



## “Cleaning” Up Our Environment

Cleaning products have a significant effect on our environment for two reasons. First, they often contain solvents that are volatile organic compounds, which “gas off” into our air, creating air pollution. Secondly, they affect our water because most cleaning products are used with water and go down the drain, getting past water treatment plants, and end up polluting our lakes, rivers and drinking water.

**The most anyone truly needs for every day cleaning is vinegar, baking soda, rubbing alcohol and perhaps, eco-friendly dish soap.** Essential oils can be added since they have disinfecting and antibacterial properties and also add a nice natural scent.

**Vinegar:** dilute distilled white vinegar with water and use to clean countertops, Bathrooms, mirrors, windows, hard, water, stains, and pretty much anything. The acid makes it a natural antibacterial, but just be careful using yet on natural stone and hardwood floors.

- \* use it half strength to clean your coffee pot and be sure to follow with a plain water brew before you reuse.
- \* Clean dentures to disinfect and remove stains and calcium deposits.
- \* Vinegar is great for cleaning the microwave. Place a bowl of equal parts vinegar and water in the microwave until steaming and food particles will be easily wiped off.
- \* Clean your blinds by dipping a cloth or glove in vinegar and wipe between slats.
- \* Remove bumper stickers by letting vinegar sit on an area five minutes before removing. Works on wallpaper as well using hot water.
- \* Carpet stains can be removed with a combination of vinegar and baking soda. Leave on til dry and then vacuum.

**Baking soda:** Baking soda is free from industrial chemicals and can neutralize odor particles

- \* Baking soda is the natural Whitening agent for laundry. Use 1/2 cup of soda with your Eco friendly laundry detergent.
- \* Use in kitchen and bathroom with vinegar or lemon juice. It will clean and help control, harmful microorganisms, including mold, and bacteria.
- \* A baking soda paste of soda and water can be excellent for bathroom, tiles, showers, Tub, sinks and toilets. Just apply with sponge and remove in 15 to 20 minutes with a damp cloth.
- \* Baking soda is much less expensive and less toxic and commercial cleansers.

**Rubbing alcohol:** Rubbing alcohol has multiple uses as a cleaner and disinfectant.

- \* Cleaning window blinds.
- \* Cleaning sinks, and chrome.
- \* Disinfecting keyboards and cell phones.
- \* Cleans most household surfaces, but not permeable surfaces like quartz and granite.
- \* Soaking kitchen, sponges in rubbing alcohol can help disinfect them and give them new life!
- \* Remove ink and permanent marker, stains by soaking in alcohol and follow with washing.
- \* Rubbing alcohol is an excellent stainless steel cleaner.

Remember never to combine rubbing alcohol and bleach, as it produces a toxic compound. In addition, avoid using rubbing alcohol near an open flame, always wear gloves, keep it away from children and use it in a well-ventilated space.

Ecofriendly cleaning products are always an option, but before using any cleaning products, look to the inexpensive and natural products like vinegar, baking soda and rubbing alcohol, which are better for our environment.

Submitted by your Environmental Action Committee