# Toxics Toolkit

**A media kit and reference guide to**

**HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE**

Produced by the Recycling Council of British Columbia

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**The Recycling Council of British Columbia**

Suite 201, 225 Smithe Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 4X7

telephone: (604) 683-6009
facsimile: (604) 683-7255

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# Toxic Truth

## How can I tell if a product is hazardous?

Look for the words ***Danger***, ***Warning***, or ***Caution*** on the product label. "Danger" warnings are found on extremely hazardous products. "Warning" and "Caution" indicate less hazardous products. Products without warning labels are least hazardous. A hazardous product can be toxic, flammable, corrosive, or reactive or any combination of these.

### Toxic

This symbol indicates a poisonous product which can cause illness. Pesticides, paint thinners, auto products and some cleaners are toxic. Look for warning labels like:
*"Harmful or fatal if swallowed"*
*"Use only in well ventilated area"*(this means the product's fumes are toxic)

### Flammable

This indicates a product which can catch fire spontaneously or burn easily. Paint, thinners, solvents, and auto products are the most flammable home products. Look for warning labels like:
*"Do not use near heat or flame"*
*"Combustible"*
*"Do not smoke while using this product"*

### Corrosive

This symbol indicates the product can cause a chemical reaction which will eat through materials or living tissue. Oven cleaners, drain cleaners, toilet bowel cleaners and auto batteries are common corrosive products. Look for warning labels like:
*"Causes severe burns on contact"*
*"Can burn eyes, skin, throat"*

### Reactive

This symbol indicates the product can react with air, water or other substances to cause rapid heating or explosions. Acids that heat up rapidly and splatter when mixed with water are examples.

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**If you have any questions, call the B.C. Recycling Hotline at R-E-C-Y-C-L-E (732-9253) *or* 1-800-667-4321**

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# Toxic Truth

## What do I do with household hazardous products?

### DO USE IT UP

If you have a household hazardous product use it for its intended purpose and then make a point of not buying that product in the future.

### DO GIVE THE PRODUCT TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO CAN USE IT

If you no longer want a household hazardous product in your home give it to someone who can use it for its intended purpose.

### DO SAVE THE PRODUCT FOR A MUNICIPAL COLLECTION DAY

Many communities hold municipal collection days when you can take your household hazardous products to a collection site for safe disposal. Call your district or municipality to find out when one will be happening in your area.

### DO AVOID BUYING HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS IN THE FUTURE

The best thing to do with household hazardous products is to not buy them in the first place. Before buying a product make sure you know how you will be able to dispose of it properly.

### DON'T THROW IT IN THE GARBAGE

Most of British Columbia's residential garbage is collected door-to-door by private collection companies or is taken to drop-off centers by individuals. Ultimately the trash ends up in a landfill. Most landfills are not designed for household hazardous wastes. Hazardous waste can leak into water supplies or cause air pollution, or both.

### DON'T POUR IT DOWN THE DRAIN

When you pour hazardous household products down the sink or flush them down the toilet these poisons enter either a septic system or municipal sewer system.

*If you have a septic system,* wastewater from your house goes into a tank buried underground. The solids settle out and partially decompose. The remaining wastewater then goes into a drain field where solids settle out and partially decompose. The remaining wastewater then goes into a drain field where the natural processes ongoing in the soil help to further break down the wastewater. Toxic materials in that wastewater can kill the helpful bacteria and the system will not operate properly.

*over*

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

Some toxic materials move through the soil untreated or unchanged. When this happens, ground water or surface waters may become contaminated.

*If your home is hooked to a municipal sewage system,* your wastewater is piped to a central sewage plant. After treatment, it is discharged into local waterways. Most municipal systems rely on bacteria or other organisms to decompose the waste. Some hazardous household waste can pass through the system unchanged and thus pollute the water downstream.

## DON'T POUR IT INTO DITCHES STORM DRAINS OR GUTTERS

Household hazardous waste that is poured into ditches, storm drains, or gutters travels directly to nearby waterways. It can poison plants and wildlife, contaminate the soil, and be harmful to children and adults who come into contact with it.

## DON'T BURN IT

If you burn hazardous waste, you risk producing poisonous fumes, contributing to air pollution or causing an explosion.

