

## **Ripple Effect #45**

### **Source Reduction Alternatives Around the House**

With Earth Day just around the corner on April 22, citizens may be looking for simple things they can do to help protect the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency has some tips for consumers looking for ways to reduce the amount and toxicity of waste around the house. This can be done, in some cases, by using alternative methods or products without hazardous constituents to accomplish a certain task.

Below are just a few ideas to get you started. Although the suggested mixtures have less hazardous ingredients than many commercial cleaners and pesticides, they should be used and stored with similar caution. Please follow these guidelines for any household cleaner or pesticide.

#### **Household Cleaner**

#### **Alternative**

##### **Drain cleaner**

Use a plunger or plumber's snake.

##### **Oven cleaner**

Clean spills as soon as the oven cools using steel wool and baking soda; for tough stains, add salt (do not use this method in self-cleaning or continuous-cleaning ovens).

##### **Glass cleaner**

Mix 1 tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice in 1 quart of water. Spray on and use newspaper to wipe dry.

##### **Toilet bowl cleaner**

Use a toilet brush and baking soda or vinegar. (This will clean but not disinfect.)

##### **Furniture polish**

Mix 1 teaspoon of lemon juice in 1 pint of mineral or vegetable oil, and wipe furniture.

##### **Rug deodorizer**

Deodorize dry carpets by sprinkling liberally with baking soda. Wait at least 15 minutes and vacuum. Repeat if necessary.

##### **Silver polish**

Boil 2 to 3 inches of water in a shallow pan with 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 teaspoon of baking soda, and a sheet of aluminum foil. Totally submerge silver and boil for 2 to 3 more minutes. Wipe away tarnish. Repeat if necessary. (Do not use this method on antique silver knives. The blade will separate from the handle.) Another

	alternative is to use nonabrasive toothpaste.
<b>Plant sprays</b>	Wipe leaves with mild soap and water; rinse.
<b>Mothballs</b>	Use cedar chips, lavender flowers, rosemary, mint, or white peppercorns.
<b>Flea and tick products</b>	Put brewer's yeast or garlic in your pet's food; sprinkle fennel, rue, rosemary, or eucalyptus seeds or leaves around animal sleeping areas.

DO NOT mix anything with a commercial cleaning agent.

If you do store a homemade mixture, make sure it is properly labeled and do not store it in a container that could be mistaken for food or beverage.

When preparing alternatives, mix only what is needed for the job at hand and mix them in clean, reusable containers. This avoids waste and the need to store any cleaning mixture.

By using just a couple of these tips, you can begin protecting our natural resources. For more earth-saving tips, go to [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at [www.redriverbasincommission.org](http://www.redriverbasincommission.org).



