

Natural Cleaning

by GCH Eco Friends

Eco Friends' cleaning research at GCH

In August 2013, the Global Co-operation House environment group was formed. One of the Eco Friends' main aims was to maintain and spread awareness of ecologically friendly practices at GCH, in the UK and beyond. They started by researching natural cleaning products and sharing information.

The group are now co-operating with the GCH cleaning team to further the use in the House of two natural cleaning products: the liquid from the Toucan Unit and diluted vinegar.

BKs have been requested to refrain from bringing cleaning agents to the House, as cleaning is done mainly with the two natural products mentioned above.

This success story reflects the power of awareness and the effect it can have on individuals and the world.

The information in the following pages is the result of research carried out by the Global Co-operation House Eco Friends' group in London and other BKs.

We hope that this e-booklet will help you and your centres to become Agents of Care for the world and protectors of your own and other's health and well-being.

We very much welcome any of your suggestions and research so we can expand this booklet further.



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Why use natural cleaning products?

Besides showing kindness to aquatic life, we can also protect ourselves from the array of toxins in household cleaning products.

Conventional cleaners can expose us to multiple chemicals linked to asthma, cancer and other documented health problems. Some people are allergic to the chemicals and are not able to visit places that use them without an adverse reaction.

Although there are many more eco-friendly products available today than previously, unfortunately, many of the branded cleaners are not made fully from natural ingredients and are often expensive. Making your own is a quick, easy and very economical alternative.



White Vinegar



General Info

Vinegar is a liquid consisting of about 5–20% acetic acid, water, and other trace chemicals. The acetic acid is produced by the fermentation of ethanol by acetic acid bacteria. You can add essential oils such as peppermint oil or citrus peel to mask the smell which, in any case, doesn't last long.

What can it be used for?

- To remove limescale from a surface, use a cloth soaked in white vinegar over night
- Kills nearly all household germs, bacteria, mould, and mildew
- Effective for washing floors (1/2 cup vinegar to 8 pints water + few drops of essential oils)
- Effective for cleaning glass, on its own and diluted in water (50/50) and put into a spray bottle. It may not work with added oils



White Vinegar

(continued)



To clean wooden furniture, mix 1 cup of filtered water with 3 tbsp of white vinegar. Use a soft cloth to wipe down wooden furniture and give it a good clean before polishing and restoring.

For other 'recipes' using vinegar, try this link for example:

<http://www.goodgirlgonegreen.com/7-diy-cleaning-recipes-using-vinegar/>

Benefits

It is 100% natural, very versatile and has many uses.

Drawbacks

It is not a registered disinfectant with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and does not kill some dangerous bacteria like staphylococcus (MRSA).

Cost at the time of research

It's possible to find in 5 litre bottle for approximately £2 on Amazon.



Sodium Bicarbonate



General Info

The use of sodium bicarbonate or baking soda as it's often called, dates back to the ancient Egyptians, who used it as a cleansing agent. It is now increasingly used in natural personal care products such as toothpaste and as an anti-acid for digestive problems.

How to use it and what it can be used for

- Sprinkle onto a cloth or surface to use, or make a paste with water
- Brilliant for bringing back the shine to stainless steel dishes, plates and pans
- Excellent to remove burnt food from pans or trays
- When used in a vinegar solution, effective to remove lime scale in the kitchen and bathroom
- To freshen up and clean furnishings and carpets, sprinkle on, leave to work and then Hoover off



Sodium Bicarbonate

(continued)



A sprinkle of baking soda in the bottom of your bin will help get rid of offensive odours

Very good for cleaning chopping boards both wooden and plastic.

See this link for plenty of other uses:

<http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/cleaning/tips/a25577/baking-soda-cleaning-uses/>

Benefits

It is a natural product with all kinds of very effective uses around the home.

Drawbacks

For cooking or personal care products, only use 'pure' or 'organic' because aluminium is often used in the extraction process.

Cost at time of research

It's possible to find in 5kg bag for just over £5 on Amazon.



Sodium Carbonate

also known as Soda Crystals



General Info

Sodium Carbonate is the sodium salt of carbonic acid. Often found in powder form, it's used in a wide range of cleaning and personal care products. It is also used as a fungicide, a microbicide, a herbicide, and a pH adjustor. It is also known as soda ash, soda crystals and washing soda. It is a highly concentrated product that is diluted.

What is it used for?

Dissolve in hot water to effectively clean kitchen floors

See this link for many other uses:

<http://www.dri-pak.co.uk/cleaning-products/soda-crystals/>

Benefits

It's a natural product that is easily available and can be bought at a very reasonable price. It has many other uses such as acting as a water softener.

