ALTERNATIVE HOME CLEANERS

We've all become used to using harsh cleaners without a second thought - cleaners that are often toxic. These recipes for cleaners and other products are easy to make, easy to use and easier on the environment. The Rules: Never mix Chlorine bleach and ammonia; deadly fumes will result. Never mix chlorine bleach with vinegar or certain toilet bowl cleaners; deadly chlorine gas is produced.

All-Purpose Cleaner
1/2 cup ammonia 1/2 cup baking soda 1/2 cup white vinegar 2 quarts of water
mix together.

Drain Cleaner; 1/2 cup baking soda flowed by 1/2 cup vinegar and a handful of salt will cut through grease. Leave 15 minutes. Pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain.
To keep drains clear, pour about 1/4 cup salt down the drain followed by a kettle of boiling water once or twice a week.
Slow drains can be helped along with hot water and 1/2 cup washing soda. Wait 15 minutes, then flush with more hot water.

Cleaners; Baking soda on a damp cloth works well on sinks and appliances and for tea and coffee stains in cups. Borax is preferred for formica.
Glass Cleaner; mix 1/2 cup vinegar in a quart of water. Keep in a spray bottle. Very good for cutting grease.

Furniture Polish; For furniture that doesn't have a protective hard coating. Combine 1 teaspoon lemon oil and 1 pint mineral oil. Put in a spray bottle. Spray on, rub in, then wipe clean.

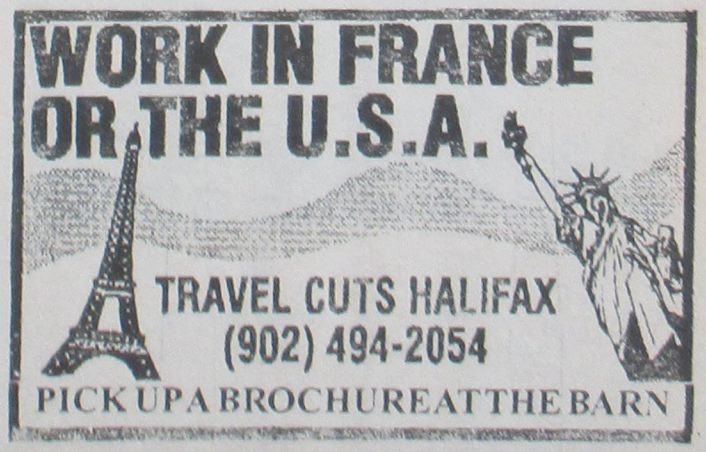
Furniture Polish; For furniture that has been varnished, lacquered or shellacked. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil to 1 tablespoon white vinegar and 1 quart warm water. Mix ingredients and put in a spray bottle. The polish works best when warm; heat the bottle in a pan of hot water. Spray on furniture, rub dry with a soft cloth.

Moth Repellents; Hang a small bag of cedar chips (available at pet stores) at either end of the clothes closet.

In the Laundry; Replace bleach with borax.
Soap powders are safer than detergents. Don't use excessive amounts of soaps or detergents and only run your washer with full loads.

Static builds up when cloths become too dry. There are two simple ways to avoid the problem. Remove the clothes from the dryer when slightly damp, hang to finish drying OR you can toss a small wet towel into the dryer a few minutes before the end of the cycle. Remove the garments and hang them up as soon as the dryer stops. Cloths will be wrinkle free too.
Descalers; Use a solution of 1 part vinegar to 2 parts water to clean your electric kettle. Bring it to the boil, unplug and leave it overnight. Rinse thoroughly.
Steam Iron; First clean the steam ports on the bottom of the iron. Poke a pipe cleaner, straightened paper clip or stiff wire into each hole and ream it out. Next fill the iron with a 50-50 vinegar and water solution. Place the iron on a metal cake rack in the sink, plug the iron in and set it on steam. The vinegar will remove the mineral deposits. Fill again with soft water and steam it out.

Toilet Bowl; For regular cleaning use 1 teaspoon household ammonia, 1 cup hydrogen peroxide and 2 quarts water. Mix ingredients in a pail and pour mixture into toilet. Let stand for 30 minutes. Scuba with toilet brush and flush. The cleaner can be left in the bowl for several hours if needed to remove hard stains.

Chrome Appliances; Clean chrome by polishing with a soft cloth and rubbing alcohol or with a little ammonia and hot water.f Dry baking soda and a dry cloth can also do the job.

By Rhoda Kernested