

The Kent County Health Department and West Michigan Environmental Action Council present...

# Green Cleaning for Your Healthy Home



GREATER GRAND RAPIDS  
CHILDREN'S  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH INITIATIVE



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*Quality living, just a healthy environment*

**WMEAC**

## **What is green cleaning?**

“Green” cleaning means using products that are non-toxic, are inexpensive, and that really work to clean your house.

## **Why clean green?**

The EPA estimates that Americans spend 90% of their time indoors. Indoor air pollutants are 2-5 times higher than those of outdoor air, and most come from cleaning products! **Green cleaning saves you money, makes your home healthier, and protects our water and nature from harmful chemicals.**

## **Getting started!**

These recipes offer ways to make household cleaning products that are safe for you, your loved ones, and the earth. Please read on to find out what you'll need, and see warnings.

**Questions? Call the  
Kent County Health Department  
at (616) 632-6912 or WMEAC at  
(616) 451-3051. Visit [www.wmeac.org](http://www.wmeac.org).**

## What You Need to Clean Green

- \* **White distilled vinegar**, a cleaner that cuts grease. Found in the salad dressing aisle .
- \* **Lemon juice**, a mildly acid-forming fruit juice that will help fight germs, fungus, and grease.
- \* **Baking soda**, a cleanser that gets rid of smells, scours, and increases soap's power. Found in baking aisle.
- \* **Borax**, a powder that cleans, deodorizes, and disinfects. Found in laundry section.
- \* **Vegetable oil-based liquid castile soap**, a soap that is good for the earth and gets things clean! Substitute vegetable oil-based dish soap in half quantity. Found in cleaning products section.

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## What You Need to Clean Green (continued)

- \* **Olive oil**, a safe product to use in place of wood polish.
- \* **Salt**, a non-scratching abrasive cleanser that fights germs.
- \* **Distilled water**, instead of tap water. Because it does not contain the minerals found in tap water, it will improve the power of your cleanser.
- \* **Essential oils**, which are strong plant fragrances. They smell nice, and some fight germs and fungus, and repel bugs.
- \* **Washing soda** boosts the power of detergent. Found in laundry detergent section.

## Warnings - Read These First

Never make household cleanser in an old cleaning bottle: The ingredients could react with old contents.

When using a recipe, order matters. Always follow the directions to avoid soap clumping and other reactions.

**Borax** can bother your eyes and is harmful if swallowed. *Keep away from children and pets.*

Avoid direct contact between **pure essential oils** and skin, eyes, or surfaces. They can harm your skin and remove paint or finish. Use a small amount, and *keep away from children and pets.*

## All-Purpose Spray Cleaner No. 1

1-16 oz. spray bottle

1 teaspoon Borax

2 tablespoon vinegar

¼ cup vegetable-oil based soap

Hot water

A few drops essential oil (optional)

How to make: Add Borax to hot water in 16 oz. spray bottle, cap, and shake until Borax is dissolved. Add vinegar and shake. Then add soap and oil.



## All-Purpose Spray Cleaner No. 2

1 tablespoon vegetable-oil based soap (½ tablespoon if using vegetable-based dish soap)

Warm water

How to make: Dilute soap with warm water.

Tip - If there is a film left after using, wipe surface with vinegar-water mixture.



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## Scouring Powder

1 cup baking soda  
1 cup Borax  
1 cup salt

How to make: Mix well and put in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and punch holes in the top. Cover with plastic wrap when not using. Use as any other scouring powder.

Tip - If this leaves a film, wipe surface with vinegar-water mixture.



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## **Window/Glass Cleaner No. 1**

1 part water  
1 part vinegar

How to make: Fill a spray bottle one quarter of the way with warm water. Pour vinegar in until bottle is three-quarters of the way full, cap, and shake. Finish filling with warm water, cap, and shake again.

Tip - Use a dry cloth or paper rag to avoid streaks.



## Window/Glass Cleaner No. 2

Club soda

How to make: Fill a small spray bottle with plain club soda. Spray onto window or glass surface, and wipe.



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## Toilet Cleaner No. 1

- 1/2 cup unscented castile soap
- 2 cups baking soda
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoons vinegar

How to make: Mix unscented castile soap and baking soda together. Dilute with 1/4 cup water and two tablespoons vinegar. Mixture will begin to foam. Mix and pour into a squirt bottle. Squirt inside the toilet bowl, under the rim and scrub with a toilet brush. Rinse and deodorize bowl with vinegar.



## Toilet Cleaner No. 2

¼ to ½ cup of baking soda  
or Borax

How to make: Sprinkle baking soda or Borax in and around the toilet bowl. Allow to stand for a few hours or overnight. Using a toilet brush, scrub the surface clean and flush the toilet.

Tip - Use a wet pumice stone to remove tough stains.



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## Wood Floor Cleaner

1 cup vinegar  
Warm water

How to make: For mopping, pour vinegar in a bucket, and add very warm water. Or, fill spray bottle with 50/50 solution of water and vinegar. Spray on floor and wipe with clean rag or mop.



## Non-Wood Floor Surfaces

2-3 drops of castile soap  
Warm water

How to make: Add 2-3 drops of castile soap in a bucket and fill with warm water. Mop as usual.



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## All-Purpose Laundry Soap

½ cup baking soda

½ cup powdered castile soap

¼ cup washing soda

¼ cup Borax,

4 drops of essential oil of choice

How to make: Mix all items listed above. Use ¼ - ½ cup per load.



## Oven Cleaner

Baking soda  
Water

How to make: Using spray bottle, coat oven with water. Sprinkle bottom of oven with baking soda to cover, then dampen bottom of oven with more water from the spray bottle. Let sit overnight and scrub out stains. For the sides of oven, make a paste with baking soda and water and spread all over.

Tip - For a really dirty oven, sprinkle with baking soda and wet the soda down with a spray bottle filled with 50/50 vinegar and water. Use a scrub pad to remove build-up. (The mixture will fizzle.)



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## Drain Cleaner

½ cup baking soda  
1 cup vinegar

How to make: Pour baking soda into the drain. Add a cup of vinegar. The mixture will start to fizzle. Cover the drain with a plunger until fizzing stops. Rinse with hot water. Repeat if necessary.



## Pest Management

½ cup Borax

¼ cup flour

How to make: Mix well and put in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and punch holes in the top. Sprinkle the powder along the baseboards and door sills.



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