

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for September 20, 2021
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about making your own household cleaners, and as always, look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Soybean fields are mottled with golden leaves, the location of sunrises and sunsets is noticeably different on the horizon, and daylight hours are shrinking. Autumn is approaching.

This time of year can be more comfortable than the dog days of summer to work on cleaning projects around your home. There are many reasons that people choose to make their own cleaning mixtures. For some it is simply the knowledge of what they are using. Unlike food labels, all ingredients on cleaning products are not required to be listed on packaging.

Some people are very sensitive to chemical compounds found in commercial cleaning products. According to University of Arkansas Extension Specialist Margaret Harris, about 16 percent of individuals are extremely sensitive to chemicals, easily breaking out in rashes or with other chronic ailments.

Some people may be interested in making their own cleaners because of environmental concerns. There are certainly more "green" labeled products than there used to be. Unfortunately, they can also come with a hefty price tag. Therefore, another reason to make your own household cleaners is that the ingredients are relatively inexpensive.

There are several characteristics of different cleaner ingredients. The first category is base or alkali. These are good for removing dirt, fat, and grease. In homemade cleaners these ingredients are baking soda (mild), borax (moderate), and washing soda (strong). Acids are used to break down rust, mineral deposits, and hard water stains. They can also be good for glass, windows, and on mold. Vinegar and lemon juice are common acids that can be used. Detergents loosen dirt and lift it up and out of the way. Washing soda and borax, as well as vegetable and coconut oils act as detergents.

Just like they sound, abrasives wear off dirt by rubbing. Baking soda or salt can be used for this purpose. Bleaches and sanitizers can involve more than chlorine bleach. Milder sources that can

whiten, remove stains, as well as reduce numbers of bacteria include sunlight, hydrogen peroxide, and tea tree oil.

One thing to remember with most homemade recipes is that they may take more contact time or elbow grease than some commercial cleaners. Patience and persistence are key. The University of Arkansas has several recipes available for a variety of cleaning purposes. I appreciate that they have a mild, stronger, and strongest version for every situation. They recommend starting with the mildest formulation and increasing strength of ingredients only when needed.

For example, a Mild All-Purpose Cleaner can be made with white vinegar, baking soda, and hot water. A Strong All-Purpose Cleaner can be made with white vinegar, borax, and hot water. And Extra Strength All-Purpose Cleaner can be made with white vinegar, washing soap, castile soap and hot water. A few drops of essential oils could be added to any of these. Lavender works well.

It is also helpful to know where to purchase some of these ingredients that we may not be as familiar with. Washing soda and borax are powders and are both located in the laundry section of the grocery store. Castile soap comes in liquid and bar form and can be found either with shampoos and hand soaps or in natural/organic sections of supermarkets.

You can find recipes for everything from toilet bowl cleaner to oven cleaner on our website coshocton.osu.edu. I'm not sure of the source for this quote, but I do love it, "Our house is clean enough to be healthy, and dirty enough to be happy."

Here are some upcoming programs from OSU Extension: The OSU Extension Home Food Preservation Team is teaching a Canning Winter Squash webinar next Tuesday afternoon, September 28 from 4:00-5:00 PM. Please register at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

The Coshocton County Fair is quickly approaching October 1-7 and this year's Fall Foliage and Farm Tour will be October 16 and 17.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!