Green Cleaning

What is Green Cleaning?
• Is not dangerous to humans or animals
• Is not dangerous to environment in manufacturing, use or disposal
• Is not derived from endangered species or animals

Why is Green Cleaning important?
• We spend 90% of our time indoors
• Air inside home is 2 to 5 times more polluted than outdoors
• The average American home uses 40lbs of chemicals per year
• Chemicals can linger indoors for days

Chemicals of Concern
• Alklyphenols
• Artificial musks
• Bisphenol A (BPA)
• Brominated flame retardants
• Chlorinated paraffin
• Organotins
• Phthalates

Health Concerns
• Skin, eye and respiratory irritation
• Endocrine, reproductive and immune system disorders
• Neurotoxins
• Liver and Kidney damage
• Nerve damage

Potentially Hazardous Cleaners
• All-purpose cleaners- may contain toxins that can be absorbed through the skin or respiratory system
• Antibacterial soap- may contain pesticides and ammonia
• Dry cleaning- toxic emissions from dry cleaning threaten workers, communities, and the environment
• Carpet cleaners- may contain neurotoxins
• Dishwashing liquids- petroleum-based, non-biodegradeable, may contain surfactants that will react to form carcinogenic nitrosamines
• Drain cleaners- pose environmental threat during manufacturing and disposal
• Oven cleaners- caustic substances that cause severe corrosive damage to eyes, skin, mucus membranes, mouth, throat, esophagus and stomach
• Toilet cleaners- contain chlorine and hydrochloric acid, fumes can escape closed container
Environmental Concerns

- Cleaning products are released to the environment during normal use through evaporation of volatile components and rinsing down the drain of residual product from cleaned surfaces, sponges, etc.
- Certain ingredients in cleaning products can present toxicity to aquatic species in waters receiving inadequately treated wastes. Ex) alkylphenol ethoxylates, a common surfactant ingredient in cleaners, have been shown in laboratory studies to function as an ‘endocrine disrupter’, causing adverse reproductive effects of the types seen in wildlife exposed to polluted waters.
- Ingredients containing phosphorus or nitrogen can contribute to nutrient-loading in water bodies, leading to adverse effects on water quality.
- Volatile organic compounds (VOC)-in cleaning products can affect indoor air quality and also contribute to smog formation in outdoor air.

Good Alternatives

Home Made

- Baking soda- deodorizer, grease cutter
- Vinegar-works on soap scum, mold, scale, alkaline substance stain remover
- Soap(castile or vegetable-based)
- Toilet Cleaner-2 cups vinegar with a few drops of essential oil. Put in a spray bottle and spray into bowl
- Window Cleaner- 2 teaspoons white vinegar in 1 quart water or just club soda sprayed on window and wiped off
- All Purpose Cleaner- Baking soda (with essential oil if desired) sprinkled on surface and wiped
- All Purpose Cleaner 2- 1 t baking or washing soda, 2 t borax, ½ t castile soap, 2 cups hot water, 10 drops essential oil

Recipes adapted from Green Clean Linda Mason Hunter and Mikki Haplin

Store Options

- Seventh Generation
- Shaklee
- Ecover
- Mrs. Meyer’s
- Method

Additional resources

- It is often difficult to see the difference between green washing and truly sustainable products, Goodguide.com provides a tremendous resource for checking if a product is truly sustainable. It is also available in a smartphone app.
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation has a one page flyer with non-toxic alternatives to common household products at http://cbf.org/document.doc?id=37
- The book Green Clean by Linda Mason Hunter & Mikki Haplin provides ideas and information about green cleaning solutions
- River City Cleaning is a local green cleaning company