Controlled burning in special hazardous waste incinerators by trained professionals can be a good disposal method. Open burning by an untrained homeowner is not. Some hazardous materials may not burn away completely and become concentrated in the ash.

## DON'T DUMP IT OR BURY IT

If you dump or bury some types of hazardous household wastes, they may leach through the soil and contaminate the soil or water, especially if the waste is persistent or non-biodegradable. Children or pets and wildlife may be hurt. Dogs frequently are poisoned by drinking antifreeze left on roads or driveways.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Even if a container seems empty, it is rarely empty of all chemicals. There is always some liquid the pump will not spray and almost always chemical residue on the sides and bottom of the container.

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# *Toxic Truth*

## SAFE STORAGE

### for hazardous household products

- Use safe containers and put on high shelves or in locked cabinets away from children
- Protect the label
- Store household hazardous products in the original container
- Close containers tightly
- Keep containers dry to prevent corrosion
- Store similar products together to reduce any danger from reactions if containers should leak or contents should spill

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# Toxic Truth

## What are the best choices?

### Household cleaners and polishes

Some cleaners contain very hazardous ingredients that can burn your eyes, skin or lungs. These products need to be carefully handled during use, storage and disposal. Fortunately, there are a number of less toxic cleaners available.

### All-purpose cleaners

All-purpose cleaners are used for cleaning surfaces around the home, including walls, floors, woodwork, counters, and tile. You do not need all the specialized cleaners on the market. It is best to buy fewer products which can be used for several purposes. For example, castille soap is a mild, versatile cleaner that can do many jobs.

Try less toxic all purpose cleaners: *Dr. Bronner's Castille Soap, Ajax Lemon Fresh Liquid, Citra-solv* (diluted 1:50), *Earthrite, Ecover, Mr. Clean, Murphy's Oil Soap, or Spic and Span.*

### Drain cleaners

Chemical drain cleaners are extremely dangerous products which can cause chemical burns to skin and permanent eye damage. Consumer reports do not recommend commercial drain cleaners because they are too hazardous and not very effective. Instead, use a plunger, snake or hose-end bladder to unclog drains.

Better yet, *prevent* clogs by pouring boiling water down a drain, or try a product that uses enzymes to break down grease and soap like *Draino Buildup Remover* or *Liquid Plumber Buildup Remover*. (Note: these products are **not** designed to clear blocked drains.)

**Recipe for All Purpose Cleaner**

| | |
|---|---|
| 50 ml | household ammonia |
| 50 ml | vinegar |
| 125 ml | baking soda |
| 2 l | warm water |

Measure all ingredients into a bowl. Mix.

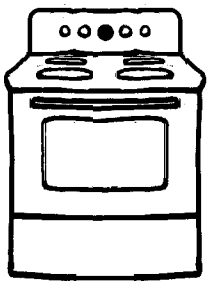
*over*

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

## Oven cleaners

Most commercial oven cleaners contain lye and are corrosive to skin and eyes. Prevent the need for caustic oven cleaners! The best strategy is to avoid drips by placing aluminum foil or a metal tray underneath. Spills are easier to clean up if attacked before they become baked on.

To clean a dirty oven, use an oven cleaner without lye such as *Easy Off Non-Caustic Formula,* non-chlorine scrubbing powder such as *Bon Ami,* or baking soda, soap and water with a copper scrubber and lots of elbow grease.



## Bathroom cleaners and disinfectants

Bathroom cleaners are designed to deal with bathroom soils (soap scum and mildew) and bath surfaces (tubs, tile, and showers). Many bathroom cleaners are also disinfectants that kill germs, viruses, or mildew. Disinfectants, which are considered pesticides, kill germs on surfaces temporarily, but cannot kill germs in the air or provide long-lasting disinfection.

A special cleaner for the bathroom is probably not necessary. A good general purpose cleaner and a scouring powder should be adequate in most homes. If you have special medical problems in the home, consult your physician. Chronic mildew indicates a moisture problem that may require structural work. It is better to solve the moisture problem than resort to long-term use of disinfectants.

