



Alternative Recipes

for common household products





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Disclaimer: Results may vary. Test recipe effectiveness by applying a small amount of product to an area before using.

CONTENTS

KITCHEN	1
Spray Disinfectant Cleaner	1
Abrasive Cleaner	1
Brass/Copper Tarnish Remover	1
Metal Cleaner	1
Silver Polish	1
Glassware/Crystal Spot Removal	2
Dishwasher Detergent	2
Window Cleaner	2
Drain Cleaner/Opener	2
Oven Cleaner	2
BATHROOM	3
Bathtub/Sink Stains	3
Soap Film on Fiberglass Surface	3
Soap Film/Mildew on Shower Curtains	3
Shower-Door Track Cleaning	3
Toilet Lime Deposit Removal	3
Toilet Bowl Cleaner	3
FURNITURE POLISH	4
Lemon Scented Polish	4
Dark Wood Polish	4
Unscented Polish	4
Oak Furniture Polish	4
Heat Blemish/Scratch Remover	4
Water Spot Treatment Polish	5
PAINTS/REMOVERS	5
Enamel Paint Drips/Spill Remover	5
Removing Paint from Skin	5
Arts and Crafts Paint	5
SPOT REMOVERS	6
All-purpose Spot Remover	6
Club Soda	6
Ink Spot Remover	6

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PETS	6
Pet Stains	6
Dog House Flea Repellant	6
PEST REPELLANT	7
Mouse Repellant	7
Ant Repellant	7
Roach Repellant	7
Insecticide	7
Moth Ball Alternative	7
Anti-Insect Air Spritzer	7
Bug Repellant, Body	8
GARDEN	8
Chili-Vinegar Spray for Fruit Trees	8
Aphids on Rose Bushes	8
Cucumber Beetles	8
Earwig Repellant	9
Fungus and Mildew ("Garlic Tea")	9
Pest Spray	9
Deer Repellant for Fruit Trees	10
Snail Repellants	10
Fertilize Naturally	10
Dry Out Lawn Fungus	10
Beneficial Bugs	10
Beneficial Plants	11
BEAUTY PRODUCTS	11
Hair Dye Alternatives	11
Hair Shampoo Alternatives	12
Hair Spray	12
Jewelry Cleaning	13
Skin Freshener/Soother	13
Skin Astringents	13
Deodorant	14
Talcum Powder	14

MISCELLANEOUS HOME MAINTENANCE	14
Homemade Glues	14
Bleach	15
Air Freshener	15
Car Wash Soap	15
Upholstery Cleaner and Rug Shampoo	15
Laundry Soap	15
Spray Starch	16
Carpet Deodorizer	16
AUTOMOTIVE CARE	16
Windshield Cleaner	16
Battery Cleaner	16
Cleaning Polish	17
Vinyl Smell Reducer and	
Natural Engine Degreaser	17
Leather Wash	17
Bug Remover	17

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KITCHEN

Spray Disinfectant Cleaner

- *½ cup borax*
- *1 gallon hot water*

Dissolve borax in hot water. Wipe down areas to be disinfected.

Abrasive Cleaner

- *Baking soda or borax*
- *Juice from ½ lemon*

Sprinkle baking soda or borax, add lemon juice and scrub.

Brass/Copper Tarnish Remover

- *1 part salt*
- *1 part flour*
- *1 part white vinegar*

Mix together equal parts salt and flour, then add white vinegar to make a paste. Rub into the stain. Repeat if necessary.

Metal Cleaner

- *Juice from 2 lemons*
- *1/3 cup baking soda*
- *1 teaspoon fine salt*
- *6 tablespoons clay powder*

Mix all ingredients together until pasty. Add water or more clay if needed. Rub paste onto metal with extremely fine steel wool and allow to sit for fifteen minutes. Wash off with a sponge and clear water. Polish metal with a soft cloth. Do not use on aluminum.

Silver Polish

Rub with paste of *baking soda* and *water*.

Glassware/Crystal Spot Removal

Dip spotted glassware into *water* to which a splash of *vinegar* has been added, dry with lint-free dishcloth.

Dishwasher Detergent

- 2 tablespoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons borax

Mix baking soda and borax and put mixture in dishwasher.

