

Zero Waste Cleaning Resources, Recipes, and Reminders

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions - email me: rbhatt4633@gmail.com

Product guides – To investigate products

- https://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners/content/decoding_labels
 - Select “Consumer Guides”
 - Scroll down to “EWG’s Guide to Healthy Cleaning” to enter the database
 - My greatest success has been to search by product name.
 - If you want to see the grades for all products, click on the first product in the search return, then click on the “Company” button at the top right of page
- <https://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov>

*****First and foremost:** Each home is different – countertops, etc. Make sure to test products on a small area before using at large!

***Although a couple of my favorite recipes are adapted from The Prairie Homestead Website, I have found two that are potentially problematic:

1. I use the toilet scrub recipe, but she instructs us to mix hydrogen peroxide and baking soda together. According to my research, this mixture will begin reacting immediately and build a gas within the container. This could erupt and cause a mess, or possibly splatter the user.
2. I do not use her recipe for the shower scrub. She suggests heating the vinegar. I never heat vinegar because the acetic acid can become more concentrated and potentially corrosive.

Ingredients – things to consider:

Difference between soap and detergent: https://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/soaps_detergents.aspx This site encourages extensive investigation – lots of information.

Palm Oil: These articles indicate how difficult this topic is, but it is certainly one that must be considered from both sides. Palm oil is in some brands of castile soap (in fact it is difficult to find products without palm oil in all areas of our lives). Before making any decisions, read a bit more.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/giving-up-palm-oil-might-actually-be-bad-environment-180958092/>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2018/12/palm-oil-products-borneo-africa-environment-impact/>

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/pages/palm-oil-the-hidden-truth-lurking-in-your-home>

<https://www.spott.org/palm-oil-resource-archive/impacts/>

Safety Reminders:

- **Never** mix bleach and ammonia

Although we are turning away from the use of bleach because of its environmental impacts, it is important to remind people that mixing these substances creates harmful fumes that can cause serious respiratory damage

- **Never** mix vinegar and bleach
- **Do not mix** Hydrogen Peroxide and vinegar. There is mixed information on the Internet. However, together they can form peracetic acid, which can be corrosive and cause burns. Since there are other alternatives for effective, cleaning and disinfecting in the home, I see no reason to use this for home cleaning.
- **Never** use vodka near a flame – it is highly flammable!!
- **Never** heat vinegar – it could concentrate the acetic acid and be corrosive.
- **Don’t mix castile** soap and vinegar (an acid and a base) – they cancel each other out and become ineffective.
- **Some alkaline ingredients like baking soda and sodium carbonate** (washing soda) might make irreparable scratches on marble or granite if used improperly – test before you use.
- **Always wear gloves** when using washing soda – it is a strong alkaline substance.
- **Vinegar** has been known to damage some natural stone surfaces – so test it first.
- **Vinegar** is reportedly not great for use on aluminum or cast-iron surfaces – works well for stainless steel. I have not tried and cannot confirm. There are lots of possibilities – cream of tartar being one – there is information in a link below.
- **Don’t premix and store** hydrogen peroxide and baking soda – they will react and create a gas that could cause an eruption and make a mess or spray eyes/faces. I use separately – see the toilet scrub recipe below as an example.

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Websites I frequent. I always approach all blogposts with skepticism until I've corroborated the information from reliable sources!

<https://www.theprairiehomestead.com/2016/04/essential-oil-cleaning-recipes.html> This site is filled with varied and interesting information. I have found some of my favorite cleaning recipes here but have adjusted and altered others (i.e. her toilet scrub).

<https://brendid.com/> She has quite an array of information. I have generally found her blog entries to be thoughtful and well researched. I've also used her recipes, as well.

<http://www.liverenewed.com/> She has been doing this for some time and has quite a collection of posts. She's a very spiritual person and mixes that in with her "green." Her *5 Surprising Nontoxic Cleaners* is worth the download.

<https://wellnessmama.com/category/natural-home/> I have found some posts to be helpful. Much like the others I have found, her blog covers a vast array of topics.

Cleaning Recipes:

Dusting

Homemade Dusting Spray – with oil

1 cup water

2 ¼ cup vinegar

3 tsp. olive oil

10-15 drops lemon essential oil

Pour all ingredients into a spray bottle – preferably glass – and shake to combine.

Shake before each use.