Here are some less-toxic products to try: *Bathroom Duck, 20 Mule Team Borax, Comet Liquid Bathroom Cleaner, or Spic and Span Spray Bath Cleaner.*

## Toilet bowl cleaners

Many commercial toilet bowl cleaners are strong acids that can burn skin and eye tissue. Look for the word “danger” on the product label; this indicates the most hazardous product. Here are some less-toxic products to try: baking soda and castille soap, *Bon Ami Cleanser, Borax, Toilet Duck, EarthRite Toilet Bowl Cleaner, or Ecover Toilet Bowl Cleaner.*

A special cleaner for the toilet is not necessary. Soap and water or a non-chlorine scouring powder will do the job unless the porcelain is old or damaged or your water has high mineral content. Stains can be removed by carefully rubbing with fine wet/dry sandpaper or rottenstone. Under normal circumstances you do not need the disinfectant properties of some toilet bowl cleaners. The bowl won’t stay germ free for long anyway. Frequent and thorough cleaning is the key.

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

## Scouring cleaners

Most scouring powders combine a surfactant with an abrasive powder. A few products use silica as an abrasive. Silica can be very dangerous if inhaled, which is more likely to happen with a powder product than with a paste. Products containing chlorine bleach emit hazardous gases if mixed with ammonia or acid cleaners such as toilet bowl cleaners or some bathroom cleaners. *Comet* and *Ajax* contain chlorine bleach; *Ajax* and *Zud* contain silica in a form which can be inhaled.

Plain baking soda is quite effective and contains no surfactants at all. Here are some less-toxic scouring cleaners to try: *Bon Ami, Mr. Clean Liquid Abrasive Cleaner, or Ecover Cream Cleaner.*

### Recipe for Scouring Solution

| | |
|---|---|
| 125 ml | baking soda |
| 125 ml | water |

Measure all ingredients into a bowl. Mix.

## Glass cleaners

Glass cleaners are low in acute toxicity because they are diluted. However, some contain ingredients such as glycol ethers and ammonia, which may pose chronic hazards through inhalation or skin absorption. Consumer reports found that plain water was more effective than half of the commercial glass cleaners on the market and that a mix of lemon juice and water was most effective for removing greasy fingerprints. Glass cleaners are very easy and inexpensive to make yourself.

### Recipe for Glass Cleaner

| | |
|---|---|
| 250 ml | white vinegar or lemon juice |
| 250 ml | warm water |

Measure all ingredients into a bowl or spray dispenser. Mix.

## Laundry bleaches and boosters

Common household chlorine bleach is an eye irritant and the vapors irritate the lungs. If mixed with ammonia or acids, it reacts to emit hazardous gases. Non-chlorine bleaches are safer alternatives, but they do not have disinfectant properties. Look for the words “non-chlorine bleach” or “hydrogen peroxide” on the product label.

## Stain removers

Commercial spot removers often contain toxic solvents such as petroleum naphtha or chlorinated hydrocarbons. Many spots can be removed quite effectively using relatively non-toxic materials such as water, dishwashing liquid, or rubbing alcohol. Always check a reliable reference to find what type of material is most appropriate to a particular stain or fabric. For fabrics that can be laundered, use a laundry pre-soak or pre-wash stain remover such as *Ecover Stain Remover* or *Spray ‘n Wash* (liquid or stick).

*over*

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

## Automatic dishwasher detergents

Detergents for use in automatic dishwashers are more hazardous than products for washing dishes by hand. Besides being stronger, they actually contain phosphates and chlorine bleach. Phosphates cause water pollution, especially in lakes and rivers.

Some products are essentially chlorine and phosphate free. These products require only a small amount of detergent per load. Always use the minimum amount of detergent. To reduce the amount of detergent, use baking soda in the detergent dispenser that has no lid. Some products to try: *Bi-O-Kleen, Bio Pac, Kleer, Life Tree, Shaklee Basic D.*

## Furniture polish and waxes

Most furniture polishes contain petroleum distillates, which are flammable and can cause serious injury if accidentally swallowed. Look for the word “danger” on the label; this indicates the most hazardous product. The least hazardous products are vegetable oil or non-toxic mineral oil based. Here are some less-hazardous products to try: *EarthRite Furniture Polish, Howard Orange Oil, Lemon Pledge* (trigger spray), or *Parker’s Lemon Oil.* For unvarnished furniture, try olive oil, almond oil,or a mixture of olive oil and lemon juice.

## Metal cleaners and polishes

Metal cleaners and polishes vary widely in the hazard they pose. Some products contain petroleum distillates, ammonia, or other hazardous ingredients.

