



Green Cleaning Guide

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Why does Green Cleaning Matter?

Many cleaners contain chemicals that can be hazardous to human and environmental health. Green cleaning products reduce the number of contaminants in the workplace and home. Using green cleaners and properly disposing of all cleaners prevents contaminants from entering our natural environment. This document provides a description of green cleaning products for the home and workplace.

At the present time, there is no law that requires cleaning product manufacturers to list ingredients on their labels or to test their products for safety. If a chemical is listed, information will be found in the first aid warning. Find out if your cleaning product contains harmful chemicals is the hazardous waste symbols found on the container. These [symbols](#) and what they mean, along with links of where to find information about cleaning product chemicals is found in this document.

The Solution to Harmful Chemicals—Make Cleaning Easy!

Green cleaning answers can be found in your home right now! There are only about five ingredients that we really need to do most of our household cleaning. They are:

- White vinegar
- Lemon juice
- Baking soda
- Borax
- Castile soap (a pure, vegetable oil-based soap)
- Hydrogen peroxide

These products are inexpensive, better for the environment and the best part – they really work! Here are a few more tips to help you make green cleaners from scratch:

- To save time and money, make your cleaners in advance and buy the ingredients in bulk for cost savings and to avoid excess packaging.
- Make large batches of the recipes and store them in reusable airtight plastic containers and spray bottles.
- Label all of your ingredients and keep them out of reach of children.
- Add your favourite essential oils or herbs to provide a pleasant fragrance.

Look for green cleaner recipes on [page 5](#).



Green Cleaning Products for Business & Home

If you are purchasing cleaning products for the home or workplace ask yourself the following questions when purchasing:

Is the product

- Non-aerosol?
- Minimally packaged?
- Non-poisonous (look for the hand skeleton)?
- Non-toxic (look for the hand skeleton)?
- Non-Corrosive (look for the skull)?
- Inexpensive?
- Phosphate-free?
- All-purpose?
- Re-usable?
- Available in bulk?

Not every product will meet all of these criteria, but they are good reminders.

Using green cleaners within the workplace can go a long way in increasing human health and decreasing the impact on the environment. Even at an industrial level, there are cleaners that meet health and safety requirements. If you want to initiate the use of green cleaners or minimize the use of cleaning chemicals in your workplace, visit the following links for useful information:

Fact Sheet: Eco-Efficiency and Chemical Management: Cleaning Compounds

Visit this link for a complete how to guide for industrial and institutional cleaning.

[http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/Files/Business Fact Sheets/cleaning_chemicals_fs.pdf](http://eco-efficiency.management.dal.ca/Files/Business_Fact_Sheets/cleaning_chemicals_fs.pdf)

Responsible Purchasing Network

This guide provides information and recommendations on responsible use and purchasing of office cleaning products, including how to develop a green cleaning policy.

www.responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/cleaners/index.php



EcoLogo Environmental Choice

EcoLogo is an example of third party certification of environmentally preferable products. This program’s website is designed for professional purchasers and consumers, and allows you to search for Canadian certified products by category. www.terrachoice-certified.com/en/greenproducts/

Green Seal Environmental Standards

Green Seal is an American-based certification program. This website allows you to search certified products and services. www.greenseal.org/findaproduct/index.cfm



Design for the Environment: Formulator Partners and Recognized Products

Design for the Environment works with environmental organizations and industry to protect human health and promote sustainable chemistry. They have provided a list of cleaning products, like soaps, detergents, and cleaners that are safer for people and the planet. www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/formulat/formpart.htm#cleaners

Chemicals Found in Household Cleaners

For additional information on the chemical ingredients found in cleaners, refer to the following sites:

United States Department of Health and Human Services, Household Products Database:

Enter the name of a household product, paint, cleaner or personal care product by brand name and the database will pull up all chemical information on the product. <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm>

Consumer Reports Greener Choices website

www.greenerchoices.org/home.cfm

The World Watch Institute, Cleaning Products – What’s Behind the Shine?

www.worldwatch.org/node/1484



Hazardous Waste Symbols Found on Household Cleaners



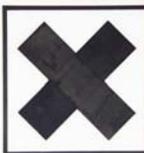
This is the symbol for a **toxic or poison**. This product can poison or damage living organisms (e.g., heavy metals or antifreeze).



This is the symbol for **corrosive**. It can eat away at surfaces, including skin (e.g., acids, rust removers, or alkaline cleaning fluids).



This is the symbol for **flammable**. These products can burn easily (e.g., degreasers).



This is the symbol for **irritant**. This symbol covers a wide range of hazards. Avoid contact with skin and do not inhale (e.g., air fresheners or synthetic soaps).



This is the symbol for **reactive/explosive**. These products can react violently when mixed with other agents, or when placed under heat or pressure (e.g., bleaches or aerosols).



Green Cleaner Recipes

You will need:

- White vinegar
- Lemon juice
- Olive oil
- Baking soda
- Borax
- Castile soap (a pure, vegetable oil-based soap)
- Essential oils (optional)
- Hydrogen peroxide

Glass Cleaner

- ☞ ¼ cup vinegar
- ☞ 4 cups warm water

Pour ingredients into a pump bottle. For best results, spray the mixture on the glass surface and rub with crumpled newspapers (no seriously, give it a try!).



Scouring Powder

- ☞ 1 – ½ cups baking soda
- ☞ 5 to 6 drops of essential oil (thyme, clary sage, tea tree and grapefruit oil have anti-bacterial properties)
- ☞ 1 tbsp Borax

Mix ingredients in an empty yogurt / sour cream container. Be sure and label the container! Sprinkle on stove-top stains or bathroom sinks.



Multi-purpose Cleaner

- 👍 ¼ cup white vinegar
 - 👍 2 teaspoons Borax
 - 👍 3-½ cups hot water
 - 👍 20 drops of essential oil (lavender or lemon is excellent)
 - 👍 ¼ cup Castile soap (add last)
- Mix ingredients and store in a clean pump bottle.

Floor Cleaner

- 👍 1/8-cup Castile soap
- 👍 ¼ to ½ cup white vinegar or lemon juice
- 👍 20 drops of essential oil (thyme, clary sage, tea tree and grapefruit oil have anti-bacterial properties)

Keep mixture in a small container. Add your desired amount to a bucket of warm water.

Furniture Polish

- 👍 ¼ cup olive oil
- 👍 ¼ cup vinegar
- 👍 2 tsp lemon juice

Mix ingredients and store in a clean pump bottle. Shake well and apply liberally to wood surfaces.

Hydrogen Peroxide around the House

Mix hydrogen peroxide to water to create a 3 per cent solution.

- Shower: Keep a spray bottle of 3 per cent hydrogen peroxide in the bathroom for spraying down the shower to kill bacteria and viruses.
- To add freshness to the kitchen: Keep a spray bottle of 3 per cent solution of hydrogen peroxide in the kitchen. Use to wipe off counter tops and appliances. It will disinfect and give the kitchen a clean, fresh smell. Also works great when used to wipe out the refrigerator and lunch boxes.
- For the laundry: Add 1 cup of 3 per cent hydrogen peroxide to your wash in place of bleaches.
- In the dish wash/rinse water: Add four tablespoons of 3 per cent hydrogen peroxide to the regular washing formula to safely sanitize dishes and reduce the transmission of colds and diseases.
- Cleansing for vegetables and salad greens: Add a small amount of salt and 1/4 cup 3% hydrogen peroxide to a sink full of cold water. Wash vegetables thoroughly, rinse with cold water and drain. This process prolongs freshness.