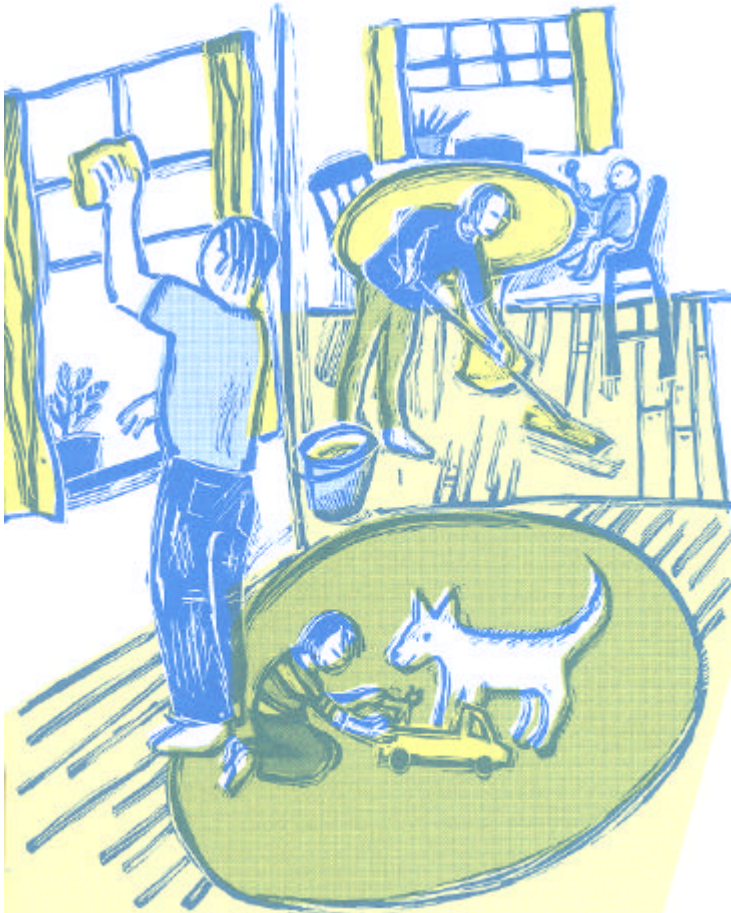


Clean Housekeeping:

Toxic-Free Solutions



**NATURAL RESOURCES
COUNCIL OF MAINE**

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CREDITS

Karen Fisk, *Editor*
Judy Berk and Beth
Dimond, *Research*
Jill Bock Design, *Design*
Toki Oshima, *Artist*

Natural Resources Council
of Maine
3 Wade Street
Augusta, ME 04330
Phone 207-622-3101
Fax 207-622-4343

Clean House - Healthy House



A clean house is a healthy house - or is it?

Do the labels on your household cleansers read "CAUTION - WARNING - DANGER"? Many of the house and garden products we use every day contain toxic chemicals. Use of these household toxics can mean exposure to harmful vapors, skin or eye irritants, carcinogenic chemicals, or chemicals that cause other medical problems.

Typically, leftover portions of household toxics are poured down the drain, dumped out back in the bushes, or tossed in the trash. These chemicals then enter septic systems, municipal waste treatment plants, surface water or groundwater, landfills, or incinerators.

There are three major strategies for dealing with household toxics:

1. Properly use and store chemicals;
2. Use up or recycle products whenever possible;
3. Use safer alternatives whenever possible to minimize exposure and reduce later disposal problems.

In this pamphlet you will find toxic-free solutions for cleaning your house and keeping your yard pest-free, plus tips on how to safely use and dispose of store-bought cleansers.

Toxic-Free Solutions



These are the five basics of toxic-free cleaning:

baking soda
washing soda
borax
lemon juice
white vinegar

1 Kitchen

Copper Cleaner

Dip cut lemon in salt, rub. Apply catsup with a soft cloth, rub. Rub with vinegar and salt.

