



WOMEN'S VOICES  
FOR THE EARTH  
OUR HEALTH. OUR FUTURE. TOXIC FREE.

# What's that Smell?

ALTERNATIVES TO FRAGRANCED  
CLEANING PRODUCTS



Common ingredients in fragrance, such as phthalates, synthetic musks, and allergens, have been linked to health impacts ranging from eye and skin irritation to hormone disruption, increased risk of breast cancer, and reproductive and developmental harm. If you choose to avoid fragranced products from the store, there are alternatives to ensuring a pleasant-smelling home.

## Tips for reducing odors around the home

<b>GENERAL</b>	Open a window or turn on a fan and let in some fresh air! Good ventilation is one of the best ways to remove odors from your home. It can also help reduce levels of indoor air pollutants that commonly build up in our homes.
<b>BATHROOM</b>	Open the window in the bathroom to decrease humidity after a shower, reducing the potential for growth of mildew and mold.
	Keep it clean! Even just a regular swish of your toilet with a brush can prevent toilet rings and reduce odors.
<b>KITCHEN</b>	Put an open box of baking soda in the fridge.
	Sprinkle baking soda or coffee grounds in your trash can to mask odors.
	Ground up a half lemon (you can use one you've just squeezed for juice) in your sink garbage disposal for a fresh lemon scent.

## Replacing air fresheners

If you want to add a particular scent to your home, here are some natural alternatives:

<b>FRESH OR DRIED FLOWERS</b>	Setting out a fresh bouquet of flowers is not only pretty, but can add a lovely floral scent to your home. A bowl of dried flowers (potpourri) can have a similar effect – and lasts even longer.
<b>COOKING UP SOME HERBS OR SPICES ON THE STOVE</b>	Adding spices like cinnamon, vanilla, or even cut-up fruit like lemon or apple to a pot of boiling water and letting it simmer on the stove can infuse a scent throughout your home. Seasonal alternatives can also include flower petals, pinecones or pine needles.

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## Unscented alternatives to store-bought scented cleaning products

<b>ALL PURPOSE CLEANER</b>	Mix 1 part white distilled vinegar and 1 part water in a spray bottle.
<b>SOFT SCRUB CLEANSER</b>	Mix 2 cups baking soda, ½ cup liquid castile soap, and 4 teaspoons vegetable glycerin in a sealed glass jar.
<b>CARPET DEODORIZER</b>	Sprinkle baking soda on carpet. Let sit for an hour or overnight. Vacuum it up.
<b>LAUNDRY DETERGENT</b>	Mix 1 cup soap flakes (just finely grate a bar of unscented soap), ½ cup baking soda and ½ cup washing soda. Use just 1-2 tbsp. per load.
<b>FABRIC SOFTENER</b>	Add ½ cup white distilled vinegar to rinse cycle of your washer.
	Use wool dryer balls in your dryer to fluff up clothes and absorb static.
<b>DRYER SHEETS</b>	Hang your laundry out to dry in nice weather instead of using your dryer, for fresh smelling clothes and sheets. (You can also save loads on your electricity bill!)

### Note on essential oils

Essential oils are liquids formed from the distillation of the leaves, stems, or flowers of a plant. They are very concentrated liquids, so a little (even just a few drops) goes a long way. They can be used to add a scent to the recipes and alternatives listed above. In addition, some essential oils have natural anti-bacterial properties and can be used as a preservative. They are commonly available in health food stores, and are sold online. With certain scents, there may be a concern for overharvesting sensitive or rare plants, so you want to look for essential oils marketed as “sustainably harvested.”

**WARNING:** It should be noted that some people can be highly sensitive to essential oils, leading to symptoms such as headaches, asthma exacerbation, skin irritation or other health effects. Essential oils, in their concentrated form, should be used with caution to avoid unintended health impacts. It is strongly recommended to dilute essential oils

in water or another substance when you use them. Undiluted essential oils will evaporate, and can emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which can interact with other compounds in the air to form hazardous air pollutants. More research is needed to assess the impacts of these emissions on human health.



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