

Cleaning Ideas & Formulas:

Laundry:

- Soap Nuts – contain saponin which dissolves in water and lifts fats, oils, and removes odors from laundry.
 - Soap nuts can also be used in water to clean just about anything.
 - They are gentle on clothes and great for people with allergies. (I use them when washing the bird covers & items used around the birds...)
 - Also available in a liquid concentrate and work in all washer types.
- Homemade Laundry Soap:
 - 1 Bar of Natural Soap (Ivory, Castile, etc)
 - 1 cup Baking Soda
 - 1 cup Washing Powder (or Soda)
Either grate or shred the soap (Bar) then mix well with the other ingredients. Store the dry mix in an airtight container. Use 1-2 Tablespoons per load. (If you want to use as a liquid mix with ¼ cup hot water)
- Homemade Laundry Soap #2:
 - 2 Tablespoons Liquid natural soap (Ivory, Dawn, Castile, etc)
 - 3 Tablespoons Borax
 - 3 Tablespoons Washing Powder or Soda
Put the ingredients in a one gallon jug. Add 4 cups boiling water and swirl until the ingredients are dissolved in the liquid. Let the liquid cool. Then fill almost to the top with cold water. Seal and use ¼ cup per load of laundry.
- Fabric Softener:
 - Add ¼ to ½ cup white vinegar and 1-3 drops of your favorite essential oil in the rinse. The essential oil is optional but for example I will use lavender essential oil for laundering sheets or bedding.
- Pre-soak – white vinegar with water mix & soak overnight (I usually put items in the washer, add ½ cup white vinegar & then add enough water to soak them. The next day I just complete the load, add the soap nuts, & let the washer run the cycle.

Kitchen Cleaning:

- General Purpose Kitchen Cleaner – combine the following and mix well. Can be used in a spray bottle or applied with microfiber cloth or mop. I also use this cleaner on bathroom countertops, walls, and carpet areas (test first)
 - 1 qt warm water
 - Add 1 tsp liquid soap (soap nut concentrate, Castile, Ivory plain)
 - 1 tsp borax (careful with the powder dust) (THIS IS OPTIONAL)
 - ¼ cup white vinegar
- All-Purpose Cleaner
 - Consumer Reports recommends : Soapy ammonia (I do not use this even though it works, I do not like the odor or hazards of working with ammonia)

- All Purpose Cleaner #2 (Care2)
 - ½ tsp washing soda
 - A drop of mild liquid soap (Castile, Ivory)
 - 2 cups hot water
 - Mix into a spray bottle, shake well until soda has dissolved, spray on surface & wipe off
- Scrubbing powder –
 - Borax makes a good scrubbing powder but can scratch some surfaces.
 - Baking Powder also is good for scrubbing (especially dishes). (THIS IS WHAT I USE**
 - I have read of recipes where they combine Borax, Baking Powder, and Salt in equal amounts. I have not used that combination but see no reason why they would not work together, since each is a good scrubbing agent by itself.
- Disinfecting Cleaners – recipes
 - Keep a spray bottle of diluted white vinegar to use (1pt vinegar to 6 pt water)
 - Cinnamon Disinfectant (You can make this substituting Tea Tree oil for Cinnamon oil)
 - ¼ tsp liquid soap emulsifier (Castile, Ivory) – then add to that
 - 1/8 tsp cinnamon oil and blend then add (if using Tree Tea Extract 1-3 drops)
 - 1 cup water
 - Shake well before using.
 - REMINDER: Tea Tree oil is harmful to pets if they ingest the oil
 - Simple Disinfectant
 - 2 tsp Borax
 - 4tbs White Vinegar
 - 3 cups Hot Water
 - Wipe this mixture onto the surfaces with a damp cloth or use a spray bottle
- Washing Dishes
 - Hand washing - use a eco-friendly alternative to common dishwashing liquid, something like Seventh Generation, Natures Clean, Earth Friendly, Ivory, Castile
 - Automatic Dishwashing – Many dishwashers require certain cleaners;
 - With some you can use an eco-friendly alternative.
 - Or a home-made mix:
 - 1 cup Baking Soda, 1 cup Borax, ½ cup Salt mixed together and kept in a sealed container. Use 2 tablespoons per load.
 - No matter which product you use make sure to add White Vinegar to the rinse cycle.
- Ovens
 - Microwave –
 - Use the general cleaner or
 - Cut up 5-6 lemons and place them in a bowl with water. Heat in the microwave on high for 5 minutes and then let sit in the microwave 30-40 minutes. Then wipe the inside of the microwave with a microfiber cloth.

