



Springtime Cleaning Ideas

The Environmental Protection Agency ranks indoor air pollution among the top environmental dangers, and much of this pollution comes from common cleaning products (or what we'll call "indoor pollutants"). Effects of exposure to indoor pollutants can include headaches, dizziness, fatigue, and irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, as well as exacerbated symptoms of asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Long-term effects (following long or repeated exposure to indoor pollutants) include respiratory diseases, heart disease, and even cancer. Luckily, chemical-laden cleaning products aren't the only means to keep a home sparkly. Non-toxic homemade cleaning products aren't only better for us; they can also help save us money and protect the environment. Making your own products cuts down on packaging waste and reduces the release of household chemicals that can contribute to air and water pollution. The best news? The majority of the most powerful cleaning products may well already be on our pantry shelves.

First, start cleaning and saving spray bottles you would normally throw out. You can make your own cleaning recipes and put in your repurposed spray bottles. To clean most surfaces:

Toilets: For a heavy-duty toilet scrub that deodorizes while it cleans, pour ½ cup of baking soda and about and about ¼ cup of vinegar into the bowl and scrub away while the mixture fizzes. Also, selzer tablets are great for removing stains, just drop a couple in and wait 15 minutes. **Tub and Shower:** Tubs and showers can produce some of the toughest grime, but it's no match for the cleaning power of vinegar. To get rid of mildew, spray pure white vinegar on the offending area, let it sit for at least 30 minutes, and then rinse with warm water (don't be afraid to use a sponge if rinsing doesn't clear away). Alternatively, try mixing together baking soda with a bit of liquid Castile soap, then scrub and rinse. **Non-Stone countertops:** Use a mixture of ½ white vinegar and ½ water. **Stone countertops:** use ½ rubbing alcohol or vodka and ½ water for best results.

Drains: For garbage disposals, make ice cubes from white vinegar and put several in and turn on. The frozen vinegar will clean the blades and surfaces, then grind up a half a lemon to leave the disposal smelling fresh and clean. To clean out pipes use a ½ cup of baking soda and 1 cup of white vinegar. Let sit for 30 minutes and then rinse with boiling water.

Cutting Boards: All that's needed to clean and sanitize cutting boards (wood or plastic) is... a lemon! Cut it in half, run it over the surfaces, let sit for ten minutes, and then rinse away. If you need some serious scrubbing power, sprinkle some coarse or Kosher salt over the board, and then rub with ½ a lemon. This works great on oven grime too!

Source (greatist.com/health/27-chemical-free-products-diy-spring-cleaning)



We Want Our Service to Be The Best and You Can Help



Please place your carts at the curb edge with at least 3 feet of clearance from other objects, including other carts, basketball hoops and motor vehicles.



What Do I Put Into the Organics Cart?

The reason Organics Carts are so important is that using them helps divert materials away from our landfills which is better for the environment. Here is a list to help you use your cart efficiently. Thank you for helping us provide you with the best possible service.

Organics Acceptable List

- Grass and weed clippings
- Shrubs and tree prunings (less than 4" in diameter)
- Leaves, plants and flowers
- Food scraps and food soiled paper products

Non-acceptable Organics List

- No household garbage
- **No plastic bags**
- No dirt or rocks
- No overloading - lid must be closed

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Non-Toxic Pest Deterrents

Save Money and Save the Environment

All insects hate soapy water... mix some dishsoap and water in one of your repurposed spray bottles to spray on insects that you find around the house. The soap breaks down their outer protective layer and they die.

