



Green Cleaning Guide

For Businesses and Individuals

Green, or environmentally preferable products are often defined as “products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.” Green cleaning is the practice of effectively protecting people’s health while choosing products which are not harmful to the environment.

Many professional cleaning companies offer green cleaning for businesses and individuals. In addition, green cleaning products are becoming more and more widely available.

Benefits of Green Cleaning at work and home

Many benefits are associated with a green cleaning products and practices including:

- Improved indoor air quality
- Fewer complaints from office and janitorial workers about their indoor environment
- Reduced or no adverse environmental impact
- Saving company owners money
- Conserving natural resources
- Enhancing and protecting natural habitats
- Improving employee productivity and satisfaction
- Optimizing life-cycle performance of building materials
- Contributing to the health and well-being of the community

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LABELING PROGRAMS

Is it really green?

Often it can be difficult to determine which products are really green and which only claim to be green. Clean Calgary Association suggests you to look for a few things in green cleaners:

1. List of ingredients
2. No perfume or fragrance with essential oils
3. Companies who started with sustainability in mind.

Alternatively, you can evaluate products according recognized labelling programs.

EcoLogo

Is North America's most widely recognized and respected certification of environmental leadership, setting standards and certifying products in more than 120 categories. There are currently more than 7,000 EcoLogo-certified products from hundreds of manufacturers. www.ecologo.org



Green Seal



Provides science-based environmental certification standards that are credible, transparent, and essential in an increasingly educated and competitive marketplace. Their industry knowledge and standards help manufacturers, purchasers, and end users make responsible choices that positively impact business behavior and improve quality of life.

Global Ecolabeling

Network's website, provides links to ecolabeling programs worldwide, most of which include English websites. www.gen.gr.jp

An important consideration

Often, certification programs are quite costly and smaller, start up firms cannot afford to register. It is important not to exclude these producers when you are looking for new cleaning products.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A GREEN CLEANING PRODUCT

It is often difficult to know which cleaning product is "greenest" but there are a few key words and phrases to look for which will help you identify those products with reduced adverse environmental and health effects. Clean Calgary Association always suggests purchasing products which label their ingredients; purchasing from a supplier who is honest to you. Words and phrases to look for include:

- Phosphate free
- Nitrogen free
- Biodegradable

- Non-toxic
- Minimizes exposure to concentrates
- Reduced bioconcentration/bioaccumulation factor
- Reduced or no added dyes, except when added for safety purposes
- Designed for use in cold water in order to conserve energy
- Reduced or no skin irritants
- Use of renewable resources, such as biobased solvents from citrus, seed, vegetable, and pine oils
- Reduced or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Scented with essential oil
- Contains vegetable based surfactants
- Parfum/Fragrance free
- Natural Ingredients - note that 'anything is natural'.



It is important to be aware that not all green cleaning products will have all of these attributes but if they list at least one, you are on the right track. For example, it is important to look for phosphate free detergents but they may also be bio-degradable. An all-purpose cleaner will be toxin free and furniture polish should contain no VOCs or fragrance additives.

WHAT TO AVOID IN CLEANING PRODUCTS

Unfortunately, it is sometimes easier to eliminate products by identifying undesirable attributes. If no ingredients are listed, walk away. There are many things to avoid in a cleaning product including:

- False claims such as CFC free
- Phosphates/NTA
- Chlorine
- Ammonia
- Formaldehyde
- Surfactants/SLS
- VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds)

There are also some other substances you want to avoid but it is often more difficult to identify their presence in a cleaning product:

- Aromatic or halogenated solvents
- Alkylphenol ethoxylate surfactants (APEOS)
- Ethylene diaminetetracetic acid, ethylene dinitrilotetracetic acid, nitrilotriacetic acid, or the salts of these compounds
- Chemicals classified as carcinogenic or endocrine disruptors
- Glycol ethers
- Toxic metals, including but not limited to arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, silver and mercury
- Compounds added with the sole purpose of changing the scent of the product
- Organic ingredients that are bioaccumulating

The best way to avoid these substances is to purchase from a company that started with sustainability in mind and who is open and honest about ingredients.

