

BARBARA LORD'S

GREEN CLEANER

Simple, Effective and Cheap
Cleaning Alternatives for a Safer
and Healthier Home and Planet

**New Edition
National Best
Seller!**

The
GREEN CLEANER

Barbara Lord

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Thanks to my sisters Irene and Rae who transferred my hand written notes onto the computer.

About the Author

Barbara's long-term concern with the environment came to fruition in the writing of the books, *The Green Cleaner*, *50 Ways to Save the Planet*, *Greening the Workplace* and *Recycling Made Easy*. Her simple, easy to read style has led her to being recognised as one of Australia's leading green authors. In 1990, *The Green Cleaner* topped the best-selling list in the non-fiction category in Victoria and Western Australia and was listed in the top ten sellers for five months in Victoria.

Barbara has worked for the Australian Conservation Foundation and broadcast her environmentally sound hints on many radio stations throughout Australia. She also wrote a monthly column "Green House" for the *Herald Sun*.

Barbara was prompted many years ago to collect and use the simple cleaning methods she recommends because of her own sensitivity to commercial cleaning products.

Foreword

At a time of great environmental concern in our community, the success of Barbara Lord's *The Green Cleaner* is a heartening phenomena. The book's huge sales across Australia during the past few years show that thousands of ordinary people want to do something practical to help protect our environment.

The Australian Conservation Foundation welcomes the new edition of this remarkable book by Barbara Lord. The success of the book is because its message is simple and positive; we can all do something about protecting our environment and we can start by changing our own lifestyle. By becoming more environmentally responsible at home you will be taking that important first step in trying to achieve a better and more ecologically sustainable future for ourselves and our children.

The beauty of *The Green Cleaner* is that all of Barbara Lord's advice and ideas make sense and really work. And what's more you can start today. Whether it's simply changing your household cleaning methods and products, learning how to recycle your waste or changing your

shopping preferences, every action you take can and will make a difference.

When this book was written in 1989, we were all being challenged to face the severe environmental problems that threatened our earth. Because of this crisis, the last decade of the 20th century brought about a turning point. We saw scientists, politicians and industry recognizing and making an effort to control urban pollution, toxic wastes, ozone depletion and degradation of farming lands.

On the home front, conservation became a way of life, with many people turning to green products and a greener lifestyle. Conservation is now a part of school curricula and children often know more about these issues than their parents.

While there still remains much to be done throughout Australia and the world, it is gratifying to know that conservation has become a part of many peoples everyday living.

- Ten years ago, there was little recycling done from the home but now, at least in urban areas, paper, glass, cans and plastic are collected weekly, destined for re-use.
- Op shops are thriving, offering a valuable service in the recycling of goods and clothing.
- Many people use composting as a method of reducing waste.
- Supermarkets now offer the consumer phosphate free cleaners and Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC's) is no longer

used as a propellant in aerosol cans or as a gas in refrigerators or air conditioners.

Conservation of water and energy remains a major problem and again the individual can help by becoming aware of wastage in the home.

The writing of this book was prompted by people asking "What can I do?" "How can I help?" Ten years on the answer is still the same. The pollution of our environment has been caused by our lifestyle. Much of this can be improved by changing our cleaning products, using the car wisely, recycling what we can, not buying things we could do without and becoming aware of our over-use of energy and water.

As well as the cleaning ideas that have stood the test of time, there are some suggestions included in this book that provide a starting point for other positive actions. Also included are a few letters from the hundreds received from readers of *The Green Cleaner* and some correspondence from readers of the "Greenhouse" column in the *Herald Sun*.

While you may feel that individual actions only contribute a little to the massive problems, remember that together we can make a difference - the last decade has proved that.

Introduction

The Problem with Detergents

Many of the chemicals in modern detergents end up in our rivers and lakes, upsetting the fragile ecological system.

The last decade has seen the end of phosphates in clothes detergents, but some still contain hydrochloric acid, sulphuric acid and benzene. These are toxic and irritating to the skin.

Chlorine bleach (chlorinated hydrocarbon) can be toxic to marine life. It can react with organic compounds in sewage, leading to the formation of highly toxic organo-chlorines. Because of this reaction, chlorine bleach must never be mixed with other cleaning agents. While it is probably the best disinfectant available, it is harmful to the environment, it bleaches surfaces in the home and splashes can cause garment damage.

Alternative Cleaners There are alternatives to destructive chemicals.

Bicarbonate of soda or baking soda is a compound of sodium, carbon and oxygen. It is marketed under the names Bi-carb Soda and Baking Soda.

Borax is mineral salt and can be made from salt. It is a mild bleaching agent and a grease solvent. Borax is slightly toxic and can enter the body through broken skin. It is a water softener, disinfectant and insecticide and is toxic to many plants. Use carefully and keep out of reach of children.

Cloudy Ammonia is a mixture of ammonium hydroxide and liquid soap. It is not damaging to the environment and is quickly converted to natural salts. However, the vapour is highly irritating to the eyes and nose so it should not be used by people with chronic respiratory problems. Never use in enclosed spaces. In high concentration, cloudy ammonia attacks lung membranes so it is advisable to wear a surgical mask when using it.

Eucalyptus oil is extracted from gum leaves. It is toxic because it interferes with the functioning of the cells. This means it can harm many beneficial plants and microorganisms so it is not recommended for garden use. Use as a cleaner and disinfectant but keep it away from children.

Methylated Spirits is produced by the methanol process and contains methyl alcohol.

Vinegar is made by fermenting wine, malt, apples, grapes or cane. This is fermented until the alcohol is converted

and an acetic acid is formed. This is the acid that helps rinse away grease and soap. It is a mild disinfectant.

Washing soda is sodium carbonate and is a water softener. Washing soda is marketed under the name Lectric Soda in some states.

Soda in its natural state is obtained from decomposing sea salt or soda lakes. When used in large quantities as a water softener, the run off should not be used to water gardens.

The Kitchen

Most cleaning requires simple solutions and a little "elbow grease". Keep a stock of Bi-carb-soda, white vinegar, cloudy ammonia and pure soap in your cupboard. These can be combined to make environmentally safe cleaners. With a little knowhow you will soon be able to clean almost everything.

- **Adhesive Label Stains**

Rub area with eucalyptus oil, methylated spirits or peanut butter.

- **Aluminium**

Use fine steel wool and plenty of soap in hot water.

Never wash coloured aluminium in dishwasher, nor use washing soda or Bi-carb-soda to clean article.

- **Aluminium Saucepans**

Fill the saucepan with water and bring to the boil. Add onion skins or lemon peel or rhubarb.

- Brass

Soak small objects in cloudy ammonia for 5-15 minutes. Remember to open windows or place the bowl outside to dissipate fumes.

Intricate patterns may need a scrub with a toothbrush. Rinse and dry with soft towel.

- Brass and Copper Bowls

You will need:

- Cider vinegar
- Bi-carb-soda
- Half a lemon
- Petroleum jelly

Make a paste of the cider vinegar and Bi-carb-soda in a bowl and rub it over the article using half a lemon. Soft steel wool can be used sparingly on badly tarnished spots. A toothbrush helps to clean difficult areas. Rinse and dry then finish with a thin coat of petroleum jelly, to protect from tarnishing quickly.

- Brass Bed Head

Wash with cloudy ammonia and soapy water. Clean using a mixture of 600 ml of water, 1 heaped teaspoon of salt, 2 tablespoons of vinegar.

Lastly, polish with oil of lemon (available at essential oil/pot pourri shops).

Fire tools and surrounds can be cleaned with fine dry steel wool. The secret is to rub the steel wool one way only to prevent scratching. Do not use water.

- Bronze Ornaments

Clean with Worcestershire sauce on a soft cloth. Use a toothbrush for difficult to get at spots. Coat with petroleum jelly when dry to protect article from tarnishing.

- Ceramic Tiles

Wipe over with white vinegar or methylated spirits on a cloth. This works especially well on greasy tiles behind the hot plates and walls where there is over-splashing and condensation. Use Bi-carb-soda first if badly splashed. Grouting will come clean with an epsom salts scrub.

- Cooking Trays, Cake Tins, etc.

Cooking trays will stay cleaner if they are wiped or washed while they are still hot. Wipe with oil before storing.

- Copper Kettles

Can be cleaned with Worcestershire sauce.

- Dishwashing by Hand

Try to buy an old fashioned wire soap shaker or improvise, e.g. a metal tin with a fitted lid. Punch holes in the sides.

Place a cake of pure soap inside, or just use a cake of pure soap without shaker.

or

To make expensive dishwashing liquid go further, dissolve:

1/2 cup washing soda

1 cup soap flakes

in 2 cups of water by bringing it to the boil slowly. Add half a bottle of dishwashing detergent and leave to set in one litre bucket or container. This will set into a soft gel. I place the bucket under the hot tap in the sink and let the water run over it when I commence washing the dishes.

A thicker mixture can be made using two cups of flakes to two cups of water. After boiling, tip mixture into a one-litre milk carton. When set this can be cut into soap cakes for use in your soap shaker.

or

Buy "green" dishwashing liquid.

• Dishwashing Solution (for dishwashers)

Place Bi-carb-soda in the soap container and vinegar in the rinse aid, or mix vinegar and soda together and place in the soap container. This washes dishes well but the inside of cups and mugs may need an occasional scrub with Bi-carb-soda or salt.

Dishwashing solutions are highly caustic and very polluting. Never store them where children can reach as permanent

damage to the throat can occur if even a small amount is swallowed.

Dear Barbara,

My handy hint is this. Three-quarter fill an empty milk carton with kitty litter. Empty all your leftover cooking oil into it, then dispose in the rubbish bin.

Gloria.

Dear Mrs Lord,

We place a small margarine container near the stove. Into it goes all the grease from grills, roasts, bacon rind, fat skimmed from casseroles and unwanted cooking oils.

When half full, the container is put out on a bird feeding ledge, and the contents disappear within two or three days.

The birds eat the solidified fats and use the oil for preening feathers.

Kathleen.

• Drains

To clean drains and clear minor blockages place:

1 cup of washing soda on the outlet, then pour boiling water through

or

a handful of Bi-carb-soda on the outlet followed by half a cup of vinegar.

Avoid tipping oil or fat down the drain as it ends up on our beaches. Put it on the compost heap or dig it into the garden.

If you live in a flat pour your excess fat into milk or orange juice cartons and put them into the rubbish.

• Enamel Cookware

Clean with toothpaste to prevent scratching.

• Frypan

Cover the blackened base with a cloth dipped in cloudy ammonia and leave to stand overnight, covered with a plastic bag. Wash using Bi-carb-soda if necessary.

• Glassware

Glasses will sparkle if you rinse them in water that has lemon peel, white vinegar or cloudy ammonia in it. A tea towel in the bottom of the sink is a good idea when washing your better glasses, to prevent chipping.

Stained bottles and vases will benefit from a good soapy soak, before adding small bits of steel-wool and shaking to the mixture or swilling with vinegar and sand or salt.

Don't tip this mixture down the sink as sand or steel wool will clog up the pipes. Tip outside onto the garden.

• Iron

(for example, wrought iron lacework) This can be soaked in paraffin oil then rubbed with steel wool.

• Kettles

Add 1 cup of vinegar and 2 cups of water. Bring to boil then rinse well. Outside of copper kettles can be cleaned with Worcestershire sauce.

• Laminex Benches and Table Tops

Use Bi-carb-soda, a fine scourer and a damp cloth. Give a final wipe with vinegar to remove any fine white particles of Bi-carb-soda. Toothpaste will remove some marks on Laminex. A chamois sports towel makes an excellent cloth. Wash regularly in the washing machine and it will last for years.

• Marble

Mix a dessertspoon of Borax in a little water and dip half a lemon into this mixture. Rub marble with the lemon.

• Oven

You will need:

- 1 cup water
- half a cup cloudy ammonia

Mix water and ammonia in an oven proof dish or bowl. Place the dish in warm oven 10-15 minutes or longer if the

oven is really dirty. It can be left overnight and cleaned the following day. Wipe off burnt on grime with scourer and Bi-carb-soda. Wipe over with a clean damp cloth. Repeat if badly stained.

After the cloudy ammonia treatment, shelves and glass door will also come clean with a scourer and Bi-carb-soda.

I use an old baking dish that has outlived its cooking days. Keep it in the laundry cupboard with cleaning equipment so it isn't used for cooking.

