

# Spring Cleaning with Homemade Products



LIVE WELL UTAH

## SPRING CLEANING WITH HOMEMADE PRODUCTS

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

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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.
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ammonia,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vinegar,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup baking soda, 1 gallon water

### **Five recipes for cleaning windows:**

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vinegar and 1 gallon water (2 tablespoons to 1 quart).
- $\frac{1}{2}$  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  $\frac{1}{2}$  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!

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*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.*

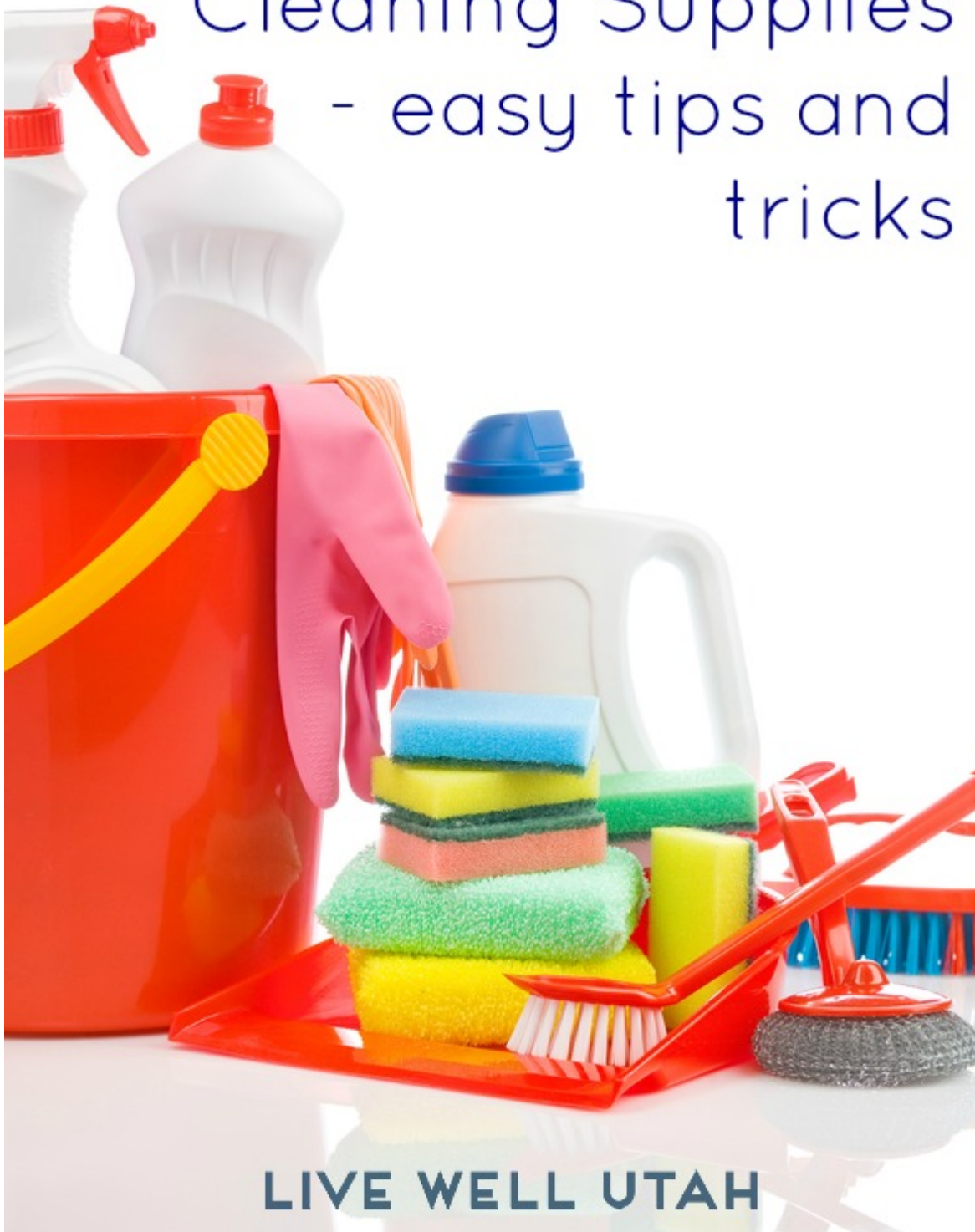
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# **Cleaning Supplies – Time to Clean Out!**

*Author – Teresa Hunsaker*

# Simplify your Cleaning Supplies - easy tips and tricks



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Spring cleaning is great for your house, but does your cleaning supply closet or cupboard need a little attention too? Now is a great time to simplify and 'clean out' the cleaning closet. What should you toss and what should you

keep? I'm sharing just a few of my favorite cleaning products and how to use them, plus a couple of recipes you may want to try for yourself, if you haven't already.

