:**

Mix 2 teaspoons of white vinegar with 1 liter warm water. Use crumpled newspaper or cotton cloth to clean. Don't clean windows if the sun is on them, or if they are warm, or streaks will show on drying. (Using too strong a solution of vinegar will etch the glass and eventually cloud it.)



**SAFETY FIRST!**

- Commercial products are tested and created to meet strict government safety standards. Testing ensures that the chemicals are compatible and will remain stable over time.
- Alternative cleaners are not tested. Be aware that some of the most common home-made mixtures may not be stable for storage and could become breeding grounds for bacteria

**Packaging Safety:**

- Cleaning products should be stored in child resistant containers.

**Instructions for Safe Use:**

- Cleaning products, both commercial and home-made, should be labeled with information about ingredients, and detailed precautionary information for safe use.

**Home and Environment Safety:**

- Cleaners may have unforeseen consequences. Test on small areas before using.
- Research to be sure that cleaners are safe for the environment during use and proper disposal.

**Understanding Your Alternatives:**

- Some alternative cleaners may not be as effective as store-bought cleaners.
- Some cleaners may become unstable over time.

***A healthy environment starts with careful management of ANY product.***



## CLEANING MYTHS

**Myth:** If you don't see foam, you don't have enough detergent to clean. (More is better????)

- If you see foam you have more than enough detergent to clean and you sometimes may have too much.
- Foam may give you the sense of security that you have enough detergent. However, too much foam can make it hard to rinse or can interfere with the cleaning process.

**Myth:** A chemical that's "natural" means that it is safer.

- It is not the source of a chemical that makes it safe or unsafe, but the responsible use of it.
- It is the structure of a chemical that dictates its behavior and properties, not its source.

**Myth:** Dye and preservative-free cleaners are safer. Dyes and preservatives are unnecessary chemical ingredients in cleaning products.

- **Dyes** play an important role as visual cues that
  - you are using the proper product and/or
  - that the cleaner is in fact not just water,
  - and that it should not be ingested.
- **Preservatives** are used to prevent growth of microbes in the product itself.
  - As cleaning products become milder to surfaces they also can become 'milder' to microbes and may even become food for them.
  - Preservatives are used to protect the cleaning product and ensure it remains effective.



### **Mold and Mildew:**

Use white vinegar or lemon juice full strength. Apply with a sponge or scrubby.

### **Mothballs:**

The common mothball is made of paradichlorobenzene, which is harmful to liver and kidneys.

- Cedar chips in a cheesecloth square will repel moths
- Home-made moth-repelling sachets can also be made with lavender, rosemary, and rose petals.

### **Oil and Grease Spots:**

For small spills on the garage floor, add baking soda and scrub with a wet brush.

### **Oven Cleaner:**

Moisten oven surfaces with sponge and water. Use 3/4 cup baking soda, 1/4 cup salt and 1/4 cup water to make a thick paste, and spread throughout oven interior. Avoid bare metal and any openings. Let sit over night. Remove with spatula and wipe clean. Rub gently with fine steel wool for tough spots.

### **Paint Brush Cleaner:**

Non-toxic, citrus oil based solvents are now available commercially under several brand names. These work well for cleaning brushes of oil-based paints.

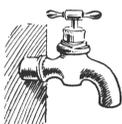
Paint brushes and rollers used for an on-going project can be saved overnight, or even up to a week, without cleaning at all. Simply wrap the brush or roller snugly in a plastic bag. Squeeze out air pockets and store away from light. The paint won't dry because air can't get to it

### **Rust Remover:**

Sprinkle a little salt on the rust, squeeze a lime over the salt until it is well soaked. Leave the mixture on for 2–3 hours. Use leftover rind to scrub residue.



**Lime Deposits:**



You can reduce lime deposits in your teakettle by putting in 1/2 cup white vinegar and 2 cups water, and gently boiling for a few minutes. Rinse well with fresh water while kettle is still warm.

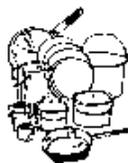
**Marks on walls and painted surfaces:**

Many ink spots, pencil crayon or marker spots can be cleaned from painted surfaces using baking soda applied to a damp sponge. Rub gently. Then wipe and rinse.

**Metal Cleaners and Polishes:**

Aluminum: using a soft cloth, clean with a solution of cream of tartar and water.

- **Brass and bronze:** polish with a soft cloth dipped in lemon and baking soda solution, or vinegar and salt solution.
- **Chrome:** polish with baby oil, vinegar, or aluminum foil shiny side out.
- **Copper:** soak cotton rag in a pot of boiling water with 1 table-spoon salt and 1 cup white vinegar. Apply to copper while hot; let cool, then wipe clean. For tougher jobs, sprinkle baking soda or lemon juice on soft cloth, then wipe. For copper cookware, sprinkle a lemon wedge with salt, then scrub.
- **Gold:** clean with toothpaste, or a paste of salt, vinegar, and flour.
- **Silver:** line a pan with aluminum foil and fill with water; add a tea-spoon each of baking soda and salt. Bring to a boil and immerse silver. Polish with a soft cloth.
- **Stainless Steel:** clean with a cloth dampened with undiluted white vinegar, or olive oil. For stainless cookware, mix 4 tablespoons of baking soda in 1 liter of water, and apply using a soft cloth. Wipe dry using a clean cloth.



