

How eco-friendly are homemade cleaning products, really?

 By [Clinton Smith](#)

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It is that time of year when New Year's resolutions abound, the gyms are full and everyone has committed to living a cleaner, greener and smarter lifestyle. Yet, while many believe that do-it-yourself cleaning products are safer for their users and the environment, because they do not contain chemicals, recent research has indicated that this may not be the case.



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For many years, healthier alternatives to chemical cleaners have been sought. Proponents of homemade cleaning products often promote the use of vinegar instead of traditional cleaning products, for example. But what is the true effect on the ecosystem, the water tables that the vinegar seeps into and the environment as a whole?

International cleaning hub Cleaning Business Today (CBT) confirms that pantry item cleaning products do not disinfect, referring to this claim as a myth. CBT confirms that, while many acids, bases and oils kill organisms, none have been proven to disinfect a specific group of harmful bacteria, mould or fungi. To make these products truly effective in disinfecting or sterilising an environment, particular tests will need to be undertaken to determine the dilution ratio, application methods, the time to leave the 'product' on the area being cleaned and how the product should be removed - perhaps with all of this information, true disinfection can be achieved.

Vinegar

For some years, a debate has raged on about whether or not vinegar is actually environmentally friendly.

On one hand, advocates for its use believe that it is a natural product, the result of vegetative fermentation, therefore returning it to nature by using it as a cleaning product (entering water systems, etc.) should not pose a problem. On the other hand, there are those that are adamant that this biodegradable and non-toxic product should not be used to clean a house or office.

Those that stand on the latter side of the argument do so due to the fact that off-the-shelf vinegar contains petrochemicals, having been processed synthetically. While pure, naturally formed vinegar may not damage the environment, petrochemicals certainly do, damaging the ecosystem, contributing to smog and air pollution and creating large amounts of greenhouse gases.

When choosing a cleaning product - whether for home, office, industrial, academic, health or hospitality use - all the relevant factors should be taken into account; from human health, to cleaning efficacy, cost, concentration and the effect on the environment. Using a product that gives a positive answer to all of these factors will ensure that truly greener, cleaner, smarter cleaning and sanitation is achieved.

ABOUT CLINTON SMITH

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