

Franciscans for Earth

**Alternative  
practices that  
won't harm Earth**



## Eco-friendly Cleaning Recipes

- General Cleaning Supplies
- Bath and Kitchen Cleaners
- Rugs/Floors
- Furniture
- Laundry
- Spot Removers



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## General Cleaning Supplies

### BASIC INGREDIENTS FOR NON-TOXIC CLEANER RECIPES

Five basic ingredients serve as the building blocks for many safe home cleaning needs:

1. Baking Soda - Cleans and deodorizes. Softens water to increase sudsing and cleaning power of soap. Good scouring powder.
2. Borax - Cleans and deodorizes. Excellent disinfectant. Softens water. Available in laundry section of grocery store.
3. Soap - Biodegrades safely and completely and is non-toxic. Available in grocery stores and health food stores. Sold as liquid, flakes, powder or in bars. Bars can be grated to dissolve more easily in hot water. Insist on soap without synthetic scents, colors or other additives.
4. Washing Soda - Cuts grease and removes stains. Disinfects. Softens water. Available in laundry section of grocery store or in pure form from chemical supply houses as "sodium carbonate."
5. White Vinegar or Lemon Juice - Cuts grease and freshens.

#### TIP:

For surfaces that need scouring, try moist salt or baking soda and a green scouring pad. Rub dry with newspaper to avoid streaking.





## GENERAL CLEANERS

### Household Cleaner

Mix together:

1 tsp. liquid soap (castile, peppermint)

1 tsp. borax

Squeeze of lemon

1 qt. warm water

**OR**

¼ c. baking soda

½ c. borax

½ c. vinegar

1 gal. water

### Window Cleaner

Mix together:

2 tsp. vinegar

1 qt. warm water

**OR**

2 tbsp. borax

3 c. water

### Disinfectant

Mix together:

¼ c. borax

½ gal. hot water

### Oven Cleaner

Mix together:  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. baking soda

2 tbsp. salt

Hot water, as needed to make a paste.

Let paste sit for 5 minutes. Caution: Keep off wires/heating elements.

**OR**

2 tbsp. liquid soap (castile, peppermint)

2 tsp. borax

1 qt. warm water

Spray on oven and wait 20 minutes, then clean. For tough stains, scrub with very fine steel wool and baking soda.

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### Drain Cleaner

Pour together:  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. borax in drain followed by

2 c. boiling water

**OR**

$\frac{1}{4}$  c baking soda down the drain, followed by

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. vinegar

Cover drain and let sit for 15 minutes. Follow with 2 qts. boiling water.

**OR**


Use a plumber's "snake" and boiling water.

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### Toilet Bowls

Pour:  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. baking soda into bowl and drizzle with vinegar.

Let sit for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. Scrub and flush. Add borax for stains.



## Air Fresheners

Commercial fresheners work by masking smells, coating nasal passages and deadening nerves to diminish sense of smell. Instead:

- Find source of odors and eliminate them;
- Keep house and closets clean and well-ventilated;
- Grow lots of house plants;  
    Simmer: Cinnamon sticks, orange peel, cloves  
    Water

To absorb odors, place 2 to 4 tbsp. baking soda or vinegar in small bowls in refrigerator and around the house and pour ½ cup baking soda in the bottom of trash cans.

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## Ceramic Tile

Mix together: ¼ c. vinegar  
1 gal. warm water

## Basin, Tub, and Tile

Mix together: ½ c. baking soda  
2-3 tbsp. liquid soap (castile, peppermint)

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## Garbage Disposal Freshener

Grind ice and lemon or orange juice in the disposal.

## Mildew Remover

Dissolve together: ½ c. vinegar, ½ c. borax in warm water. Apply with sponge or spray bottle.



## Rugs/Floors

### Rug and Upholstery Cleaner

Sprinkle corn meal, baking soda or cornstarch on dry rugs and vacuum. Use club soda or soap-based rug shampoo.