OTHER BENEFICIAL ATTRIBUTES OF A GREEN CLEANING PRODUCT

All of the attributes of the product may not have to do with its use/application. There are other attributes which help to reduce its environmental and health impacts including:

- Reduced flammability
- Recyclable packaging or reusable or refillable
- Recycled-content in packaging
- Reduced or no added fragrances
- Reduced packaging
- Concentrated formulas with appropriate handling safeguards
- Efficient packaging (e.g., light weight, reduced volume)
- Refillable bottles
- Pump sprays rather than aerosols
- Packaging and dilution systems designed to reduce exposure to the product
- Products shipped in bulk



INGREDIENTS FOR MAKING GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS AT HOME

Making our own cleaning products is not only easy, it is also much less expensive than purchasing them from the store. To get started, you need just a few key ingredients:

White vinegar

Normal, everyday vinegar is a great grease-cutting acid.

Washing soda (brand name J&J So Clean)

Is a chemical neighbor of baking soda. Washing soda cuts grease, cleans petroleum oil, removes wax or lipstick, and neutralizes odors in the same way that baking soda does. Don't use it on fiberglass, aluminum or waxed floors—unless you intend to remove the wax. You can get it in most stores under "soda crystals" or washing soda. Add 1. Essential Oils; 2. Rubbing Alcohol; 3. Soap Flakes.

Castile soap

This soap is made from vegetable oil and is also sometimes called Seafarer's soap because of its broad range of uses.

Baking soda

The same stuff that deodorizes your fridge can help in lots of cleaning applications too!

Borax

Is usually found in a white powder form and acts as an abrasive cleaner. Most common applications are for scrubbing sinks and bathtubs.

Olive oil

Usually olive oil is used in cleaning for polishing wood floors or furniture.

Water

Water is often used to dissolve solid cleaning substances or to dilute solutions.

Lemon juice

Is also a great grease cutter which can add a natural fragrance to your cleaning mix.

Elbow grease

Is the most important ingredient for all green cleaning, especially at home. Chemicals have been doing the work for most people for a long time.

REMEMBER:

If you are getting rid of old chemical based products, please take them to a Fire Hall for proper disposal.

Fire Stations

- #4 Fire Station (1991 18th Ave. N.E.)
- #17 Fire Station (3740 32nd Ave. N.W.)
- #20 Fire Station (2800 Peacekeepers Way S.W.)
- #24 Fire Station (2607 106th Ave. S.W.)
- #26 Fire Station (450 Midpark Way S.E.)

Seven days a week: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.

GREEN CLEANING RECIPES FROM CLEAN CALGARY ASSOCIATION

Recipes listed here can be modified to best meet your needs. If CCA has missed one or you come up with a new or better recipe, please let us know at info@cleancalgary.org. Have fun mixing your own!

All Purpose Cleaner

Recipe # 1

- 1 tbsp Borax
- 1/2 c. liquid castile soap

1/2 c. white vinegar

4 L hot water

20 drops of essential oil (optional)

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle for easy use. Works on multiple kitchen and bathroom surfaces, including shower mildew and baked on microwave gunk.

Recipe # 2

4 tbsp baking soda

1L warm water

Dissolve baking soda in warm water, or use baking soda on a damp sponge.

Recipe # 3 (good for scouring)

1 2/3 c. baking soda

1/2 c. liquid castile soap

1/2 c. tap water

2 tbsp white vinegar (add last)

Mix together and use liberally

Recipe # 4

1 tbsp baking soda

1 tbsp lemon juice

1/2 c. hot water

Place all ingredients in a spray bottle and shake well before use.



Note: The recipes listed here are enough for more than one use and can be stored.

Counter Cleaner

Recipe # 1

4 tbsp baking soda

2 tbsp lemon juice

Mix into paste and spread on surface. Let sit 30 minutes for ink and other tough stains. Wipe with damp cloth. Great for getting rid of smells!

Recipe # 2 (Glass Cleaner)

1 c. white vinegar

1 tbsp lemon juice

3 c. Water

Mix with water and you can clean windows or any other glass, countertops and tile.

