

My pal Violet sent me these Recipes for a Cleaner Planet. Please pass them on.

All-Purpose Cleaner (Fantastic Cleaner)

1/2 teaspoon washing soda
2 teaspoons borax
1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent
2 cups hot water

Combine the washing soda, borax, and soap in a spray bottle. pour in the hot water (it will dissolve the minerals), screw on the lid, and shake to completely blend and dissolve. Spritz every 6 inches or so of surface once or twice, wiping off the cleanser with a rag as you go. For tough dirt, leave the cleanser on for a few minutes before wiping it off. Shake the bottle each time before using.

Shelf Life: Indefinite

Storage: Leave in a labelled spray bottle

Soft Scrubber

This is one of my most favourite recipes. I use it on the bathtub, sinks, Formica countertops, and the shower stall.

1/2 cup baking soda
Enough liquid soap or detergent to make a frosting like consistency
5 to 10 drops antibacterial essential oil, such as lavender (optional)

Place the baking soda in a bowl; slowly pour in the liquid soap, stirring all the while, until the consistency reaches that of frosting. Add the essential oil (if using). Scoop the creamy mixture onto a sponge, wash the surface, and rinse.

Shelf Life: Make only as much as you need a time; natural soft scrubbers dry out.

Mold Cleaner and Inhibitor/Tea Tree Treasure

This spray works wonders to eradicate mold and mildew. I've used it successfully on a moldy ceiling caused by a leaking roof, a musty bureau, a musty rug, and a moldy shower curtain. Tea tree oil is expensive, but a little goes a long way. Unless you have frequent mold crises, this mixture can last for months.

2 teaspoons tea tree oil
2 cups water

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle, shake to blend, and spray on problem areas. Do not rinse. The strong odour will dissipate in a day or so.

Shelf Life: Indefinite

Storage: Leave in a labelled spray bottle

All-Purpose Window Wash

Around Earth Day 1990, every newspaper in the country (or so it seemed) offered recipes for non-toxic cleaners made with basic ingredients that we all have in our kitchen cupboards. The recipe for window cleaner was invariably plain white distilled vinegar and water; the method of drying was with old newspapers. People by the thousands tried this, and many swore off cleaning with home-made products for good because the formula left streaks on their windows. Actually the problem was that the commercial products they had used for years had left a wax build-up, and vinegar alone wouldn't remove the residue. A dab of dish soap with vinegar and water would have done the trick, and from then on they could have used plain vinegar.

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent
2 cups water

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle, and shake to blend. Spray on, then remove with a squeegee, paper towel, or newspaper.

Shelf Life: Indefinite

Storage: Leave in a labelled spray bottle.

Basic Wood Cleaning Formula

This is a good formula for well-used furniture. The vinegar works wonderfully to pull dirt out of wood.

1/4 cup white distilled vinegar
1/4 cup water
1/2 teaspoon liquid soap or detergent
A few drops jojoba or olive oil.

Combine the ingredients in a bowl, saturate a sponge with the mixture, squeeze out the excess, and wash surfaces. The smell of vinegar will dissipate in a few hours.

Shelf Life: Indefinite

Storage: Labelled glass jar with a screw top

Floor Cleaner with Fragrant Herbs

This recipe is nice to rid the house of the stale smell of winter.

1/8 cup liquid soap or detergent

1/4 to 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar or lemon juice

1/2 cup fragrant herb tea (peppermint is great as it adds antibacterial qualities)

Combine ingredients in a pail or bucket. Swirl the water around until it is sudsy. Proceed as normal.

Shelf Life: Discard