healthy homes: green cleaning
S.O.S. Parksville
March 31st
Where does water come from?
Where does it go?
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Photo credit: CAWST (Centre for Affordable Water and Sanitation Technology, based in Calgary)
What Does Clean Really Mean?

- De-odorized
- Dis-infected
- Shiny
- ....Toxic?
Common misconceptions:

- **We need** these products to achieve cleanliness
- **Bacteria are scary**
- **We need a different product** for each area of our home ..... $$$$
Not all ingredients are required to be listed.

Sometimes **NONE** are listed.

Some ingredients are listed by a **generic name**... *fragrance – what is it?*

**Fine Print...**

**DANGER** should be a warning sign.
What to Avoid

- **Ammonia** – irritating to eyes, nose, lungs
- **Surfactants** – Some biodegrade into toxic substance for fish (hormone disruptors)
- **Tricolsan** – under review by Health Canada, many concerns
- **Fragrance**
- **Petroleum Distillates** – highly volatile
- **Phthalates** – links to cancer (found in air fresheners)
- **Phosphates** – Can cause excessive algae growth, depleting aquatic ecosystems of Oxygen
- **Chlorine compounds** – acutely toxic to fish, persistent in environment, toxic gas & byproducts
- **Parabens** – Irritating to skin, hormone disruptors
  - Butyl – Benzyl – Ethyl – Methyl – Phenol – Propyl
- Generally anything you cannot pronounce or that has unexplained acronyms e.g. DEA, PDCB
Biodegradable – what does it really mean?

There are **no standards** for the biodegradable claim....

The term is applied to a wide range of products....

Even those that **break down into other harmful environmental toxins** can be labelled “Biodegradable”
Certification
What to Look For

- Non Toxic
- Water or Vegetable Based
- Easy to understand, complete list of ingredients
- No “Chlor”
- Phosphate Free
- Pump spray instead of aerosol
Other Important Issues

- Ingredients in Cosmetics
- Solvents and Paints Safe disposal
- Pharmaceuticals down the drain
Safe Cleaning Kit

- Baking Soda
- Vinegar
- Castile Soap
- Essential Oils
- Borax
- Washing Soda (optional)
- Spray Bottles
- Microfiber Cloth
- Gloves
- Glass Cleaning Cloth
- Scrub Brushes
- Bucket
- Hydrogen Peroxide
## Ingredients explained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baking soda</th>
<th>Borax</th>
<th>Essential oils</th>
<th>Lemon juice</th>
<th>Liquid castile soap</th>
<th>Salt</th>
<th>Soap granules</th>
<th>Olive oil</th>
<th>White vinegar</th>
<th>Washing soda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuts grease</td>
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<td>Fights mould &amp; mildew</td>
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<td>Lifts dirt</td>
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<td>Softens water</td>
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</table>

Essential oils are optional; avoid them if you are sensitive to scents. Lemon, lime, grapefruit, tea tree, lemongrass, lavender, and eucalyptus oils have antibacterial, antifungal and/or grease-cutting powers.

More tips and recipes at [queenofgreen.ca](http://queenofgreen.ca)
Essential Oils

- Smell amazing (avoid if scent-sensitive)
- Some have antifungal, antibacterial, and/or degreasing properties!
- Buyer be aware! Not all essential oils are created equal.
Sources

- **Grocery stores** – commonly stock vinegar, baking soda, and Borax
- **Naked Naturals** (Qualicum, Parksville), and **Island Natural** (Nanaimo) carry Essential Oils and green cleaners
- **Soap Exchange** (Nanaimo - Country Club Mall) carries Castile Soap and a wide variety of green cleaners
- **Planet Clean** (625 Townsite Rd, Nanaimo) carries a wide variety of non-toxic cleaners and supplies for residential and commercial use
How to get started...

- Learn the properties of the various commonplace green cleaning agents

- Start small... with one cleaner you use everyday

- Using green cleaners:
  - Green cleaner recipes
  - Know your ingredients and mix and match!

- Safety first! Always label and properly store your green cleaners
RECIPEs we’ll try today....

- **Disinfectant Spray**
  - 2 cups water
  - ¼ cup vinegar
  - 2 tsp tea tree or eucalyptus oil

- **Creamy Soft Scrub**
  - 1 2/3 cup baking soda
  - ½ cup liquid soap
  - dilute with ½ cup water
  - Essential oil (optional)
Greener Cleaners

- Better for your health
- Better for the environment – both the air and the water
- Effective
- Inexpensive
- Fun to make & experiment with!
THANK YOU
FOR COMING!

Resources:

Georgia Strait Alliance
Toxic Smart Materials

David Suzuki Foundation
“Queen Of Green”
Cleaning Recipes

Thanks to GOOGLE for the pictures...