Glass Cleaner

NOTE: Before you go natural you may have to use rubbing alcohol to remove the waxy residue from the store bought stuff.

Recipe # 1

1 c. white vinegar

1 c. water

Mix together (always equal parts) and store in a pump spray container for easy use.

Recipe # 2

1 c. white vinegar

1 tbsp lemon juice

3 c. Water

Mix with water and you can clean windows or any other glass, countertops and tile.

Recipe # 3

2 tbsp Borax

3 c. hot water

1 old newspaper

Mix and put in spray bottle. For best results, use newspaper to wipe off.

Recipe # 4

1 L water

2 tbsp white vinegar

Combine ingredients in a spray bottle.

Recipe # 5

1 c. rubbing alcohol (isopropyl)

1 c. water

1 tbsp white vinegar

Combine ingredients in a spray bottle and use as needed.



Tub Scrub

Got Mildew? Try vinegar and salt to remove it!

Recipe # 1

1 c. Borax

1 Scouring pad or sponge

Sprinkle Borax in the tub and begin to scrub. The Borax will act as an abrasive cleaner. Add a bit of water if needed. Rinse well.



Recipe # 2 (All purpose Cleaner)

- 1 tbsp Borax
- 1/2 c. liquid castile soap
- 1/2 c. white vinegar
- 4 L hot water
- 20 drops of essential oil (optional)

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle for easy use. Works on multiple kitchen and bathroom surfaces, including shower mildew.

Recipe # 3

- 4 tbsp baking Soda
 - 1 tbsp liquid soap (castile or dish soap)
 - 2 tbsp vinegar
- Mix the ingredients together and apply to tub surface. Scrub well and wipe or rinse clean

Carpet Deodorizer and Stain Removal

Recipe # 1 (Deodorizer)

- 2 c. baking soda
- 4-5 crumbled bay leaves
- 1/2 c. cornstarch
- 1 tbsp ground cloves

Mix the above ingredients together and sprinkle on the carpet. Let it sit for up to 24 hours and vacuum it up!

Recipe # 2 (Carpet Stains)

- 1 box baking soda
- Sprinkle baking soda, rub in and let sit one hour. Scrub with stiff brush and vacuum out.



Wood Floor Polish

Recipe # 1

- 1/4 c. olive oil
- 1/4 c. white vinegar
- 10 drops essential oil (optional)

Mix ingredients in a spray bottle. Spray liberally on wooden floor and polish.

Recipe # 2

- 4 tbsp white vinegar
- 4 tbsp vegetable oil

Mix together in a spray bottle and spray generously on the floor. Wipe up with either a mop or rag.



Automatic Dishwasher Detergent Soap



Recipe # 1

- 1 c. washing soda
- 1 c. Borax
- 2 tbsp white vinegar

Mix equal portions washing soda and Borax. To prevent build up, use only every 4th or 5th load, otherwise you'll end up with a white film on your dishes. Add white vinegar to the rinse cycle.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

Recipe # 1

- 1/2 c. baking soda or Borax
- 1/2 c. washing soda
- 2 tbsp white vinegar

Mix washing soda with baking soda OR Borax. Apply to surface, scrub, then flush. Add splash of white vinegar to deodorize.

Recipe # 2

- 1 c. hydrogen peroxide

Pour throughout the toilet and scrub. Leave for at least 20 minutes before flushing.



Vegetable Wash



Recipe # 1

- 1 tbsp vinegar
 - 1.5 L water
- Mix together and rinse vegetables thoroughly.

Recipe # 2

- 1/2 tbsp environmentally friendly dish soap
 - 1.5 L water
- Mix together and rinse vegetables thoroughly.

Microwave Cleaner

Recipe # 1

- 2 tbsp baking soda
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 c. water

Mix together in a microwave safe bowl and microwave for 5 minutes or until the mixture boils. Wipe the condensation from the inside of the microwave.