If you suffer from asthma, wear a surgical mask when cleaning with ammonia as the fumes may be damaging to people with nose, throat or chest problems.

The outside of the oven and around the hotplates only needs Bi-carb-soda on a damp cloth, even where cooking spills have hardened. Burnt on grime may need to have a paste of Bi-carb-soda left on it for a while.

Line the bottom of the oven with easily replaced aluminium foil so it catches the spills, or leave an old scone tray in the bottom of the oven for the same purpose.

• Painted Cupboard Doors

Use 1 tablespoon Borax dissolved in boiling water and added to soapy water.

• Percolator

Fill with water and add 2 tablespoons of salt. Percolate for 10-15 minutes.

• Pewter

Rub your pewter with fine steel wool dipped in a little olive oil. Polish dry with a soft rag. Do not use water. A very old method of cleaning lead pewter was to rub it with cabbage leaves. Wet the leaves with vinegar, dip them in salt and rub the article gently.

• Stained Plastic and Stained Crockery

These stains can be removed by rubbing the spot with cooking salt or Bi-carb-soda. Apply with a damp cloth or rub over using your fingers. Rinse clean.

• Plastic Containers that Smell

Add one third malt vinegar to two thirds cold water. Leave several hours then rinse clean.

• Electric Plastic Jugs (1)

Place 1 cup of white vinegar or a couple of slices of lemon into electric plastic jug. Bring to the boil and rinse well. Boil again using fresh water.

• Electric Plastic Jugs (2)

Measure 1 cup of white vinegar and put into electric plastic jug. Bring to the boil. This will boil over so be careful to turn spout away from you. Place jug on the sink if possible. Wipe spout with a cloth then boil again using clean water. Rinse well.

• Refrigerator

Outside and inside only needs to be wiped with Bi-carb-soda on a damp cloth. Finish with a wipe of white vinegar on a soft cloth for a shine.

An opened box of Bi-carb-soda inside the fridge will eliminate smells for up to three months.

Vanilla essence also deodorizes the refrigerator. Wipe over the inside fridge walls with vanilla essence or leave a cotton wool ball soaked in it in the fridge.

• Burnt Saucepans

Cover the burnt section with vinegar and a layer of cooking salt and leave overnight. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Wash when cool.

or

Sprinkle with Bi-carb-soda. Leave to stand.

or

Simmer strong solution of cream of tartar and enough water for 15-30 minutes.

or

Add enough oil to cover the burnt base and bring to the boil. Scrub with metal scourer.

or

Turn the hot saucepan upside down in the sink and pour cold water over the base. This causes the metal to contract

and loosens the burnt food in the process. It must be done immediately, on a very hot saucepan.

Dear Mrs Lord,

May I have a copy of "how to clean silver". Now that my children are gone, I have to do it myself.

Yvonne.

Dear Mrs Lord,

I tried your method for cleaning silver. I had an old metal colander with congealed fat in the corners that no detergent would shift. I tried your method and my colander looks brand new. Your book is compulsive reading for me.

Marie.

• Silverware

To clean your silver cutlery you will need:

1 piece of aluminium foil

1 litre water

1 tablespoon Bi-carb-soda or washing soda

You will need an old saucepan that is big enough to hold knives and forks.

Put at least 1 litre of water, one tablespoon of washing soda or Bi-carb-soda, and a piece of good quality aluminium foil (about the size of a saucer), into the saucepan.

Bring to the boil and place a few articles of cutlery in at a time. They only need around 10 seconds. Lift out with tongs and rinse in clear water. A few drops of methylated spirits in rinse water will add shine. Dry with a soft cloth. They may need a "second dip" if they're badly tarnished.

I clean my silver tea and coffee pot in an old jam-making pan with enough water to cover half the article, doubling the recipe. I insert the teapot and after a few seconds turn it over and do the other side. As long as every part of the article has been immersed in the boiling solution this is successful.

Intricate work may need polishing with a soft tooth brush.

The soda reacts with the aluminium causing the water to give off hydrogen bubbles which lifts the tarnish off. If the silver has worn very thin or even worn through to the nickel, cleaning will not restore the silver.

A small silver article can be cleaned quickly with toothpaste and a soft cloth. Rub petroleum jelly over the article after cleaning to maintain shine longer. For silver tea and coffee pots that are seldom used, place a sugar cube in the pot to absorb moisture.

To store silver cutlery, wrap in blue tissue paper or foil and place a sugar cube in the box or drawer to absorb moisture.

• Silver Candlesticks

If silver candlesticks are full of wax, put them in the freezer for one hour and then...

Candles will burn slower, more evenly and with very little drip if they are placed in the freezer for two or three hours before use.

Candles will not drip if you place them in cold salt water before lighting. Stand them in a tall glass so that the wick is not immersed in water.

• Stainless Steel Sink

Rub with Bi-carb-soda on a damp cloth and wipe over with methylated spirits. If the sink has some rust, rub a cut lemon dipped in salt on rust spots. Vinegar may also help. Rinse clear.

• Stainless Steel

Use soapy water only.

Fine steel wool can remove stains. Do not use acids like vinegar or harsh salt as this may scratch or harm the item. Bi-carb-soda may be used sparingly. Cooking flour can be rubbed over stainless steel with a dry cloth to produce a good shine.

• Teapot

Fill pot with cold water, add some denture cleaner and soak overnight.

• **Thermos Flasks/Coffee Makers**

Smells can be removed from glassware by adding one teaspoon of Bi-carb-soda to hot water. Leave to soak for two hours.

or

Half fill containers with cold water and one tablespoon of dry mustard. Shake, then stand for twenty minutes. Rinse thoroughly.

or

Fill jars with warm water. Add one tablespoon of tea leaves, one tablespoon of vinegar. Stand three to four hours. Shake, then rinse clean.

• **Waste Disposal Units**

Insert a couple of cut lemons to eliminate odours.

Floors

Most floors only require a mop or a scrub with vinegar in a bucket of water. Vinegar is a natural, mild disinfectant and will not leave a film on the floor.

For cork tiles, ceramic tiles, lino/vinyl and slate use 1/2 cup vinegar to half a bucket of warm water.

• **Untreated Brick**

Clean stains with an application of white vinegar. Untreated brick will come up beautifully with the furniture polish recipe.

• **Rubber**

Wash with soapy water only. Scuff marks may need a gentle rub with Bi-carb-soda. Rubber stains can be removed with tea tree oil.

• **Sealed Timber Floor**

Can be cleaned with cold tea on a sponge mop. This is excellent for picking up the dust. Use only a damp cloth, not wet.

- Slate

Wash using one cup of washing soda dissolved in a bucket of hot water.

- Terrazzo

Rub the stained area with half a lemon dipped in salt, leave for 1 hour, then wash.

- Quarry Tiles

Stains can be removed with cloudy ammonia on a damp cloth. Repeat if necessary.

General Hints

- Shoe marks can be removed using a soft eraser.
- Ink spots on vinyl - squeeze lemon juice over stain, leave to dry then wipe clean.
- To remove wax, sprinkle cloudy ammonia onto a damp cloth and wipe over floor.
- Moving furniture? To prevent scratching floors, place woollen socks over the legs of furniture prior to moving, or place a piece of carpet or towelling under furniture, then slide along.

Carpets

Carpet stains need to be removed quickly before they set. Use as little water as possible. Mop frequently with a dry towel and dry as quickly as possible using a hair dryer. Work from the outside in to prevent the stain spreading.

- How to Make a Carpet Shampoo

You will need:

- half a cup of pure soap (do not use soap flakes)
- 3 tablespoons of washing soda
- 3 tablespoons of cloudy ammonia
- 5 cups of boiling water

Grate half a cup of soap (Velvet or Sunlight) into a saucepan and add boiling water. Boil for 1 minute until the soap has dissolved. Add washing soda and cloudy ammonia. Pour into wide-necked screw top jars when cool. This is to enable you to scoop out the mixture by hand or a spoon when wanted. Label bottle clearly.

Place a small amount of the soap mixture onto the mark. Lather with a cloth and some hot water. Use as little water as possible. Wipe off excess with clean absorbent cloth.

Old towels are excellent. Stand on them so that your weight will squeeze out the water.

This mixture is worth making as it removes most stains and keeps well. The above quantity will last you at least one year.

• **A Smelly Stuffy Carpet**

Deodorize by sprinkling Bi-carb-soda over the surface and leaving overnight. Vacuum.

• **Quick Spot Clean**

Apply shaving cream. Wash off with warm water.

Soda water or mineral water are usefull as an immediate stain remover. Mop up any excess liquid without rubbing. Apply soda water immediately then mop up using absorbent cloth. Repeat if necessary and shampoo if stain persists.

• **Specific Carpet Stains**

Ballpoint Pen - Methylated spirits will help remove fresh ink. Do not dilute.

Blood - Use cold water immediately and soak up with absorbent cloth. Repeat if necessary. Shampoo.

Burn Marks - Use steel wool, working in a circular motion or trim with scissors, then use carpet shampoo and 1 teaspoon of white vinegar. If a hole has been left in the carpet this can be partly disguised by gluing clean fluff from the same carpet into the hole.

Candle Wax - Freeze with an ice cube then scrape off with a knife. Shampoo if necessary.

Chewing Gum - Remove surplus gum then soak using eucalyptus oil. Scrape off with knife. Repeat until gum is removed then shampoo.

Curry - Rub with Borax solution or glycerine. Rinse.

Egg - Scrape up surplus then shampoo. Do not use hot water as this will set the egg.

Fruit Juice - Sponge with glycerine then dab on equal parts water and white vinegar. Shampoo if necessary.

Grass - Wipe with cloth soaked in methylated spirits. Shampoo.

Grease - Place absorbent paper over stain. Touch with hot iron to soak up surplus grease. Wash with one tablespoon of cloudy ammonia to 500ml of water.

Grease Spots - 1 part cloudy ammonia/1 part water. Mix together, and apply to spot. Mop with absorbent cloth. Repeat if necessary.

Ink - Dilute ink with water. Soak up excess moisture. Sponge with equal parts vinegar and water. Soak up excess moisture then shampoo.

Lipstick - Cover with eucalyptus oil. Do not rub. Pat up oil so as not to spread stain. Repeat if necessary. Shampoo.

Muddy Feet Marks - Sprinkle salt or Bi-carb-soda over marks and leave to dry. Vacuum.

Oil - Baby powder, cornflour or cream of tartar will soak up the surplus oil. Vacuum, then sponge the stain with eucalyptus oil. Shampoo.

Red Wine - Dilute with soda or mineral water. Soak up excess moisture. Repeat if necessary. Shampoo.

Shoe Polish - Sponge stain with dry cleaning fluid or turpentine. Dab on equal parts warm water and white vinegar. Shampoo.

Syrup - Use 2-3 tablespoons Borax in 1 litre of hot water. Work from outside in to prevent stain spreading.

Urine/Vomit - Scrape off excess. Immediately cover with soda water or vinegar. Blot up moisture and sponge with one tablespoon of Borax to half litre warm water. Shampoo.

To rid carpet of urine smells from animals mix one tablespoon each of eucalyptus oil and white vinegar in one litre of water. Dab mixture on but don't soak the carpet. Dry with a warm hairdryer.

"Bactonature" is available from vets or pet shops for animal excreta.

Wax - Place absorbent paper, e.g. toilet paper, over spot and touch with hot iron to melt and absorb the wax.

Wine, Beer, Coffee, Tea and Milk - Use soda water immediately. Soak up excess fluid. Repeat if necessary. Shampoo.

Salt or Bi-carb-soda will absorb the stain. Soak up liquid spill with cloth, do not rub. Sprinkle the spot with salt or Bi-carb-soda. Vacuum when dry. Shampoo if necessary.

The Bathroom

Vinegar is used in many of the cleaning solutions. Vinegar can have sprigs of lavender, rosemary or other herbs added to soften the vinegar smell. However, the vinegar smell doesn't last long, especially if you open the windows.

• Ceramic Bath and Basin

Wipe over with Bi-carb-soda on a damp cloth. Give a shine to your bath and basin by wiping them over with white vinegar.

Dear Person,

To clean the outlet of a bathroom hand basin, use a firm teapot spout brush with a dash of bi-carb.

These are available from specialty tea shops.

Beatrice.

• Badly Stained Baths

Use fine steel wool with Bi-carb-soda. Rinse with vinegar.

or

Use cloudy ammonia on a damp cloth.

or

A paste of Borax and lemon juice can be left on the stain for a few hours. Rinse off.

