



Stocking Up On Green

If making your home more eco-friendly is a priority, start with this closet of supplies recommended by “green clean” authority Linda Mason Hunter. “You and your household will be helping to preserve the planet,” she says, “even if it’s one spritz at a time.”

Your Green Supply Closet

Linda Mason Hunter chose products according to two basic principles: 1) Items that reduce waste, such as supplies made from recycled materials or those that can be reused. 2) Cleaners that reduce the chemicals in your home. Here are her pointers:

1. & 5. PAPER PRODUCTS

When shopping for paper goods, choose those with the highest “post consumer waste” content you can find, either unbleached or whitened without chlorine.

2. CANDLES

Replace paraffin candles, which are made from crude oil, with cleaner-burning soy or beeswax ones.

3. TRASH BAGS

Select biodegradable bags or those made with at least 65% recycled content.

4. LIGHT BULBS

Compact fluorescent bulbs use one-quarter of the energy of incandescent bulbs and last ten times longer.

6. & 7. CLEANING STUFF

Buy prepared basics (see *page 88*) or mix your own cleaners using common ingredients (*page 90*).

8. REUSABLE CLOTHS

Flannel cloths, for dusting or wet cleaning, can be washed and reused.

9. NATURAL SCRUBBERS

Try cellulose or natural sea sponges instead of plastic ones. Old toothbrushes come in handy for cleaning grout.





A Green Cleaning Basket

With manufacturers offering more options, it's easier to buy environmentally sensitive cleaners. Look for products that are made from plant sources rather than petroleum, and that are free of chemicals that can irritate (such as chlorine) or pollute (such as phosphates).

1. POLISH WOOD

Choose a vegetable-based soap to polish wood floors and furniture to a glow. Murphy's Oil Soap, 32 fl. oz., about \$5; most grocery stores.

2. & 5. WASH DISHES

Choose detergents free of chlorine, phosphates, and synthetic chemicals. Ecover Automatic Dishwasher Powder, 48 oz., \$5.55; shopnatural.com. Mrs. Meyer's Clean

Day Dish Soap, 16 oz., \$4.99; mrsmeyers.com.

3. CLEAN SURFACES

An all-purpose, plant-based cleaner removes grime from almost everywhere—walls, windows, countertops, and appliances. Shaklee Basic H₂ Organic Super Cleaning Concentrate, 64 oz., \$42.97; shaklee.com.

4. SCOUR GRIME

Biodegradable scouring powder with mineral

abrasives cleans countertops, grout, outdoor furniture, grills, microwave ovens, showers, sinks, and stoves. Bon Ami, 14 oz., about \$1.50; most grocery stores.

6. WHITEN SURFACES

A nonchlorine oxygen bleach cleanser tackles stains on grout, sinks, bath tubs, and toilets. Jason Heather's Oxygen Bleach Cleanser, 14 oz., \$2.39; vitacost.com.

Do-It-Yourself Cleaners

If these three natural products—baking soda, vinegar, and soap—are in your cupboard, you have what it takes to mix up effective cleaners. Not only do these recipes smell fresh and clean, they won't make your eyes burn or your hands itch.

THE BASIC INGREDIENTS

BAKING SODA

This works best on proteins, grease, and animal messes. Because it's slightly abrasive, it can be used for scouring—and, of course, it's a natural deodorizer.



DISTILLED WHITE VINEGAR

This mild acid works on alkaline substances, dissolving scale, inhibiting mold, and cutting soap scum. It's terrific for stains such as coffee, rust, and tea.



SIMPLE SOAP

Try castile soap, made with olive oil, or a vegetable-based soap. Both attach to soil at the molecular level, so you can rinse dirt away with water.



Recipes from Green Clean, by Linda Mason Hunter and Mikki Halpin (Melcher Media, 2005; \$16.95)

THE RECIPES

1. SOFT SCRUB

Add enough soap to $\frac{1}{8}$ cup baking soda to make a creamy mixture. Apply with sponge to clean; rinse the surface well. Use and discard.



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2. APPLIANCE CLEANER

Dry baking soda shines up small appliances and even removes bread wrappers burned onto the toaster. Try rubbing a teaspoon onto your grubby blender or food processor with a clean flannel cloth.



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3. TOILET CLEANER/DEODORIZER

Sprinkle toilet bowl with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup baking soda. Drizzle with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar, then scour with a toilet brush.



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4. OVEN CLEANER

Sprinkle oven with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baking soda (more if needed) and spray with water. Let sit for several hours or overnight before scraping up stains and spills. Rinse thoroughly with water.



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5. HARDWOOD FLOOR CLEANER

In a pail or bucket, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup distilled white vinegar in one gallon warm water. Mop wood or linoleum floors, then rinse with water, making sure not to leave large pools to dry.



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