Here are some less-toxic products to try: *Twinkle* silver and copper polishes or *Wright’s* brass, copper and silver creams. You can also clean copper with a paste of equal parts vinegar and salt; rinse completely afterward to prevent corrosion. The old-fashioned electrolytic method of cleaning silver (immersing in hot water with a piece of aluminum foil and some salt or baking soda) gives off small amounts of toxic hydrogen sulfide.

*The source for the preceding information on household cleaners and polishes was the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King county, Seattle, WA.*

*The Recycling Council of British Columbia does not endorse the use of any of the aforementioned products.*

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# Toxic Truth

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

### for the disposal of hazardous products?

The government? Taxpayers? Environmental organizations? All wrong.

The manufacturer and ultimately you, the consumer of products, are responsible for proper disposal of hazardous products.

British Columbia is moving in a new direction for dealing with the disposal of hazardous products. Gone are the days when municipal taxpayers paid for the disposal of household hazardous waste wheter they used it or not. Today, we have something known as product stewardship which makes producers and consumers responsible for the costs and effects of the disposal of hazardous waste.

Manufacturers of goods and packaging are now being asked to manage their products from 'cradle-to-grave' which means they have to be responsible for:

- the consequences of using certain raw materials and resources
- the effects the production process has on the environment, and
- what happens to the products when it is time to dispose them

By making producers responsible for all aspects of the product's 'life', including what happens to products when we are finished with them, product stewardship creates incentives for the redesign of products and packaging to make them more environmentally sound. Product stewardship recognizes that only the producers of products and packaging have it in their power to prevent pollution and reduce waste. Producers have the ultimate authority to design 'cleaner' products.

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### Are eco-fees a tax?

It is a common misconception that eco-fees are a tax. Although eco-fees are displayed as a separate item when you purchase a product, they should be considered part of the real cost of the manufacturing of that product. Eco-fees refer to the cost of cleaning up the mess that is made in the production of a product and to the cost of properly disposing of that product after you finish with it. Eco-fees are collected by industry, not government, to supplement the cost of safe manufacturing and disposal of the products they produce. Compared to raising taxes, eco-fees are a cheaper and more efficient way to pay for safe disposal. Eco-fees ensure that it is the people who make the products and the people who buy the products who pay for proper disposal.

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

## Why is product stewardship a good thing?

**IT SAVES TAXPAYERS MONEY -** Product stewardship effectively shifts the cost of managing waste packaging from taxpayers to manufacturers and consumers of the product. For example, the newly expanded beverage container regulation will save municipal taxpayers as much as $7 million annually by keeping used beverage containers out of the municipal and regional landfills.

**IT MINIMIZES IMPACTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT** - By making producers responsible for their products from 'cradle-to-grave', product stewardship sends a signal to the designers to create products that can be easily reused and recycled. This is called Design for the Environment. It simply won't be economical to design hard to dispose of products.

**IT PUTS INDUSTRY IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT** - Product stewardship programs are designed to allow industry maximum flexibility in seeking solutions. Goals are set, such as annual recycling rates, and industry is left to do what it does best, determine the most economical and efficient way to meet the targets.

**IT CREATES NEW INDUSTRIES AND NEW JOBS** - Product Stewardship creates new industries in the re-manufacturing or recycling of goods, and builds new markets in recycled materials. For example, B.C.'s Paint Stewardship Regulation led to the creation of a new paint bulking facility in the Lower Mainland.

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# Toxic Truth

## What does a label really tell me?

It is important to carefully read the labels on any products you buy, so that you can determine if the product could be potentially toxic to you or the environment. However, keep in mind that labels can be misleading. Unfortunately, federal guidelines regarding product labeling are incomplete and not strictly enforced. It is important to question what the claims made on product labels are actually telling you.

### Natural

There is no legal definition of the word "natural". Many products that could be considered natural are also toxic. Petroleum could be considered natural because it comes from the earth. However, petroleum is flammable, toxic, and may cause illness. Natural does not always mean that a product is safer.

### Biodegradable

When you see the word "biodegradable" on a product, think about what is being referred to. Is the packaging biodegradable or is it the contents that are biodegradable? While biodegradable packaging is better for the environment, it is unlikely that the package will ever have the opportunity to degrade if it is placed in a landfill. Most substances need either light or oxygen to break down, neither of which is available when packed in a landfill. If the contents are biodegradable this does not necessarily mean that the product is entirely safe for you or the environment. Chlorine bleach is biodegradable, but it is nevertheless toxic and can be harmful to the environment while it is in the process of breaking down.