Laundry Recipes

Recipe # 1 (Liquid Laundry Soap)

- 1/2 c. Borax
- 1 1/2 c. washing soda
- 1 c. soap flakes or grated bar soap
- 7.5 L water
- 20 drops essential oil (optional)

Combine Borax, washing soda and most of the water. Boil soap flakes in remaining water and add to first mixture (you can also melt grated bar soap in the microwave). The soap will gel the mixture. If your water is hard, add more washing soda. Use about 1/2 cup per load.

Works in cold water! Soap flakes and washing soda work well on natural fabrics when there are few stains. Add a tablespoon of vinegar to rinse to keep colors bright.

Recipe # 2 (Powdered Laundry Soap)

- 1 c. soap flakes or grated bar soap
- 1/2 c. Borax
- 1/2 c. washing soda

Mix ingredients together well. Use 1 tbsp for light loads and 2 tbsp for heavier loads.

Recipe # 3 (Fabric Softener)

- 1 c. vinegar
- Simply add to the rinse cycle.



Furniture Polish

Recipe # 1

- 1c. olive oil
 - 1/2 c. lemon juice
- Put in squirt bottle and use cloth to polish.

Recipe # 2

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp white vinegar
- 4 c. warm water

Mix and store in spray bottle. When ready to use, spray the mixture onto a cloth and rub furniture.

Recipe # 3

3 tbsp vegetable or olive oil

1 1/2 tbsp lemon juice

Mix together in a spray bottle and shake well before use. Do not spray directly on furniture but apply a small amount to a cloth for use.



Septic Tank Treatment

Recipe # 1

2 c. brown sugar

1 tbsp baker's yeast

5 c. warm water

Mix together until everything is dissolved and pour the solution into the toilet. Flush. You're done!

Oven Cleaner

Recipe # 1

5 tbsp baking soda

3 tbsp water

Scour oven to remove big, black chunks. Mix ingredients into paste and spread over all surfaces to be cleaned. Let sit for one hour. Scrub and rinse.

NOTE: Some ovens are self-cleaning and would not require.

Drain Cleaner

Suggestion from a Pro

If you are continuously having trouble with your drain, try using a plunger or a snake to clear the drain.

Recipe # 1

4 tbsp baking soda

4 tbsp vinegar

3 c. boiling water

Pour baking soda down the drain and follow it with vinegar. Let it sit for 15-20 minutes and flush the drain with boiling water.

Recipe # 2

4 tbsp Borax

Boiling water

Pour the Borax down the drain and wait for 5-10 minutes. Flush with 1 c. at a time of boiling water. Repeat if needed.

Metal Cleaners

Recipe # 1 (Stainless Steel)

1 c. olive oil

1 c. white vinegar

Rub the metal's surface with a cloth dosed in olive oil. Wipe away with a vinegar soaked cloth. Let it dry and watch the streaks and smudges disappear.

Recipe # 2 (Silver Polish)

1 L water

1 tbsp baking soda

1 tbsp salt

Aluminum foil

Put ingredients in a pot with silver items. Boil for three minutes, making sure the foil stays in contact with the silver. Wipe dry when finished.

Recipe # 3 (Silver Polish)

1 L warm water

1 tbsp baking soda

1 tbsp salt

Aluminum foil

Put a sheet of aluminum foil into a plastic or glass bowl. Sprinkle the foil with salt and baking soda and fill bowl with warm water. Soak your silver in the bowl. The tarnish will migrate to the foil. Dry and buff.

Recipe # 4 (Brass Polish)

1 lemon

1 tbsp salt

Cut a lemon in half, sprinkle it with salt and rub the lemon on the metal. Buff with a cloth.

Recipe # 5 (Brass Polish)

1 c. white vinegar

1 c. flour

1 tbsp salt

Mix into a paste and rub onto your copper, leave on for an hour and then buff with a cloth.

Recipe # 6 (Chrome Polish)

1 tube toothpaste

Rub chrome with toothpaste and buff with a cloth.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Green cleaning products and services are widely available but sometimes you might just have to ask. Businesses can ask suppliers or cleaners about the more environmentally preferable options available. Individuals and small businesses could talk to their local retailers about bringing these product in if they haven't already. You may need to look in the natural food section of your grocery store for these cleaners.

