

## ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ALTERNATIVES FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES

### CLEANERS

**Hardwood floors:** equal parts of distilled white vinegar and vegetable oil, place mixture in a spray bottle. Work small sections of the floor at a time. Spritz small area at a time and rub in with clean cotton cloth. Use another clean cotton cloth to buff.

**Vinyl/linoleum floors:** 1 cup distilled white vinegar to 1 gallon water.

**Carpet stains:** Club soda or seltzer water on fresh stains. Set a couple of minutes; blot up with paper towel or sponge.

**Carpet stains:** Work a heaping tablespoon of foam shaving cream into stain. Let dry then rinse with cold water.

**Wall stains:** Grease-pour baby powder on a soft clean cloth-no water needed.

**Crayon marks-**baby wipes or WD 40 with a paper towel.

**Ballpoint ink-**hairspray, blot with rag.

**Furniture polish-** Mix ½ cup of distilled vinegar with cup olive oil or mix 1 cup of mineral or baby oil with 3 drops of lemon extract.

**Water mark/white ring in furniture-**(proceed cautiously) rub ring with a dab of non-gel, plain white toothpaste on a damp cloth until gone. Wipe and buff with a soft cotton cloth.

**Major water mark-**mix non-gel white toothpaste with equal amount of baking soda. Wipe and buff dry.

**Scratch removal-** on dark wood fill scratch with a paste made from an it of cooled instant coffee mixed with 1 or 2 drops of water. Use cotton swab to apply. Varnished wood- colored eyebrow pencil, shoe polish or crayon. On mahogany- a little iodine will had most scratches.

**Tarnish removal-**Place ashes from a wood burning fireplace in a glass jar. Add 2 tablespoons of baking soda to each cup of ashes and mix. Take a scoop of mixture and add just enough water to form a mildly abrasive paste. Use a damp cloth to gently rub the paste unto the metal. Use a soft cloth to rinse and dry immediately.

**Silver-**baking soda on a damp cloth, rinse and buff dry. Or try a coating silver with a thin layer of non-gel white toothpaste, gently rub with damp cloth. Rinse and buff dry with soft cloth.

**Stainless steel-** club soda on a sponge. Dry with soft cloth. Stainless steel flatware is dull pour a little baking soda on ea utensil, add 1 or 2 drops of water and rub it shiny. Rinse and dry. Sinks- paste out of 1 part of 3% hydrogen peroxide and 3 parts cream of tarter. Put mixture on water spots and when it dries wipe off with a wet cloth.

**Pewter**- large outer leaf of a cabbage. Buff with soft cloth.

**Mirrors**-Mix equal parts of distilled white vinegar with water. Scrunch up a piece of newspaper and dip in the mixture. Wring it out, then wipe mirror. Wipe mirror dry with a clean cloth. (Wearing rubber gloves will prevent print off your hands)

**Fog free mirrors**-every 2-3 weeks put a generous amount of foam shaving cream on the entire mirror and let it evaporate. Then wipe off.

**Hairspray from mirrors**-Wipe with rubbing alcohol on a soft cloth.

**Lint free wash**-use 1 cup of distilled white vinegar instead of fabric softener keeps lint from getting on other clothes. Vinegar is inexpensive softener as well. Will not smell like vinegar.

**Clothes brightness boost**-pour ½ cup baking soda into load.

**Bleach substitute**-1/2 cup lemon juice or 1 cup distilled white vinegar or 6 ounces of 3% hydrogen peroxide.

**Perspiration stains**- dissolve 5 adult aspirins in a basin of hot water, soak white clothes. When ready to wash places clothes and mixture into washing machine.

**Restore colors**-when fabrics start to fade add 1 cup of table salt to wash.

**Glue**-place garment in sink filled with water and add 4 tablespoons of distilled white vinegar, let soak 1-2 hours. Wash as usual.

**Tobacco odor**-tobacco odor in a room white vinegar in dishes let set over night. In clothes add ½ cup baking soda along with laundry detergent.

**Urine**-on a mattress moisten spot with plain water work enough borax (buy at supermarket) to cover stain. Let dry and vacuum.

**Sheer Curtains**-While in the wash dissolve a packet of unflavored gelatin in a cup of boiling water and add to final rinse cycle.

**Toilet bowls**-Toss a couple of Alka-Seltzer or denture cleaning tablets into the bowl. Leave for 1-2 hours and brush and flush. Toilet tank- to prevent wear and tear on parts, once a month pour a 1 pound box of baking soda into the tank before you go to bed. In the morning flush the toilet. A couple of denture cleaning tablets for 1 hour will work the same way.

