For the Garage

Antifreeze

Use less toxic propylene glycol-based antifreeze.

Household Batteries

Buy rechargeable batteries and charger or use solar powered substitutes. Recycle chargeable batteries instead of discarding.

Oil-Based Paints

Use less toxic latex paint. Or use solvent-free paint, when possible.

Paint Stripper

Look for less toxic paint removers such as Citristrip. Sand and scrape paint.

Paint Thinner

Let paint particles settle, then pour off clear liquid and reuse.

Varnishes and Stains

Look for less toxic water-based alternatives. Or use pure tung oil combined with pure linseed oil. Use shellac.

For the Garden

Bug Sprays/Insecticides

For gardens, use companion planting. Plant disease resistant seeds. Pour a line of cream of tartar, red chili pepper, paprika or dried peppermint where ants are entering the house.

Chemical Fertilizers

Use compost, blood or fish meal, wood ashes. Plant cover crop in winter such as annual rye.

Flea Killer

Use a flea comb. Vacuum often. Wash pet's bedding. Give pet brewers yeast, garlic tablets or Vitamin B as preventative measures.

Insect Repellant

Do not wear scented products outdoors. Burn citronella candles, punk, or incense. Alternative product—Bite Blocker.

Moth Balls

Use cedar chips or dried lavender sachets.

Weed Killer

Pull weeds. Mulch garden. Use intensive gardening techniques. Maintain a healthy lawn by adjusting the pH to 6.5, mowing high with a sharp blade, and watering deeply when the soil is too dry.

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Household Hazardous Waste

Don't Even Buy It – Use Safe Alternatives!

Key to Household Hazards and Alternative Products

AVCOG
WESTERN MAINE
Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
125 Manley Road, Auburn, ME 04210
207-783-9186 * Fax: 207-783-5211
Web Page: avcog.org
E-mail: jcummings@avcog.org

For the Home

Disinfectant and Mold Inhibitor

Place 1 teaspoon borax and 3 tablespoons white vinegar in spray bottle. Dissolve borax by pouring 2 cups hot water over it. Shake. Spray onto mold-growing areas. Leave without rinsing. Vinegar will evaporate.

Drain Opener

Use plunger or snake. Put 1/2 cup baking soda followed by 1/2 cup white vinegar or lemon juice down drain. Flush 15 minutes later with hot water. Or prevent clogs by pouring boiling water directly down drain weekly.

Floor Polish

Mop with 1 cup white vinegar mixed with 2 gallons of water to remove dull, greasy film.

Floor Wax Stripper

Four a small amount of club soda on a section of the floor. Scrub well, let soak for a few minutes, then wipe clean.

General Purpose Cleaner

1/4 cup borax, 1/4 cup white vinegar, 2 gallons hot water. Stir to dissolve. Use mop or sponge to clean. Alternative products - Murphy's Oil Soap or Citra-Solv.

Metal Cleaners

A dab of white toothpaste with water to make paste. Rub on metal with damp sponge. Rinse in hot water and buff dry with soft cloth.

Oven Cleaner

Sprinkle salt on spills while still warm. Scrub. Or mix 1 cup baking soda and 1 tablespoon salt with water to make a paste. Spread evenly over oven. Wait overnight. Soak steel wool in water and scrub. Alternative product - Citra-Solv.

Rug Cleaner

Sprinkle baking soda on rug then vacuum. Use club soda on stains. Alternative product - Heavenly Horsetail All Purpose Cleaner for steam cleaning.

Scouring Powder

1 cup baking soda mixed with 1/4 cup borax. Dampen sponge and scoop up mixture. Rub on surface. Let "rest" then rinse well. Alternative product—Bon Ami.

Spot Remover

Clean spill quickly. Use club soda for fruit juice, tea, gravy, ketchup, mud. Cold water immediately for blood. Lemon juice for ink, perspiration. Beaten egg whites for leather.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner

2-3 tablespoons cream of tartar sprinkled on area. Scrub and rinse. Or 1 cup borax and 1/4 cup vinegar or lemon juice poured into bowl. Let rest for a few hours, then scrub with brush. Flush.

Window Cleaner

Use 1/8 cup white vinegar in 1 cup warm water. Use spray bottle. Dry with newspaper.