

Safer Alternatives to Hazardous Products

Here is a list of cleaning and pest removal alternatives which will help protect the environment.

Cleaning Alternatives

All-Purpose Cleaner

- **Vinegar and salt**
Mix together for a good surface cleaner.
- **Baking soda**
Dissolve 4 Tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water. Or use baking soda on a damp sponge. Baking soda will clean and deodorize all kitchen and bathroom surfaces.

Cleaner

- **Soap**
Regular cleaning with plain soap and hot water will kill some bacteria.
- **Keep dry**
Mold, mildew, and bacteria cannot live without dampness.
- **Borax***
Borax has long been recognized for its cleaning and deodorizing properties. Mix ½ cup Borax into 1 gallon hot water and clean with this solution.

Drain Cleaner

- **Prevention**
To avoid clogging drains, use a drain strainer to trap food particles and hair; collect grease in cans rather than pouring it down the drain; pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain weekly to melt fat that may be building up in the drain.
- **Baking soda and vinegar**
Put ½ cup baking soda and ½ cup white vinegar down your drain and cover the drain. Let set for a few minutes, then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.

Furniture Polish

- **Olive oil and vinegar**
Mix 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar. Apply and polish with a clean, soft cloth.
- **Olive oil and lemon juice**
Mix 2 parts oil and 1 part lemon juice. Apply and polish with a soft cloth.
- **Water spots**
To remove water marks on furniture, rub gently with toothpaste on a damp cloth.

Lime and Mineral Deposit Remover

- **Vinegar**
Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked paper towels. Leave the paper towels on for about an hour before cleaning. Makes

chrome clean and shiny. To remove deposits which may be clogging metal showerheads, combine ½ cup white vinegar and 1 quart water. Completely submerge the showerhead and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic showerhead, combine 1 pint white vinegar and 1 pint hot water. Completely submerge the showerhead and soak for about an hour.

Pest Removal Alternatives

Ants

- **Flour and borax***

Mix 1 cup flour and 2 cups Borax in a quart jar. Punch holes in the jar lid and sprinkle contents around the house foundation. Keep Borax out of reach of children and pets.

- **Pennyroyal*, spearmint, southernwood and tansey**

Growing these plants around the border of your home will deter ants and the aphids they carry.

Fleas

- **Vacuum**

Vacuum, remove the vacuum bag, seal it, and dispose of it immediately (outside your home).

- **Vinegar**

A ratio of 1 teaspoon to 1 quart of water (per 40 lbs. of pet weight) in their drinking water helps keep your pet free of fleas and ticks.

Roaches

- **Boric acid***

Commercial roach formulas containing boric acid are available. Apply these according to directions for effective elimination of roaches.

- **Borax* and flour**

Mix ½ cups Borax and ¼ cup flour and fill jar. Punch holes in jar lid and sprinkle contents along the baseboards and doorsills.

*** Ingredients marked with the asterisk (*) are safer alternatives but not non-toxic. Keep these out of reach of children and pets, and exercise caution while using them.**

Read more about safer alternatives to hazardous products at the [Environmental Health Coalition website](#).

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