- Regular Oven Cleaner
 - There are alternative cleaners on the market but they usually contain d-limonene which some people can be sensitive to the fumes.
 - Cleaner #1: Make a paste of 1 cup Baking Soda and add the water to get a paste that spreads easily (you can add 1-2 tsp of liquid soap such as Ivory, Castile). Spread this on the oven interior and leave overnight with the door closed. Remove with water and a nylon scrub pad. Use a steel wool or SOS pad on stubborn areas.
 - Cleaner #2: Mix together 2 Tbs mild soap (Ivory liquid), 2 tsp Borax, and warm water in a spray bottle. Mix until it dissolves completely. Then spray it on the inside of the oven very close to the oven surface. Leave the solution on for 20 – 30 minutes, then scrub of with a scrub pad and baking soda (as a scrubbing agent).
- Stainless Steel Cleaner
 - 2tablespoons baking soda
 - ½ cup white vinegar
 - 2 cups warm water

Mix ingredients together in a spray bottle. The mixture will foam, when it stops put on the cap and spray the stainless steel surfaces, wipe clean & dry with a lint-free rag.
- Floors
 - General Floor Cleaner: Mix 1 cup White Vinegar to a gallon bucket of warm water.
 - General Floor Cleaner #2:
 - 1 cup vinegar
 - ½ cup baking soda
 - 8-10 cups hot water
 - 1 tablespoon borax
 - 1 tablespoon washing soda
 - 30 drops essential oil (Optional)

Mix vinegar and baking soda together in the bucket; add the hot water, Borax, washing soda, & essential oil until all the powders have dissolved. Use mop or sponge to apply on the floor and then mop with a clean, dry towel or mop to dry the floor completely.
 - Laminate Flooring – Use eco-friendly cleaners made for laminate floors
 - Wood Floors –
 - Cleaner: Mix ½ cup Cider Vinegar to 1-2 gal pail of water and clean with a microfiber mop, making sure not to leave puddle areas.
 - Cleaner: Mix ¼ cup mild soap, ½ cup Cider Vinegar, with warm water to fill a 2 gal bucket. Clean with a microfiber mop making sure to not leave puddle areas.
 - Cleaner/Polish: Mix 1/8 cup olive or vegetable oil with 1 Tbs Cider Vinegar and add 1 Tbs vodka. Wipe on the floor with a microfiber mop or cloth until floor is evenly polished.
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 - Tile Floors:
 - Use General Floor Cleaner
 - Can mix ¼ cup baking soda with ½ cup white vinegar together and apply with a microfiber mop (however – this could be abrasive to some tile). Be sure to rinse the floor completely.

- Carpets:
 - Freshener:
 - Sprinkle baking soda on carpet and let it sit for several hours (overnight) and then vacuum really well.
 - Cleaning:
 - Clean stains with baking soda and water mixed or
 - Clean stains with club soda

