Spring Cleaning with Homemade Products

Try these DIY cleaning products to get your home sparkling clean this spring.

As spring approaches, our thoughts are turned to…spring cleaning! We've been cooped up in our houses all winter and

we’re ready to see the shine of clean walls, windows, and floors! But with the plethora of products available, it is difficult to decide on which ones to choose and which ones we can afford! So the answer is…homemade cleaning solutions. Now is a great time to revive an article written by Carolyn Washburn, a USU professor from Washington County. Thanks to her list of homemade cleaning products, we can have products that are less expensive, less toxic, and are safe and effective.

Some of the basic supplies needed include baking soda, vinegar, lemon juice, borax, cornstarch and salt. Here are a few of her recipes:

Four recipes for general cleaning:

- 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon liquid detergent, 2 cups water.
- 1 cup vinegar, 1 gallon water.
- 2 tablespoons vinegar, 1 teaspoon borax, hot water.
- ½ cup ammonia, ¼ cup vinegar, ¼ cup baking soda, 1 gallon water

Five recipes for cleaning windows:

- ½ cup vinegar and 1 gallon water (2 tablespoons to 1 quart).
- ½ cup ammonia and 1 gallon water.
- 1 tablespoon ammonia, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1 quart water.
- 3 tablespoons denatured alcohol, 1 quart water.
- 3 tablespoons dish detergent and 1 tablespoon “Jet Dry” in ½ pail of water for outdoor windows.

Other cleaning solutions she suggests include:

Baking Soda

Baking soda neutralizes acid-based odors in water and absorbs odors from the air. Sprinkled on a damp sponge or cloth, baking soda can be used as a gentle, non-abrasive cleanser for kitchen countertops, sinks, bathtubs, ovens and fiberglass. For laundry, add up to a cup per load to eliminate perspiration odors and neutralize the smell of chemicals. It is also a useful air freshener and carpet deodorizer.

Vinegar and Lemon Juice

White vinegar and lemon juice are acidic and neutralize alkaline substances such as scale from hard water. They are natural cleaning products as well as disinfectants and deodorizers. Acids dissolve gummy buildup, eat away tarnish and remove dirt from wood surfaces. Vinegar can be used as a softener in laundry cleaning. Lemon juice can be mixed with vinegar and baking soda to make a cleaning paste.

Borax

Borax is a natural cleaner and bleach. It can boost other cleaning products, but be cautious when using it since it can cause skin, eye and respiratory irritation. Don’t use borax around food, keep it out of the reach of children and pets and be sure to rinse it out of clothes and off surfaces.

Cornstarch

Cornstarch can be used to clean windows, polish furniture and clean carpets. As a window cleaner, use it with water, vinegar and ammonia. To use on stains and to polish, use a mixture of water and cornstarch. Sprinkle on carpets to remove stains and odors.

Salt

Salt as a cleaner is one way to be a little “greener” at home. It is inexpensive, does not harm the environment and is readily available. Salt mixtures can remove yellowing, clean tarnish, remove lipstick, get rid of mold and can work as a drain cleaner.

Soap vs. Detergent

Liquid dish soaps and detergents are necessary for cutting grease, but they are not the same thing. Soap is made from fats and lye. Detergents are synthetic materials. Unlike soap, detergents are designed specifically so they don’t react with hard water minerals and cause soap scum. If you have hard water, buy a biodegradable detergent without perfumes. If you have soft water, you can use liquid soap.

Ammonia and Denatured Alcohol

Additional cleaning products are ammonia and denatured alcohol. Be careful not to mix ammonia with a bleach product, as it can produce a harmful gas. These toxic products need to be stored carefully and used in well-ventilated areas. Be sure to keep all homemade formulas labeled and out of the reach of children.

Happy Cleaning!

This article was written by GaeLynn Peterson. Gaelynn is a long-time resident of Wayne County where she serves the residents as Utah State University faculty with an emphasis in FCS and 4-H. She has an M.S. in Psychology and has worked with at-risk students before joining the USU family. As a mother of seven and grandmother of 28, she has had a lot of experience working with youth, and she loves it! She enjoys traveling, camping, Lake Powell, and any beach.