Window Cleaner

Option 1:

- Juice from one lemon
- 2 cups water or club soda
- ½ teaspoon peppermint essential oil (optional)
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch

Mix all ingredients and pour into plastic spray bottle. Shake well.

Option 2:

- 8 parts water
- 1 part vinegar

Mix ingredients, scrub and wipe with newspaper.

Drain Cleaner/Opener

- ¼ cup vinegar
- ¼ cup baking soda

Mix ingredients and pour mixture down drain. Let stand for a few minutes and rinse with boiling water.

Oven Cleaner

- 1 part Castile soap
- 1 part Borax
- 1 part Water

Mix ingredients. Apply mixture, let set for 20 minutes. Scrub with mixture of *baking soda* and *salt*.

BATHROOM

Bathtub/Sink Stains

Scrub with paste made from *cream of tartar* and *hydrogen peroxide*.

Soap Film on Fiberglass Surface

Apply *baking soda* with damp cloth, rub and rinse off residue well.

Soap Film/Mildew on Shower Curtains

Pour full-strength *white vinegar* on the shower curtain to remove soap film and mildew.

Shower-Door Track Cleaning

Pour full-strength *white vinegar* into the track, let soak for a few minutes, rinse.

Toilet Lime Deposit Removal

Pour full strength *white vinegar* in the bowl, let sit for several hours. Scrub with sturdy brush.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

- ½ teaspoon sodium lauryl sulfate
- 2 tablespoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 teaspoon orange essential oil or 1 teaspoon grapefruit essential oil (optional)
- 2 cups water

Mix all ingredients. Vinegar and baking soda will foam when mixed. Let mixture stand for 10 minutes before pouring into a spray bottle.

FURNITURE POLISH

Lemon Scented Polish

- 1 teaspoon lemon oil
- 2 cups mineral oil

Mix and apply with soft cloth.

Dark Wood Polish

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- Juice from one lemon
- 1 teaspoon brandy or whiskey
- 1 teaspoon water

Mix and apply with soft cloth. Must be made fresh each time.

Unscented Polish

- 3 parts olive oil
- 1 part vinegar

Mix and apply with soft cloth.

Oak Furniture Polish

- 1 quart of beer
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons beeswax

Boil beer with sugar and beeswax. When cool, wipe mixture on wood, allow to dry and polish with soft cloth.

Heat Blemish/Scratch Remover

Rub in *mayonnaise* and wipe off. Buff with clean cloth.

Water Spot Treatment Polish

- Toothpaste (not gel)
- Baking soda
- Pecan

Apply equal parts toothpaste and baking soda with a soft, damp cloth. Rinse out the cloth and wipe off any residue. When the finish is smooth, buff with a clean soft cloth. Restore color and shine by rubbing the spot with the meat of half a pecan, then buff.

PAINTS/REMOVERS

Enamel Paint Drips/Spill Remover

Wipe up spills and drips with a soft wet towel lathered with *pumice soap* (the sooner the better).

Removing Paint from Skin

Rub with *mineral oil*. Wash with soap and water.

Arts and Crafts Paint

- ½ cup cornstarch
- 2 cups cold water
- Food coloring

Mix cornstarch and water in a saucepan. Bring the mixture to boil and continue to boil until it thickens. Let cool slightly. Pour into jars and color each with food coloring.

SPOT REMOVERS

All-purpose Spot Remover

- *¼ cup borax*
- *2 cups cold water*

Dissolve borax in cold water. Sponge it on and let it sit until dry. Wash with soap and water to completely remove spot. Works well on blood, chocolate, coffee, mildew, mud and urine.

Club Soda

Pour *club soda* on fresh spots and stains to remove wine and foods from clothing, carpets and linens.

Ink Spot Remover

- *Cream of tartar*
- *Lemon juice*
- *Warm water*

Put cream of tartar on the stain and squeeze a few drops of lemon juice on top. Rub into the stain for a minute, brush off the powder with a clean brush and sponge immediately with warm water. Repeat if needed.

PETS

Pet Stains

Soak stained area in *warm soapy water*. Sponge with equal parts of *water* and *white vinegar*. Blot dry.

