



2-2004

SP459-C Household Cleaning - Cleaning Supplies

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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Recommended Citation

"SP459-C Household Cleaning - Cleaning Supplies," The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service, 04-0236 SP459C 02/04 E12-5315, http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_agexhome/6

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Household Cleaning

Cleaning Supplies

Why a Clean House?

- A clean house means fewer health problems and accidents for you and your family members.
- A clean home is more pleasant.

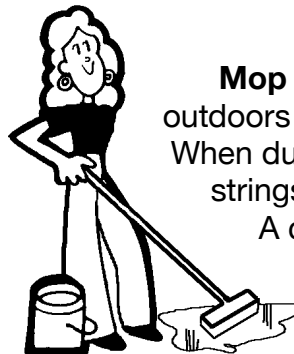
Why Do I Need More Than One Cleaning Product?

- The right product will do a better job, save time, cost less and avoid frustrations and disappointments.
- Different surfaces may require different cleaning products, tools and methods.

Let's see what we have —

Cleaning Tools

Broom. For better service, a broom should never stand on its bristles. If yours doesn't have a ring for hanging, put a screw eye in the end, or bore a hole through the top of the handle and knot a string through it. Occasionally, wash the bristles with sudsy water, rinse with clean water and let it dry thoroughly.



Mop (dry). Give it a good shake outdoors or inside a big paper bag. When dust clings tenaciously to the strings, the mop needs a bath.

A cotton yarn mop should be soaked overnight in water with soap or detergent. Remove hairs and lint.

Rinse thoroughly, squeeze out excess water, shake and hang it to dry, preferably outdoors.

Mop (wet). A mop used with cleaning compounds (soaps and detergents) usually needs only to be rinsed thoroughly after each use. Squeeze the water out and gently separate the strands. Hang it to dry. Press sponge mops as dry as possible and hang them in the shade. **Mops should never be stored wet.**

Cellulose sponges. They should be soaked carefully before using, because they are brittle when dry. Don't use strong bleaches, or strong solutions to soak them. Rinse after each use. They can be bleached in a mild solution of household bleach, if necessary, but don't soak them for a long period of time. Rinse carefully afterward.

Foam rubber sponges. These should be washed in warm mild suds and rinsed carefully. Store them in a cool dry place. **Grease, oils, acids and gasoline are all damaging to sponges.**

Dustcloth. Occasionally, clean it by using hot water with suds. Rinse it thoroughly and hang it to dry outdoors, if possible. Do not use an oiled duster on a waxed surface.

Dish towels. Wash them daily or dry them thoroughly before putting them with the dirty clothes. They will mildew if tossed, damp, into the clothes hamper. Use hot suds and mild bleach if needed.

Dishcloths. Soak them in hot sudsy water after each use. Rinse thoroughly with clean water, squeeze out water, hang them up and let dry.

Household Cleaners

All purpose cleaners. Designed to clean large washable surfaces (such as floors, countertops, walls, etc.) where the dirt or grease is even. They come granulated or in liquid form. You can use them full strength or mixed with water. Granules can be sprinkled onto a damp sponge or on the surface to be cleaned. When diluted in water, they require no rinsing.

Bleaches. Used to whiten materials, as a disinfectant and to remove certain stains. They are available in liquid and in granular forms.

Chlorine Bleaches. Remove stains from bathtubs, sinks, tiles and woodwork. Also can be used as a toilet bowl cleaner. After washing, wipe the stain with a mix of 1 quart of water with 4 tablespoons of bleach. Keep it wet for 5 minutes with this solution. If the stain doesn't disappear, repeat.

Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other toilet bowl cleaner.

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Disinfectant. Designed to clean and kill germs on hard surfaces in the home. Used full strength as a disinfectant. Solutions of ammonium compounds are highly effective. They can be used to treat dishes, utensils and areas such as floors. Examples are chlorine bleaches, pine solutions and other products labeled as disinfectants.

Ammonium. Helps remove grease and dirt from surfaces such as ovens, tiles, windows and mirrors. A small amount of household ammonium added to washing or rinse water will help make glassware sparkle and makes many household tasks easier. Remember that it tends to bleach slightly, so don't use too much.

Oven Cleaners. Designed to help remove charred grease and other things deposited on oven walls. The available forms are liquid, sponge and spray. Most oven cleaners are designed to work in cold ovens; others require oven heat for soil removal. Wear rubber gloves while using these products. After applying, close the oven door. Allow the cleaner to work 20 minutes or longer, then wipe clean with cloth or sponge, rinsing frequently. Wipe oven spills after each use. Wipe away grease with a non-metallic bristle brush. If the oven is wiped after each use, there will not be a need to use harsh chemicals for cleaning. **Follow manufacturers instructions carefully.**

Baking Soda. Aids in the removal of burned-on soils on cookware, microwaves, food containers, tiles, tubs, etc. It also absorbs odors that can develop inside your refrigerator. Just place an open box of baking soda inside the refrigerator. For household cleaning, apply to damp sponge, wipe and rinse. To deodorize, sprinkle right from box.

Keep all cleaning products away from young children.

This factsheet was originally developed by Nayda I. Torres, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Economics, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. The material has been adapted for use in Tennessee by Martha Keel, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences – Housing and Environmental Health.