### Recyclable

The particular packaging of a product may be recyclable, but unless there is somewhere in your area to take the product for recycling the claim is of little use to you. It can be frustrating to buy a product believing that it can be recycled because you read so on the label, and then finding out that there is actually nowhere you can take the product for recycling. You can avoid this problem by calling the Recycling Hotline and asking an operator if there are facilities in your area to recycle the product.

### Ozone Friendly *or* CFC Free

There is nothing new about aerosols that do not contain CFC's. In fact, CFC's have been banned in aerosols since the early eighties and more recently CFC's have been banned from most other products. While the replacement chemical in aerosols is less damaging to the ozone layer it can certainly not be called "ozone friendly". Furthermore, these claims do not mean that a product is any safer for you or the environment. For example, many aerosols contain chemicals that are flammable, as well as chemicals that may be toxic or cause illness.

*over*

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

## Made from recycled materials

The term "recycled" can simply mean that scrap from the production process is put back in the manufacturing mix. A better claim to look for is "Post Consumer Content" which indicates that the material has been collected through recycling programs. You should check the label to see if it indicates the % of in-plant and post-consumer content on the label.

## Environmentally Friendly or Environmentally Safe

These are misleading claims because every product made has an impact on the environment. Furthermore, there is nothing that is actually beneficial to the environment about any consumer products or packaging.

## Non-Toxic

This is a vague claim. You should look for an explanation of why the product is claiming it is not toxic. Usually this claim does not refer to the effects the product will have on the environment.

## Green

The major Canadian grocery store chain Loblaws owns the trademark for "President's Choice GREEN Environmentally Friendly Products". However, they got the trademark for this name before there were specific federal guidelines regarding environmental labeling. You should not assume that these products are any safer for you or the environment because of their name. General "green" claims should not be taken to imply that a product is safer or good for the environment.

## Canada Safeway's Environmental Options

These claims are displayed on shelves and are made in addition to environmental claims made by the brandowner on the product. Because these are shelf claims they are not subject to federal guidelines. While the claims made on products can be misleading they are nonetheless subject to federal guidelines unlike the shelf claims made by Canada Safeway.

## Environmental Choice Program/EcoLogo

Ecologo programs are run by government sponsored agencies that award the right to use the specific claim and logo on a product that has met established environmental criteria. Canada's Environmental Choice Program is symbolized by the three doves symbol.

In general, you should be view environmental claims made on products with a healthy degree of skepticism. Watch out for vague claims that are not substantiated with reference to scientific tests or ingredients. A label may state that a product does not contain a certain toxic chemical, but it should also back up the claim with a required test and identify what has been used to replace the substance.

Sources

"Reassessing Environmental Labeling: The Consumer Perspective". Environmentally Sound Packaging Coalition of Canada, April 1997.

"Consumer Factsheet: Green Products and Labeling". Environmentally Sound Packaging Coalition of Canada, 1997.

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# Toxic Truth

## Does advertising affect our use of household hazardous products?

Definitely. Whether we realize it or not we are constantly being bombarded with advertising messages encouraging us to buy household hazardous products. Television commercials and ads in newspapers and magazines show us the products that are supposed to make our lives easier and cleaner. In the long run, many of these products create waste and pollution.

When was the last time you saw a television commercial for a cleaning product that told you how to dispose of that product safely? For that matter, when has a commercial ever mentioned the toxic effects of the cleaning product it is advertising? Obviously advertisers do not want to include such information in their ads. The advertisers want you to believe that the product they are selling is the newest, strongest, or easiest to use product available. If they told you about the toxic effects of the products you probably would not want to buy them.

Even if you think you are not influenced by advertising when you buy a certain product, you should still ask yourself why you are buying the product at all. Many household cleaning products are unnecessary and have safer alternatives. The problem is that we are constantly being told that our homes are filled with germs that need to be killed, or that our clothes need to be whiter than white, or that everything in our homes that could possibly sparkle should. These messages are not based in reality; they are created by advertisers to sell products.

