

How to Make Greener Cleaners

Winter is over, and for many homeowners that means it's time for spring cleaning. Unfortunately, many cleaning products contain metals, solvents, and toxic chemicals. If poured down your drain, these can pollute Suisun Bay because our wastewater treatment process is designed to treat biological wastes only; it cannot remove all traces of such pollutants before the treated water flows into the Bay.



Many cleaners also contain unnecessary antibacterial agents (which are technically pesticides) that can actually make bacteria more resistant to antibacterial drugs.

But don't worry, we have alternatives for you that use baking soda, borax, lemon juice and other ingredients that are friendlier to our water environment. These home-made solutions are also less expensive than commercial cleaning products.

• **ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER:** Baking soda mixed with a little water (paste consistency). For stubborn stains, work it in and let it sit for a while before you remove with a damp cloth or sponge.

• **DISINFECTANT:** Full-strength white distilled vinegar. Spray or rub on surfaces, door knobs, etc. Alternative: ½ cup Borax in 1 gallon hot water.

• **DRAIN CLEANER:** Baking soda, salt, vinegar, boiling water. Pour ½ cup baking soda and ¼ cup salt into drain, add ½ cup vinegar, cover drain while fizzing (let sit overnight for best results), then flush with boiling water. To clear clogs, use a Zip-It drain cleaning tool, plumber's snake, or plunger. Note: Do NOT use the baking soda combination or a plunger after using a commercial drain opener. *Tip: To avoid clogs, use drain strainers to trap food particles and hair; collect grease in cans rather than pouring it down the drain.*

• **GLASS CLEANER:** 2 cups water, 1 cup white distilled vinegar and 1 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent. Put in spray bottle; use to remove wax residue left by commercial window cleaners. After that residue is removed, you can leave out the soap for future cleaning. Alternative: lemon juice and water.

• **GREASE REMOVER:** Lemon juice or vinegar. Spray or douse, let sit a few minutes, then scrub.

• **LIME & MINERAL DEPOSIT REMOVER:** Vinegar and paper towels. Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked paper towels. Leave paper towels on for one hour before cleaning.

• **MILDEW REMOVER:** Undiluted white distilled vinegar. Use it on a cloth or sponge mop to wipe down surfaces.

• **OVEN CLEANER:** Baking soda and very fine steel wool. Sprinkle water followed by a layer of baking soda. Let stand overnight. Rub gently with a very fine steel wool pad. Wipe off scum with dry paper towels or sponge. Rinse well and wipe dry.

• **SCUFFMARK/WATERMARK REMOVER:** Toothpaste. Use to remove scuffmarks from floors and watermarks from wood furniture.



Tip: wiping with newspaper instead of paper towels prevents streaks.

Now that you'll be using these home-made alternatives, you can dispose of your unwanted commercial cleansers (as well as paint, pesticides, batteries solvents, cleansers, and other potentially hazardous household products) at our Household Hazardous Waste Collection Facility. Never put them down the drain or in the trash. Call 1-800-646-1431 for more information.