Drain opener Use a drain strainer. To prevent clogging, flush drain weekly with boiling water. Use a plunger or a mechanical snake. Pour a 1/2 cup of baking soda into drain, follow with two cups boiling water. Pour a 1/2 cup of baking soda into drain, then add a cup of vinegar. It will start to fizz. Rinse with a mixture of boiling water and salt. Repeat if necessary.

Kitchen cleaner Wash surfaces with baking soda and a clean cloth, rinse with water. Mix 1/2 a cup of vinegar with 1/2 a cup of water in a hand-pump spray bottle - wash, rinse with water.

Oven cleaner Sprinkle salt on still warm spills, scrub. Scour with baking soda and water.



Silver Polish Soak silver in a solution of 1 quart warm water, 1 tsp. baking soda, 1 tsp. salt, and a piece of aluminum foil.

Stainless steel cleaner Wash utensil or pot in a solution of 1 quart warm water and 3 tbs. baking soda, rinse with hot water.

2 Bathroom

Disinfectant & mold inhibitor In a hand-pump spray bottle, mix 1 tsp. borax and 3 tbs. white vinegar with 2 cups hot water.

Spray onto mold-growing areas. Do not rinse. Vinegar will evaporate.



Linoleum

- Mop with a solution of 1 cup vinegar in 2 gallons of water.

Porcelain cleaner

- Make a paste from baking soda and water, apply to stain, let set, rub clean, rinse with water.

Toilet cleaner

- Sprinkle with baking soda or borax, pour a little vinegar on toilet brush, scrub.

Tub and tile cleaner

- Mix 1 2/3 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup liquid soap, 1/2 cup water, and 2 tbs. vinegar (if you add vinegar too early it will react with baking soda), scrub and rinse with water.

Insects, Yard & Garage

Ant control

- Pour a line of cream of tartar where the ants enter the house.
- Sprinkle red chili, paprika, or dried peppermint where the ants enter the house.
- Mix 2 tbs. boric acid, 2 tbs. sugar, and 1 cup water. Soak paper towels in solution, place on dishes and set out for ants. Keep dishes away from children and pets.

Flea and tick repellent

- Scatter pine needles, fennel, rue, or rosemary on pet's bed to repel fleas.
- Feed pet brewer's yeast, vitamin B, or garlic tablets.

Insect spray for plants

- Blend 6 cloves crushed garlic, 1 minced onion, 1 tbs. dried hot pepper, and 1 tbs. pure soap in 1 gallon hot water; let sit 1-2 days, strain before using.

Moth control

Sew dried lavender or cedar chips into small cloth bags and place in closets

Roach killer

Set out a dish of equal parts:

- baking soda and powdered sugar; or,
- oatmeal flour and Plaster of Paris; or,
- borax and brown sugar.

(Keep these mixtures away from children and animals.)

To repel roaches, place bay leaves around cracks in room.

Snail and slug killer

Fill shallow pan with stale beer and place in infested area. Lay boards or clay flower pots

between rows of vegetables; snails will often attach themselves and can be collected.



4 Reducing Indoor Air Pollution



Aerosols

Use nonaerosols:

- Deodorants - use roll-ons, creams, sticks;
- Hair spray - use setting lotion, gel;
- Shaving cream - use gels and shaving soap;
- Glass cleaners - use manual spray bottles;
- Cooking - use oil instead of cooking spray.

Air freshener

Leave an open box of baking soda in the room.

Open a window.

Set out a dish of vinegar.

Add cloves and cinnamon to boiling water, simmer.

Place fresh flowers in the room.

Carpet and Upholstery Cleaner

Clean stains immediately with club soda

Sprinkle cornstarch on rug and vacuum

Use soap-based, nonaerosol rug shampoo.

Furniture Polish

Use 2 parts vegetable oil and 1 part vinegar or lemon juice.

Use 1 tsp. lemon oil in 1 pint of mineral oil.

Shoe Polish

Use olive oil

Laundry

Add 1/2 cup of baking soda, borax, lemon juice, white vinegar, or washing soda to help deodorize, brighten, and soften.