To use, spray onto furniture, or dusting rag, and dust as normal.

<https://www.frugalfarmwife.com/article/homemade-dusting-spray/>

Homemade Dusting Spray – without oil

1 Tbsp natural dish soap or castile soap

15 drops lemon essential oil – or less

2 Cups water

Pour ingredients into a spray bottle and shake gently to combine. Either spray onto surface and wipe clean with a cloth or spray it directly on the cloth and then wipe down the surface.

<http://www.liverenewed.com/2012/10/31-days-to-green-clean-homemade-dusting-spray.html>

Multipurpose Cleaners

My Favorite Multipurpose Cleaner – has sanitizing capabilities because made with vodka

1. All-Purpose Cleaner with Lemon

- 2 cups vodka – the cheapest you can find
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon natural dish soap (NOT castile soap) I use Ecover from Lucky's
- 10 drops lemon essential oil (depends on your desire)

Mix all ingredients in a quart-sized spray bottle. Shake to combine. Spray and wipe on counters, cabinets, sinks, toilets, and anywhere else. I adapted this recipe by using vodka and not using tea tree oil. I also decreased the lemon essential oil by 2/3 – 10 drops should do it.

Adapted from: <https://www.theprairiehomestead.com/2016/04/essential-oil-cleaning-recipes.html>

Homemade Multipurpose Cleaner – General cleaner – technically not as strong a sanitizer, although tea tree oil does have sanitizing qualities

Fill a 32 oz spray bottle with water to an inch or two below the fill line, leave room to add the soap and essential oil.

Add approx. 2 Tbsp. castile soap (She writes: "I like peppermint or citrus, but you can use any scent you like, or even unscented").

Add 10-20 drops of tea tree oil

Shake gently to combine.

<http://www.liverenewed.com/2012/10/days-green-clean-homemade-multipurpose-cleaner.html>

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Soft Scrub Cleanser for Sinks:

Simple Soft Scrub – Adapted: I really like this scrub – I used more castile soap than called for, and I will add even more in my next batch until I reach the consistency I desire.

- 1 cup baking soda
- 1/4 cup liquid castile soap
- Approximately 10 drops lavender essential oil

Mix ingredients together to form a paste (add more castile soap if needed). Apply with rag or sponge, then rinse with clean water. I especially like to use this on my stovetop and on grimy sinks.

Original recipe was citrus – no lavender – over all, I think too much essential oil – I used 25 drops in the one I brought to the session and will use less in my next batch.

- 10 drops lemon essential oil
- 10 drops lime essential oil
- 10 drops wild orange essential oil

<https://www.theprairiehomestead.com/2016/04/essential-oil-cleaning-recipes.html>

Shower Cleaners:

No Scrub Shower Cleaner - This really did a nice job, but the fumes were strong; next time I will dilute and try using dish detergent and compare.

½ cup white vinegar

½ cup Sal's Suds – or any dishwashing detergent. Sal's Suds can be purchased online.

Mix together in a spray bottle; spray on tub and tile, let stand a few minutes, scrub and rinse. You can add essential oil to this if you want. I would open a window, because the fumes are quite strong. When I make another batch, I intend to add an additional 1 cup of water to reduce the bubbles and strong fumes. This scrub lived up to its claims, and I hope the added dilution will offer the same results.

<https://brendid.com/non-toxic-no-scrub-shower-cleaner/>

Toilet Scrubs

Deep Clean Toilet Scrub

½ cup baking soda

1/3 cup liquid dishwashing detergent

Approximately 10+ drops Eucalyptus essential oil (maybe less)

¾ cup water

Mix together in a squeeze-type bottle, then squirt into toilet along with a separate squirt of hydrogen peroxide. Scrub and let stand about 20 minutes before flushing. Do not mix the hydrogen peroxide with the other ingredients – add separately.

Adapted from: <https://www.theprairiehomestead.com/2016/04/essential-oil-cleaning-recipes.html>

Laundry

Vinegar and laundry:

- Prevent static cling, and soften, brighten, and deodorize clothes by adding ½ cup vinegar to rinse

<https://m.wikihow.com/Add-Vinegar-to-Laundry>

****In one Internet post about adding vinegar when running the dishwasher, the reader was warned that this can wear out the rubber gaskets faster. Given this possibility, I am researching this as a possibility for washing machines, as well; I might have to rethink this laundry practice.

