

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Family and Consumer Sciences



This document contains "recipes" for environmentally friendly household products including:

- All-Purpose Cleaner
- Drain Cleaner
- Drain Opener
- Furniture Cleaner
- Furniture Polish
- Lime and Mineral Deposit Remover
- Brass Cleaner
- Aluminum Cleaner
- Chrome and Stainless Steel Cleaner
- Oven Cleaner
- Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Cleaning Recipes for a Healthy Home

One way you can reduce the number of hazardous products you have in your home is to make your own cleaning products. Wise buying decisions and good management practices can reduce the hazards in the home, in the air we breathe, and in the water we drink.

All-Purpose Cleaner I

4 tablespoons baking soda
1 quart warm water

Dissolve baking soda in warm water. Apply with a sponge. Rinse with clear water.

All-Purpose Cleaner II

Apply baking soda to a damp sponge. Rinse with clear water.

All-Purpose Cleaner III

1 tablespoon ammonia
1 tablespoon liquid detergent
1 pint water (2 cups)

Mix ingredients and put in spray bottle. Spray on surface. Wipe. Rinse with clear water.
Ammonia is a toxic ingredient. Handle it with care and store it safely.

Drain Cleaner

1/2 cup baking soda
1/2 cup white vinegar
Boiling water

Pour baking soda down the drain. Add white vinegar and cover the drain, if possible. Let set for 5 minutes. Then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain. (The vinegar and baking soda break down fatty acids into soap and glycerine, allowing the clog to wash down the drain.) ***Do not use this method if you have used a commercial drain opener and it may still be present in the drain.***

Drain Opener

Use a plunger (plumber's helper). It may take a number of plunges to unclog the drain. ***Do not use this method if you have used a commercial drain opener and it may still be present in the drain.***

Drain Cleaner and Opener

Use a flexible metal snake. The mechanical snake may be purchased or rented. Thread it down the clogged drain, and you will be able to push the clog away.

Furniture Cleaner and Polish I

3 cups olive oil
1 cup vinegar

Mix together until well blended. Use a clean, soft cloth to apply to the furniture.

Furniture Cleaner and Polish II

Wet a washcloth. Wring out as much water as possible. Wipe furniture surface with damp washcloth. Dry immediately with a clean, soft, dry cloth. (You can remove sticky fingerprints and dust safely from wood surfaces, but furniture with an oil finish needs an oil-based cleaner.)

Lime and Mineral Deposit Remover

Soak paper towels in vinegar. Apply the paper towels to the lime deposits around the faucet. Leave them on for approximately one hour. The deposits will be softened and can be removed easily.

Aluminum Cleaner

2 tablespoons cream of tartar
1 quart water

To clean aluminum cookware, combine ingredients in cookware. Bring solution to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Wash and dry as usual.

Brass Cleaner

Lemon juice
Baking soda

Make a paste about the consistency of toothpaste. Rub onto brass with a soft cloth. Rinse with water and dry.

Brass Cleaner

Lemon juice
Cream of tartar

Make a paste about the consistency of toothpaste. Apply to surface, leave on for 5 minutes. Wash with warm water. Dry with a soft cloth.

Chrome and Stainless Steel Cleaner

Dip soft cloth in undiluted white vinegar. Wipe surface.

Oven Cleaner

Baking soda
Very fine steel wool

Sprinkle water on oven surface. Apply baking soda. Rub using very fine steel wool. Wipe off scum with a damp sponge. Rinse well and dry.

Oven Cleaner

While oven is still warm, sprinkle water on the spill, then sprinkle salt on it. When the oven cools down, scrape the spill away and wash the area.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Borax
Lemon juice

Mix lemon juice and borax to make a paste about the consistency of toothpaste. Flush toilet to wet sides. Rub paste on toilet bowl ring. Let sit for 2 hours and then scrub thoroughly. ***Borax is a toxic ingredient. Handle it with care and store it safely.***

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Baking soda
Vinegar
Sprinkle baking soda into the toilet bowl. Add vinegar. Scour with a toilet brush.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Pour 1/2 cup liquid chlorine bleach into toilet bowl. Let stand for 30 to 45 minutes. Scrub with a brush. Flush. ***Do not mix bleach with vinegar, toilet bowl cleaner, or ammonia. Chlorine bleach is a toxic ingredient. Handle it with care and store it safely.***

For more information on hazardous products in the home, see [Reducing Hazardous Products in Your Home](#), or Hazardous Household Products, or [Disposal of Hazardous Household Wastes](#).

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Publication List	Main Menu	FCS Home
Comments	NCCES Home	NCSU Home