Ants: Indoors, trace the ant column back to their point of entry. Set any of the following items at the entry area in a small line, which ants will not cross: cayenne pepper, citrus oil (can be soaked into a piece of string), lemon juice, cinnamon or coffee grounds. Window cleaner also works well to erase the path that ants create for others to follow. Also, save your used coffee grounds and spread around the outside of your house to create a barrier. **Dust Mites:** Tannic acid neutralizes the allergens in dust mite and animal dander. Dust problem areas with tannic acid powder, available at health food stores and pet centers. **Cockroaches:** In an empty one pound coffee can, place 1 or 2 pieces of bread which have been soaked thoroughly with beer. Set a ramp leading up to the top and line the inside top edge with Vaseline. Place in areas known to have roach infestations. **Fleas:** Trap fleas in your home using a wide, shallow pan half-filled with soapy water. Place it on the floor and shine a lamp over the water. Fleas will jump to the heat of the lamp and land in the water. The detergent breaks the surface tension, preventing the flea from bouncing out. **Mosquitoes:** The most important measure you can take is to remove standing water sources. Change birdbaths, wading pools and pet's water bowl twice a week. Keep your eaves-troughs clean and well-draining. Remove yard items that collect water. Next, an effective natural bug repellent, mix one part garlic juice with 5 parts water in a small spray bottle. Shake well before using. Spray lightly on exposed body parts for an effective repellent lasting up to 5 - 6 hours. Strips of cotton cloth can also be dipped in this mixture and hung in areas, such as patios, as a localized deterrent. **Flies:** Use mint as a fly repellent. Small sachets of crushed mint can be placed around the home to discourage flies. Bay leaves, cloves and eucalyptus wrapped in small cheesecloth squares can be hung by open windows or doors. **Moths:** Cedar chips in a cheesecloth square, or cedar oil in an absorbent cloth will repel moths. The cedar should be 'aromatic cedar', also referred to as juniper in some areas. Homemade moth-repelling sachets can also be made using any of the following: bay leaves, cinnamon sticks, cloves, eucalyptus leaves, lavender, pepper corns or wormwood. Dried lemon peels are also a natural moth deterrent - simply toss into clothes chest, or tie in cheesecloth and hang in the closet. **Soft-bodied insects (mites, aphids, mealybugs) on your plants:** Mix one tablespoon canola oil and a few drops of dishsoap into a quart of water. Shake well and pour into a spray bottle. Spray plant from above down, and from below up to get the underside of the leaves. The oil smothers the insects. *Source (eartheasy.com)*



Rodents: are not only germ carriers they can cause much damage around your house, especially if they nest in your appliances or vehicles causing thousands of dollars of damage if they chew the electrical wiring (wire coating contains soy which they like). A good all-purpose recipe for rodents and some insects is to boil water, add lots of Cayenne pepper, hot sauce, horseradish and garlic powder. Once the mix is thoroughly mixed remove from heat and as an option steep several bags of mint tea in the mix. Once cool, pour into spray bottles and spray around the outside of your house to create a barrier and under the hood of your car on wires and thoroughly spray the underside of your car. **WARNING** — Please use waterproof gloves when pouring or spraying this concoction because if you get some on your fingers and then wipe your eye it will burn like crazy! That is why the critters don't like it. **Deer:** if deer have been foraging on your plant leaves and you would like to discourage them without harm, here is a good recipe: 1 quart water, one raw egg, squirt of dishsoap, a generous amount of Cayenne pepper and hot sauce. Put into spray bottle, remember to wear gloves, shake well and spray all your plants and trees. Use up all the mix or refrigerate due to the raw egg. Reapply after a heavy rain. *Source (matsecooks.com and deerbusters.com)*



EXPANDED REUSABLE BAG ORDINANCE

The Alameda County Waste Management Authority approved an **expanded reusable bag ordinance** for Alameda County at the October 2016 meeting. The expanded ordinance will apply to all stores and restaurants in the county, and will go into effect on May 1, 2017 for retail stores and November 1, 2017 for restaurants. Covered stores can only distribute compliant reusable bags or bags made of recycled content paper and only if the store charges a minimum price of 10 cents per bag, itemized on the receipt (the 10 cents goes to the store to offset the purchase cost of bags). The types of stores will now be expanded to include all retail and restaurants. Retail stores will have the same requirements as currently covered stores. Restaurants would not be required to charge customers if distributing recycled content paper bags, but must charge a minimum of 10 cents for a compliant reusable bag (which may include durable thick plastic bags). "Expanding the ordinance to all stores will further protect our local environments and waterways," said Authority Board President Dan Kalb. "The original ordinance proved to be a success, and we expect the expanded ordinance to make a positive impact as well on litter reduction in our communities." *Source(Stopwaste.org)*

