



Photo by Leeanne Dixon

# Clean & Green: *Chemical Free at home*

*Would you bathe in your bathroom cleaner?*

*By Lesley-Ann Trow*

We've all experienced how tough it can be to clean our bathrooms without gassing ourselves. Anyone who uses traditional household cleaners knows you've got to wear gloves, open the windows, and scrub whilst holding your breath. This experience should tell us a few things about traditional household cleaners, and not least that they're having a negative impact on our health - while also being damaging to the environment.

If you're looking to make your household cleaning safer for yourself and the environment then there are some great options available to you. The first step is to safely discard the chemical cocktail in your cleaning cupboard.

The health concerns stem from absorption of harsh chemicals directly through your skin and nasal passages to your bloodstream, as well as Volatile Organic Compounds that are found in petrochemical based cleaning products and synthetic fragrances and are released into the atmosphere as you spray your cleaners around your home. If you or your children have asthma, or you have allergies then these VOCs could be aggravating symptoms.

It's not hard to imagine what the world will be like if we don't address our polluting of waterways and ground water. No one wants to be responsible for making the problem worse but as Leroy Eldridge Cleaver put it - 'you're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem' - and we all have to do our bit in our own homes today. That means switching to products that are 100% biodegradable (truly green products will tell you how many days this will take - 7 is good!), buying Phosphate Free cleaners and avoiding chemicals where there is a natural alternative.

You can then take the 'back to basics' approach and use simple ingredients to create your own cleaners and a bit of elbow grease. This is a great alternative if you have the time and patience. From Lemon Juice and Baking Soda for scrubbing down benches, chopping boards and bathrooms right through to Vinegar to clean your windows, there's a natural alternative to pretty much everything you find under your sink. There are recipes you can follow in fabulous books like 'Spotless' by Shannon Lush & Jennifer Flemming or even a quick

Google search will have you cleaning up an environmentally friendly storm in no time.

The other way to go, which is the option I've chosen in my home is to use household cleaning products that have been formulated to be kind to you and have minimal impact on the environment. Not only does this option save time and effort but in most cases the ready-made cleaning products smell much better. In some cases so much so that you'll never need to use anything else to scent your home. These greener household cleaning products will give you all the information you need on the label. They'll tell you if it's a plant-based surfactant, if the fragrance is naturally derived, how many days it will take to biodegrade and if it contains phosphates.

A few brands to look out for in the Supermarket or your Health Food store are Seventh Generation - great product imported from the US, Cinderella - my favourite as they smell divine and are Aussie Made, BEE - amazing Laundry Liquid & Dr Bronners - the ultimate All Purpose Castile Soap. If you have allergies or sensitive skin, you'll notice the difference immediately.

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