

Sustainable Home Care

- To make your own **all-purpose cleaner** combine **one part vinegar to one part water** in a spray bottle. Add **a few drops of essential oil** if you want to mask the vinegar scent.
- To make **window cleaner**, combine **¼ cup vinegar, ½ tsp natural dish detergent and 2 cups water** in a spray bottle.
- To **clean your toilet**, add **1 cup of borax and ¼ cup of vinegar** to the toilet bowl, let sit for a few hours, then **scrub**.
- **Instead of** buying a scouring powder for your tub, try **sprinkling on baking powder or borax powder** and **rubbing with a damp sponge**. Plain vinegar is a good basic bath cleaner.
- Commercial **clog-clearing products** can impact the regional wastewater system, so try a more **natural approach**. Pour some **baking soda and 1 cup of vinegar into the drain**, wait 15 minutes then pour in a kettle of **boiling water**.
- Use **chemical-free dishwashing soaps**. Conventional dishwashing liquids and powders are petroleum-based and contain phosphates. Phosphates add nutrients (phosphorous) to our effluents and can cause algae blooms in our lakes and streams. Algae are single-cell plants and like any other plant, will consume oxygen at night during their respiration phase. This robs fish of oxygen in the water at night and can trigger a fish-kill as they suffocate.
- **Conserve packaging** with brands having **concentrated formulas** that you can dilute at home. Buy products with as little packaging as possible or leave the packaging at the store.

Sustainable Consumer Power

- Choose **Fair Trade certified products** and **items made from organic and/or sustainable resources** (i.e., reclaimed wood, bamboo, organic cotton, etc.) If your store doesn't carry these products, ask for them!
- Try **flea markets, local bazaars, antique jewellery and vintage clothing shops for gifts**. Giving vintage items new life keeps interesting and fun items in circulation and reduces the need to make and ship new items.
- Shop **locally** and **buy locally** produced products.
- Take **reusable bags with you** when you go shopping, they are not just for groceries! That plastic bag full of plastic shopping bags can now be recycled by dropping them in the appropriate bins at most grocery stores.
- **Plan out your route** when shopping to save time and avoid unnecessary vehicle emissions.
- Take **public transit instead of driving** your car. You reduce emissions and avoid traffic jams and searching for a parking space. Check with your city transit, several buses are probably making frequent runs to the major shopping malls.
- **Bring your own cart**. You can find several versions of foldable carts, which allow you to move your purchases with very small effort. A small cooler can be set at the bottom for perishables. Many bus doors are built low to allow elderly riders access and this helps you with your cart.
- When **giving gifts, treat people to an experience**. Give movie or theatre tickets, or an annual membership to a museum or Conservation Area. Make a promise of service. Re-imagine items.
- Look for **products and companies that donate money** to charity for certain purchases, this will help your money to go even further and make a difference! Check out the company's claims and not just at their own website.
- **Buying in bulk** cuts down on excess packaging. Bring your own containers and weigh them at the store, before and after.