Dog House Flea Repellent

Wash dog houses with *salt water*. Scatter *fresh pine needles* or *cedar shavings* under your pet's sleeping pad. Keep bedding clean.

PEST REPELLANT

Mouse Repellent

Stuff all cracks around gas and water pipes with *steel wool* to keep mice out.

Ant Repellent

Sprinkle *red chili powder*, *cream of tartar powder*, *salt* or *sage* near ant infestations.

Roach Repellent

Place *bay leaves* in cracks around room.

Insecticide

Mix *dishwashing liquid* and *water*, spray infected area.

Moth Ball Alternative

Place *cedar chips* or *cedar blocks* in desired area.

Anti-Insect Air Spritzer

- *2 cups vodka*
- *1 tablespoon citronella essential oil*
- *1 tablespoon eucalyptus essential oil*
- *1 teaspoon geranium essential oil*
- *1 teaspoon rosemary essential oil*
- *1 teaspoon orange essential oil*
- *1 teaspoon lemon essential oil*

Mix all ingredients and shake well. Mist into air to keep bugs away.

Bug Repellant, Body

- 2 tablespoons citronella essential oil
- 2 tablespoons rosemary essential oil
- 2 tablespoons geranium essential oil
- 2 tablespoons eucalyptus essential oil
- ½ cup olive oil

Mix all oils together. Dab on clothing and skin. Avoid eyes and mouth.

GARDEN

Chili-Vinegar Spray for Fruit Trees

- 4 jalapenos, habaneros or other hot chili peppers, seeded and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1½ quarts water
- 2 oz. Beer
- ½ cup vinegar

Mix chopped chili peppers, garlic, water and beer. Cover and bring to a boil for 5 minutes, then let the mixture steep in the pot for 24 hours. Add the vinegar, strain well and pour into a sprayer. Spray leaves (but not blossoms). Will help keep birds away.

Aphids on Rose Bushes

Mulch *banana peels* into the soil at the base of the rose bushes. This will strengthen them and ward off disease-bearing aphids.

Cucumber Beetles

Make beetle traps from *open cans* or *milk cartons* baited with *melon* or other garden targets. Place the traps around the garden and check them early in the morning and discard.

Earwig Repellant

Option 1:

Make rolls out of *newspaper*, soak them in *water* then set them out overnight. First thing in the morning, the rolls will be full of earwigs. Put the rolls in a tightly sealed bag and out with the trash. Keep at this for a while and you will be rid of your problem.

Option 2:

Fill old *tuna* or *pet food cans* with ½ inch of vegetable oil; place several cans around the infested area. When full, dump bodies in trash and refill with oil.

Fungus and Mildew (“Garlic Tea”)

- 1 bulb of garlic (about 20 cloves), chopped
- 1 quart of hot water

Place chopped garlic in water and let steep for at least 24 hours. Strain and spray on plants to eliminate fungus and mildew.

Pest Spray

- 1 cup grated castile soap
- 1 cup coarsely chopped tobacco leaves, fresh or cured
- 3 cups boiling water, divided
- 1 entire bulb garlic, peeled and crushed or chopped
- 1 cup of chopped fresh tansy (optional)

In a bowl, dissolve soap in 1 cup boiling water and set aside. In a blender, pour remainder of boiling water over tobacco leaves and let set for ten minutes or so. Add garlic and tansy (if available) and whirl until smooth. Strain through cheesecloth and discard solid materials. Add herbal liquid soap to mixture and stir; pour into a spray bottle. To use, spray the herbal liquid on insects and their environments at early morning and dusk for three days in a row. Because this mix drives most bugs away, but does not kill them, apply as needed.

Deer Repellant for Fruit Trees

To repel deer, roll several pounds of *soft, scented herbal soap* into balls. Tie the balls into small bundles, using cloth or net and string. Hang several bundles from each fruit tree. The deer won't come near the trees. As a bonus, rain will eventually melt the soap bundles and lend a bit of alkalinity to the soil below.

Snail Repellants

Bury a small bowl or can flush with the ground and fill it with *beer* to attract and trap snails.