**Tank leak test**- if you think your tank is leaking place a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If after flushing the water in the bowl turns color it is leaking.

**Rust stains in sink-** For rust stains mix 1 teaspoon of table salt or cream of tartar with ¼ teaspoon of lemon juice and make a paste. Put paste on a soft cloth and rub stain away. To prevent rust paint the bottom of the rim (the part that touches the sink) with clear nail polish. Let dry and repeat.

**Shower curtain-** Before hanging up a new shower curtain, fill the bathtub with a few inches of water then add 2 cups of table salt. Put in the new shower curtain for 10 minutes. Shake off water and dry with a clean cloth and hang your mildew proof curtain.

**Steamy bathroom-** before filling the tub fill the tub with 1” cold water then add hot water. This may also prevent mold and mildew from developing.

**Chrome-**clean anything chrome with white distilled vinegar or rubbing alcohol dabbed on a cloth and buff dry.

## **CEILING FANS**

**Ceiling fans-** run clockwise in the winter to push warm air down and counter clockwise in the summer. This may cut heating bills by 10%.

## **DEODORIZER**

**Room deodorizer-** in a spray bottle then add 2 cups of distilled water, 2 cups of rubbing alcohol and 3 drops of natural lemon oil. This is non toxic and will last a long time.

## **OUTDOOR GRILLS**

**Outdoor grills-**before lighting the grill lightly coat the racks with vegetable oil or nonstick spray. Toss some fresh herbs on the coals-rosemary, sage, basil or sage the scent of the herbs will subtly flavor the foods. When done cooking with the grill still warm, sprinkle baking soda on it. Let sit overnight. Clean and rinse the next day.

## **GARDEN PLANTS (also see Lawn/Garden section)**

**Butterflies-** plant cornflower, aster, dill, morning glory, verbena, mint, globe thistle, goldenrod, lilac, pansy, parsley, shasta daisy, sweet marjoram, zinnia, sage and butterfly bush.

**African violets-**Grow bigger and healthier by simply sticking a few nails around the soil.

**Azaleas-**Once a month fill the watering can with 2 tablespoons of distilled white vinegar in 1 quart of water.

**Bulbs-** before planting protect bulbs by dusting with medicated baby powder. Dust them again with the powder during winter storage-prevents fungal problems.

**Cabbage-** sprinkle cayenne pepper on the plant as they grow. A trickle of a little milk mixed with water on the cabbage protects it from cabbage worms.

**Carrots-** mix carrot seed with coffee grounds to repel root maggots.

**Climbing plants-** use an old umbrella (fabric removed) drive handle into the ground, open the umbrella so that the spokes are extended and use as a trellis. At the base of the umbrella plant clematis or wisteria in sunny locations or honeysuckle or morning glory in partial shade.

**Ferns-** finely chop 3-4 oysters and work into soil.

**Forsythia-** Once it blooms it should be pruned. To revitalize mature forsythias, revive  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the oldest (largest) branches at ground level. Do this every other year.

**Geraniums-** Takes a lot of water. Rinse used coffee grounds and put them on top of soil surrounding the plants.

**Herbs-** more flavorful if harvested right before flowers open.

**Hollyhocks-** When you (or a friend) finish their beer add a little water to the can or bottle, mix and water plants.

**Hydrangeas-** acid soil yields blue plants while alkaline soil yields pink flowers. For blue flowers add 1 tablespoon of aluminum sulfate (garden store) to 1 gallon of water. Make sure plants are 2 years old. Water throughout the growing season.

**Lilac-** After bush blooms-prune. Remove dead branches and cut back healthy stems 1-2". Water and fertilize regularly. The lilac may take 1 or 2 years to re bloom but it's worth the effort.

**Perennials-** Layer hay, shredded leaves or grass clipping on frozen ground to prevent premature thaw.

**Roses-** nourish roses by air drying banana peels until crumple. Use 3 peels per rosebush bury a few inches deep into soil. Also Epson salts help strengthen color. During 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> weeks of May and June feed according to plant height 1-teaspoon of Epson salts per foot, work into soil around the stem. For mature bushes sprinkle  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of Epson salt around stem.

## GLUES

**Gorilla glue-** tough and glues wood, stone, ceramic, metal etc. It is water proof and not affected by sun, rain or heat. It can be sanded, stained or painted. (Do not let children or pets eat this product) Also see Gorilla tape-incredibly strong.