Top recommended:

Seventh Generation
Nature Clean
Ecover
Simply Clean

Local:

Small Planet
Claudia's Choice

Clean Calgary Association Eco-Store

809 4th Ave S.W.
(403) 230-1443 ext 222

Amaranth Whole Foods Market

7 Arbour Lake Dr NW
(403) 547-6333

Community Natural Foods

Chinook Station Market
202 - 6 1st Ave SW
(403) 541-0606

10th Avenue Market & Café
1304 - 10th Ave SW
(403) 229-2383

Planet Organic

10233 Elbow Drive SW
(403) 252-2404

4625 Varsity Dr NW
(403) 288-6700

Sunnyside Market

302 10 St NW
(403) 270-7477

Many of the traditional retailers are starting to carry green cleaning products. Again, we encourage you to look for companies who started with sustainability in mind rather than those getting on the green bandwagon.

SPECIAL THANKS

This compilation of homemade cleaning recipes was developed by Clean Calgary Association staff for use in the general public. We would like to recognize the following organizations for their contributions to this guide:

David Suzuki Foundation

Georgia Strait Alliance

Seventh Generation

Simply Clean

The Natural Step

Also, a special thanks to iStockphoto for all the lovely graphics and pictures.

YEAR ROUND ACTIVITIES OF CLEAN CALGARY ASSOCIATION

Empowering Calgarians to create healthy homes and communities by providing environmental education, products and services.

Clean Calgary Association offers a variety of programs to help achieve mandates of waste reduction and water protection including:

Environmental Education

Clean Calgary is pleased to offer a wide variety of presentations to businesses and employees to help answer tough questions about the environment, explain how to practically become green and share Calgary specific knowledge. These can be done as part of a staff meeting, as a 'Lunch and Learn' or any other time.

Waste at Work: Reducing your company's environmental footprint

Green Procurement: Using buying power to influence change

Waste at Home: How individuals can make a difference in daily life

Getting There Green: Environmentally friendly driving and alternative transportation

Green Cleaning: How to improve indoor air quality and choose green products

Composting: Learn how to recycle your organic waste and make great fertilizer

Vermicomposting: Don't have a yard? Learn to compost indoors with red wiggler worms!

Please contact the Education team at 403-230-1443 ext 225 or education@cleancalgary.org for more information or to book. Member discounts apply.

Healthy Homes Calgary

The Healthy Homes Calgary program is our newest residential service, providing free home visits to Calgarians interested in creating a healthy living environment, while reducing the home's "eco-footprint". We will provide the tools and information needed to improve indoor air quality, energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, and more.

Please call Ashley at 403-230-1443 ext. 223 or email ashley@cleancalgary.org.

Commercial Environmental Services

Assisting companies to reduce their environmental impact associated with waste. We offer customized, one on one service and the information, education, resources and tools necessary to divert waste from landfill and reach your waste diversion goals.

Services include:

- Waste Reduction Solutions / Consultation
- Online Recycling Directory
- Waste Measurement Toolkit Assessments
- Calgary Materials Exchange - www.cmex.ca

Please call Sarah at 403-230-1443 ext. 226 or email sarah@cleancalgary.org.

EcoStore - selling environmental products that reduce our environmental footprint

The Clean Calgary EcoStore sells products that are environmentally sustainable and help to reduce waste and conserve water. Products include compost bins, recycling bins, rain barrels, water saving kits and much, much more. Visit the website for details: www.cleancalgary.org

We are wheelchair accessible and located in downtown Calgary on the southwest corner of 4th Avenue and 7th Street SW.

809 - 4th Avenue SW

403-230-1443 ext. 222

Open Tuesday and Wednesday 10-5:30

Thursday 10-7

Friday and Saturday 10-4

Closed Sunday and Monday

Information Services & E-newsletter

We respond to thousands of public requests for environmental information. Calgarians want to know how to recycle their household waste and otherwise reduce their environmental footprint.

Please contact the Clean Calgary Association if you would like more information about our programs or if you are interested in volunteering.

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