Fertilize Naturally

Use *compost* to return needed bacteria, enzymes and nutrients to the soil. Include clover or other nitrogen fixing plants in the lawn to make it self-fertilizing.

Dry Out Lawn Fungus

Dethatch; add soil bacteria and re-seed. Fungus grows only in wet, thatchy, over-fertilized lawns.

Beneficial Bugs

Ladybugs (Ladybird beetles) – eat aphids and eggs of the Colorado Potato Beetle and Psyllids.

Green lacewings – eat aphids, mites, mealybugs and other small insects.

Ground beetles (Carabid beetles) – eat cutworms, grubs, root maggots and other soft-bodied pests.

Parasitic wasps – kill whiteflies, moths and Mexican bean beetles.

Beneficial Plants

Basil – plant with tomato plants, it helps control tomato hornworms.

Thyme – plant with cabbage, it helps control flea beetles, cabbage worm and white cabbage butterflies.

Marigold – plant in vegetable gardens, it produces a scent that repels many garden pests.

Mint – repels mosquitoes and produces an odor that aphids and cabbage pests dislike.

Garlic – when planted close to roses, it can protect bushes from a fungal disease called black spot; can be grown in rings around a crop to repel aphids; can eliminate fungus and mildew when "garlic tea" (see above) is sprayed on plants

BEAUTY PRODUCTS

Hair Dye Alternatives

Lighten hair:

- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 gallon warm water

Rinse hair with mixture.

Red tones:

Rinse with strong tea of *rosehips* or *cloves*, or use *strong black coffee*.

Cover gray:

- *½ cup dried sage*
- *2 cups water*

Boil sage for thirty minutes, then steep for several hours. Apply tea to hair after it cools. Allow to dry, then rinse and dry hair again. Apply weekly until you have the shade you want and then monthly to maintain color.

Darken hair:

Rinse hair with a *strong black tea* or *black coffee*.

Hair Shampoo Alternatives

Everyday shampoo:

- *Castile bar soap*
- *Water*
- *¼ cup olive oil, almond oil or avocado oil*
- *½ cup distilled water*

Grate castile bar soap and mix it with water in a blender or food processor. Blend 1 cup of castile liquid with distilled water and olive oil, avocado or almond oil.

Dandruff remedy:

Wet hair and rub in a handful of dry *baking soda*, then rinse.

Hair Spray

- *1 chopped lemon (or 1 orange for dry hair)*
- *2 cups pure hot water*
- *1 ounce vodka*

Place lemon and hot water in a pot, and boil until only half remains. Cool and strain. Place in a fine spray bottle and test on hair. If too sticky, add more water. Store in the refrigerator, or add 1 ounce vodka per cup of hair spray as a preservative (with vodka, hair spray may be stored unrefrigerated for up to two weeks).

Jewelry Cleaning

Rub a small amount of *toothpaste* on jewelry with finger, rinse well and polish with a soft cloth.

Skin Freshener/Soother

Add *pulp-free aloe vera juice* to *water* in a spray bottle and spritz arms, legs, back and face.

Skin Astringents

Option 1:

- *Lettuce leaves*
- *Water*

Boil green lettuce leaves for 10 minutes in enough water to cover. Let cool and strain.

Option 2:

- *Vodka*
- *Strong chamomile or mint tea*

Mix 1 part vodka with 9 parts strong chamomile or mint tea.

Option 3:

- *2/3 cup pure water*
- *2 tablespoons vodka*
- *¾ cup borax*

Combine ingredients in a blender until borax is dissolved.

Option 4:

- *¼ cup lemon juice*
- *¼ cup lime juice*
- *¼ cup pure water*
- *1/8 cup vodka*

Blend ingredients. Strain to remove pulp.

Deodorant

Pat *baking soda* under arms after showering. Skin should be slightly damp, but not wet. If too abrasive, mix with *cornstarch* or *white clay*.

Talcum Powder

Use *cornstarch*, *rice starch* or *oat flour* on skin.

MISCELLANEOUS HOME MAINTENANCE

Homemade Glues

Option 1:

- 6 tablespoons gum arabic
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons natural glycerin

Dissolve gum arabic in water, add glycerin, and mix well. Apply to both surfaces with a toothpick or tongue depressor. Hold together for 5 minutes. Make fresh batch each time.

