

Everyday Cheapskate: Homemade cleaning solutions are cheap, green

by *Mary_Hunt*

I make my own household cleaners to save money, not to avoid toxins or to help clean up the planet. For years, I've been collecting, testing and recommending cheapskate solutions to help my readers save time and money. That these concoctions just happen to be "green" alternatives is a terrific bonus.

All of these solutions should be mixed thoroughly in an appropriate container (spray bottle or other container with a tight-fitting lid), labeled clearly and kept out of reach of children.

--Cleaner for Painted Cabinets: 1/4 cup of baking soda, 1 cup of household ammonia, 1/2 cup of white vinegar, 1 gallon of warm water. Wash cabinets with a sponge and this solution. Rinse off with a clean sponge and water. Wipe cabinets completely dry. Note: For stubborn areas, press a hot, damp cloth against grease deposits until they soften. Then proceed as directed above.

--All-Purpose Spray Cleaner: 2 cups of rubbing alcohol, 1 tablespoon of liquid dishwashing detergent, 1 tablespoon of non-sudsing household ammonia, 1 tablespoon of white vinegar. Mix in a gallon jug. Fill jug with warm water, and shake. Put solution in a spray bottle. Great for cleaning windows, chrome and bath fixtures.

--Heavy-Duty Window Cleaner: 1/2 cup of ammonia, 2 cups of rubbing alcohol, 1 teaspoon of liquid dishwashing detergent, water. Mix ammonia, alcohol and detergent in a gallon jug. Fill to the top with water. Shake well before each use. This solution is great for cleaning really dirty windows, taking tape marks off windows, and removing soap film from shower doors.

--Antiseptic Spray: 1 part liquid chlorine bleach, 9 parts water. Mix ingredients in a spray bottle. Use this solution to clean and disinfect surfaces in the kitchen and bathroom. Make in small batches to use immediately. As bleach evaporates, it loses its germ-killing properties.

--Skunk-Scent-Removing Shampoo. 32 ounces of hydrogen peroxide, 1/4 cup of baking soda, 1 teaspoon of dishwashing liquid. Mix ingredients together in a large bottle with a cap. Use as shampoo on pets, children and spouses. Rinse well.

--Vinyl-Siding Cleaner: 2/3 cup of Spic and Span, 1/2 cup of powdered Tide laundry detergent, 1 quart of liquid chlorine bleach, 3 quarts of hot water. Mix ingredients in a 2-gallon bucket, and allow to stand for 4 to 5 hours. Pour into ordinary garden sprayer, and apply to vinyl siding. Leave solution on siding for 5 minutes, and rinse with hose. When you spray it on, you will see the dirt, film and mildew slide off.

You can go online to get a copy of Mary Hunt's "Cheapskate Solutions," a 42-page booklet that contains nearly 300 recipes and instructions for making your own household, health and beauty, garden and craft solutions, at www.DebtProofLiving.com (click on "Bookstore" and then on "Booklets"), or you can call 800-550-3502, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time. Or send your check or money order for \$6, which includes shipping and handling, to: Debt-Proof Living, Dept.: CS, P.O. Box 2135, Paramount, CA 90723. Allow one to two weeks for delivery.

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