**SOME HOMEMADE CLEANING**

**Note:**

- **These alternatives are offered to help minimize the use of toxic substances in your home, and reduce the environmental harm caused by the manufacture, use, and disposal of toxics.**
- **Results may vary and cannot be guaranteed to be 100% safe and effective.**
- **Before applying any cleaning formulations, test in small hidden areas. Always use caution with any product in your home.**
- **Be sure to keep all home-made formulas well labeled, and out of the reach of children.**

**All Purpose Cleaner:**

- Mix 1/2 cup vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda (or 2 teaspoons borax) into 2 liters of water. Store and keep. Use for removal of water deposit stains on shower stall , bathroom chrome fixtures, windows, bathroom mirrors, etc.
- Another alternative is microfiber cloths which lift off dirt, grease, and dust without the need for cleaning chemicals, because they are formulated to penetrate and trap dirt. A good quality cloth can last for several years.

**Air Freshener:**

- Baking soda or vinegar with lemon juice in small dishes will absorb odors around the house.
- Having houseplants helps reduce odors in the home.
- Prevent cooking odors by simmering 1 tablespoon vinegar in 1 cup water on the stove while cooking. To get such smells as fish and onion off utensils and cutting boards, wipe them with vinegar and wash in soapy water.
- Keep fresh coffee grounds on the counter.

**Bathroom Mold:**

Mix one part hydrogen peroxide (3%) with two parts water in a spray bottle and spray on areas with mold. Wait at least one hour before rinsing or using shower.

**Carpet Stains:**

Mix equal parts white vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Spray directly on stain, let sit for several minutes, and clean with a brush or sponge using warm soapy water. For a heavy duty carpet cleaner, mix 1/4 cup each of salt, borax and vinegar. Rub paste into carpet and leave for a few hours. Vacuum.



**Chopping Block Cleaner:**

Rub a slice of lemon across a chopping block to disinfect the surface. For tougher stains, squeeze some of the lemon juice onto the spot and let sit for 10 minutes, then wipe.

**Coffee and Tea Stains:**

Stains in cups can be removed by applying vinegar to a sponge and wiping. To clean a teakettle or coffee maker, add 2 cups water and 1/4 cup vinegar; bring to a boil. Let cool, wipe with a clean cloth, and rinse thoroughly with water.

**Deodorize:**

Plastic food storage containers—soak overnight in warm water and baking soda.  
Carpets—sprinkle baking soda several hours before vacuuming.

**Dishwashing Soap:**

Add 2 or 3 tablespoons of vinegar to the warm, soapy water for tough jobs.

**Disinfectant:**

Mix 2 teaspoons borax, 4 tablespoons vinegar, and 3 cups hot water. Wipe on with dampened cloth or use non-aerosol spray bottle.

**Drain Cleaner:**

- For light drain cleaning, mix 1/2 cup salt in 4 liters water. Heat, but not to a boil, and pour down the drain.
- For stronger cleaning, pour about 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain, then 1/2 cup vinegar. The resulting chemical reaction can break fatty acids down into soap and glycerine, allowing the clog to wash down the drain. Wait 15 minutes and pour in hot water to clear residue.
- Caution: do not use this method after trying a commercial drain opener—the vinegar can react with the drain cleaner to create dangerous fumes.



**Fabric Softener:**

Line dry your clothes.

**Floor Cleaner and Polish:**

- Vinyl and linoleum: Most floor surfaces can be easily using a solution of vinegar and water.
- Wood: apply a thin coat of 1:1 vegetable oil and vinegar and rub in well. For damp-mopping wood floors: mix equal amounts of white distilled vinegar and water. Add 15 drops of pure peppermint oil: Shake to mix.
- Painted Wood: mix 1 teaspoon washing soda into 4 liters hot water.
- Brick and Stone Tiles: mix 1 cup white vinegar in 4 liters water. Rinse with clear water.

**Furniture Polish:**

- Varnished wood: add a few drops of lemon oil into a 1/2 cup warm water. Mix well and spray onto a soft cotton cloth. Cloth should only be slightly damp.
- Unvarnished wood: mix 2 teaspoons each of olive oil and lemon juice and apply a small amount to a soft cotton cloth. Wring the cloth to spread the mixture further into the material and apply to the furniture using wide strokes. This helps distribute the oil evenly.

**Laundry Detergent:**

Mix 1 cup Ivory soap, 1/2 cup washing soda, and 1/2 cup borax. Use 1 tablespoon for light loads; 2 tablespoons for heavy loads.

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