• Fibreglass Baths

These must not be scratched with an abrasive powder or scourer. Dissolve half a cup of washing soda in half a bucket of hot water. Wipe over bath. If scratched, fibreglass can be treated and repainted. Check your Yellow Pages or local hardware shop.

When you see a large sea sponge on the beach, take it home to use in the bathroom. Soak a few times in fresh water before using as a cleaning pad.

• Ceramic Tiles (on shower or floor)

Wipe with white vinegar on a damp cloth. To rejuvenate tiles use cloudy ammonia rubbed on tiles with newspaper. Wipe with clean cloth.

• Gold Taps

Use only warm soapy water. A drop of hair shampoo or washing liquid will clean them.

• Plastic or Nylon Shower Curtain

Scrub with vinegar.

or

24

Wash in solution of one cup cloudy ammonia to one bucket of water. Place shower curtain in washing machine with several hand towels. Wash at 30°C. Do not spin dry. Hang up while wet.

Soak curtains in salt water to help prevent mildew forming.

• Glass Shower Screens

Scrub with Bi-carb-soda on a scourer. Rinse off with warm water.

This is my method. Have a one litre container in the shower recess filled with the Lux dishwashing solution and a scourer. Every time you have a shower wipe this mixture over one section of the shower recess. Rinse soap off. This means it's never a big chore to clean the shower. The secret to keeping a shower recess clean is to dry it every time you have a shower. Invest in a sports towel (a synthetic chamois) and keep it in a bag hanging from the taps. Encourage the family to wipe over the recess after every shower and you'll find you rarely have to scrub! The sports towel is also excellent for cleaning the hand basin, vanity unit and mirrors.

The outside of glass screen doors will stay clean using vinegar on a pad of damp newspaper, or chamois cloth.

Dear Barbara,

I clean my shower with your eucalyptus wool mix. It works really well.

Sandra.

- Glass Cleaner

Dissolve:

1 desertspoon washing soda

1 litre hot water

Add 1 cup of methylated spirits. Bottle and label.

- Shower Base

Scrub with Bi-carb-soda and a scourer.

- Grouting

Use a toothbrush or nail brush and a strong solution of Epsom salts.

or Use a toothbrush or nail brush with dry Bi-carb-soda.

New grouting may have a coat of petroleum jelly wiped over it before using the shower, to prevent damp soap residue from staining.

- Mirrors

Clean the mirror with a damp ball of newspaper sprinkled with white vinegar. Wipe well, then give a coat of glycerine or eucalyptus oil, again applied with a wad of newspaper so that the mirror will not fog up when the shower is in use. Hairspray stains will come off with methylated spirits on a soft cloth.

Stubborn stains may come off with a mild Borax solution.

- Mould on Tiles

Scrub with stiff brush or scourer and Bi-carb-soda or methylated spirits or cloudy ammonia or epsom salts.

A ceiling fan and open windows help eliminate the dampness that causes mould.

- Combs/Brushes/Hair Curlers

Soak in warm water with 3 tablespoons of vinegar and juice of 1 lemon or soak in warm water with 1 tablespoon of cloudy ammonia. Rinse and dry.

- Toilets

Frequent washing with hot soapy water will keep the toilet clean.

Wipe over the bowl and lid with eucalyptus oil if you want to use a disinfectant.

or

Use 1 cup of white vinegar. The vinegar, left over night then scrubbed next day, will be all you need to clean the bowl. The outside of the bowl and the cistern needs only white vinegar on a damp cloth.

Badly stained bowls need a scour with Bi-carb-soda, then use vinegar as the regular cleaner.

Once a fortnight leave one cup of washing soda or 1/2 a cup of calgon in the toilet bowl overnight. This softens the water and loosens any calcium residue. Badly stained bowls may need a

"one off" clean with a diluted liquid Descaler. These are available from hardware stores or Sunbeam appliance and service centres. Follow directions carefully.

• Septic Toilets

Use 1 cup of white vinegar and leave to stand overnight if possible. It is a mild disinfectant and doesn't harm the microbes which ensure the breakdown of sewage in the tank.

One suggestion I received from a septic toilet user was to place one teaspoon of granulated yeast into the toilet once a fortnight to assist the breakdown of sewage. They had done this for years with success.

Note:

Bleach, coloured toilet paper, coloured and perfumed cleaners, coloured and perfumed soaps can all be water pollutants. Use unbleached paper and pure and natural soaps and cleaners when possible.

A lot of water can be saved by using it carefully in the bathroom. Take shorter showers, turn the tap off when cleaning your teeth and install a half-flush toilet if possible.

To make your bathroom smell nice put a few drops of eau de Cologne or essential oil on the light bulb. Every time the light is turned on the warmth will activate the perfume.

The Laundry

• Outside of Washing Machine, Dryer and Stainless Steel Trough

Rub with Bi-carb-soda on a damp cloth.

• To Clean Inside a Washing Machine

Front loader - Fill machine with warm water and 4 litres of vinegar. Put machine through full cycle. The vinegar will remove soap residue from the hoses.

Top loader - The same method but use only 2 litres of vinegar. This cleaning only needs to be done very occasionally.

• Ceramic Tiles

Use white vinegar on a damp cloth.

or

1 cup of white vinegar in half a bucket of water for floor tiles.

• General Pre-wash Spray

Mix equal parts:

cloudy ammonia
water
dishwashing liquid

Add 1-2 teaspoons of lemon or eucalyptus oil and put in a spray bottle. Shake mixture everytime you use it.

Dear Mrs Lord,

My family waste a fair amount of toilet soap. They refuse to use the last third of any cake. How can I make it into re-usable soap again?

Ann.

Dear Barbara,

To use up left over bits of toilet soap, I have made a small drawstring bag from light cotton material. I keep this hanging over the laundry tap and pop in all the odd pieces of soap. When I need to clean shirt cuffs or collars or even to just wash my hands, I use my little bag.

It looks quite neat and tidy in the laundry.

Nell.

• Clothes Washing Soap

You will need:

1 cake pure soap (125 grams - this can be Velvet, Sunlight, Preservene or a No Brand soap) or 3 cups of soap flakes.
1 large cup of washing soda (Lectric)
3 (9 litre) buckets or one large plastic container

Grate or cut into small pieces the cake of pure soap. Bring grated soap or soap flakes to boil in 1-2 litres of water in an old large saucepan. Mash with potato masher as it comes to the boil. (I never wait until soap is completely dissolved.)

Dissolve 1 large cup of washing soda in 1-2 litres of hot water in a bucket. Do not let this cool before adding soap mixture.

Using an old strainer, strain the liquid soap into the soda solution. It must be done in this order. (Soap bits that are left over are placed in a small basin with a little water to dissolve for using the next time you make up this soap.)

Divide the soda/soap solution equally between the 3 buckets and fill each bucket slowly with cold water or tip into a large container and fill with water. Mix with your hand or a wooden spoon. This mixture will set into a soft gel which can be used in your washing machine with cold water. Dissolve in hot water before adding to cold water for better results.

This softens it so that it only takes a couple of minutes to dissolve next time I want to make up the mixture.

A thicker mixture can be made using 2 buckets but this would need dissolving in hot water before washing. If you wash in hot water you will get better results but I use cold water and find it adequate.

Use 2-3 large cups of this mixture per wash, or more depending on the size of the wash.

This mixture is good for pre-soaking grubby clothes.

White collars and cuffs need an extra soak then a scrub using a nail brush.

Even if you feel you need to use one of the "wonder super soaps" to remove spots or dirt on collars you can still help the environment by using this soap mixture as a general clothes wash. Alternatively, one cake of grated "wonder soap" can be added to the recipe for clothes washing soap. This will give a whiter finish to your clothes.

This soap mixture can be used in both top or front load washing machines.

If you decide not to use this mixture to wash your clothes, look at the herbal products on the market. They are a step in the right direction e.g. bio-degradable, natural ingredients, no animal testing, no phosphates or bleach.

Commercial detergents mostly have a NP sign on the box showing that the product no longer contains phosphate.

• Bleach

It is very hard to find a satisfactory alternative to bleach for whitening clothes. I suggest you avoid buying white clothes where possible. Washing whites separately will help.

In the old days it was the boiling in the copper that kept everything white. Synthetic fabrics weren't available so cotton fabric really was 100% cotton and could tolerate boiling. Synthetic fabrics yellow in hot water or sunlight so dry them inside or in the shade.

• Bleach Alternatives

1 cup of lemon juice in half a bucket of water can be used as a bleach.

or

1 tablespoon of methylated spirits in a bucket of water. Wash.

or

An overnight soak in a thick, soapy solution plus lemon juice is also quite an effective whitener for cotton fabrics.

or

Soak garments in salty water - 1 cup per bucket.

or

Soak garments in cloudy ammonia - 1 cup per bucket.

or

Soak garments in washing soda - 1 cup per bucket. Do not use on silk.

White clothing absorbs colour from unstained timber in wardrobes. Paint inside your wardrobe or cover white clothing with pillow slips or bags made from old sheeting.

• Spot Cleaning

Haste is the secret to effective stain removal. The longer a stain is left the harder it is to remove. Act quickly on your spills and the result will always be better.

Eucalyptus oil is a very effective stain remover especially when the stain is unknown. I use it quite often, always with excellent results, but I store it in the medicine cupboard well out of reach of children. Both vinegar and eucalyptus oil are disinfectants.

Place a few drops of eucalyptus oil or glycerine on the stained area. Leave for 1-2 minutes. Do not rub, the eucalyptus oil or glycerine will evaporate. Repeat if necessary and rinse if needed. Eucalyptus oil is excellent for removing chewing gum or other unknown sticky substances from fabric. Remove excess with knife, soften remainder with oil and repeat until clean.

For a persistent stain, use half water and half glycerine and soak for an hour. Rinse well.

• Acid

Spread either cloudy ammonia or washing soda on the garment immediately. Wash as normal. If acid is left on the garment it may burn a hole.

Dear Barbara,

I do worry about our kid's dishcloths and mops. Is there a good way to sterilize them? I boil mine (the old trained nurse popping up).

Mary.

• Dishcloths

Change these daily. The best way to clean them is to soak for a while, then bring to the boil. Regular machine washing is adequate if they are only used for washing dishes.

• Grass Stains

Soak the stain in glycerine or eucalyptus oil for at least one hour before washing.

or

Soak for one hour before washing in 1 part cloudy ammonia, 2 parts methylated spirits, 3 parts hot water. *This mixture will also remove cricket ball stains.*

- **Perspiration Stains**

2 tablespoons Bi-carb-soda or washing soda in half a bucket of cold water. Soak at least one hour before washing. Lemon juice or white vinegar can also be used.

- **Blood**

If fresh, soak in cold water with a little salt, rub with soap and stand a while before washing.

or

Soak in a bucket with a few drops of cloudy ammonia in a litre of warm water. Rub with soap and stand a while before washing.

- **Chocolate, Cocoa and Chocolate Milk**

Soak in cold, soapy water.

or

Cover the stain with Borax for a minute or two, then soak in cold water. Pour boiling water through stained area after soaking. Wash as usual.

If the material is non-washable, sponge the stain with methylated spirits.

- **Coffee and Tea**

Pour boiling water through the stain.

or

Soak the stain with glycerine or eucalyptus oil. Leave for half an hour then wash.

or

Make a paste of Borax and glycerine and cover stain. Rub, then wash.

- **Beetroot**

Soak garment in milk for a few hours or overnight. Wash as usual.

- **Biro**

Rub the biro stain with methylated spirits then wash. If a biro has emptied itself into a shirt pocket there is nothing I can suggest to remove it. Art and Craft shops that sell paint for T-shirts etc., have a solvent that may work.

- **Black Ink**

Rinse quickly in cold water. Soak in soapy water with cloudy ammonia added.

or

Make a paste of salt and lemon juice. Leave the paste on the stain for a while. Wash in soapy water.

- **Canvas**

Scrub with salt and water.

- **Cement**

Soak in one cup vinegar, 3 tablespoons salt and enough water to cover area.

- **Curry**

Soak stain with methylated spirits or glycerine before washing.

- **Doonas**

Place 1 tablespoon of cloudy ammonia in the water during the wash cycle then add 1 tablespoon of oil of lavender in the rinsewater. This will disinfect the doona.

- **Dye**

When dye stains other garments in the wash, soak article immediately in cold water and Bi-carb soda.

