

Byron Shire Green Cleaning Challenge

Are the cleaning products you use in your home safe for the environment
or do they pose health risks to your family?



Your challenge is to become a 'Green Cleaner':

- Avoid phosphates, petro-chemical and palm oil ingredients.
- Choose concentrates in recyclable packaging.
- Avoid aerosols that easily enter lungs and pollute indoor air.
- Choose products that are 100% biodegradable and plant based.
- Avoid 'fragrances' – the term covers dozens of synthetic chemicals.
- Avoid chlorine-based bleaches, which produce mercury and dioxins.

Chemicals in the Home

Many everyday activities around the home involves the use of toxic chemicals. Household cleaners, garden pesticides, paints and detergents can all be hazardous to our health and the environment.

Environmental Impacts

- Many household cleaners impact local waterways via stormwater drains and sewerage systems.
- The high phosphate content of detergents can cause algal blooms that grow dense enough to suffocate aquatic life.
- The manufacture of some cleaners can result in the release of harmful chemical compounds that bio-accumulate up food chains.
- There are also concerns about the amount of packaging, transport and animal testing practices associated with commercial cleaners.

Health Impacts

- Over 100 chemicals commonly found in homes have been linked to allergies, cancer, headaches, depression, chronic fatigue and respiratory problems.
- The health impacts of any cleaner are determined by the toxicity of each chemical ingredient, your exposure to the substance and your personal sensitivity.
- Most impacts relate to low level, cumulative exposures, rather than acute poisoning. Children and seniors are especially vulnerable.

Green Cleaners

- Many commercial cleaners are simply more concentrated or more chemically active versions of simpler cleaners that can be made from basic, non-toxic ingredients found in most homes.
- Many of these substances are used in cooking and rapidly biodegrade in the environment.
- See overleaf for a list of green cleaning recipes!



Natural Cleaning Recipes



*Please note, these recipes are suggestions only and safety precautions should be followed. You should wear gloves and have a general understanding of each ingredient prior to use.

General Surface Cleaner.....

Ingredients: 3 - 4 cups of water, 1/3 cup vinegar, 1/4 cup baking soda, 2 drops essential oil (e.g. eucalypts).

Method: Mix ingredients together, apply with a spray bottle.

Glass and Mirror Cleaner.....

Ingredients: 1 cup white vinegar, 5 drops eucalyptus oil, newspaper.

Method: Combine vinegar and oil in a spray bottle. Spray surface and wipe away with newspaper (will prevent fogging of mirrors).

Furniture Polish.....

Ingredients: 1 tbsp lemon oil, 2 cup olive oil, 2 drops sandalwood oil.

Method: Mix ingredients and apply with a soft cloth.

Drain Opener.....

Ingredients: 1/2 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup vinegar, 1/2 litre boiling water, plunger.

Method: Use plunger on drain, mix ingredients and pour down drain.

Laundry Gel (Detergent).....

Ingredients: 4 cups water, 1/3 cup of grated pure soap flakes, 1/4 washing soda, 2 drops of your favourite essential oil (e.g. peppermint).

Method: Dissolve soap flakes in boiling water, mix and cool. Add remaining ingredients and pour into storage container.

Carpet Cleaner.....

Ingredients: Bicarb, 1/2 cup soap, 5 cups boiling water, 3 tbsp washing soda, cloudy ammonia.

Method: Sprinkle carpet with bicarb and leave over night. Vacuum carpet. Mix remaining ingredients together, use this to shampoo the carpet.

