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Newsletter



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Spring Cleaning - Sustainably!

Many cleaning products available on store shelves contain ingredients that can be harmful to people and the environment. But you can save money, and protect your family and the environment, by using safe and simple ingredients to clean your home.

Here are some examples of simple cleaners you can mix up at home:

All Purpose Cleaner

Combine 1/4 cup white distilled vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon liquid soap and 3/4 cup warm water, shake to blend. For really big jobs, combine 1/4 cup liquid soap, 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar and 2 gallons of warm water in a pail and stir to blend.

Grease Cleaner

Mix vinegar and salt together for a good surface cleaner. Will remove grease if vinegar is at full strength.

Crayon Mark Remover

To remove crayon marks from walls, floors, counters, cabinets and furniture, rub area with toothpaste and a damp cloth. Do not use on non-vinyl wallpaper.

Fabric Softener and Whitener

Add 1/2 cup of baking soda to rinse cycle to deodorize and brighten clothes.

Soft Scrub

Combine 1/2 cup baking soda with enough vegetable oil-based liquid soap to make a frosting-like mixture. Add 15 drops of tea tree oil (optional). Scoop the mixture onto a sponge and scrub the bathtub, sinks, Formica countertops or shower stall. Rinse.

Mold and Mildew

Use equal parts vinegar and water. Spray and wipe clean.

For a complete list of green cleaning recipes and tips, visit the [Oregon Metro Green Cleaners](#) page or download the [Hazardless Home Handbook!](#)



Container Gardening

A fun activity to share with young family members, or on your own!

In Oregon, Spring brings us more sun mixed with the rain, which makes it a great time to start a garden. If you live in a rental home, or an apartment or duplex without a yard, a container garden can be a great way to grow your own vegetables, herbs, and decorative flowers.

Almost any type of container can be used in a container garden, as long as it has drainage holes on the bottom. 5-gallon buckets are inexpensive and can easily be drilled for drainage.

Most vegetables do need to be planted in a container that can hold at least 6-8 inches of potting mix. Root vegetables, like carrots and beets can be grown in a container as small as 2 gallons, but the container needs to be deep. Standard tomatoes need at



least a 4-gallon container, while cherry tomatoes can thrive in a 2-gallon container.

The Iowa State Extension Service offers a [simple chart online](#) listing different crops that can be grown in containers and their minimum size requirements. The Oregon State University Extension Service also has an extensive booklet called "[Growing Your Own](#)" that has a section on raised bed and container gardening (see page 2-3).

In addition to providing fresh vegetables to eat, gardening has many other benefits!

Benefits for Children:

Children who grow their own foods are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables and show higher levels of knowledge about nutrition. Eating fruits and vegetables in childhood leads to higher fruit and vegetable consumption in adulthood, which can help prevent or delay chronic conditions over a lifetime.

Students who are engaged in garden projects tend to enjoy learning and show improved attitudes towards education.

The process of gardening gives empowering experiences. Plus, active gardening has been shown to have a strong influence on how natural areas and gardens are valued in adulthood.

Benefits for Older Adults:

Gardening can help keep older hands strong and nimble! Research has shown that older adults who are gardeners have better hand strength and pinch force, which is a big concern as people age.

Gardening is a physically active hobby and can provide older adults the opportunity for mild to moderate exercise.

Benefits for Everyone:

Gardening can provide extra food for a family and savings on food purchases.

Gardening promotes physical health, mental health through relaxation and satisfaction, and better nutrition.

Lastly, if you are an avid gardener and want to support others with donated food, the Oregon Food Bank operates the "Plant a Row" program that accepts donations of vegetables. For more information about how you can connect with Plant a Row, visit the [Oregon Food Bank website](#).

Spring Safety Check-Up

Outdoors

As the weather gets better and people head outside for fun, keep these tips in mind to make sure everyone has a safe and fun outdoor adventure!

1. Do a helmet check. Oregon law requires all youth under age 16 to wear a bicycle helmet. Oregon Department of Transportation recommends checking and adjusting the helmet's fit before each ride. For 7 steps to a perfectly fitted bicycle helmet, [see the ODOT guide](#).

2. Protect skin from the sun. Just because the sun isn't at its brightest in the spring, it's still a good idea to protect skin from UV rays. For information on finding a good sunscreen for you and your family, visit the [American Academy of Dermatology Sunscreen FAQs](#).

3. Test outdoor toys. If your family includes children, check any outdoor toys that have been stored or not used for a while. Look for loose wheels, sharp edges, rust, and other hazards. Make sure toys are in good working order before anybody uses them. For more tips, visit the [National Network for Child Care's Toy Safety page](#).

4. Stay hydrated. When engaging in outdoor activities, it's important to stay hydrated. Experts at [Harvard University recommend drinking water](#) when thirsty and avoiding sports drinks, which can add unneeded calories and sugar. Some sports drinks contain the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of sugar!

Inside the home

1. Test your smoke alarm(s). The [National Safety Council](#) recommends checking the batteries in your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms when you change your clocks.

2. Plan (and practice) a family escape route. If you don't have an escape route from your home, now is a great time to plan one! Download the free [Fire Escape Plan](#) from [SafeKids.org](#).

Check Out your Library for Things to do this Spring!

Click the links below to see the list of upcoming events!

Events for Kids

Some of the upcoming events for kids:

Read to the Dogs * Story Time * Baby Boogie and Toddler Twist * Messy Art for Little Kids * Homework Help

Events for Teens

Highlights:

Anime Club * Science Fiction Club * Open Mic * Teen Movie Night * Teen Wii Weekends * Afterschool Game Day * Homework Help

Plus - Spring Break Wii Super Smash Brothers Brawl Tournament!

Events for Adults

There are lots of classes and events on the calendar of interest to adults (and families)!

Computer Basics * Fruit Tree Planting * Writing Workshop * Downton Abbey Episode Screening * Mother Daughter Book Club * Friday Family Flicks * Spanish/English Conversation Group * and many more!



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