Bathroom Cleaning

- Use General Cleaner on counters, walls, general areas
- Use Scrubbing mix for tough areas in tubs, showers, sinks, and other areas
- Toilet Bowl Cleaner:
 - Cleaner #1: put ¼ cup Borax and let overnight. Scrub the next day.
 - Cleaner #2: scrub with a mixture of ½ cup Borax and 1 gallon water.
 - Cleaner#3: Turn off water flow valve & flush toilet until tank is drained. Pour in 1 cup baking soda, then slowly add 1 cup vinegar making sure to cover as much of the bowl surface as possible. They will react – this is normal. Use the toilet brush to scrub the surface to remove rings and stains. Turn the water back on and when tank fills, flush the toilet. (for an air freshener, you can add 10 drops of essential oil to this cleaning mix)
- Glass Cleaner
 - Recipe #1
 - Mix equal parts white vinegar and water in a spray bottle. Spray on glass or mirrors to clean, wipe glass or mirror to remove.
 - If sensitive to vinegar smell, 5-10 drops of an essential oil can be added.
 - Spray on the glass and wipe with a microfiber cloth, a lint free cloth, or 2 week old crumpled newspaper to dry the glass. (a squeegee may also be used)
 - These mixtures also work for mold and mildew.
 - Recipe #2 (Consumer Reports)
 - 7 pints of cold water
 - ½ cup soapy ammonia
 - 1 pint rubbing alcohol
 - Combine in a 1-2 gal bucket. Add the alcohol & ammonia carefully, mix well and pour into spray bottles (can add food coloring to help distinguish it from other cleaners)
- Drain Opener / Cleaner
 - Mix 1 cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar into the drain, allow sitting for 5 minutes then following with approximately 4 cups of boiling water down the drain. Then flush the drain with hot water. You can flush the drain weekly with this mix to prevent clogs. (without boiling water, just follow with hot tap water)

General House Cleaning

- Dusting
 - Microfiber cloths used dry or slightly damp.
 - Mix 1 tsp olive oil with ¼ cup white vinegar and apply with a soft cloth or microfiber cloth.
- Furniture Polish
 - Mix 1 tsp olive oil with ¼ cup white vinegar, shake well and apply evenly with a soft cloth. Then polish with a dry cloth.

Personal Care Products

- Castile Soap
 - Body Wash – dilute 1:2 with water into a squirt style bottle.
 - Shaving Cream – full strength applied and then “shaved-off”
 - Hand Soap – Use a foaming soap dispenser, filled with water and 1-2 tsp of castile soap. This avoids triclosan and still makes a soapy hand wash.

Pest Control

- Know the pest you are trying to control
- Consider Sanitation, Cultural, Biological Control Methods
- Try creating a landscape that attracts beneficial insects
- Methods:
 - Vacuum inside pests when possible
 - Borax works well against insect pests (but can be toxic to pets)
 - Mild soap mixed with water kills some insects on contact
 - A basic pest contact spray:
 - Mix together approximately 15 drops of hot pepper sauce, 1 Tbs of mild liquid soap and chopped garlic. Place in a spray bottle filled ¾ with water. This has to be reapplied after rainfall or every few weeks. (There are lots of spray mixes combining hot peppers & garlic with mild soap, but most require the mix to sit for at least overnight – this one does not so I use it)
 - Natural oils can repel some insects
 - Eucalyptus repels flies
 - Citrus oils repel ants
 - Cedar repels moths
 - Cayenne pepper repels ants (attracts flies)
 - White vinegar will remove the ant trail and repel ants
 - White vinegar will also repel spiders, so if applied around windows & doors outside you will not have spider webs
 - Diatomaceous Earth both repels some & kills other insects (soft bodied, slugs)
 - Epsom salts in a spray is toxic to insects in the beetle family

- Boiling water will kill weeds
 - Vinegar mixes will also kill weeds. USDA studies confirmed a 20% solution killed 80-100% of weeds in the test areas. This is hand applied, spot spraying as vinegar is a non-selective plant killer. Younger weeds only required a 5-10% solution to be effective. There are vinegar pesticides on the market.
- Special Areas – Pet Areas
 - Soap nuts in water can be used to wash dogs
 - White vinegar (1/4 cup) in bathtub to wash dogs (dog will smell like vinegar)
 - Eco-friendly pet grooming products are available
 - Dry shampoo for pets can be made from either baking soda or cornmeal. Just sprinkle them on the pet, rub into the fur, and brush out completely
 - Pet bedding can be washed with soap nuts and hot water or eco-friendly cleaning products labeled safe for pets
 - Baking soda is a great cleaner for pet areas, just mix with water and scrub – rinse well
 - There are lots of eco-friendly products for pets – toys, special poop disposal systems, natural dishes and natural collars
 - For pet cages & kennels: White vinegar mixed with water, GSE (Grapefruit Seed Extract) mixed with water, steam cleaning, high pressure cleaning, or natural cleaning products specific to the pet