Often there is no difference between competing brands of cleaning products. Advertisers have to attribute values to products that have nothing to do with the product's use. Advertisements tend to show people who are happy, successful and attractive leaving you to make the association between those qualities and a certain product. Even the current trend of "real life" advertising is misleading because the "real" people are often actors who are presented in a way that leads you to think they are regular people talking about their favourite products.

Next time you see an advertisement for a cleaning product ask yourself the following questions:

? How does the ad try to convince me that I need the product?

? Does the ad explain why the product is better than the alternatives?

*over*

# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

? Does the ad attribute qualities to the product that have nothing to do with the product's purpose? (e.g.; wealth, success, happiness, love, etc.)

? Does the ad mention what potentially harmful chemicals are contained in a product that enable it to cut grease, dissolve stains, kill germs, etc.?

? Does the ad tell you what happens to toxic chemicals used in your home? Do they remain after their use and contaminate your air, your skin, and your food?

When you take a moment to think about it you will realize that advertisements do not give you all the information you need to make responsible choices as a consumer. The truth is you need very few of the products that are advertised to you. For example, *Consumer Reports* found that plain water was more effective than half the glass cleaners on the market and that the most effective way to remove greasy fingerprints from glass is using lemon juice and water. Especially where household hazardous products are concerned it is important to make informed purchasing decisions. Your personal health as well as the health of the environment could be at stake.

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# *Toxic Truth*

## Which hazardous products should I take to collection depots?

In B.C., the Consumer Product Stewardship Program runs depots which will take back leftover paint, solvents, pesticides, flammable liquids, and gasoline. This industry-funded program is partially supported by the collection of eco-fees collected at the point of sale.

| **If the product falls into one of these categories, take it to a collection depot:** | **If the product falls into one of these categories, it will NOT be accepted:** |
|---|---|
| 4 The product is a ***paint,*** aerosol paint, stain, or varnish intended for household use<br>4 The product is a ***solvent*** intended for household use<br>4 The product has a ***flammable*** symbol on it or a warning of fire hazard such as "Keep away from heat, open flame or spark"<br>4 The product is a ***pesticide*** with a poison symbol and a registration number that says "Pest Control Product" or "PCP"<br>4 The product is ***gasoline*** sold for use in spark ignition engines and is contained in an ULC approved container (a red container with a round ULC sticker or the words Danger Flammable Petroleum Fuel")<br>4 The product is an acrylic driveway sealer<br>4 The product is a marine enamel or bottom paint | 8 The product is a cosmetic, insect repellant, disinfectant or pet product<br>8 The product does not have any identification<br>8 The product is in a container that is leaking or improperly sealed<br>8 The product is diesel fuel or gaseous fuel such as propane or butane<br>8 The product label says it is for commercial or agricultural, or industrial use<br>8 It is an empty solvent or pesticide container<br>8 It is a non-aerosol automotive, industrial or multi-component paint<br>8 The product is a diluted, ready-to-use pesticide or solvent without "poisonous" or "flammable" symbols or warnings<br>8 The product is kerosene in a container larger than nine litres |

Phone the collection depot if you are unsure whether a product can be returned to them. To find out their phone number, or to find out where your nearest collection depot is located, call the B.C. Recycling Hotline.

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# Toxic Truth

## What are some alternatives to household hazardous products?

Making your own household cleaning products is not only cheaper, it is safer for you and the environment. Why keep a cupboard full of products which are often unnecessary, expensive, and over-packaged? Instead, stock up on pure soap, washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, and cornstarch. These ingredients, along with other items commonly found in the kitchen, are all you need to have a clean and healthier home. Borax and ammonia are also effective cleaners but it is recommended to use them only when there is no milder, safer alternative. Beware -- both cleaners can be eye and skin irritants and ammonia can be dangerous if mixed with other cleaning products.

### Furniture and floor polish

Polish unvarnished wood with olive, peanut or almond oil, or dissolve 1 tbsp. of lemon oil in 1 pint of mineral oil.

### All-purpose cleaner

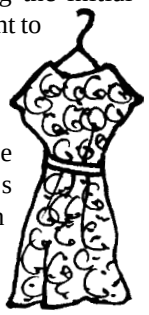
Mix 1/2 cup (125 ml) of pure soap and 1 gallon (4 litres) of hot water. To help cut grease add 1/4 cup of lemon juice.

### Bleach

Use borax in place of bleach.