Option 2:

- 4 tablespoons wheat flour
- 6 tablespoons cold water
- 1 ½ cups boiling water

Blend flour into enough cold water to make a smooth paste. Boil water and stir into flour mixture until mixture is translucent. Use when cold.

Option 3:

- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 4 tablespoons cold water
- 2 cups boiling water

Blend cornstarch and cold water to make a smooth paste. Stir paste into boiling water, continue to stir until mixture becomes translucent. Use when cold.

Bleach

Use *vinegar* or *baking soda* as a substitute.

Air Freshener

Set *potpourri* or *fresh oranges* with *cloves* in a dish.

Car Wash Soap

- 3 cups grated castile soap
- ½ cup sodium lauryl sulfate
- 3 cups boiling water
- 1 tablespoon borax
- 1 tablespoon balsam fir essential oil (optional)

Dissolve castile soap and sodium lauryl sulfate in boiling water; add borax and essential oil and mix well.

Upholstery Cleaner and Rug Shampoo

- 4 cups water
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 3 tablespoons sodium lauryl sulfate
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon lavender essential oil (optional)
- 1/8 teaspoon ginger essential oil (optional)

Mix all ingredients together and fill a handheld rug/upholstery shampoo bottle half full. Shake the bottle vigorously and shampoo furniture using small circular motions. Scrub sudsy area well.

Laundry Soap

- ¼ cup clay powder
- 2-3 tablespoons essential oil of choice (optional)
- 13 cups borax
- 12 cups baking soda
- 4 cups sodium lauryl sulfate

Mix clay powder and essential oil. Add remaining ingredients and mix well in a 2-3 gallon pail. Use 1/8 cup of laundry powder per load.

Spray Starch

- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 pint cold water

Dissolve cornstarch in cold water. Pour mixture into a spray bottle and squirt to apply (shake before each use).

Carpet Deodorizer

- Baking soda

Sprinkle baking soda liberally on area for treatment. Wait fifteen minutes or longer, then vacuum. Repeat if necessary. Carpet should be completely dry before application.

Please note: several pounds of baking soda are needed for a nine-by-twelve-foot room.

Removing Grease Spots from Walls

Make a paste of *baking soda* and *water*. Apply thick paste to the grease stain and let it dry. Brush the residue off with a soft brush or cloth.

AUTOMOTIVE CARE

Windshield Cleaner

- Club soda

Spray on the windshield and wipe dry. Not recommended for use in the vehicle's windshield-spray reservoir because it could freeze.

Battery Cleaner (Removes built-up battery acid)

- Baking soda
- Water

Sprinkle baking soda onto battery terminals. Spritz with water to dampen. Let set for about one hour. While wearing protective gloves, sponge off with water. Air dry.

Cleaning Polish (shiny, protective finish similar to wax)

- ½ cup flakes of grated hand soap
- ½ cup water
- ½ ounce beeswax
- ½ cup jojoba oil

Mix soap flakes and water in a bowl or jar and allow the soap to dissolve overnight. Combine the beeswax and jojoba oil in a double boiler over medium heat until the wax is melted. Remove from the heat and add the soapy water. Mix with an electric hand mixer until creamy. Dab some onto a soft cloth, then buff to a shine with a soft cloth. Excess polish can be stored in a container for future use.

Vinyl Smell Reducer and Natural Engine Degreaser

- ¼ cup washing soda
- 1 gallon warm water

Dissolve washing soda in warm water. Saturate a sponge with the mixture and wash the vinyl or pour on engine areas that need degreasing. Rinse thoroughly. Excess should not be stored -- discard all leftovers.

Leather Wash

- ¼ cup vodka
- ¼ cup distilled vinegar
- 3-4 drops of jojoba or olive oil

Combine all ingredients in container. Shake to blend. Pour mixture onto a soft rag and rub into leather. Do not rinse.

Bug Remover

- ½ cup baking soda
- Liquid soap

Combine baking soda with enough liquid soap to make a paste. Scoop the paste onto a sponge and scrub over splattered bugs until they are loosened. Rinse well. Safe to use on painted surfaces and chrome.



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