### Carpet Cleaning Foam

Mix together:  $\frac{1}{4}$  c. vegetable oil-based liquid soap  
3 tbsp. (or more) water

Whip ingredients in bowl with egg beater. Rub foam into problem areas of the rug. Rinse well with water.


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## Floors

Mix together:  $\frac{1}{2}$  c. white vinegar  
1 gal warm water

Polishing with skim milk after floor is dry will make the floor glow!

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## Furniture


### Furniture Polish (Wood Surfaces)

Rub toothpaste on wood furniture to remove water marks.

Polish wood with 2 tsp. lemon oil and 1 pint mineral oil in spray bottle. Spray, rub in and wipe clean.

Mix two parts olive oil to one part lemon juice. After rubbing the mixture in, let stand for several hours and then polish with a soft, dry cloth.

Melt 1 tbsp. carnauba wax into two pints mineral oil. Use sparingly and rub hard.





When making the initial switch from a detergent to a soap laundry cleaner, wash items once with washing soda only. This will eliminate detergent residues that might otherwise react with soap to cause a yellowing of fabrics.

### **Laundry Soap**

Add 1/3 cup washing soda (sodium carbonate) to water as machine is filling. Add clothes. Add 1 1/2 cups of soap. If the water is hard, add another 1/4 cup soda or 1/4 cup vinegar during the first rinse.

Add 1/3 cup washing soda to water before placing clothes in machine and substitute soap flakes or powder for detergent. Add 1/2 cup borax for additional cleaning power.

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### **Pre-soak**

Soak heavily soiled items in warm water with 1/2 cup washing soda for 30 minutes. Rub soiled areas with liquid soap.

### **Fabric Softener**

Add 1 cup vinegar or 1/4 cup baking soda during final rinse. To reduce static cling in tumble-dried synthetics, dampen hands when folding or line dry instead.

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### **Spray Starch**

Dissolve 2 Tbsp. cornstarch in 1 pint cold water in a spray bottle. Shake before each use. For delicate fabrics, dissolve 1 package unflavored gelatin to 2 cups of hot water. Dip a corner of the fabric into the solution to test; if fabric becomes sticky when dry, add more water.





## Spot Removers

Here are alternatives to enzyme pre-soaks and bleach for tough stains. Test each of the following remedies on a corner of your fabric first. Wash after application.

### **Heavy Soils**

Rub with solution of 2 tbsp. washing soda in 1 cup warm water.

### **Fruit and Wine**

Immediately pour salt or hot water on the stain and soak in milk before washing.

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### **Ink**

Soak in milk or remove with hydrogen peroxide.

### **Coffee**

Mix egg yolk with luke-warm water and rub on stain.

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### **Lipstick**

Rub with cold cream or shortening and wash with washing soda.

### **Mildew**

Pour strong soap and salt on the spots and place in sunlight. Keep the spots moist, and repeat as often as necessary.





## Spot Removers

### Soiled Diapers

Pre-soak in 3 tbsp. baking soda dissolved in warm water in either tub or washing machine.

### Grease

Pour boiling water on stains and follow with dry baking soda. Also try ammonia and water.

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### Blood

Soak in cold water or remove with hydrogen peroxide. For a more stubborn stain, mix cornstarch, talcum powder or cornmeal with water and apply to stain. Allow to dry and brush away.

### Chewing Gum

Rub with ice. Gum will flake off.

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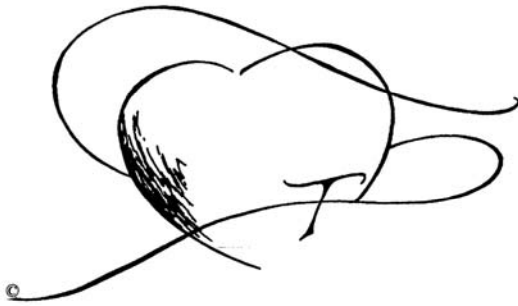
### Rust

Saturate with sour milk (or lemon juice) and rub with salt. Place in direct sunlight until dry, then wash.

### Scorches

Boil scorched article in 1 cup soap and 2 qts. milk.





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