Stain Remover

Clean stains immediately with club soda. For wine or coffee stains: put stained material in a glass, enamel ware, or stainless pot. Cover with a mixture of milk and water. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2-4 minutes or until stain has completely disappeared.

Window cleaner Mix a solution of 1/2 cup vinegar in 1 gallon warm water, use a hand-pump spray bottle to apply. Use newspaper to dry glass.

5 At the Store

Buy Wisely

Read the label. Look for the word "nontoxic" and compare products. Use nontoxic alternatives. Make your own cleansers. (See sections 7-4 in this pamphlet) Buy only what you need. Buy products with child-proof packaging. Buy nonaerosol products. Aerosols produce a fine mist which, when breathed, can settle deep in the lungs, where chemicals can be quickly absorbed in the bloodstream.



6 Use, Storage & Disposal

Use Wisely

Use products in a well-ventilated room and avoid breathing fumes. Take breaks and work outside if possible. Wear protective clothing. Never mix products. Combining ammonia and chlorine bleach produces deadly fumes. Mixing chemicals can even cause explosions. Use as little as possible. Try using half the recommended amount of commercial cleansers. If pregnant, avoid exposure to toxics as much as possible. In case of poisoning, call Poison Control (1-800-4426305) rather than relying on label directions. Labels may be incorrect.

Store securely Store in a safe place. Keep all toxics away from children. Close containers securely. Some products, such as gasoline, paint, and paint thinner, can evaporate over a long period of time and pollute the air in your home. You may want to store these products in a shed or garage. Keep products in their original containers.

Dispose of properly

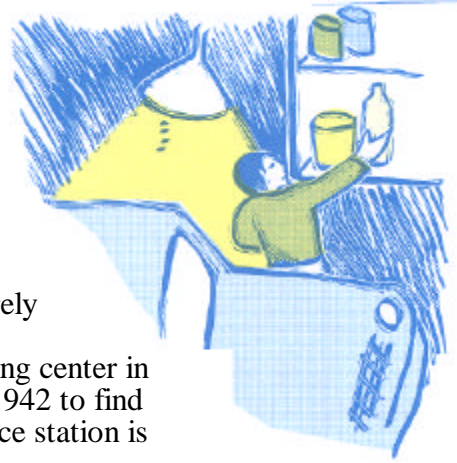
Use up products so there is nothing left to throw away.

Donate leftover paint and other products to a local service organization.

Make sure the product is securely packaged and well-labeled.

Take crankcase oil to a recycling center in your town. Call 1-800-452-1942 to find out which participating service station is nearest your home.

NEVER pour harmful chemicals down the drain or on the ground. These chemicals include pesticides, paints and preservatives, automotive products, home hobby chemicals, dry cleaners, and drain cleaners. Some towns sponsor a collection program for household toxics. People can take leftover chemicals to a central collection point, such as a shopping center, and the chemicals are disposed of properly. Look for such collection programs, or ask your town to sponsor a "household hazardous waste pick-up day" if this option doesn't already exist.



*You can help keep
it that way!*

MAINE:

Clean Waters, Fresh Air, Natural Spaces

The Natural Resources Council of Maine is the state's leading membership-supported environmental advocacy organization. Since 1959, the Council has successfully advocated for:

- the removal of Edwards Dam and restoration of the Kennebec River,
- protecting the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and the Caribou-Speckled Wilderness Area,
- reducing toxic chemicals used and discharged in Maine,
- establishing solid waste recycling programs, and
- developing sensible transportation policies for the state.

Lend your voice to this
important work.

\$28 Individual
\$35 Family
\$50 Friend of Maine
\$100 Landmark

*Become a member
of the Council
today!*

Please call 1-800-287-2345 to join, or log on to our website at <http://www.nrcm.org>

Thank you for your support.



NATURAL
RESOURCES
COUNCIL OF MAINE

3 Wade Street
Augusta, ME 04330-6351
(207) 622-3101
(207) 622-4343 FAX

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