

Natural Home

March 2011

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LIVING WISELY » LIVING WELL

## Small-Space Gardening

### **Spring Clean**

Build Your No-Chemical,  
Clean-Anything Arsenal

### **3 Plastics to Avoid**

For a Healthier Home

### **Water Recycling 101**

Put Wastewater to Work

### **Small Homes in Our Future**

Some Assembly Required

### **Fresh Food 2.0**

New Ways to Indulge  
Your Passion



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Get clean for spring with nontoxic basics such as vinegar and essential oils.

## The labels

on most household products read like the periodic table violently collided with a bowl of alphabet soup. What are those ingredients, and what might they do to our homes, our pets and our loved ones? A foolproof way to know what's in your cleaning products is to make them yourself. It's easy and economical, with the added benefit of reducing your household's carbon footprint by creating less packaging waste and less pollution from manufacturing and shipping.

### WING IT!

Feel free to improvise with proportions; none of these recipes are set in stone. When it comes to making soft scrubs, I find myself mixing until the right texture is achieved. It's like cooking a favorite recipe—rely on instinct and use trial and error to refine. The fun part is trying out essential oils to find your preferred fragrance. DIY cleaning will soon become second nature, and your home will look, feel and smell naturally fresh.

### Ditch the Toxins

Avoid these toxic ingredients when buying cleaning products:

- |                           |                          |                         |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ Alkylphenol ethoxylates | ■ Nonylphenol ethoxylate | ■ Triclosan and other   |
| ■ Ammonia                 | ■ Sodium laureth sulfate | antibacterial agents    |
| ■ Chlorine                | ■ Sodium lauryl sulfate  | (phenols, formaldehyde, |
| ■ Glycol ethers           | ■ Synthetic fragrance    | petroleum solvents,     |
| ■ Lye                     | ■ Terpenes               | perchloroethylene,      |
|                           |                          | butyl cellosolve)       |

## Shopping List

With these 15 items, you can clean just about anything.

- BAKING SODA: scrubbing, whitening
- BEESWAX: polishing wood
- BORAX (sodium borate): removing stains/disinfecting
- CLUB SODA (or any unflavored fizzy water): lifting stains
- CORNSTARCH: absorbing stains
- HYDROGEN PEROXIDE: disinfecting, removing stains
- LEMON: removing stains and odors
- LIQUID DISH SOAP: sudsing power
- OLIVE OIL: polishing wood
- PINE OIL: cleaning soft wood floors
- PLANT ESSENTIAL OILS: chemical-free fragrance (do a sniff test before buying to make sure you're not sensitive to the fumes)
- SALT: scrubbing
- TOOTHPASTE: polishing metal
- WASHING SODA (sodium carbonate): scrubbing, removing stains and cutting grease
- WHITE VINEGAR: disinfecting, removing stains