

# Environmentally Friendly Cleaners

## Ingredient List:

- **Baking soda** - Sodium bicarbonate - made from soda ash; slightly alkaline. Cleans, deodorizes, softens water, scours. A commonly available mineral full of many cleaning attributes. It neutralizes acid-based odors in water and absorbs odors from the air. Gentle and non-abrasive. It attacks grease by turning it into soap.
- **Borax** – (sodium borate) cleans, deodorizes, disinfects, softens water, cleans wallpaper, painted walls and floors
- **Essential oils** – tea tree, eucalyptus, lavender, orange or lemon, peppermint (most of these are antimicrobial – they kill germs that are the common cause of cold, flu and other infections). For a substance to be registered by the EPA as a disinfectant, it must go through extensive and expensive tests. These, and other, essential oils are very antiseptic even though they aren't registered as such. Tea tree oil is an excellent natural fungicide. Avoid eyes!
- **Lemons** - Effective against most household bacteria. The strongest food acid in our kitchens, strong enough to make life unbearable for most bacteria. Like vinegar, it is acidic. Neutralizes alkaline substances such as scale from hard water. Acids dissolve gummy buildup, eat away tarnish and remove dirt from wood surfaces. Cuts through grease and mineral deposits on counters, in grout, on shower doors, floors and so on. It removes odors and can be used to freshen everything from air to shoes. Tie peels in cheesecloth to add to your white laundry load. Dry peels and tie in cheesecloth to create natural "mothballs." Place in your closet or clothes bins.
- **Liquid vegetable oil based soap (Bronner's)** - Will clean just about anything. Necessary for cutting grease.
- **Olive or other oil** – attracts oils and dirt.
- **Rubbing alcohol** - an excellent disinfectant
- **Vinegar** - Cuts grease. Removes mildew, odors, stains and wax build-up. It is acidic. Neutralizes alkaline substances such as scale from hard water. Acids dissolve gummy buildup, eat away tarnish and remove dirt from wood surfaces. Kills microbes and bacteria.

Purchasing the above ingredients in bulk where possible, and making your own cleaners can cost up to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of what it would cost to purchase standard, (potentially toxic) cleaners. This includes the expensive price of essential oils. Remember, with these, a little goes a long way.

**Microfiber cloths** lift off dirt, grease and dust without the need for cleaning chemicals because they are formulated to penetrate and trap dirt. There are a number of different brands. A good quality cloth can last for several years.

**Loofa sponges** are a great alternative to sponges made from synthetic materials. It's natural, lasts longer and stays more sanitary. You can toss it in the dishwasher to clean it. It scrubs without scratching. And, when it's time to toss it, it's biodegradable and doesn't damage the environment.