

NATURAL HOME SUBSTITUTES

Cleaning the House Safely by Elizabeth Hughes

Five basic nontoxic ingredients that can be used as cleansing agents:

These ingredients, supplemented with vegetable-oil-based soaps, lemon juice, herbs or toothpaste, can be mixed together and used to bring a natural, economical and safe shine to your home.

- * baking soda
- * washing soda
- * borax
- * salt
- * white vinegar

Here are some of the compounds you can make:

Disinfectant:

Mix 1/2 cup borax (a natural mineral that kills mold and bacteria) with 1 gallon hot water.

Add a few sprigs of fresh thyme. Steep for 10 minutes, strain and cool. Store in a recycled plastic spray bottle.

Floor cleaner:

Mix 1 cup white vinegar with 2 gallons hot water.

For greasy floors, add 1/4 cup washing soda and 1 tablespoon vegetable-oil-based soap to the above mixture.

Window-washing fluid:

Mix 1 cup vinegar with 4 cups hot water.

Oven cleaner:

Make a paste of baking soda and hot water. Sponge onto stains and wipe clean.

Copper-pan cleaner:

Sprinkle surface of pans with coarse salt. Rub salt into stains with the cut half of a fresh lemon.

Wood furniture cleaner:

To remove water stains on wood furniture, dab white toothpaste onto the stain. Allow the paste to dry and then gently buff off with a soft cloth.

Removing mildew:

To remove mildew from bathtubs, bathroom curtains and tile, make a mixture of: one-half cup vinegar, one-half cup of Borax cleaning detergent and 2 cups of water. Pour it on the dirty areas and let it sit for a few minutes, and then scrub with a cloth. If mildew is still visible, use the mixture twice.

Clean the toilet bowl: Combine equal parts of baking soda, Borax cleaning detergent and white vinegar. Pour generously around the bowl and scrub with a brush. Or leave it over night if badly stained.

Removing crayon, pencil or ink from walls:

To remove crayon, pencil or ink marks from the walls (without removing paint), take about 2 tablespoons of baking soda and mix in water. Dip a white wash rag in the solution and rub the marks away. Wipe away excess baking soda with the same cloth.

Furniture Polish:

Make your own furniture polish by combining one tablespoon of lemon juice or white vinegar with one-half cup of olive or vegetable oil. Take a soft cloth and polish.

Removing crayon, pencil or ink from upholstery:

To remove pencil, crayon or ink marks from upholstery, use dry baking soda. Use a hairbrush or similar brush to rub baking soda and remove the marks.

Blood stains:

To remove blood stains, combine one quart of Borax cleaning detergent with two cups of cold water. Rinse stained clothing item in cold water, and scrub in warm water with your hands. Then dip in solution and wash by hand.

Coffee and chocolate stains:

To remove coffee and chocolate stains, mix one teaspoon of white vinegar in one quart of cold water. Sponge on stain and wipe clean.

Other hints:

Ironing Clothes: To get crisp results when ironing clothes, combine 1-2 tablespoons of cornstarch in one pint of water. Pour into a spray bottle, shake and spray clothes before ironing.

Bug Control:

-To keep bugs out of flour, pasta, rice, pancake mix and other wheat products, put 2 to 3 bay leaves in the containers.

-Rather than pesticides, you might foil roaches by placing bay leaves around cracks in the room and leaving out dishes of equal parts baking soda and powdered sugar. The last resort is a mix of powdered sugar and boric acid (a poison).

-For other pests, a soapy water spray can be an insecticide, and a shallow pan filled with stale beer will kill snails and slugs.

-To protect the family pet, alternatives to toxic flea collars include eucalyptus ointment, herbal baths and a pinch of brewer's yeast or Vitamin B with dinner.

Removing Grease: To remove grease or hair from the drain, use equal parts of vinegar, salt and baking soda. Pour mixture down the drain and let stand for 15 minutes. Then pour boiling water down the drain.

<http://pinksunrise.com/fixit/cleaning.htm>