Info about dryer sheets:

<https://www.ecowatch.com/why-you-need-to-ditch-dryer-sheets-1881714654.html>

***An important addition to this article: During the session on Thursday 2/21, one of the women who attended reported that she had experimented with “green” dryer sheets, and the substance on the sheets had coated her dryer filter with a paraffin-like substance. She said that this has been linked to dryer fires.

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Some additional Cleaning Tips from EWG (Environmental Working Group)

- “For stubborn stains, try oxygen (color safe) bleaches – always wear gloves.”

For a brief description of oxygen bleach:

<http://www.1stclasscleaningnyc.com/cleaning-products-2/chlorine-bleach-vs-oxygen-bleach-whats-the-difference.html>

- Beware the commercial Air Fresheners – “they contain dozens of undisclosed chemicals, and possibly untested chemicals that are harmful to health. Open windows – baking soda absorbs odors, too.” Some of the Web blogs listed above have recipes for DIY room fresheners.

Sanitizer/Disinfectants: Vinegar, Vodka, Hydrogen Peroxide: Do a small test before using widely:

Hydrogen Peroxide: Natural disinfectant, stain remover, and bleach substitute (test on fabric before you use, however. Works great on blood, berry stains, etc.)

Don't mix hydrogen peroxide with baking soda unless you intend to use it immediately. If you mix and store – it will react and form a gas that can build up in the container. I use separately.

You can spray directly on the counter top – just add a nozzle. You must keep in the brown bottle or it will break down.

Hydrogen Peroxide + baking soda as a paste will remove stains from counter tops, etc.

Cream of Tartar can be used in place of baking soda: on grout, as a stain remover. You can make a paste or sprinkle it in your sink, bathtub, etc.

Alcohol can also be used directly – you can wipe down your counter tops without diluting. I've never mixed with anything.

Vodka: Can be used in place of white vinegar. I am currently testing a lemon-infused vodka disinfectant by peeling lemons (about 3-4). Put peels in quart Ball jar and cover with vodka. Place in a cool, dark place for about 3 weeks.

Stain and use as a disinfectant spray. I'm still waiting for it to fully infuse currently. If this works, I will use it as the base for my favorite multi-purpose cleaner above – and forego the essential oil.

Vinegar has many uses like all other disinfectant/sanitizers. Know the surfaces that need to be tested first. Also reacts with baking soda in the same way as hydrogen peroxide.

Difference between Baking Soda and Washing Soda:

<https://brendid.com/difference-washing-soda-baking-soda/>

Essential Oils: Know about your oils.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321639.php>

<https://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/ss/slideshow-essential-oils>

<https://grist.org/living/what-should-you-think-about-when-buying-essential-oils/>

<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins/ai/ingredientmono-113/tea-tree-oil>

https://www.webmd.com/search/search_results/default.aspx?query=Essential%20oils Results from a search for “Essential Oils” on Web MD

Borax – want to know more about Borax – here is some info: Unfortunately, most articles about Borax require a payment to access.

MSDS – Material Safety Data Sheet <https://www.uregina.ca/hr/hsw/assets/docs/pdf/Laboratory-Safety/Material-Safety-Data-Sheet.pdf>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borax#Uses>

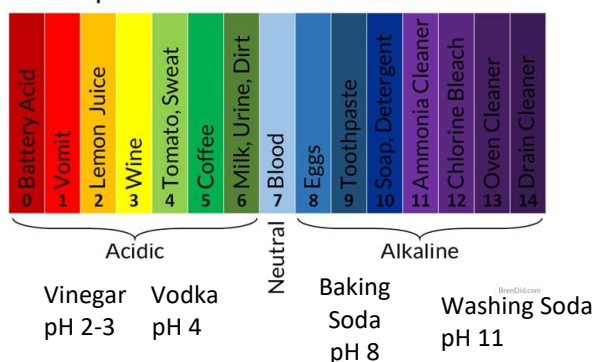
<https://wellnessmama.com/26407/borax-safe/>

Cream of Tartar as a cleaning option:

<https://www.stockpilingmoms.com/25-ways-to-clean-with-cream-of-tartar/>

<https://www.thekitchn.com/cream-of-tartar-cleaning-tips-255817>

pH of Household Substances



Remember, each pH level is a factor of 10 greater or smaller than the one before or after it.