Dear Barbara,

Did you know that bi-carb soda instantly neutralized the smell of vomit? After cleaning up the mess from floors, carpet and furniture, I sponge over the area with a handful of carb-soda in a bucket of water.

If my children were sick in the night, I would throw the dirty sheets in the laundry trough and cover with water. In the morning there would be no smell.

One of my children was a 'burpy' baby, so I would carry a small jar of carb-soda and a wet face washer when we went out. I would wipe the mess with the washer and then dab on a little dry soda, and I would have a sweet smelling baby again.

On one holiday, I had two children who vomited with car sickness and we didn't get the window open in time. We stopped at the next supermarket we came to. Bought a packet of carb-soda and a dish cloth. Found the local park with a tap, cleaned up the children and the car and happily continued on our way.

Wendy.

- **Vomit**

Soak in a solution of water and 2 tablespoons of Borax. Wash as usual.

- **Wine**

Immediately cover stain with soda water.

or

Sprinkle stain with salt then pour boiling water through.

or

Soak in cold water with 1 tablespoon of white vinegar or methylated spirits.

Non-washable material needs to be sponged with equal parts cold water and methylated spirits.

Red Wine - Cover area with salt. Soak in cold water as soon as possible. Rub with "Magic Wonder" soap and soak overnight. Wash. (This soap isn't "green" but is the only effective remover of red wine.)

- Egg

Sponge or soak the stain with cold salty water. Do not use hot water as it will set the egg stain.

- Faeces

Remove excess then soak in soapy water with 1 dessertspoon of cloudy ammonia. Non-washable fabrics need sponging with equal parts cold water and white vinegar.

- Glue

Eucalyptus oil will remove glue from clothes, appliances and fingers.

- Blue Tac

Dab on eucalyptus oil. Scrape off surplus. Repeat until removed.

- Rust

Make a paste of tartaric acid and water. Rub on stain, leave to stand. Repeat if necessary. Wash.

or

Make a paste of lemon juice and Bi-carb-soda. Leave on stain for a few minutes then soak in 1 litre of water.

- Sap

Dab with eucalyptus oil or tea tree oil.

- Scorch marks

If minor, soak in lemon juice for 10 minutes then rinse clear. If this doesn't remove the scorch mark, apply a paste of lemon juice and salt or Bi-carb-soda. When dry, brush off then wash.

- Texta

Use nail polish remover or cloudy ammonia.

- Tomato Sauce

Immediately sponge with cold water. Dab glycerine or eucalyptus oil on the stain and leave for 1/2 to 1 hour before washing as usual.

- Lipstick

Soak in milk for half an hour and wash in hot soapy water.

or

Use glycerine or eucalyptus oil to remove small stains from most fabric.

- **Linen and Lace**

Wash in dishwashing detergent then rinse two or three times.

Do not use starch if articles are to be stored, as the starch attracts silverfish. Iron when damp and the linen will stiffen. Store in alkaline tissue paper which is available from art shops or store in new envelopes. These are non-acidic.

Rust stains on old or stored fabric are best removed using "Rustiban". Small stains may be removed by using a drop of bleach, then rinsing immediately.

- **Mildew**

Make a paste of lemon juice and salt and spread on fabric and leave to stand. After washing, hang in the sun to dry.

or

Dab kerosine on stain and leave to soak overnight. Wash in warm soapy water.

For yellowed lace tablecloths and doilies soak for one hour in 1 tablespoon of Lux flakes and 2 cups of hot water. Add 1 tablespoon of cloudy ammonia, 1 teaspoon eucalyptus oil, 2 tablespoons lemon juice (or 1 dessertspoon of citric acid). Wash gently by hand by dunking article up and down and squeezing carefully. (Delicate fabric may be placed in a pillow slip before washing.) Rinse twice then dry article lying flat on a towel. Cover with another towel

and pat moisture off. This method can be repeated if necessary. Iron between teatowels or tissue paper.

- **Make-up**

Equal parts warm water and cloudy ammonia.

- **Milk**

Soak in cold water before washing.

- **Nicotine**

Use eucalyptus oil or methylated spirits.

- **Oil (Cooking)**

Cover with a paste of sugar and water. Leave awhile to absorb stain before washing.

or

Pour a few drops of eucalyptus oil on stain. Don't rub, just pat on stain. Leave to evaporate. Repeat if necessary. Some articles of clothing will need rinsing after this treatment.

- **Grease (Kitchen)**

Iron article between layers of absorbent paper.

or

Pour boiling water through stain.

or

Soak stained area in methylated spirits.

- Stained Sheets

Soak for at least one hour in cold water with 2 tablespoons of Borax added.

- Stained Work Shirts, Trousers and Overalls

To a bucket of warm water add 1 tablespoon of vinegar, 1 tablespoon of salt, 2 tablespoons of cloudy ammonia. Soak overnight then wash as usual.

or

Soak in washing machine for 1 hour with 2 tablespoons of salt and 1 tablespoon of baking soda. Add washing detergent and soak overnight. Wash as usual.

- To Clean a Mattress

Stand mattress on its side.

Urine - Use equal parts cloudy ammonia and warm water. Then use soapy water using as little water as possible.

Blood - Make a mix with 2 tablespoons of salt and half a litre of water. Sponge stained area and blow dry with hair dryer to avoid moisture remaining on padding and springs.

- Handkerchiefs

Soak in cold salty water before washing. This dissolves the mucin.

- Teatowels

Soak grubby teatowels in a mixture of 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar and 1 litre of water before washing.

- Straw Hats

Wipe or brush with lemon juice.

- Nappies

Soak nappies in a thick solution of the soap mixture. 1 cup white vinegar or 1 capful eucalyptus oil may be added to the soap mixture as a disinfectant and freshener. Nappies will stay white if soaked in 1 cup of washing soda to a bucket of hot water.

Hot water at 60°-65°C will kill any bacteria. Try to dry nappies in the sun when possible.

Consider using a nappy washing service rather than resort to general use of disposable nappies. These create an enormous disposal problem and can remain in the soil for 400-500 years. They also have traces of Dioxin which is a toxic chemical and would be best kept away from a child's sensitive skin. The cost of a nappy washing service is comparable to the cost of disposable nappies.

Note:

You are caring for your child's future by not using disposable nappies even though it is convenient for you. Raw sewage in our land fill tips creates many health

hazards and is a source of contamination for underground fresh water supplies.

Laundry hints

Dear Barbara,

Re your suggestion to use hair spray to combat static, I thought Ugh!, how horrible.

All you have to do is use fabric softener in the final rinse.

I even use plain home brand label and it is absolutely foolproof.

Betty.

- **Softening Stiff Jeans/Bath Towels** - Dissolve 2 dessertspoons of Borax or epsom salts in two and a half litres of hot water. When cool put items in the water and leave to soak overnight. Rinse in hot water then wash in usual manner.
- **Perspiration Odour** - Dissolve 2 heaped tablespoons Bi-carb-soda in three quarters of a bucket of luke warm water. Soak garments for one hour then wash as usual.
- **Jumpers** - Wash jumpers inside out to prevent fluff or pilling. To stop fluff adhering to clothing put 1 cup of vinegar in last rinse or place garment in the freezer 10 minutes before wearing.

- **To Wash Dark Clothing** - Turn jeans, tracksuit pants, dark-coloured shirts and T-shirts inside out when washing to avoid soap streaks.
- **Socks** - Place in an old stocking before washing to keep them free of lint.
- **Shirt Collars** - Rub collar with white chalk to absorb grease before washing.

or

Rub with shampoo and leave for a while before washing. or Soak collars with eucalyptus oil before washing.

or

Make a paste of vinegar and Bi-carb-soda. Rub on collar and soak awhile before washing.

A good soapy scrub and a soak the night before washing usually lifts the dirt.

- **Electric Iron** - Clean iron while it is warm with steel wool and white vinegar.
- **Brown stains on face of iron** - When cold, rub salt and vinegar mixture on it or rub with a cut lemon.
- **Wax on iron** - Rub with fine sandpaper.
- **To clean inside steam iron** - Use half water and half cider vinegar. Place in water compartment while iron is off. Turn on power and steam for 2 minutes. Turn off. Leave for one hour then tip out fluid.

- To remove hem marks when ironing - Rub mark with vinegar or sponge with water containing a few drops of cloudy ammonia.
- Alternative for spray starch - You will need half a cup of rice (brown or white) and 2 cups of water. Boil for ten minutes, strain. When cool put mixture into a pump spray bottle and use in place of liquid spray starch. This works well and keeps in the refrigerator for a few weeks.

Wool Mix

- 4 cups Lux flakes
- 1 cup methylated spirits
- 1 cup eucalyptus oil Mix together and bottle.

Dissolve mixture in hot water, cool slightly then wash jumpers by kneading gently. Rinse and dry carefully to keep in shape.

• Stained Fleecy Tops & T-shirts

Soak stain in wool mix solution overnight and then wash as usual.

Soap scraps can be placed in a jar with a little water and left to gel. This can be used as a liquid hand wash or for small stains.

Wooden clothes horses will last longer and hold damp clothes without staining them if they are given a coat of clear lacquer.

If you have made up the soap recipe (page 31) you will find it excellent for washing woollens.

A reader who grows her own wool recommends the soap mixture for washing greasy wool. Another reader said she washed her ugboots successfully using the soap recipe.

The Lounge Room

• Furniture Polish and Dust Remover

You will need:

- half a cup lemon juice (strained)
- 1/2 cup olive oil

Mix ingredients into a bottle and shake well. Label clearly. This solution will clean and polish any woodwork in your home from cupboard doors to grand pianos. Use a soft rag, slightly dampened - not wet with the solution. Use a shaving brush for awkward comers.

This is an excellent cleaner for woodwork, especially for people with a dust allergy or asthma, as it picks up the dust rather than flicking it into the air.

It is important to use only a little of the mixture.

• Wooden Furniture Restorer

Equal parts:

- vinegar
- methylated spirits

THE GREEN CLEANER

linseed oil

Mix ingredients together and bottle. Label carefully. When required, rub over the surface with a dry cloth.

or

Equal parts:

turpentine
methylated spirits
vinegar
paraffin oil

Before using a restorer or polish, clean furniture with diluted vinegar.

• Alabaster

Rub over stain with turpentine then use a beeswax polish to give shine.

• Stains on Polished Wood

Burn Marks - May be helped by rubbing toothpaste over the spot.

White Heat Marks - Rub with a paste of water and cigarette ash. or Rub with camphorated oil.

or

Rub with a mixture of 1 teaspoon of salt and 1 dessertspoon of olive oil.

The Lounge Room

Scratches - 1 tablespoon olive oil, half a tablespoon vinegar. Mix together and rub on the scratch with a dry cloth.

or

Rub with a cork dipped in camphorated oil.

or

Rub with half a shelled raw walnut.

Water Stains - Rub with a soft cloth dipped in camphorated oil.

• Dark Leather Furniture

Rub with olive oil or eucalyptus oil on a soft cloth using a circular motion.

Always test a small section in an area that is not noticeable before proceeding with the whole piece of furniture. Skim milk can be rubbed over leather then polished off with a soft cloth.

• Light-Coloured Leather Furniture

Seek professional advice.

• Leather Renovator

Mix:

1 cup of linseed oil
1 cup of vinegar
2 teaspoons of rosemary oil

Bottle and label clearly. Shake before use.

- Vinyl

Clean with dishwashing liquid or shampoo then rub over with petroleum jelly. Wipe off surplus with a soft rag.

- Chrome Furniture

Polish with cloudy ammonia and a soft dry cloth.

or

Use a dry cloth dipped in flour.

- Bamboo and Cane Furniture

Use warm soapy water with a little Borax. Rinse with salty water.

or

Soapy water with a little cloudy ammonia.

or

Use furniture polish for polished wood.

After washing sagging cane in hot water, dry in the sun to help shrink it back to normal.

- Aluminium

Warm soapy water and soft steel wool. Rub in one direction only. Shine with cloudy ammonia and soft cloth.

- Plastic Furniture

Warm soapy water. Use Bi-carb-soda on stains. Buff with soft cloth.

- Fabric Upholstery

Never over-wet. Make a sudsy mixture with hot water and the carpet shampoo, or pure soap flakes. Use the suds only and don't over-rub. Dry with a soft absorbent cloth using pressure only. Dry the upholstery with a hair dryer.

- Bad Stains or Very Dirty Chairs

Seek professional advice.

