

News article for week of 6/17/19



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### “Green” Cleaning

A clean home is a healthy home. It looks better and smells better. Some of us have faced some cleaning challenges related to recent flooding -- creating real trials in achieving a ship-shape living environment.

Cleaning after a flood is a task in and of itself requiring really deep cleaning, disinfecting, and possibly tearing out of some housing materials just to get the drying process going. Be on the lookout for mold as our humid environment will promote mold growth in those damp areas. For more on the topic of mold and after the flood, visit the Southwind Extension website at [www.southwind.ksu.edu](http://www.southwind.ksu.edu).

For our day to day cleaning chores, we have a mass of conventional cleaning supplies from which to choose. Some include chemicals that can cause skin and eye irritations, irritations for those with respiratory problems, and could have an ultimate environmental impact if not used or disposed of correctly.

So what are our options? There are an increasing number of “green” labeled products on the market. Some of those products are comparable to conventional cleaners, yet they can also be pricier. Consider taking a closer look at what you may already have on your pantry shelves:

- Baking soda – a mild scouring powder that can be used for almost all household cleaning purposes. It also absorbs odors and works great at removing baked-on food from pans and oven.
- Borax – similar but stronger than baking soda. Good for sanitizing, freshening laundry and deodorizing. Found in the laundry section.
- Washing soda – strongest alternative to baking soda and borax. Can be used with washing detergents. Found in the laundry section.

- Vinegar – good for killing germs and deodorizing. Can remove some stains from carpet. Be careful using with fabrics containing acetate. Good for cleaning coffeepots, chrome, countertops and can be used in the regular cycle of the dishwasher.
- Lemon juice – can deodorize, lighten stains and cuts grease. Also removes tarnish from brass, copper, bronze and aluminum, but DO NOT use on silver.
- Hydrogen peroxide – a mild alternative to bleach. Used for stain removal, killing germs, mold, or mild whitening.

As we consider going more “green” with our cleaning products, most household cleaning can be done with only baking soda and vinegar.

It’s best to start with a milder formulation when using homemade cleaners for a task, then moving to stronger mixtures as the need arises. Mixtures we create will likely be mixed with water and clear in color. Be sure to have several spray bottles clearly identified with the contents and the purpose for which it is used.

Bleach is a chemical that should NEVER be mixed with anything but water. Toxic fumes are created when mixed with some other chemicals.

As with all cleaning supplies, whether homemade or purchased, be sure to keep out of the reach of children.