

FOSTER FOLLY NEWS

Green Cleaning – If Wallets Could Talk

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Sometimes it seems that making healthier choices, whether protecting your home, family or the environment, can be costly. When it comes to household cleaning, though, using the tried and true products like Grandma often used can result in cost savings while at the same time protecting Mother Earth.

Put simply, cleaning 'green' protects the health of the humans and pets who might come in contact with the cleaned areas and the environment by keeping harmful chemicals out of the air, waterways and landfills. Green cleaning reduces waste, eliminates toxins in the waste, increases efficiency and protects the indoor and outdoor environment, all while usually costing less than traditional cleaning methods.

Making cleaning products versus buying them also saves money. For example, making one gallon of an all-purpose cleaner consisting of white vinegar and distilled water costs about \$2 and provides more than ten times the cleaning potential than a 12-ounce name-brand pine cleaner averaging about \$3.

Using homemade, non-toxic or biodegradable cleaners also helps reduce pollution, both indoors and out. The EPA estimates that indoor air pollution levels can be 100 times higher than outdoor levels.

Using homemade cleaners eliminates toxins released into the air, as well as those being washed down the drain or ending up in landfills.

There are also money-saving microfiber cleaning cloths available that are positively charged to attract dirt and grease, picking up more than 97 percent of the dust and other materials containing microbes, pollen and mold. With nothing more than water and a microfiber cloth, furniture can be dust-free, windows streak-free, and sinks and faucets shiny clean.

Modest investments, such as switching to Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs not only help conserve natural resources, but since they are more energy efficient than standard incandescent bulbs, save about \$30 over the lifetime of each bulb.

Other money-saving practices that benefit the wallet are using the dishwasher and washing machines only for full loads, keeping the dryer's lint filter clean for more efficient heating and composting scraps instead of disposing of them.

There are plenty of products available to purchase if making them at home is not appealing. Those products carry a third party certification, or ecolabel such as Green Seal, Design for the Environment or EcoLogo. Reading product labels can help determine which products are non-toxic, biodegradable, made from renewable resources, scented with natural plant derivatives or essential oils, and those which

are phosphate, bleach, dye, petroleum or chlorine-free.

Using green products is relatively effortless, doesn't shrink your wallet and benefits the environment. What an easy way to make a difference. For helpful green cleaning ideas, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/green/cleaning.htm.