- Plain Fabrics e.g. Velvet

Seek professional advice.

- Glass Top Tables

Dampen a ball of newspaper with water. Sprinkle newspaper ball with white vinegar or methylated spirits. Wipe over table top and then dry by wiping over with dry newspaper.

- Glass cleaner (1)

Dissolve 1 dessertspoon of washing soda in 1 litre of hot water. Cool, then add 1 cup of methylated spirits. Bottle and label.

- Glass cleaner (2)

Mix:

- 1/2 cup vinegar
- 1 teaspoon cloudy ammonia
- 2 litres water

Bottle and label.

- Picture Frames

Wooden Frames - Wipe with warm soapy water. Slightly damp cloth only.

Gilt Frames - Rub with equal parts of methylated spirits and water.

Gold, Brass or Chrome Frames - Cloudy ammonia rubbed onto the frame.

Avoid touching painting. Badly tarnished frames should be removed from picture and soaked in cloudy ammonia.

- Oil Paintings

Cut raw potato in half, then rub gently over painted surface. When potato becomes soiled, cut off and continue rubbing with clean raw potato. Wipe with clean dry cloth to remove any potato starch.

- Piano Keys

Plastic - Warm water with a few drops of white vinegar.

Ivory - For ivory piano keys make up a mixture consisting of half methylated spirits/half warm water. Use damp cloth only. *WARNING:* Never let water seep between the keys.

- TV Screen

Rub with soft cloth or chamois with a few drops of methylated spirits or vinegar or use a glass cleaner.

- Artificial Flowers

Place flowers head first in a large paper bag which has salt in it. Shake well and the dust will come off into the salt.

- Animal Hair

Wipe over furniture with a damp cloth sprinkled with vinegar.

- Animal Vomit and Excreta

Scrape up surplus and then sponge with white vinegar or soda water. Repeat a few times then shampoo.

- Crayon

Marks on walls may come off with a very clean eraser. Toothpaste will remove some crayon.

- Bar Radiators

When radiator is turned off, place damp cloth behind elements. With the blowing end of vacuum cleaner, blow

over elements. The damp cloth will pick up the dust and there will be no floating particles.

• **Blinds/Fly Wire Screens**

Non-Washable Holland Blinds - Use a rough cloth dipped in flour to get rid of dust.

Use a soft eraser to get rid of spots.

To mend small tears in blinds, stick them together with clear nail polish or clear glue.

Canvas Blinds - Use salty water.

or

Scrub with soft brush and soap mixture.

Venetian Blinds - Wrap cloth around a blunt knife blade. Dip in methyated spirits and rub between slats.

or

Very dirty slats may need warm soapy water.

Flywire - To remove dust, brush them down or clean with vacuum cleaner. Greasy areas need a scrub with soapy water and a nail brush.

If flywire screens are easy to remove, take outside and hose down.

Quickest method of cleaning flywire is to use a round hair curling brush.

• **Books**

Silverfish - Sprinkle books with epsom salts or place a couple of camphor blocks amongst books. (This also helps get rid of musty smells.)

or

Rub shelves with lavender oil and place lavender sachets behind books. Renew occasionally.

Mould - Rub with soft cloth dipped in vinegar. or

Dust cornflour on affected pages. Leave to stand for at least one week, then brush off.

Mould Prevention - Rub leather binding with oil of lavender or eau de Cologne. Wipe over immediately with dry cloth.

or

Sprinkle a few drops of oil of cloves or eucalyptus oil on bookcase shelves.

• **Brick Fire Places**

Can be cleaned with neat white vinegar.

or

Make a paste of cream of tartar and water. Spread on the smoke stain. Leave to dry and then brush off.

or

To clean ceramic hearth tiles, use nail brush dipped in vinegar, then wipe with soft cloth.

or

Put salt over burning firewood. Soot outfall will be reduced by two thirds.

Logs Made from Newspaper

Boil 2.5 litres of water with 1 packet (750 gm) washing soda in a large container. When soda is dissolved add newspaper (the equivalent of one Saturday Herald Sun). Tear paper into pieces approximately the size of a dinner plate. Boil for 10 minutes prodding with a stick or wooden spoon to help moisture soak through paper. When cool, mould into tennis ball-sized balls with your hands, squeezing out as much water as possible. Put on a rack to dry.

Use to supplement wood. They burn for nearly one hour.

Alternatively - wet newspaper sheets with mixture in trough and roll tightly into a log. Leave to dry. Rubber bands or wire can be used to keep ends tight but remove before burning.

Jewellery

Stones that are glued into metal settings can become unstuck with many cleaning solutions. Once the surface of gold or silver plating on jewellery has worn through no amount of cleaning will restore it.

• Gold Jewellery

Needs to be soaked in a little cloudy ammonia for 5-10 minutes then scrubbed with a toothbrush. Rinse in clean water.

• Marcasite Jewellery

Rub with soft tissue paper only.

• Copper Jewellery

Wash in soapy water. Then dip jewellery into a solution of 2 parts white vinegar and 1 part salt. Dry with a soft cloth.

• Silver Jewellery

You will need:

half a litre of water

1 dessertspoon washing soda or Bi-carb-soda

Bring to the boil. Immerse jewellery using a tea strainer or larger strainer. Dip in and out a few times and give a shake so that every part of the jewellery will make contact with the boiling solution. Rinse and dry.

For a quick clean, rub the item with toothpaste and scrub using a toothbrush.

• **Diamonds**

Mix together a small quantity of soap, hot water and add a few drops of cloudy ammonia, and scrub jewellery lightly. Remove and dip into alcohol for a final shine.

• **Pearls**

Shake in a bag with a cup of uncooked rice.

An old cooking book I read had handwriting in the margin "Gin for rings". Most alcohol will add a shine to rings, especially diamonds.

Walls & Windows

• **Windows**

Clean with a water-dampened ball of newspaper sprinkled with white vinegar or methylated spirits.

Dry with dry newspaper.

• **Window Cleaner**

Dissolve:

1 dessertspoon washing soda

1 litre hot water

Add 1 cup methylated spirits. Pour into spray bottle and label.

Never clean windows while the sun is shining directly upon them. The glass dries too quickly and this leaves streaks.

Clean one side of the window vertically and the other side horizontally then you can see which side has streaking.

To make a clear window opaque, mix 125 g salt in 160 ml of light ale. Warm in saucepan to dissolve salt. Paint the solution

over inside of window. This is enough to do a large window. Give a second coat when first coat has dried.

To remove this mixture just wash off with cold water.

• Painted Walls

Clean with the soap solution. Bi-carb-soda can be used lightly with a soft damp cloth so that the surface of the wall isn't scratched.

or

White vinegar or cloudy ammonia on a damp cloth can also be used.

• Wall Paper

Because of the variety of surfaces on wallpaper it is difficult to recommend a cleaner.

The old cleaning suggestion of 2-day-old bread rubbed over the paper may do the job. A very slight wipe with Dettol removes some marks. Use on a damp cloth, not wet.

Vinyl Wall Paper - Clean with a warm cloth and white vinegar.

Washable Wall Paper - Wash with warm soapy water, and rub very gently. Use as little water as possible.

• Fabric Wall Coverings

Can be cleaned by dabbing on baby powder, leave for 2 hours then gently brush off. *Always test cleaner first in a place on the wall that isn't noticeable.*

• Mould on Walls

This may be difficult to remove with environmentally safe methods. Bi-carb-soda, methylated spirits or cloudy ammonia may help, but you might have to resort to a commercial mould remover. As long as there is an alternative to an environmentally unsound product I would suggest it, but there are some times when we need to use them. Make sure the cause of the mould is rectified e.g. faulty or clogged spouting or lack of ventilation in room.

Natural Pest Repellants

• Ants

Boiling water can be poured into the nests.

or

Borax mixed with sugar or jam can be placed on the ant trail. Be sure this is a safe place, preferably under the house, as Borax is *poisonous* to animals and humans.

or

Sprinkle crushed cloves or black pepper.

or

Soak pennyroyal oil onto a piece of material.

or

Rub lemon juice around sink.

• Cockroaches

Borax mixed with oats, honey or jam. Make sure it is inaccessible to children or pets.

or

Epsom salts can be sprinkled in the backs of cupboards,

or

Put cucumber skin where cockroaches are found. Renew skin when it has dried out.

Seal cracks around drainage pipes. Citronella oil can be rubbed around crevices or soaked in a cotton wool ball and placed where they may get into the home.

A bad infestation of cockroaches may need a pyrethrum insect spray. Use with care.

Make a cockroach trap - Smear dripping around the neck and half way down the inside of a wide mouthed bottle. Put cake or bread crumbs in bottom of jar. Cockroaches will climb in but can't get out.

• Silverfish

Cloves, garlic or epsom salts can be placed at back of drawers and wardrobes.

or

Equal parts Borax and sugar.

or

Wipe shelves with lavender or eucalyptus oil.

or

Place dried lavender bags in drawers.

A bad infestation of silverfish is best treated with pure lavender oil. Tip into joins at back of wardrobe and shelves and along skirting boards. I cut small pieces of scrap wood and soak them for a few days in lavender oil. Place at back of food cupboards or where you keep photographs and books. A bait to attract silverfish can be made with 1 part molasses and 2 parts vinegar placed on a metal or plastic lid.

• Moths

Epsom salts and/or cloves sprinkled at the back of shelves or drawers will deter moths.

or

Wipe shelves over with cloudy ammonia.

Use dried herbs such as wormwood, tansy or lavender. Place in bags and hang in your wardrobe or place in drawers. To make lavender sachets see page 75.

• Flies and Mosquitoes

Make sure all opening windows and doors have adequate screens on them.

Don't forget that the chimney needs netting or a damper to close the opening in spring and summer.

Buy a fly swatter.

Many herbs are insect repellants and can be grown in pots near doors and on window sills. Mint, tansy, pennyroyal, rosemary, feverfew, fennel, garlic, wild marjoram and basil are all repellants.

Bay leaves or crushed mint can be placed on window sills or around the sink.

Ferns growing near doors and windows will deter flies as will oil of lavender placed in a small container near an open window. An easy way to do this is to place a small piece of sponge in a saucer. Pour a little boiling water onto the sponge and then add a few drops of oil of lavender. The heat will activate the perfume. Re-do every few days. Oil of lavender can also be used on the skin to repel insects. Mosquitoes dislike camphor so this can be melted in boiling water and placed in bedrooms overnight. Or soak cotton wool balls with a few drops of spirits of camphor and place near bed.

Window frames can be rubbed over with oil of lavender, paraffin oil, onion or garlic. A saucer of chopped garlic by the window will deter flies and mosquitoes.

Avoid having sources of standing water around your house where mosquitoes will breed. Old fashioned mosquito coils are good and are still available in camping shops, if not in the supermarket.

There is a fern-like plant on the market called "Citrosa" or "Mozzie Buster" which can be grown inside or outside. Enquire at your nursery.

• Fleas

Herbal flea shampoos for pets are available on the market, but you can make your own by adding pennyroyal, eucalyptus, citronella or teatree oil to a plain shampoo.

Frequent vacuuming and cleaning of your pets bedding will reduce the flea problem.

Place fresh mint leaves wherever you see fleas - under mats, mattresses and under dogs bedding.

• Weevils

Bay leaves and whole cloves left on the shelves where you store cereals and flour will keep weevils away. Replace every few months.

To Consumer Advisor,

While I was in Ireland, I was told to put a green plastic soft drink bottle in the middle of the lawn as a way of keeping dogs off the grass. Bizarre as it sounds, I was assured it worked.

John.

Dear Barbara,

To keep dogs and cats off garden beds, place moth balls liberally around the plants. The mothballs last for quite some time and rain does not seem to affect them.

R.C.

Dear Mrs Lord,

Can you tell us how to keep cats off garden beds?

We are sick to death of their disgusting business. The stench is so bad, we can't even open our doors to let fresh air in.

Mrs M.C.

Dear Barbara,

Citronella oil is a bit dear, but worth every cent. Sprinkly it on a rag, fence, gate or in a carport where stray cats venture. It's simply marvellous! We haven't had to clean up after cats for months.

Rose.

• Cat and Dog Repellant

Animals are repelled by cloudy ammonia, orange peel, kerosene, cayenne pepper, garlic, citronella oil and curry.