**Gripping stuff-** Removable, reusable, repositionable, and nontoxic is polyester felt with a special adhesive. May be pressed on and peel off repeatedly.

## INSECTS

**Flying insect repellent-** Many flying insects are repelled by the smell of basil. Dry 3-4 stems together with a rubber band. Dry them upside down in a well ventilated area out of direct sunlight. When leaves are dry, crumble them in a small muslin bag or pieces of cheesecloth and hang them around the house.

**Silverfish-** hate pungent odors such as dried lavender leaves, bay leaves, tansy, mint leaves or cinnamon bark. Dry area thoroughly prior to placing dried leaves. Books or papers should be sealed in a plastic bag and placed in a freezer for 4 days to destroy an infestation.

**Bees, yellow jackets and wasps**-these insects are attracted to warm bright colors. Use fabric-softener sheets on tables or rub on skin. Sculpt a sandwich size brown paper bag into a beehive and hang it along the air path outside your home were bees would travel. The theory is that bees will avoid hives that are not their own.

**Mosquitoes**- Drink 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water (add a little honey if you wish). You may also dab 1 or 2 drops of lavender oil on pulse points-inside the wrists, inside elbows behind the ears and knees.

## LAWN/GARDEN

**Seedlings**-Start seedlings in a plastic pot. Commercial greenhouses gently brush their hand over the seedlings several times a day to get them used to air movement. This helps them grow strong and hardy.

**Watering lawn and garden**-water early in the morning-not at night. Leaving leaves wet overnight may cause fungal diseases. Do not over water or water too frequently causes roots to weaken. Water grass thoroughly after fertilizing.

**Mowing the grass**-It is best to mow the grass more often because its less stressful tot eh grass. Grass should be about 3" high to prevent it from drying out and it prevents weeds. Aeration is good for lawns. Cool grasses such as Kentucky Blue grass should be aerated in the fall. Warm season grasses such as carpet grass should be aerated in the late spring or summer when they are actively growing.

**Garden weeds**-Safe and environmentally friendly-in a spray bottle combine 1 quart distilled water and either 1 ounce of distilled white vinegar or 1 ounce of gin, plus 1 capful of baby shampoo. Spray weeds until they are soaking wet. Let dry a day or so the weeds will turn brown and die.

**Patio or sidewalk weeds**-pour distilled white vinegar on the weeds so they are good and wet. This is also good for patio moss. To keep weeds from growing in the first place, sprinkle table salt or baking soda into the cracks.

## PEST CONTROL

**Birds**-place shiny objects such as tinsel strips on posts and states.

**Cats**- pieces of garlic bulb or mix 2 tablespoons of mustard powder, 1 tablespoon of cayenne pepper, 2 tablespoons flour and 2 cups of water. Place in a spray bottle.

**Deer/animals**- hang car fresheners from trees and bushes. Tie old CD on a string and hang. Use mothballs or cayenne pepper in soil around shrubs.

**Dogs**- neutralize dog urine and to bring grass back mix 1 cup of baking soda into 1 gallon water. Saturate the area every 3 days.

**Insects**- aphids and whiteflies are attracted to yellow. Paint a pan yellow and fill with soapy water. If on your plants mix ½ cup of powdered milk with 1 quart of warm water and

spray on plant leaves. Planting onion or garlic plants throughout the garden will help keep insects away. Most insects do not like the smell of mint. Use mint leaves.

**Rabbits-** use baby talc, kitty litter, mothballs or human hair.

**Raccoons/Woodchucks/Gophers-** In a blender put 3 cloves of garlic, a few chili peppers and 3 cups of water. Poor some solution in each hole.

## **RODENTS/MICE**

**Rodents-** plug every hole that leads into the house with steel wool including gas and water pipes. Rodents do not like to chew through steel wool.

**Mice-**hate the smell of peppermint. Put a few drops of peppermint on a cotton ball and place them in strategic locations.

**Slugs/nails-** Collect empty tuna or similar type cans. Dig shallow holes and bury the cans open side up. Fill each can 2/3 full with beer. Discard dead slugs as needed.

**Squash bugs-**place strips of heavy aluminum foil under the vines. The foil will keep soil moist and block sunlight which will help weeds from growing. It may also speed up the crop-ripening time.

**Squirrels-**coat bird feeder metal poles with petroleum jelly.

## **WINTER**

**De-icing-**Rock salt poisons the soil. Use natural clay kitty litter or sand. Baking soda will melt ice and prevent slipping. For a wooden deck use cornmeal.

**Snow shovel-** put a coat of floor wax on you snow shovel to prevent snow from sticking.