### Laundry

Add 1/3 cup of washing soda as water is filling machine. Add clothes. Then add 1 1/2 cups of soap. When making the initial switch from detergent to soap laundry cleaner, wash laundry with washing soda only. This will eliminate detergent residues that might react with the soap and cause materials to yellow.



### Dishes

Use dissolved soap flakes in hot water and for tough grease add some vinegar.

### Stains


**Ink:** Soak in milk, use hydrogen peroxide, or you can use cold water combined with one tablespoon of cream of tartar and one tablespoon of lemon juice.
**Wine:** Immediately pour salt or cold soda water on the stain and soak in milk before washing.
**Grease:** Use borax on a damp cloth.
**Chewing gum:** Rub with ice and the gum will flake off.
**Coffee cup stains:** Use moist salt.

### Fabric Softener

Add 1/4 cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle.

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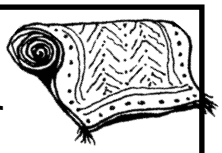
# *Toxic Truth* *continued*

## Carpet cleaner



To clean and deodorize carpets: vacuum, liberally sprinkle carpet with baking soda, then vacuum again. For tough stains, try cold soda water or repeatedly blot with vinegar and soapy water.

## Drain cleaner

To clean your drains, pour 1/2 cup of baking soda down the drain followed by 1/2 cup of vinegar. Let stand for 15 minutes and flush with boiling water.

## Paints

Use latex or water-based paints.

## Fertilizer

Replace chemical fertilizers with peat moss, manure, fishmeal or organic compost. Lawn fertilizer is unnecessary if you water your lawn properly and practice grass cycling. To grass cycle you simply need to leave the grass clippings on the lawn so that the nutrients from them can be reabsorbed into the soil. Do not cut the grass too short so that deeper root systems can be developed and so that the lawn will hold more water. When necessary, thoroughly water your lawn in the early morning for no more than three hours with a regular sprinkler. It is also important to aerate your lawn every couple of years.

## Pesticides

Many commercial pesticides are not only unnecessary, but are unhealthy for you, your pets, and the environment. It is best to determine why you have pests and take steps to prevent infestation, such as sealing cracks, keeping all food covered, and keeping your kitchen clean, free of crumbs and other food particles.

**Ants:** Squeeze lemon juice at place of entry and leave the peel. You can also deter ants with lines of chalk, bone meal, charcoal dust and cayenne pepper.

**Cockroaches:** Plug cracks along baseboards, cupboards, and around pipes, sinks, and bathtub fixtures. For a trap, lightly grease the inner neck of a milk bottle and put stale beer or a raw potato in it.

**Fruit flies:** Pour a small amount of beer or wine into a wide-mouth jar. Put a plastic bag across the mouth of the jar with a rubber band. Poke a small hole in the bag. Fruit flies will enter through the hole and not be able to find their way out again. Prevent fruit flies by keeping food wrapped.

**Silverfish:** Make silverfish traps by combining one part molasses with two parts vinegar and place near cracks.

**Plant pests:** You can mix 5 grams of dry pure soap in 1 litre of water and spray it on pests and plant leaves. Another option is to blend two to three very hot peppers, 1/2 an onion, and a clove of garlic in 4 litres of water. Boil this mixture and steep it for two days. Then strain the mixture and use it as a spray for indoor and outdoor plants.

**Bug repellant:** Use citronella spray or burn citronella candles. Citronella is available at most drug stores.

**Fleas on pets:** Give your pet garlic or brewers yeast. Most flea collars, sprays and powders contain chemicals which are unhealthy for your pets (as well as for children who may be playing with them).

## Polishes

Metal polishes are expensive and often contain toxic chemicals. It is not necessary to use commercial products to polish metal because the alternatives are easy to use, safe, and work great.

**Chrome:** Use apple cider vinegar to polish chrome or try white flour on a dry rag.

**Brass:** Use Worcestershire sauce or try equal parts salt and flour, with a little vinegar on a dry rag.

**Copper:** Use lemon juice and a little salt or hot vinegar and a little salt on a dry rag.

**Silver:** In a non-metal bowl mix 1 litre of water, 1 tbsp. salt, 1 tbsp. baking soda and a strip of aluminum foil.

**Stainless steel:** Polish stainless steel with olive oil.