To make a repellant, chop, mash or grind a whole bulb of garlic or a large onion. Add a tablespoon cayenne pepper or 1 teaspoon tabasco to 4 cups of tepid water. Let steep for one or two hours. Strain into watering can or sprayer. Use where needed. This can also be rubbed on articles that you don't want puppy to chew! A Rue plant is disliked by cats and a Coleus Carnis is supposed to repel dogs.

• Mice

Mice are repelled by peppermint oil and pennyroyal herb or oil.

• Possums

Sprinkle cayenne pepper where needed.

• Insect Repellants

Baby oil, citronella, castor oil and lavender oil can be rubbed on skin to repel insects.

Mosquito and fly zappers are excellent when used in food shops for cleanliness, but outside they zap every insect that comes near so are not suitable for the garden. Citronella or pyrethrum candles placed outside also act as a deterrent. Pyrethrum fumes may irritate sensitive noses. The old fashioned mosquito coils are very effective and are still available in supermarkets or camping shops.

• To Relieve Stings

Vinegar mixed into a paste with Bi-carb-soda helps remove the itch when applied to bites. This mixture also relieves sunburn.

Honey will help relieve bee stings once the little sack of poison has been removed.

Raw onion juice or eucalyptus oil applied to the skin relieves itching.

Make sure babies and toddlers are covered with mosquito nets while they are asleep.

- Borers and Termites

Small items - heat in microwave to destroy larvae.

Furniture/doors can be sealed in black plastic and left in strong sunlight for a day to destroy larvae.

Avoid annual preventative chemical treatment because they require large amounts of chemicals which do not kill the colony, but merely cause the termites to invade the neighbours. This results in more long-lasting chemicals in the neighbourhood. Preferred treatment of infestation is physical removal of damaged wood or an injection of arsenic trioxide by a professional pest control operator. When building, inquire about the termite-proof mesh that is used in conjunction with the concrete slab.

See Consumers' Guide to Safer Pest Control (\$2 pamphlet). Available from:

The Total Environment Centre,
1/88 Cumberland Street,
Sydney, 2000.
Telephone (02) 9247 8476
or (02) 9247 4714

- To make your own lavender or spice sachets

- Lavender

Mix together:

225 g dried lavender flowers
14 g dried thyme
14 g dried mint
28 g common salt

- Spice

Mix together:

approximately 50 g orris root powder
8 g each of cloves, caraway seeds, nutmeg, mace,
cinnamon (powdered)

Stitch into small bags using fine scrap material or old nylon stockings (orris root powder prolongs the perfume).

Personal

• Breath Fresheners

Garlic breath will disappear altogether if you juice half a bunch of parsley and drink it. Add a squeeze of lemon juice. It still tastes awful but it works! It can also benefit hay-fever sufferers.

Chewable breath sweeteners are cloves, coffee beans and fresh mint leaves.

Natural yoghurt everyday can help people with chronic bad breath. Healthy teeth are a must for fresh breath so visit your dentist regularly.

• Teeth

Clean with soft toothbrush and Bi-carb-soda. Place a few drops of peppermint oil in a small container and cover with some Bi-carb-soda. The oil flavour will soak through. Rinse teeth well with warm water.

After you get used to the taste and realise how clean your teeth are, you will never want to use toothpaste again. You may even give up the peppermint oil.

or

Soak a few drops of cinnamon or clove oil in 1 tablespoon of orris root powder for 2 hours. Add 1 tablespoon of Bi-carb-soda. Mix and place in a screw top jar.

Sage leaves can be rubbed on teeth to whiten them.

Dear Mrs Lord,

I just want to thank you for writing the book. It's a real Godsend. My teeth have never felt cleaner.

Sue.

Dear Barbara Lord,

I have been using carb-soda combined with lemon juice for many years to clean my teeth. I keep a small jar of carb-soda in the bathroom and each day I mix a little lemon juice with some soda to whiten my teeth and refresh my mouth.

Mary.

• Dentures

Soak in white vinegar for 10-15 mins. Overnight use a solution of half vinegar, half water.

• Sore Eyes

Sore eyes will be relieved with a bathe in black tea. I re-use teabags for this purpose. I also place used teabags on my closed

eyes to reduce strain and puffiness. It is very relaxing in the bath. The teabags may be warm or cold.

• Dandruff

For very dry hair, some hot olive or corn oil can be rubbed into the scalp. Cover with plastic bag, then a towel and leave for one hour before washing out.

or

White vinegar or cider vinegar can be massaged through the scalp weekly or more often if necessary. Leave for a few minutes and rinse.

or

Juice some parsley and rub into scalp with your shampoo.

or

Chop a handful of rosemary and bring slowly to the boil in 1 cup of olive oil. Strain before bottling and use once a week until dandruff clears.

• Hair Shampoo

You can make your own shampoo using Lux flakes. Bring to the boil 1 cup of flakes in one and a half cups of water. When flakes are dissolved tip into a 1 litre bucket with lid and keep in the shower recess. To make a commercial shampoo go further, add the contents of one bottle to the above mixture. Rinse hair with chamomile, lavender or rosemary vinegar. This can also be kept in the shower in a

plastic bottle. Use two basins, one to pour rinse over, one to catch liquid so you can repeat the process. Give a final rinse of warm water.

To make your own lavender vinegar you will need 4 cups of cider vinegar and 8 tablespoons of dried lavender. Heat vinegar, pour over lavender flowers and let steep, until cool. Strain and bottle. Add 5 cups of water to 1 cup of vinegar for hair rinse. To make rosemary vinegar use 4 stems of fresh rosemary, cut leaves with scissors to assist steeping, then use the same method as for lavender vinegar.

• Hair Conditioner

For dry hair, I suggest natural yoghurt rubbed into the hair. Leave for a couple of minutes before rinsing.

• Home Made Hair Gel

1 tablespoon gelatine, 2 1/2 cups of hot water and 1 teaspoon of eucalyptus oil. Towel dry hair after washing and pour this mixture through hair. It is really good for fine hair as it gives a lot of body.

• General Soap

Use a cake of pure or herbal soap.

• Baths

Half a cup of epsom salts in your bath water is refreshing. For dry skin, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil to bath water.

Put the herb lovage in the foot of an old stocking and hang it in the bath.

Have a jar of oatmeal by the bath and use it as a face scrub or all over scrub. Leaves the body feeling smooth and silky.

Oatmeal in the bath helps relieve hot weather itches. It can be placed in the foot of an old sock and used as a massager.

• Hand Lotion

Equal parts olive oil, lemon juice and honey.

• Massage Oil

Mix 100ml of almond oil with 1 teaspoon of a favourite essential oil or a few drops of mixed oils.

• Chilblains

Half a dessertspoon Bi-carb-soda mixed with a teaspoon of vinegar. Apply to affected area.

• Deodorant

I have had many people ask for an alternative deodorant because of rashes and itching. Both of these mixtures work really well. I use the liquid deodorant most days and the cream deodorant in really hot weather.

Liquid Deodorant - 1 part cider vinegar to 8 parts of water. Add perfume or scented oil that appeals to you. Oil of lavender is the most effective. I use 2 teaspoons of oil to 200-250 ml of the mixture.

I take the lid off an old roll-on bottle and fill it with this mixture. You may need to use it more often than commercial deodorants.

Cream Deodorant - 2 tablespoons of Bi-carb-soda, 2 tablespoons petroleum jelly, 2 tablespoons talcum powder or corn flour and 2 tablespoons light olive oil. Stir over low heat till a smooth cream forms. Jar and label.

Dear Home Hints,

I read with interest your article on talcum powder. My mother would never have it in the house (9 children), as it was made from Kaolin.

I became an asthmatic one year after arriving in Australia from the U.K. where I used to be a top swimmer and found that eating Crisps, bananas and margarine gives me the wheeze.

I get upset when I see Mums giving these things to their children.

J.J.

• Heat or Nappy Rash

Place some cornflour into a large salt shaker and use as powder for rashes caused by sweating. Good for underneath breasts or anywhere creases cause itching. Excellent for babies where dampness and heat cause nappy rash. Talcum powder can aggravate people with allergies or asthma, because the fine particles are breathed into the lungs.

• Natural Skin Treatments

Face Massage - Light olive oil can be used on its own as a face or scalp massage.

or

1 tablespoon of honey, 1 tablespoon of olive oil heated together in a small saucepan makes a good face and hand massage. Use warm and leave on face for 10 minutes if possible. Rinse off using warm water. Splash on rosewater for an astringent.

or

3 tablespoons of honey and the juice of half an orange. Warm the honey and add the juice. Use as a face massage, then rinse with warm water.

Garden-weary hands and rough elbows can be revitalised by scrubbing them with sugar and a cut lemon. Rinse with cold water.

• Rosewater

Gather roses, preferably a damask rose such as Black Boy or Josephine Bruce before 11.00am when the fragrance is at its peak. Strip the petals and partly dry them before layering them loosely in a cardboard box. Turn frequently to keep the air circulating.

Fill a large screw-top jar three-quarters full with petals and cover with fresh water. They tend to float to the surface so push them down a few times before putting the lid on (not

too tightly) and placing the jar in a large saucepan. Half fill the saucepan with water and bring slowly to the boil. Simmer quietly for 15 minutes, occasionally removing the lid of the jar and pushing petals down into the hot water with a long handled spoon. Strain the liquid into a bowl using cheesecloth, an old stocking or terylene, then wring out the residual petals to extract the last colour and fragrance. For a deeper stronger rosewater repeat the above process once or twice using the claret coloured water with fresh petals.

To preserve your 'decoction', add a teaspoon of tincture of gum benzoin which is available at chemists. Shake and place in a clean screw-top bottle in the fridge. This will keep indefinitely. After a while some settling may occur, so strain the contents again without shaking and continue to use. As the perfume is the main reason for making rosewater, try this method with any strong-smelling roses but to get a good claret colour you will need to use dark red roses.

• Facial Steam

This can be made with dried and fresh herbs. Select a combination such as lavender, chamomile, lemon verbena and elderflower and steep in boiling water for a minute. Cover basin and head with a towel and steam for a minute or two at a time, coming out for breath when needed.

• Facial Scrub

Mix together:

- 1 tablespoon instant oatmeal
- 1/3 cup of any type of milk
- 1 teaspoon of honey

To this add a small amount of fruit such as strawberry, peach, mango, pawpaw or avocado. Mash and rub gently over the face. Leave for 10 minutes then rinse off with warm water. Finish with an astringent.

Astringents

To make Hungary Water you need:

- 2 cups of brandy
- 2 cups of rosewater
- 1/2 cup of dried rosemary
- 4 tablespoons finely chopped orange peel
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped lemon peel

Steep together for one week and strain through fine muslin or an old stocking.

This mixture made a woman so beautiful that at 72 years of age she was proposed to by the King of Hungary and was made queen. Hence the label "Hungary Water".

or

Try a little lemon juice mixed with ice cold soda water.

or

Use rosewater with a little glycerine added.

Summer Soother - Juice a cucumber and a few mint leaves together. Thin with a little rosewater. Strain. This is excellent after a day in the sun.

Citrus Water - 4 dessertspoons lemon juice, 1 dessertspoon glycerine and 1 cup rosewater. Mix together and add rosewater. Leave on face and hands for five minutes then rinse.

• **Mascara**

Add a drop or two of glycerine to your dried up mascara. It will last a little longer.

• **To Soothe Sore Dry Lips**

Melt 1 tablespoon of honey and add 1 teaspoon of rosewater. Seal in a small jar.

• **Tired Feet and Hands**

1 basin of hot water, 1 basin of cold water. Put a handful of salt in each. Soak feet for ten seconds in alternate basins.

or

1/2 cup epsom salts plus 1/2 cup brown vinegar in a bucket of hot water. Soak in water as hot as you can stand.

• **Tinea**

Mix 3 parts vinegar and 5 parts water. Pour over affected area after showering.

or

Use Friars Balsam.

Dear Barbara,

I had to laugh when a friend suggested putting a clean unpeeled potato under my pillow at night time to get rid of cramp. I was amazed this worked for me.

Patricia.

Dear Barbara,

For those suffering from night cramps, place a wine cork anywhere in the bed. 100% prevention.

Ted.

Dear Mrs Lord,

You mentioned putting corks in the bed to stop cramps. During an European tour, I suggested to a lady suffering from cramp that she try the cork method.

By the end of the tour everyone on the bus was teasing me, and presenting me with wine corks after dinner. This did not worry me as it was worthwhile to know I had helped a fellow traveller.

