

Alternatives to Hazardous Materials at Home

Air Fresheners: Use baking soda to absorb odors. Dissolve 2 tsp each baking soda and lemon juice in 2 cups hot water and use as a spray freshener. Boil cinnamon and cloves in water. Burn a candle.

Ant Control: Sprinkle equal parts powdered sugar and powdered borax on anthills. At the point of entry to your house, pour a line of paprika or red chili powder.

Drain Cleaner: Use a plunger or plumber's snake.

Flea and tick products: Put brewer's yeast or garlic in your pet's food; sprinkle fennel or rosemary around animal sleeping areas.

Furniture polish: Mix 1 tsp of lemon juice in 1 pint of mineral or vegetable oil and wipe furniture.

Glass cleaner: Mix 1 tbs of vinegar or lemon juice in 1 quart of water. Spray on and use newspaper to wipe dry.

Mothballs: Use cedar chips, lavender flowers, rosemary, mint, or white peppercorns.

Oven cleaner: Clean spills as soon as the oven cools using steel wool and baking soda; for tough stains, add salt (do not use this method in self-cleaning or continuous-cleaning ovens).

Plant sprays: Wipe leaves with mild soap and water; rinse.

Rug deodorizer: Deodorize dry carpets by sprinkling liberally with baking soda. Wait at least 15 minutes and vacuum. Repeat if necessary.

Silver polish: Boil 2 to 3 inches of water in a shallow pan with 1 tsp of salt, 1 tsp of baking soda, and a sheet of aluminum foil. Totally submerge silver and boil for 2 to 3 more minutes. Wipe away tarnish. Repeat if necessary. (Do not use this method on antique silver knives. The blade will separate from the handle). Another alternative is to use nonabrasive toothpaste.

Toilet Bowl cleaner: Use a toilet brush and baking soda or vinegar. (This will clean but not disinfect)