

Environmentally Friendly Cleaning Products

All cleaning products actively damage the environment to some extent. However, it is important to choose items and services which cause as little ecological harm as possible. Therefore the best way to go about using cleaning products whilst remaining as environmentally friendly as possible is to be aware of harmful chemical compositions.

Be wary of statements such as 'biodegradable' or 'non-toxic' on cleaning products, as these terms don't have a fixed definition, and in most cases are actually false.

Try to avoid cleaners which contain chlorine (i.e. bleaches), phosphates and other dangerous chemical substances. These toxins enter the atmosphere and waterways, causing both environmental and wildlife destruction. (Green Consumer Guide, 2006).

Below is a selection of cleaning products that have a reduced impact on the environment, these are available to buy in bulk from the Ecotopia website – www.ecotopia.co.uk however can also be found in your local supermarkets and health food shops.

Ecover

ECOVER Ecover was established in 1979 and was the first to market ecological cleaning products on a large scale. Many people were attracted by Ecover's innovative company philosophy, in which respect for people, animals and the environment are at the forefront. Ecover is the first one to produce ecological washing and cleaning products on a big scale.

Ecover has developed into the worldwide market leader in ecological washing and cleansing agents from an initial base of enthusiastic and genuine users.

You can take bottles of Ecover washing up liquid, fabric conditioner, laundry liquid and multi surface cleaner to be refilled at certain shops – check out the Ecover website at www.ecover.com, they also sell Ecover in bulk.

Bio-D

bio^D Bio-D is an independent, family-owned, ethically motivated company, dedicated to promoting the use of hypoallergenic, environmentally responsible detergents that have a minimum impact on the ecosystem both in their use and in their manufacturing process. Where possible, all raw materials are plant-derived and are obtained from renewable sources.

Bio-D operates a strict policy whereby none of their raw materials or finished products are tested on animals. All raw materials are free from genetically modified ingredients; animal by-products and are subject to scrutiny and approval by The Vegan Society, Naturewatch Trust and The World Wildlife Foundation.

All bottles, containers and packaging contain optimum levels of re-cycled materials and are themselves recyclable. Check out www.biodegradable.biz for more information and prices.

Clear Spring Cleaning Products



A new planet friendly cleaning range especially formulated with planet and people in mind and to have minimal environmental impact. Check out the website for more information and prices:

www.naturalcollection.com/natural-products/Clear-Spring-Cleaning-Products.asp?sc=T

Bulk Buying

Check out the website www.ecotopia.co.uk, Ecotopia offer all the above in larger size containers which are suitable for family users and small to medium sized businesses. These are fantastic for refilling the smaller 500ml or 1L bottles at home, and reuse the packaging rather than throw it away, as well as greater value for money and even better for the environment!

"Refill not landfill" may be considered a cliché however with these bulk purchases you are taking definite steps to reduce waste and so if you reorder and send your old container back Ecotopia will refund the cost of the empties' return postage up to the value of £2.50. In any case Ecotopia encourage you to send them back to us as they reuse all our containers.

Homemade Cleaning Products

If you are small organisation you may want to consider using products find around the house. These can be just as good and of course are much cheaper!! For many more ideas check out this website - <http://www.goselfsufficient.co.uk/homemade-cleaning-products.html>

White vinegar

Vinegar naturally cleans like an all-purpose cleaner. Mix a solution of 1 part water to 1 part vinegar in a spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home. Vinegar is a great natural cleaning product as well as a disinfectant and deodorizer. Always test first though on an inconspicuous area. It is safe to use though, and is incredibly cheap.

- To clean your dishwasher, run a cup of white vinegar through the entire cycle of the empty dishwasher.
- Clear a blocked sink by tipping a handful of bicarbonate of soda followed by a cup of vinegar straight down the plug. After a couple of hours, pour down a kettleful of boiling water.
- To de-scale tap nozzles, put a plastic bag filled with vinegar over the nozzle. Secure it with an elastic band and leave for at least half an hour.
- To clean windows, mix two teaspoons of white vinegar with one litre of warm water. Use crumpled newspaper to clean.

Lemon

Lemon juice is a great natural substance that can be used to clean your home, as highlighted by the fact that it can be found in abundance in shop-bought cleaning products. Lemon is a great substance to clean and shine brass and copper. Lemon juice can be mixed with vinegar and or baking soda to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces and stains.

- Remove the chemical smell of oven cleaners by heating lemon rind in a low oven for about 20 minutes.
- Clean a microwave by placing half a lemon in water and setting it to boil.
- Lemon oil keeps tiles shinier longer and helps keep water stains from building up.
- Mix one cup olive oil with half a cup of lemon juice and you have a furniture polish for hardwood furniture.