Lorna.

Dear Green Cleaner,

I suffer from night cramps and have found the best cure to be bi-carb soda. I have a small jar of it by the bed and whenever a cramp is coming on I put half a teaspoon under my tongue. It taste awful, but really works.

Reg

Dear Barbara,

I find camphor in an old sock placed between the sheets in the bed prevents cramps. It also feels good between my feet.

Camphor Lover.

Smells

There is a pottery bowl with a candle in the base and a lid that holds various aromatic oils. Mix these with a little water and the warmth of the candle evaporates the liquid, giving off an aroma that will gradually penetrate the house.

or

Alternatively, use an unglazed corked pottery bowl with a few drops of essential oil. The oil is absorbed and the perfume escapes into the room. Do not stand on wooden furniture as the oil will stain.

- Shoes

Can be sprinkled inside with Bi-carb-soda and left overnight.

- Sneakers

Should be washed regularly in the washing machine.

- Socks

Soak in equal parts warm water and vinegar. Leave overnight then wash.

• To Make Your Own Pot Pourri

Pot pourri is available in many shops but you can make your own using flowers, leaves, spices, etc. Pick flowers during summer on a warm dry day.

Use rose petals, lemon verbena, scented geranium, forget-me-not, pinks, lavender, thyme, bay leaves, marjoram, sage, marigold, rosemary, jasmine, pansies, violets, honeysuckle or cornflowers. Lay out on a newspaper in a dry dark place for a few weeks.

Mix in a large bowl, add 1 teaspoon of salt or orris root powder (orquim benzoin) to fix the scent.

Shake in some allspice and nutmeg. Add dried orange and lemon peel and add scented oil such as lavender or rose and cover for 2-3 weeks.

When the smell wears off you can re-scent your bowl of pot pourri by adding some scented oil.

An Australian Pot Pourri - This can be made by using dried gum leaves, seed pods from wattle, wattle flowers and gum nuts. Add dried orange and lemon peel. Sprinkle with eucalyptus oil.

• Rosemary Pot Pourri

Rosemary
Black pepper corns
Citrus peel

Mix together and allow to dry out for several days.

• Urine

Smell can be removed from linen or clothes by soaking in white vinegar or lemon juice. After washing, dry outside, preferably in sunshine.

• Oil (Petroleum)

Smells can be removed by soaking article in bucket with eucalyptus oil added. One dessertspoon of eucalyptus oil added to the wash can also help.

• Tobacco

Add two tablespoons cloudy ammonia to half a litre boiling water and leave in room overnight.

or

Cider vinegar in a bowl overnight.

or

Dampen a hand towel with vinegar and swing it around your head as you walk through the room.

• A Newly Painted Room

Place a bowl of water containing a chopped onion or a couple of handfuls of grass or hay or one cup of vinegar in the room. Renew water every three hours to absorb paint odour.

- Toilets

Add sprigs of lavender or rosemary to the toilet cleaning vinegar. Let nature help, open windows whenever possible. Whenever I use lemons I put the remains in a bowl and pour boiling water over them. Stand this bowl in the bathroom with the door closed. This works for a few days.

Why not try a few stems or a bunch of fresh cut flowers? Boronia, fresas and jasmine have a beautiful and natural perfume.

Burn a couple of matches after using the toilet. This really works well, but remember to keep matches out of children's reach. Eucalyptus oil or oil of lavender in a bowl of hot water works well.

- Vomit

Wipe with equal parts warm water and vinegar. If smell lingers sprinkle area with a few drops of eucalyptus oil.

- Perspiration

Soak article in water to which 2 crushed aspirins have been added.

- General House Smells

Pour a few drops of pine needle oil on small pieces of cotton wool. Place them in unobtrusive places around the room.

or

Put plates filled with charcoal around room. Charcoal absorbs smells.

or

Burning candles absorbs smells. If you have ducted heating place dried orange or lemon peel over the duct. The warmth will bring out the citrus odour.

- How To Make Your Own Perfume

This is a delightful perfume which could be used in any room in the house. Heating brings out the perfume, so it can be added to boiling water in a cup, sprinkled on the fire or used in a candle burning pot.

'An odoriferous parfume for chambers'

150 ml rosewater

1 tablespoon powdered cloves

Mix the ingredients well and store for a few days to mature. Sprinkle a few drops in a hot, dry iron pan to scent the room. (*From A Queen's Delight, 1661.*)

- Cooking Smells

Add thick slices of lemon to cabbage or onion while cooking to prevent smells.

Meat that has become smelly will freshen with a soak in water with a tablespoon of Bi-carb-soda.

Fish will not smell if you add a little curry to the flour, or add a piece of apple to the pan when cooking.

Commercial Garden Insecticides

- Dipel

Use: To kill caterpillars.

Dipel is a biological insecticide based on spores of the bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis*. The bacteria are ingested by the caterpillars and multiply in the insects gut. This produces toxins that prevent the caterpillars from feeding, thus killing them.

Effects on our Health: None

- Pyrethrum (Pyrethrins)

Use: Pyrethrum/pyrethrins are used in many household insecticide sprays and aerosols. They are available as spray concentrates and dusts for use on vegetables, fruit trees, ornamentals and shrubs. They are also used in some mosquito coils and mats. Low volumes are sometimes used for large-scale treatment against flies and mosquitoes.

How it works: Pyrethrum is a nerve poison affecting the central and peripheral nervous systems of insects. The affected insects suffer excitation, paralysis then death. The synergist ipieronyl butoxide is nearly always included in pyrethrin formulas to increase their effectiveness. *Effects on Health:* Pyrethrum is not highly toxic to people or other mammals. Fruit and vegetables sprayed or dusted with it can be eaten immediately after harvesting. The fumes may irritate chemically sensitive noses.

- **Glyphosphate** - Roundup (a 36 per cent concentrate sold in large containers); Zero (a 10 per cent solution for home use). Both contain a wetting agent.

Use: Glyphosphate is a weedicide that controls many broad-leaf and narrow-leaf plants, especially deep-rooted perennials. It is effective against tough weeds such as bamboo and blackberries and many grasses, such as kikuyu, couch grass, rye grass etc. It can be applied with a spray but much more safely with a rope-wick applicator (wiping device).

How it Works: The chemical is taken up by the leaves and spreads rapidly throughout most plants. Little is taken up by the roots. **It kills all growing plants.** Why it kills plants is not clear. Care must be taken not to apply the chemical to non-target species. It may be necessary to re-apply until seed and bulbs are exhausted.

Effects on Surroundings: Glyphosphate does not persist long in the soil (half of it goes within 60 days). Microbes in the soil readily break it down, though it decomposes much

more slowly on plants in waterways. The wetting agent may cause problems to non-target organisms. It is corrosive to iron and galvanised steel.

Alternatives: Manual or mechanical control of weeds.

Note: Do not use near ponds, creeks, dams or any waterways. While this is one of the least hazardous weedicides available, it is still *potentially harmful and should be handled with extreme care.* When doubt exists regarding impact on the environment and health it is better to be safe than risk harm.

• Very Harmful Sprays

Name	Persistence	Hazardous To
Aldrin	30 yrs	fish, birds, dogs, cats
Chlordane	30 yrs	fish, birds, dogs, cats, bees
Dieldrin	30 yrs	fish, birds, dogs, cats, bees
Heptachlor	30 yrs	fish, birds, dogs, cats, bees
Lindane	2 yrs	fish, bees
2,4,5-T	3 months	fish, bees
Pentachlorophenol	4 yrs	fish

From "A-Z of Chemicals in the Home". Total Environment Centre, 1/88 Cumberland Street, Sydney, 2000.

Garden

Although pyrethrum sprays should only be used as a last resort, the pyrethrum daisy is now available through many nurseries in Australia. Plant them amongst vegetables or plants that attract unwelcome insects. Marigolds and Calendulas also deter some pests.

Note:

Home made sprays can be very poisonous and need to be labelled and stored carefully. They will kill natural predators such as lacewings and ladybirds, so be careful where you spray and watch overspray. Keep out of reach of children.

Because of their toxicity and the likelihood of careless labelling, home made sprays are best mixed in small quantities and used immediately.

• Home Made Garden Sprays

Aphids and Thrip - Can be controlled with soapy water, onion or garlic spray and white oil.

Garlic Spray - Crush garlic cloves and steep in an equal quantity of vegetable oil for a week. Add some soap mixture (Cleansel) and dilute 1 part mixture to 10 parts water. Store in glass container.

Pikelet Spray - For aphids, scale and caterpillars, mix together 1 tablespoon of white flour, a quarter cup of milk and 1 cup of water. Spray on leaves.

• **For Scab and Mildew**

Chive Spray - Use dried chives. Pour 600 ml boiling water over approximately 20 g chives. Leave to stand for one hour. Strain. Dilute one part spray to 2 parts water.

Cabbage Moth Spray - 50 g soft soap, 150 g salt, 10 litres water. Melt soap in water, add salt, strain through fine strainer to get rid of lumps of soap if you want to use this in a pump spray. Liquid cleanser may be used in place of soap.

• **Easy All-Purpose Insecticide Spray**

Mix together 1 bucket water, a small packet of epsom salts, 1 teaspoon Condy's Crystals (available at chemists).

Rhubarb Spray (all purpose) - Cut up one kilogram of rhubarb leaves and boil in two and a half litres of water for 30 minutes.

Grate 1/3 of a cake (60 g) of pure soap into 3 1/2 litres of boiling water to dissolve. When cool, mix together and strain for use. Bottle and label as very poisonous. I suggest you only make enough for immediate use.

Dear Barbara Lord,

Shame on you for suggesting that people pick up crushed shells and coarse sand to put on the garden. How long do you think we will have beautiful beaches if all gardeners did this.

Mary.

Dear Barbara,

I dry my empty eggshells until they are brittle, then I crush and sprinkle them around plants to form a barrier against snails and slugs.

B.M.

Dear Barbara,

I recommend your garlic spray for snails and caterpillars. Cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower seem very susceptible to these pests. If you use a natural spray like this there is not fear of chemicals damaging the environment.

Barbara.

• **Snails and Slugs**

Sawdust, shell grit or sand heaped around new plants will deter slugs and snails.

Bury tins up to the neck and put beer in the bottom, or just fill saucers with beer near new plants. Slugs and snails are attracted to the beer. Empty every morning.

Cut the top and bottom off plastic bottles and place them around each new plant. Alternatively, use ice-cream or margarine containers to form a collar around the plants until they are large enough to lose their appeal to snails.

Fill a shallow bowl with water and cover with a layer of natural bran. Snails will crawl onto this thinking it is solid, fall through and drown.

• Moss

To remove moss from path, mix equal parts vinegar and methylated spirits. Apply with scrubbing brush. Scrub well then leave for 15 minutes. Scrub again with mixture, leave another 15 minutes. Sweep with broom.

To promote mossy growth on rocks or paths tip milk over them.

• Garden Tools

To prevent rust, clean tools after use and rub secateurs and cutting tools with petroleum jelly.

• Quassia Chips

Use to deter possums.

• Terracotta Pots

After cleaning and drying wipe over with linseed oil. Apply a second coat after an hour or so and they will look like new again.

• Concrete Paving

Cover stains with one part detergent to 6 parts kerosene. Hose off after 5-10 minutes.

• Composting

There are plenty of books in the library that will tell you how to make compost but here is my easy way.

You will need a couple of square metres of ground (not necessarily together) and some soil.

Throw all your kitchen scraps (not meat and bones as that will encourage flies and mice) onto the ground, add some blood and bone and fresh manure if available. Cover with a layer of soil, slightly dampen. Repeat this until you have quite a heap then start again on another spot.

Fork it through weekly to allow air to circulate and keep damp with the occasional sprinkle of water. Black plastic held down by bricks will speed the process. This can take months but it is well worth the effort. Scrape some away from the bottom of the compost heap for pot plants or use it half broken down for your vegetable plot. It will continue to break down while your vegetables grow.

Grass clippings, leaves, spent flowers, seaweed, newspaper, other paper and cardboard, ash from fires, sawdust and wood shavings (not treated pine), egg shells, tea leaves and coffee grounds can all be composted.

Avoid using couch grass, oxalis bulbs, ivy cuttings and roots.

Lime quickens the breaking down process but is not good for all plants. A worm farm will break down the scraps quickly and produce wonderful compost

Dear Handy Hints,

Don't put lemons in your compost bin. They are too acidic and worms won't inhabit your compost.

