

LET'S TALK TRASH – MAY 20221

Green Cleaning - When the sun slants through my dirty windows just right to expose the overwintered cobwebs and accumulated dust, I know it's time for a good spring cleaning! Fortunately, I have all the ingredients in my house to make my own green cleaners.

'Green cleaning', according to Wikipedia, is using products and procedures safe for the environment which don't emit pollutants - as opposed to 'green washing', a marketing spin using green values to deceptively persuade the public that an organization's products, aims and policies are environmentally friendly. Green washing uses vague marketing terms like 'eco-friendly and 'natural' even when the products include harmful chemicals.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) household cleaning products rank amongst the most toxic everyday substances to which people are exposed. In order to fully evaluate a cleaning product, you need to know all the ingredients and how they interact with each other. There aren't federal regulations requiring ingredients to be listed on a product's containers. Those looking for this kind of information can refer to the Environmental Working Group (EWG) database on cleaners.

Most of the brand name cleaners I grew up with (maybe you too remember the many bottles under the sink with synthetic smells and bright colours?) are rated as toxic. 95% of the chemicals found in those cleaning products are derived from petroleum and have been shown to alter hormones, weakened immune systems, and cause cancer, neurological disorders, learning disabilities, allergies, infertility and asthma. These chemicals persist in nature, remaining capable of harming nature and organisms for generations to come.

Once upon a time, people cleaned their homes without using Nitrilotriacetic acid, Propylparaben, and Butyl benzyl phthalates, and you can, too. In fact, you can clean your house with ingredients you cook with! Most DIY cleaners are made from a combination of lemon, baking soda, corn starch, vinegar, essential oils, salt and olive oil.

I found so many recipes for home-made cleaners that it was hard to choose which ones to share. Here are some basics.

- All Purpose Cleaner
 - 1/2 cup vinegar
 - 1/4 cup baking soda
 - 2 L water

Mix in a labelled spray bottle and use where needed. You can add some essential oils if you want a deodorizing effect.

- Glass Cleaner
 - 2 cups water
 - 1/2 cup vinegar

1/4 rubbing alcohol (optional)

Few drops of essential oil (optional)

Again, label your bottle and keep it out of reach of children. Also for cleaning windows, don't do it on a hot sunny day as the solution dries quickly and will leave streaks. A comprehensive list of DIY cleaning ideas can be found at: learn.eartheasy.com

Cleaning your home this spring doesn't have to mean dirtying the planet!