Learn more about homemade cleaning products: https://extension.usu.edu/admin/files/uploads/mpp-2009-04-01-s-004.pdf

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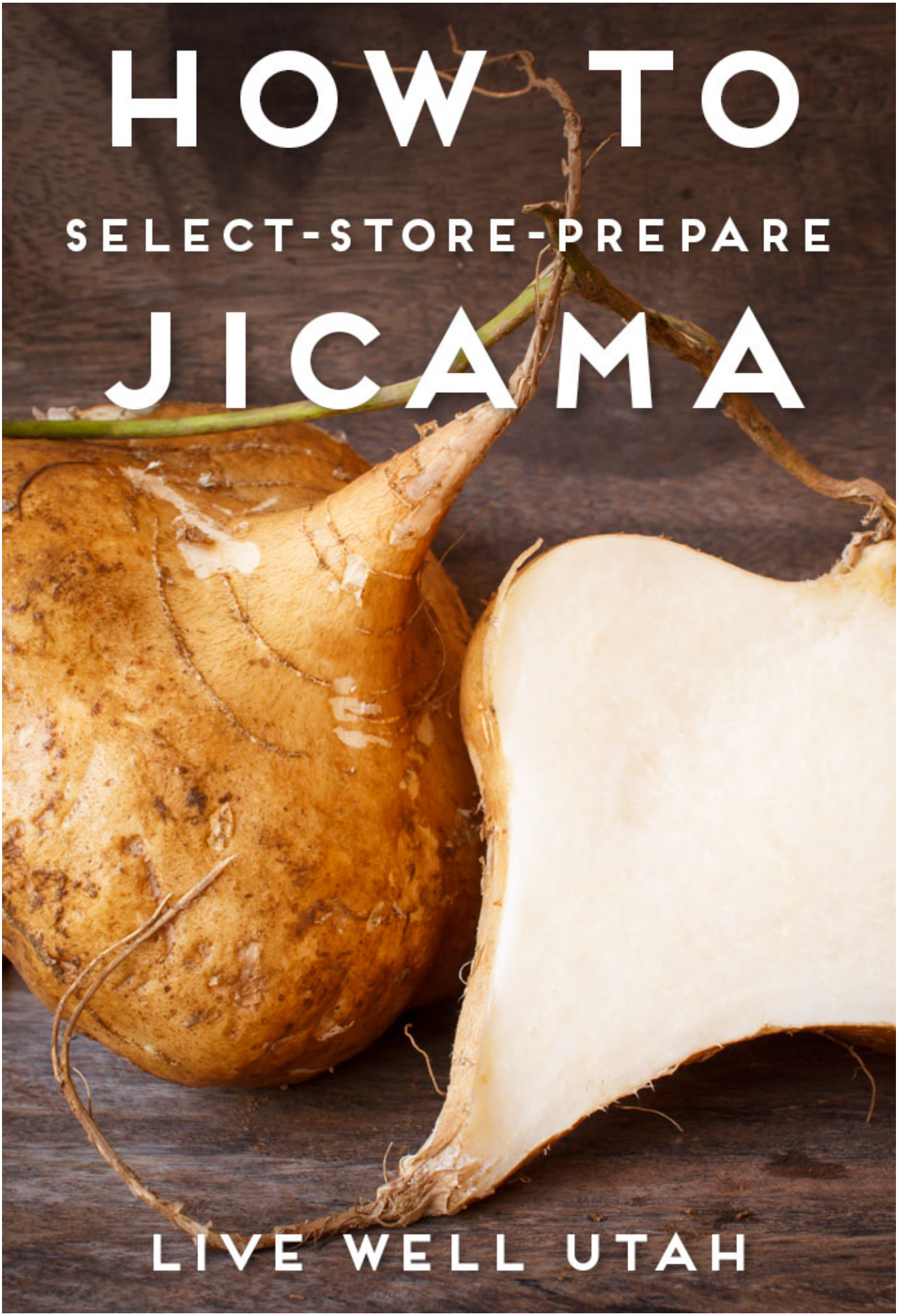
Give Jicama a Try!

HOW TO

SELECT-STORE-PREPARE

JICAMA



LIVE WELL UTAH

Are you ready for a change in your vegetable menu? Give jicama a try (pronounced hic-uh-mah)! It's a delicious treat full of vitamin C and fiber and will add a crunch to your palate. We introduced jicama to the students in our after-school program. The youth loved it and shared it with their families.