Gillian.

• Grow Your Own Herbs

Whilst herbs in their dried form are readily available I would suggest growing a few of your own.

They are not difficult to grow and apart from watering need very little attention. Most herbs like a sunny spot. They don't need fertilizing but can be started in a good mixture of compost and some light sandy soil. They also grow well in pots.

Always pick the top leaves so that the plant will grow strong and bushy.

Lavender and rosemary are essential for your vinegar mixtures and as a silverfish deterrent.

Mint, chives, basil, oregano, camomile, parsley, sage and tansy can all be grown in pots by windows and doors and are insect repellants.

To dry herbs - Pick when leaves are dry and hang upside down in small bunches. Leave for a few days in a warm dry spot until the plants are dried and the leaves can be stripped from the stems ready to bottle. Label carefully.

Cleaning the Car

- **Washing**

A hot soapy mixture with 1 cup of kerosene in a bucket. Rinse with hose using as little water as possible. If the car can be washed on grass then the water is not wasted.

- **Stains**

Most stains will come off the duco with Bi-carb-soda on a damp cloth.

Vinyl Dashboard and Trim - A damp cloth is mostly all that is necessary. Use a commercial cleaner or restorer if needed.

Vinyl Seats - Use cloudy ammonia on a damp cloth. Bi-carb-soda will remove most stains.

Carpets - See *carpet shampoo page 17.*

- **Tree Sap**

Remove with "De-solve it" available from large newsagents, craft or car accessory shops. Wash car with warm soapy water.

- **Windows**

Dry with a chamois cloth after washing.

- **Chrome**

Rub when dry with a soft cloth dipped in cooking flour.

or

Use cloudy ammonia on a soft cloth.

- **Battery Terminals**

Brush on a solution of 1 teaspoon of Bi-carb-soda to a half a cup of water to get rid of acid build-up. Use an old toothbrush.

Miscellaneous

- **Lemons**

Lemons are valuable as a bleach for whites, nappies and perspiration stains. They help remove odours from rooms if they are cut and placed in a basin of hot water.

The best way to preserve the juice when lemons are plentiful is to squeeze and make into ice blocks. Tip out of tray into plastic bags and then store in the freezer. For maximum juice, soak lemons in hot water for a few minutes before using.

- **Spectacles**

Clean with eau-de-cologne then rinse with warm water.

- **Paint Brushes**

Soak for one hour in hot vinegar.

- **Price Tags**

Dab on a little eucalyptus oil and rub gently.

Dear Mrs Lord,

Do you know that turpentine can be re-used?

After cleaning paint brushes, store the turps in a clean bottle or tin and allow the sediment to sink to the bottom. Carefully decant the turps off the top to clean more brushes.

The sediment can be used to paint outside gates or fences.

My present tin of turpentine has lasted fifteen years so far.

John.

• Microwave

Don't use new plastic wrap to cover food cooking or warming in the microwave. Any paper will do, the cover is purely to prevent splashing.

• Patent Leather

Rub with milk or petroleum jelly.

• Home Made Shoe Polish

1 cup of linseed oil and 1 cup vinegar.

Bring oil to boil in a double boiler or use a small saucepan inside a larger one as linseed oil is flammable. Cool then gradually add vinegar. Store in a glass bottle and label. Shake well before using. Rub on with a soft cloth or brush.

• Indoor Plants

Wipe large shiny leaves with a cloth dampened with milk. This gives a shine and protects the plant against dust.

• Cut Flowers

Half a cup of lemonade, 1 dessertspoon of sugar or 2 aspirin will prolong the life of flowers by keeping the water fresh. Alternatively, change water every day, cutting a little off the end of each stem.

• Rusty Barbecue

Cover rusty spots with aluminium foil wrapped tightly around the grill. Light the barbecue. When it is glowing leave for 10 minutes. Allow to cool and dry. Remove foil. Rust should have disappeared.

To prevent rust occurring on barbecue grills and hotplates, rub oil over surface before beginning to cook and again after cooking.

• Rusty Keys

Soak in paraffin oil

• Umbrellas

Clean by rubbing off dirt with methylated spirits. Clean with a solution of 1 part cold tea, 1 part cloudy ammonia. To restiffen, sponge open umbrella with 2 tablespoons of sugar dissolved in half a cup of hot tea. When the mixture

cools apply to umbrella. This will stiffen the fabric and revive the colour.

• Spare Beds

Place a cake of soap between the sheets and under the pillow to prevent a musty smell developing.

Cooking Hints

Cream - When whipping cream for cakes add a small pinch of Bi-carb-soda, this will keep cream fresh for days.

Cream will whip more easily if you add a few drops of lemon juice.

Eggs - A dessertspoon of vinegar in the pan when poaching eggs will stop the yokes from breaking.

When beating egg whites add a little vinegar to increase the volume.

A pinch of salt added to whites of eggs when beating will make the mixture stiffer.

Sandwiches - To keep sandwiches fresh and cut down on the use of plastic, cover sandwiches with a damp teatowel until required.

Tea/Coffee - To save energy, boil enough water to fill a thermos flask and use for your quick "cuppa" through the day instead of boiling one cup at a time.

• Kettle

Empty kettle after each use and place a couple of marbles inside to prevent sediment build-up.

• Pan Splatters

Before frying, sprinkle salt over the top of the stove. This will stop fat from burning onto the enamel.

Handy hints

- Garlic smell will lessen if green core is removed.
- Onion fumes when cutting are mostly eliminated if a tea towel is placed over the shoulder of the person cutting.
- Stamps are removed from envelopes by placing in a saucer of water and placing it in the microwave for 60 seconds.
- Glue recipe: 1/2 cup plain flour, 1 dessert spoon salt, 4 cups water. Make paste using flour and a little bit of water. Bring to the boil adding the remaining water and salt, stirring all the while to avoid lumps. Boil 2 minutes, cool and bottle. Keep in the fridge.

Environmental Actions

...IN THE HOME

- When buying an electrical appliance, look for its energy rating. Use the system of stars on the label to guide you.
- Check the temperature of your fridge. It only needs to be 4°C.
- If you have a microwave oven, make good use of it. They are very energy efficient.
- Check the temperature of your hot water service. Sixty degrees is usually optimum.
- Many people use cold water to wash clothes and find it adequate. Dissolve soap in hot water before adding to machine.
- If you have a clothes drier, use it as little as possible.
- In summer, turn out the pilot light on your gas heater.
- Discover compact fluorescent lights. These globes have an output of only 13 watts but the light is equivalent to an incandescent globe.

- Turn off the lights when not in use. You might have a light on when an open curtain would do instead!
- Install ceiling fans in place of air conditioners.
- Fit skylights to make use of natural light.
- Have showers rather than baths
- Have shorter showers
- Use a low flow shower head
- Once the toothpaste is wet on the toothbrush, turn the tap off.
- Wait for a full load in your washing machine before you turn it on.
- Use your dishwasher once a day if possible
- Use unbleached toilet paper and other recycled paper products.
- Use your car responsibly. Do your shopping when you are out for another reason, e.g. work, picking up children or visiting.
- Letting your fingers do the walking through the Yellow Pages can mean huge savings of time, money and car emissions. Rather than drive from shop to shop looking for what you want, you can find out all the details and the best price over the phone.

- Walk for your health...Are shops nearby? Can you meet the children after school without using the car?
- Never pour any chemicals down the drain. Instead, store them somewhere safely, then ask your local council about chemical disposal days. Many councils organize weekends when people can bring chemicals to a central location where they are safely dealt with.
- Dog poo is thought to be one of the major reasons why levels of *E.coli*, a particularly insidious bacteria, is rising in the popular bays around Australian beaches. Faecal matter washes off footpaths and into drains and eventually finds its way into the sea. Use a "pooper-scooper".
- Check what you are eating. The early 2000 years should see fruits, vegetables and cereals which are genetically modified labelled. The law that covers this, may not include the labelling of by-products like oils and sugars that are used in many processed foods.
- Eat fresh food grown without chemicals. Many local green grocers and markets now stock some organic produce.
- Avoid processed food where possible.
- Steer clear of rainforest timbers, or products that contain rainforest timbers. Look out for these names when you're at the timber yard or at furniture stores. These trees were once a delicate and complex web of life.

Meranti, Merbau, Teak, Phillipine Mahogany, Kapur, Ramin, Batu, Keruing, Jelutong, Mengkulang, Nyaton, Calantas, Narra.

- Use secondhand timbers wherever possible.
- Make sure your home is insulated. Outside blinds and planting of trees contribute to the heating and cooling of a home.

...IN THE GARDEN

- Start a compost heap. Apart from reducing your household waste by at least 30%, compost can add valuable nutrients to your garden soil. Run the lawnmower over fallen leaves before adding them to the compost.
- Grow your own vegies and use organic fertilizers such as chicken or cow or horse manure, rather than chemicals. Consider making your own organic insecticide sprays.
- Attract native animals to your yard by planting native species. Native plant species need about half the amount of water that exotic plants do. Encourage birds by providing a bird bath. Planting a tree or two is an effective way to fight the greenhouse effect.
- Save water by reducing the size of your lawn by planting ground cover and native shrubs.
- Mulch garden beds each year to save on water evaporation.

- Water gardens in the evening rather than during early morning or midday sun so that the water penetrates rather than evaporates.
- Install a drip system so that water drips straight onto the plant and is not wasted.
- Sweep paths and driveways with a broom. A hose used in place of a broom wastes valuable water.
- Wash the car using a bucket of soapy water, then give the car a quick rinse.

...WHEN SHOPPING

Plastic bags are pumped out in there billions each year by the supermarket chains across the nation. The average family accumulates up to 2,000 plastic bags in one year. Plastic bags never rot. They stay in their same state forever. They're made from petroleum, a non-renewable resource. Even bags that are supposed to "breakdown", in fact only turn into smaller pieces of plastic, releasing toxic chemicals in the process.

- Take your own string or carry bags when ever you shop.
- If you can't do without a plastic bag, wash it out when you've finished and see how many times you can re-use it.
- Return plastic bags to the recycling bin at the supermarket.

- Cut six pack rings after using. The clear plastic makes them invisible, so sea animals and birds are put at risk of becoming entangled.
- Choose paper and glass packaging over plastic, where possible. Make sure you recycle these.
- Most vegetables don't need to be put into plastic bags. Buy them loose and put in your carry bag.
- Ignore anything that has more than the barest packaging.

...RECYCLING

- Use the facilities in your area for recycling glass, plastic, metal and paper. Don't discard these valuable resources along with other waste that is destined for the tip. Australians have become very good at recycling except for tin cans. Only about 30% are recovered. Rinse out your cans including pet food tins and place them in the recycling bin.
- Junk mail can be lessened by placing a "no junk mail" sticker to your letterbox. All junk mail can go into the paper recycling.
- Second hand clothes shops welcome goods that you don't need. These shops are also a valuable source of house items, toys and clothes that may suit you.

- Buy a battery re-charger for small household batteries. In the long term you will save money as rechargeable batteries can be recharged many times.
- Car batteries are recycled to extract the heavy metal. Local waste stations will take them. Also look under Scrap Merchants in the Yellow Pages.

...AT WORK

- Take your own cup to work instead of using disposable foam cups.
- Photocopy on both sides of paper and use scrap paper for unimportant documents.
- Re-use manila folders. Stick new adhesive labels over old ones to identify new files.
- Make sure your firm has a recycling program.
- Make a notepad out of scrap paper. Paint one end of a collected wad of paper with glue and then put a weight on it. When it dries you have a peel off pad.
- Re-use envelopes by using adhesive labels.

...OTHER THINGS TO DO

- Show your concern by writing a letter of protest about an environmental issue.
- Write to your local Councillor.

- Write to State Parliamentarians, C/- Parliament House in your State.
- Write to Federal Parliamentarians C/- Parliament House, Canberra 2600.

Address letters to the Premiers, the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister for the Environment...

- Write to companies. Boycott their products, then write and tell them why you have done this. Ask them for alternatives or explanations.
- Become a member of a local, State or National conservation society.

The Australian Conservation
Foundation needs your support.

Becoming a member enables the
ACF to continue their work of
caring for the environment.

Ring and ask for membership
information.

1 800 332 510

or

Visit the ACF website

www.acfonline.org.au

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GREEN CLEANER

“A ‘must have’ book for every Australian household that is interested in saving money and doing their bit to help the environment.”

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