

ecOLOGIC

Ideas for
a greener
Garden State

EDITED BY JESSICA KITCHIN



EQUINOX DETOX

Pack up the winter clothes, clean out the garage, and scrub those windowsills. It is spring cleaning time, which is good for your closets and floors, but not always for your air, watershed, or planet. Caustic chemicals and petroleum-based cleaners are common, but many natural options are just as effective without the environmental downside. Here, we offer a few tips on keeping your spring clean green:

- ✓ Mix baking soda with water for an all-purpose cleanser for everything from ovens to bathtubs.
- ✓ Vinegar can be used to clean stainless steel, stone, or brick, and to get rid of mildew.
- ✓ Use borax detergent in the wash. Hand wash less-soiled items with natural soap and a bit of vinegar. Dry on a clothesline in the sun.
- ✓ For clogged drains, pour in ½ cup baking soda and then ½ cup white vinegar.
- ✓ Cover the drain, wait 30 minutes, and pour in a teapot of boiling water.
- ✓ Use lemon juice or vinegar to clean glass, and dry with newspaper.
- ✓ Deodorize carpets using cornstarch. To remove stains, sprinkle baking soda, wait 30 minutes, and vacuum.
- ✓ For wood floors, apply a thin coat of equal parts vegetable oil and vinegar, and rub in.
- ✓ Use mineral oil to polish furniture.
- ✓ Rub a slice of lemon across your chopping block to fight household and food bacteria.
- ✓ Spread borax detergent in the bottom of garbage cans to prevent mold.
- ✓ Freshen the air with plants, dried lavender bundles, or by boiling cinnamon sticks and herbs.
- ✓ When switching to natural products, do not dump toxic cleaners down the drain or in the trash. Call your town for disposal options. --J.K.

NATURAL WOMEN

With a dash of vinegar and a pinch of grapefruit seed extract, more than a dozen Passaic County residents create their own cleaning products through the Holistic Moms Network, a national non-profit organization, founded in New Jersey in 2003, that provides support to those interested in natural health and holistic living.

"Chemicals in standard household cleaners are more toxic to people, pets, and the environment than we're often led to believe," says Nancy Massotto, Passaic County chapter leader and HMN executive director. "If you want a truly safe and green product, you need to make your own."

The group has tried out recipes from the HMN cookbook and one supplied by Women's Voices for the Earth, a national environmental health group that gives people the tools to hold their own green cleaning parties (womenandenvironment.org). Members mix their own cleaners and store them in recycled spray bottles and milk cartons.

There are HMN chapters all over New Jersey that host such parties and workshops. For more information, go to holisticmoms.org or call 877-HOL-MOMS. —JANICE PERRONE

Organic Mechanics

Growing Healthy Families: Cooking With Holistic Moms contains more than 300 recipes from HMN members, including homemade baby food, natural baby wipes, nontoxic household cleaners, and holistic remedies (\$15 at cookbook.holisticmoms.org).

Recipe: Natural Cleaner

Suggested uses: Windows, glassware, mirrors, hard surfaces. Not recommended for natural stone.

Ingredients:

- 1 qt. spray bottle
- 1 to 3 cups white vinegar
- 1 tsp. castile soap
- 25-35 drops essential oil (lemon, lavender, etc.)
- 25-50 drops grapefruit seed extract
- Water

Directions: Fill spray bottle with 1 to 3 cups vinegar. Add remaining ingredients. Fill to the top with water. Shake well.

GROWING
Healthy Families



COOKING WITH HOLISTIC MOMS