A Food $ense (SNAP-Ed) Guide to Eating Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Jicama is a crispy, sweet, mild, bulbous root vegetable that is light tan in color and shaped like a small pumpkin. Jicama's flavor is similar to an apple or pear, but its texture more closely resembles a radish or turnip. Some jicama is grown in Texas and Florida, but it is typically grown in semitropical or tropical climates, such as Mexico and Central and South America. Other names for jicama include yam bean, Mexican water chestnut, Mexican potato, and Mexican turnip (Bender, 2016; Park & Han, 2015; Park, Lee, & Han, 2016; Ramos-de-la-Pena, Renard, Wicker, & Contreras-Esquivel, 2013; Stevenson, Jane, & Inglett, 2007).

Nutrition Highlights:

120 grams of fresh, raw jicama provides 45 calories and approximately 40 percent RDA of vitamin C. Jicama is an excellent source of dietary fiber providing 24 percent RDA and less than 1 percent fat. Jicama also contains small amounts of vitamin B complex, vitamin E, and potassium. In addition, Jicama contains healthy amounts of magnesium, copper, iron, manganese, and antioxidants. Jicama is 86-90 percent water (United States Department of Agriculture, 2016).

Jicama's low glycemic load makes it an excellent snack for diabetics and dieters, or anyone watching their blood sugar and insulin (Park & Han, 2015; Park, Lee, & Han, 2016).

Availability:

Jicama is available year-round in most grocery stores. The market is flooded with jicama from Central America in the spring and summer.

Eating:

The most popular method of eating jicama is in raw form. It can be cut into small cubes, sticks, or slices, and can be shredded and added to snacks, salads, and salsas for added crispness. Jicama tends to absorb sauces without losing its crunch, making it an excellent addition to stir-fry and salsa. Jicama can also be cooked and is often combined with lime, lemon, cilantro, ginger, and chili powder. The skin of jicama is inedible (Neff, 2007).

Selecting:

When shopping for jicama, chose medium-sized, firm tubers with dry roots. Larger jicama can be eaten but tends to be dry, starchy, and less flavorful. Avoid blemishes, wrinkles, or soft spots (D'Sa, 2004).

Cleaning and Preparing:

Wash jicama and remove the outer peel and the slightly papery layer just under the skin with a sharp paring knife or vegetable peeler. Cutting the jicama in half, then in half again, makes it is easier to handle (Bender, 2016; D'Sa, 2004).

Storing:

Store uncut jicama in a cool, dry place uncovered for up to 3 weeks (similar to potatoes). The ideal temperature is 55-59 degrees. Storing at lower temperatures or in a moist area may cause discoloration and decay. Once jicama is cut or sliced, refrigerate covered for up to three weeks (D'Sa, 2004).

Some ideas for enjoying jicama include:

- Serve on vegetable trays along with carrots, celery, and other raw vegetables.
- Combine with fresh berries and other fruits to make a fruit salad with a crunch.
- Use in stir-fry, salads, or slaws.
- French fry – baked or deep fried.
- Peel, chop, and boil jicama for about 15 minutes until softened. Drain, mash, and season with butter, salt, and pepper.
- Bake at 375° for 45 minutes and top with sour cream and butter and sprinkle with fresh herbs, chili powder, or chopped chives.
- Mix shredded or finely diced jicama with pineapple and avocado to make a yummy salsa.
- Add to soups and stews.

Jicama Fruit Salad

From https://whatscooking.fns.usda.gov

Makes 7 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 cups jicama, sliced (small)
- 2 cups watermelon (cut into pieces)
- 1 mango
- 1 papaya (small)
- 1 lime
- 2 kiwi
- 1 tsp. lime or orange juice
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. chili powder

Directions:

Wash, peel, and cut jicama into thin slices. Wash, peel, and cut the rest of the fruit into slices or medium-sized pieces. On a large plate, arrange the fruit. Sprinkle the lime or orange juice over the fruit. In a small bowl, mix the salt and chili powder. Sprinkle over the fruit and serve. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Jicama Fries

From http://thehealthyadvocate.com/2012/08/30/jicama-fries/

Makes 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. jicama, peeled
- 1 tbsp. coconut oil
- ¼ tsp. Himalayan salt
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Slice peeled jicama into thin, matchstick-shaped fries.
2. Combine sliced jicama with coconut oil and spices.
3. Toss well to combine.
4. Evenly spread the fries on a cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes.

Jicama Chips

From http://www.doctoroz.com/videos/jicama-chips

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 whole jicamas

- chili powder (to taste)
- garlic powder (to taste)
- onion powder (to taste)
- salt (to taste)

Directions: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Peel and slice jicama into thin slices. Spread out on top of parchment paper on a cookie sheet. Season to taste. Coat chips with cooking spray. Place in oven at 400 F for approximately 25-30 minutes or until crisp. Enjoy with your favorite low-calorie dip!

