

Remember the 4 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair

Chemicals play a major role in our everyday lives. They are part of what we eat, where we work, and how we live. Many toxic chemicals can be found in our soil, water, air, and bodies. This contamination is seriously affecting the health of humans and wildlife everywhere. Our schools, and places of work, can all be sites of hazardous chemical contamination and many toxic elements may be found in your own home.

This month I would like to make some suggestions about **going green** in the home. Many of us can remember that our grandmothers used home-mixed cleansers to get the job done.

Read the labels before you buy anything - Household products such as detergents, floor and furniture polish, paints, and various commercial cleaning products may contain hazardous chemicals such as ammonia, sulfuric and phosphoric acids, lye, chlorine and formaldehyde.

You can help protect children at home - Use natural products for cleaning agents such as baking soda, vinegar and used coffee grounds. These are safer to use and are also inexpensive.

Vinegar and baking soda can be used to clean almost anything. Mix a little warm water with either of these and you have an all-purpose cleaner. Baking soda not only removes unpleasant odors coming from your fridge, it also eliminates odors in your carpets or furniture. Just sprinkle on a little baking soda to soak up some of those odors and then vacuum it up.

Clean your indoor air naturally - Discontinue buying store-bought air fresheners and instead try boiling cinnamon, cloves, or any of your favorite herbs also **keep the bugs** away with an eco-friendly citronella candle instead of DEET.

Unclog your sink naturally in a matter of minutes without chemicals. Flush your drain with a pot of boiling hot water and allow all of the water to drain through completely. Pour ½ cup of baking soda down the drain, followed by ½ cup of vinegar. Cover the drain opening for 5 -10 minutes, uncover and flush the drain again with boiling hot water. This process will safely loosen up any grime that has built within the drain pipe.

Caution: Never mix ammonia and bleach! Mixing these chemicals creates a harmful gas that can be fatal.

Clean Cars - Use baking soda to clean your car lights, chrome, windows, tires, vinyl seats and floor mats without worrying about unwanted scratch marks. Use a baking soda solution of 1/4 cup baking soda in 1 quart of warm water. Apply with a sponge or soft cloth to remove road grime, tree sap, bugs and tar.

Remove Oil and Grease Stains - Use baking soda to clean up light-duty oil spills on your garage floor or in your driveway. Sprinkle baking soda on the spot and scrub with a wet brush.

Clean Corroded Batteries - Baking soda is a mild alkali and can be used to neutralize battery acid corrosion on cars. Be sure to disconnect the battery terminals before cleaning. Make a paste of 3 parts baking soda to 1 part water; apply with a damp cloth to scrub corrosion from the battery terminal. After cleaning and re-connecting the terminals, wipe them with petroleum jelly to prevent future corrosion. Please be careful when working around batteries-they contain a strong acid.

Coffee grounds can be used to mulch around acid loving plants in the garden to deter snails and slugs. Roses, azaleas, rhododendrons, evergreens and hydrangeas like coffee grounds for the natural acidity and nutrients they add to the soil. Also you can sprinkle coffee grounds around areas of ant infestation to deter them.

Don't forget "Together we can make a difference!" - lesleyhaynes14@yahoo.com