Here's my go-to list of the cleaners I like to use:

### **All Purpose Cleaner**

In my opinion, every home should have one good all-purpose cleaner. The intent of the all-purpose cleaner is to clean most surfaces and tackle many tasks. While they have their limitations, a good one will serve many functions in cleaning. They can clean floors when damp mopping, walls and counters, cupboard shelves and windows. The trick in their use may be in the strength and cleaning rag or scrubber, as well as the rinse. I have even been known to use them on a laundry stain or two.

**Commercial favorites:** Greased Lightening, Simple Green, Seventh Generation Free and Clear, Lysol All Purpose Cleaner, Fantastik Orange Action and 409.

**Note:** You can make your own cleaners with a few basic ingredients mixed with water. Here is one I like:

2 cups warm water

1 cup vinegar

1 TBS borax

1 TBS liquid Castile soap (or 1 TBS liquid dish detergent)

Mix all ingredients and put in a spray bottle.

### **Soft Scrubbing Cleanser**

It is possible to make your own scrubbing cleansers, and they work pretty well, but for a few cents extra, it is nice to have one handy and ready to go for those tough spots and stains on porcelain, some tile and even on pots and pans.

### **Natural Soft Scrub**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup liquid soap

5 – 10 drops pure antiseptic essential oil (lavender, tea tree or rosemary)

Place the baking soda in a bowl. Slowly pour in liquid soap, stirring constantly, until frosting-like. Add oil.

### **Dish Detergent**

Dish detergent is a basic staple in any cleaning cupboard. It can be used to clean many surfaces and lift many stains.

**Commercial Favorites:** Dawn Liquid Hand Dish Detergent, Palmolive and Ivory—especially the formulas for de-greasing.

### **Vinegar**

Vinegar is a great addition to a cleaning cupboard. Because of its acidity, it is also a pretty good disinfectant and mold inhibitor. Use it to dissolve mineral deposits, grease, remove traces of soap remove mildew or wax buildup, polish some metals and deodorize. Vinegar can clean brick or stone, and is an ingredient in some natural carpet cleaning recipes. Use it with baking soda to clean a toilet bowl, or mix it with salt to clean a tub. For a hundred other uses, go to [www.vinegartips.com](http://www.vinegartips.com). It is amazing how many uses it has!

### **Lemon**

Like vinegar, lemon juice has many options for your cleaning arsenal. In fact, many of the same uses for vinegar can be interchanged with lemon juice. No all, but many. Remember, nothing acidic can go on marble! Lemon juice can be used to dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. Lemon juice is a great substance to clean and shine brass and copper. It can be mixed with vinegar and/or baking soda to make cleaning pastes. Cut a lemon in half and sprinkle baking soda on the cut section. Use the lemon to scrub dishes, surfaces and stains.

Homemade Furniture Polish using Lemon:



Mix 1 cup olive oil with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lemon juice and you have a furniture polish for hardwood furniture.

### **Borax**

Borax is a naturally occurring mineral, soluble in water. It can deodorize, inhibit the growth of mildew and mold, boost the cleaning power of soap or detergent, remove stains and can be used with attractants such as sugar to kill cockroaches. One great use for Borax is to kill odor-producing mold and bacteria in garbage cans: sprinkle 1/2 cup Borax in the bottom of the garbage can.

**Note:** Borax is toxic if ingested.

### **Rubbing Alcohol or Isopropyl Alcohol**

This is an excellent disinfectant, and can be used on most home surfaces without damaging them. It is especially nice for cleaning keyboards. It cleans dry-erase boards very well and other unwanted ink-related marks. Don't buy special cleaners to get out baby formula stains, use a little isopropyl alcohol on the stain, then a regular detergent worked in. Works like a charm. Use an isopropyl alcohol/water solution for cleaning mirrors or chrome: 1 part alcohol to 4 parts water.

Many of our homes have "special" surfaces (travertine, marble, stainless steel, solid surface counters, brass and chrome) that we may need to be sure we know how to properly care for – but even many of these surfaces can be cared for with at least one or two of the above products. While there may be "special" cleaners to go with these "special" surfaces, checking to see if other options will do can save you some cash and some cupboard space.



Teresa Hunsaker

Family and Consumer Science Educator, CFCS

USU Extension, Weber County

Teresa was raised in Arizona. She received a B.S. degree from BYU in family resource management and family finance, and a second major in nutrition and food science. She has worked for USU Extension since 1980 and has served on many state, regional and local boards—including the County Fair Board for 18 years—and has served as president of her two state associations. She has written many bulletins and publications for USU Extension and appears regularly on KSL Studio 5. She is the supervisor of the Food Stamp Nutrition program for Weber County and teaches classes on finance, home management, food storage, food preservation and food safety throughout Weber County. She is married and has two grown children. She loves to cook, sew, scrapbook, work in the garden, read, camp, hike and be involved in her community.