Lime, Cilantro, and Chili Infused Jicama Fries

From www.annaliisakapp.com

Makes 3-4 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 smaller jicama
- 1 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. coconut oil
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. dried cilantro
- ¼ tsp. fine sea salt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 F. Add coconut oil to a medium mixing bowl and put it in the oven to melt. It only takes about a minute, so don't forget the bowl in there!

Add lime juice, chili powder, dried cilantro, and sea salt to coconut oil and mix together.

Peel jicama and cut into sticks about the size of a small french fry. Mix jicama in the coconut oil and spread onto a

baking sheet lined with unbleached parchment paper. If you have a cookie rack, lay the jicama on it. If not, you will have to flip them halfway through the baking time.

Bake for 30 minutes. Flip once at 15 minutes if not using a cookie rack.

Tangy Jicama Slaw

From http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/recipe/?iRID=829

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 medium red onion, finely chopped (1/4 cup)
- 1 ¼ tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 2 tsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- 2 ½ lbs. jicama, peeled and cut into julienne strips (10 cups)
- ⅓ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:

Soak onion in 1 cup cold water with ½ tsp. salt for 15 minutes to make onion flavor milder. Drain in a sieve, then rinse under cold water and pat dry. Whisk together lime juice, oil, sugar, pepper, and remaining ¾ tsp. salt in a large bowl until combined well. Add onion, jicama, cilantro, and salt to taste. Toss well.

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Ask an Expert // How to Make Flaky Pie Crust

ASK AN EXPERT: HOW TO MAKE FLAKY PIE CRUST

LIVE WELL UTAH

Having guests over for dinner? Need to use up the fruit on your counter? Ready to wow your family and friends? Try making a flaky, homemade pie crust and filling it with your favorite fruit or creamy filling. If you're overwhelmed with the thought of making your own pie crust, watch this video with Gaelynn Peterson, USU Extension Agent from Wayne County, and you'll be an expert pie maker in no time.

Increase the Joy with Forgiveness

INCREASE JOY WITH FORGIVENESS

LIVE WELL UTAH

So much of our happiness is within our own control. Find out how to increase joy in your marriage or relationship through forgiveness.

Isn't it amazing that the people we are closest to have the ability to offend us the most? One reason for this is that when we love someone, we lower our protective emotional wall so we are more vulnerable to getting hurt. It works the same with the people who love us – none of us are perfect – we have all said or done things that offend those we love the most. It is the way we REACT to offending or being offended that determines the effect on our relationship. It is important to think about how we really want to feel. Do you want to feel anger, resentment, bitterness, pain, and misery or do you want to feel love, peace, joy, and happiness? There are ***two*** responses that will bring about the positive feelings we all want to enjoy – ***forgiving your spouse*** when you are offended***,*** and ***offering a sincere apology*** when you have offended your loved one.

The following five steps can help you in the forgiveness process and will allow you to replace the feelings of bitterness and hurt with positive feelings of love:

1. Take time to calm down before speaking to your spouse. This allows your brain to switch from the "fight or flight" area of the brain to the higher level thinking part of the brain.
2. Talk with your spouse about what happened to offend you. Sometimes you will find it was a misunderstanding or totally unintentional.
3. Recognize you aren't perfect either. Think of the many times your spouse has forgiven you for offenses.
4. Think of at least three memories when your feelings of love were especially strong for your spouse. Whenever you feel negative emotions of anger, hurt etc., think of

these memories.
5. Give yourself time for the hurt feelings to be replaced with feelings of love. It may take some time, but don’t give up!

It is also important to learn how to offer a sincere apology. Three crucial steps are:

1. Recognize exactly what you did to offend your spouse.
2. Develop a plan to avoid repeating the same mistake again.
3. Tell your spouse you are sorry.

Making sure you include the first two steps will make the third step more meaningful and effective.

So…think of something you may have done recently to offend your spouse and begin the steps of apologizing – and think of something your spouse has done that offended you and begin the steps of forgiveness. Don’t forget the three memories!

Marriage can be hard work when you think about giving and taking, forgiving and asking for forgiveness – but when you are snuggling in the arms of the one you love, it is well worth it!

This article was written by GaeLynn Peterson, Wayne County Director and Extension Assistant Professor, FCS and 4-H Youth