Drawbacks

Sodium carbonate is considered an irritant at concentrations below 15% and caustic above 15% according to the EPA, so keep this in mind when mixing your own cleaning solutions with it.

Cost at time of research

1kg bags are available on Amazon from £2 to £4.



Homemade Natural Bleach Alternative using Hydrogen Peroxide

For more info go to

<http://www.thehippyhomemaker.com/diy-bleach-alternative/>

Ingredients for 4 pints of natural bleach mixture

- use an amber 4 pint glass bottle (keeps the hydrogen peroxide from breaking down when exposed to light) or, store out of direct sunlight.
- 3/4 cup of 3% (strength) hydrogen peroxide
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. citric acid (optional) whitens clothes naturally and helps to soften water, making this more effective in hard water
- 20 drops lemon essential oil
- filtered water to fill

Directions

Pour peroxide, lemon juice, citric acid (if using), and lemon essential oil into the 4 pint amber glass bottle. Swish around until citric acid is dissolved.

Fill the rest of the bottle with distilled water and use, as you would bleach.

Benefits

Easy to make and easy to find Hydrogen Peroxide on Amazon and the internet.

Cost at time of research:

Hydrogen Peroxide can now be bought in different volumes from 500ml to 5 litres. For 5 litres the cost is between £15 and £19 on Amazon.



Homemade Furniture Polish



Ingredients

- 1 cup of cold pressed olive oil
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

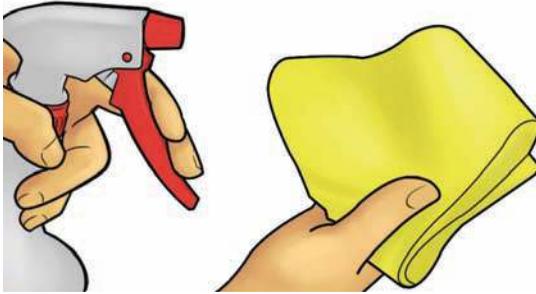
Shake in a glass jar and apply with a very soft cloth.

Benefits

Naturally cleans and polishes hard wood furniture.
You only need a little bit.



Microfibre cloths



Benefits

- They only need water to clean streaks, smudges, dirt and grime on glass, mirrors, and stainless-steel surfaces. They are also easily washed and re-used.
- Microfibre cloths last several years.

Drawbacks

- They are made from petrochemicals.
- The polyester and polyamide fabric strands are 100 times finer than human hair. That's what makes them so good at lifting dirt, grease, and dust without cleaning chemicals. The problem is, they are made from a non-renewable resource and do not biodegrade.

Only microfibre cloths made from polypropylene are recyclable.



AlmaWin Orange Oil Cleaner



General Info

This product is made in Germany and is only available in 500ml bottles. It is made out of essential orange and lemon oils. It is highly concentrated and needs to be diluted for most uses. It is advisable to use gloves when undiluted.

What can it be used for?

- Used undiluted it removes gum and glue from jars
- Removes lime scale when left to work overnight on surface
- Used diluted it effectively removes dust
- Also diluted, effective for washing floors, leaving nice fragrance
- Good for removing stains but may need more than one application
- Eliminates unpleasant odours from carpets

Benefits

Natural product, not tested on animals, no preservatives, suitable for vegans, long shelf life.

Drawbacks

Highly concentrated and can burn slightly, like acid, when undiluted. Need to use gloves when undiluted. Should not be released into environment in concentrated form as toxic to aquatic organisms. Packaging may not be recyclable.

Cost at time of research

£19 for an 8 litre bottle, £9.90 per 500ml bottle + delivery charges from Amazon.



Toucan unit tap water treatment system

(tested at GCH)



The Toucan Eco uses ECA (Electro-chemical Activation) technology to transform tap water and salt into a very effective combined sanitiser and cleaning agent. It usually takes 7 minutes to treat tap water. Additional cycles of 7 minutes are needed for additional strength. The effectiveness of treated water lasts 7 days. There is also a Toucan-mini for smaller centres and homes.

The research conducted mainly by the University of the West of England (in Bristol) shows nearly 100% effectiveness in killing bacteria such as e-coli, MSRA, salmonella.

The research as well as the Toucan machines of different sizes are available in the UK from Centrego: <https://centregold.com/>

What is it used for?

- Disinfection
- Tested with good results on grease, dust, limescale, stains and floors

Benefits

Easy to use and maintain and is a cost effective way to keep places safe and clean without damaging the environment. Saves buying multiple products and replaces expensive chemical cleaners.



Useful video for natural cleaning. My non-toxic cleaning guide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEVOYRwfrkg>

