**The Basic Ten**

Stock your cupboards with these ten products and you can clean just about anything:

***1) White vinegar:*** An antifungal that also kills germs and bacteria.

***2) Baking soda:*** Eliminates odors and works as a gentle scouring powder.

***3) Borax:*** Borax, the common name for the natural mineral compound sodium borate, eliminates odors, removes dirt, and acts as an antifungal and possible disinfectant*.* ***CAUTION:*** *Use with care around children and pets, can be toxic if swallowed.*

***4) Hydrogen peroxide*** (3% concentration): A great nontoxic bleach and stain remover, as well as a proven disinfectant.

***5) Club soda*** (fresh): A stain remover and polisher.

***6) Lemon juice:*** A pleasant-smelling nontoxic bleach, grease-cutter, and stain remover.

***7) Liquid castile soap:*** An all-purpose cleaner, grease-cutter, and disinfectant. “Castile” means the soap is vegetable-based, not animal-fat-based.

***8) Corn meal:*** Great at picking up carpet spills.

***9) Olive oil:*** Makes a wonderful furniture polish.

***10) Salt:*** A cheap, simple abrasive.

***OPTIONAL: Pure essential oils:*** Adding all-natural, organic essential oils to your cleaning concoctions can add wonderful scents to your housekeeping endeavors. Some—such as lavender, peppermint, eucalyptus, lemongrass, and tea tree oils—also may have antibacterial, antifungal, or insect-repelling properties.

**The Basic Ten at Work**

Now that you know what products you need, grab a few clean, empty spray bottles; some rags and sponges; and a bucket of water, and you’re ready to clean your house the green way.

***All-purpose cleaners:*** Put 2 Tbsp. white vinegar and 1 tsp. borax into a 16 oz. spray bottle. Fill the rest with very hot water and shake to blend until the borax is dissolved. Add 1/4 cup of liquid castile soap only after you’ve completed the above steps. If you want to scent your spray, also add 10–15 drops of an essential oil.

***Hard floor cleaner:*** Combine 1/4 liquid castile soap, up to 1/2 cup white vinegar or lemon juice, and 2 gallons of warm water in a large plastic bucket. Use with a mop or sponge.

***Carpet cleaner:*** Blend 1/2 cup baking soda, 1 cup borax, and 1 cup cornmeal. Sprinkle mixture over rug and rub with a cloth. Be sure to sprinkle, as large clumps of cornmeal could clog your vacuum. Let rest for several hours or overnight, then vacuum. To remove stains from your carpet, mix 1/4 cup liquid castile soap and 1/3 cup water in a blender until foamy. Spread the mixture on the carpet and let sit for a few minutes, then scrub the stain with a brush or clean rag. Club soda will remove many acidic stains, like coffee or wine.

***Glass cleaner:*** Simply use club soda in a spray bottle. Add 1 tsp. of lemon juice to increase your window cleaner’s degreasing power.

***Bathroom surface cleaners:*** You can use the all-purpose cleaners recommended above or, for even simpler bathroom cleaning, use baking soda or borax with a little salt as a scouring powder. For a softer scrub, combine 1/2 cup baking soda with enough liquid soap to achieve a frosting-like consistency. You may want to add 5-10 drops of an essential oil for fragrance.

***Toilet cleaner:*** Sprinkle baking soda or borax, or pour white vinegar into the toilet, and let sit for a few minutes. Scrub with a good toilet brush.

***Oven cleaner:*** Cover the oven floor with baking soda, spray with water until very damp, and let set overnight. Spray with water every few to keep damp. In the morning, clean out the baking soda, and the stuck-on gunk will be loosened and ready to scrub off.

***Mold remover:*** Combine 1/2 cup hydrogen peroxide or white vinegar with 1 cup water. Spray on mold and do not rinse. Another option is to spray with a mixture of 2 tsp. tea tree oil and 2 cups water.

***Wood polish:*** To polish wood furniture, dab olive oil onto a soft cloth and rub.

***Source:*** Green America