



Spring clean, **GREEN** clean

By Amanda N. Wegner

It's that most wonderful time of the year again — spring cleaning. So crack the windows, pull out all the caustic, stink y cleaners and...

Stop! Save your health and the environment by cleaning (and or ganizing) it green this spring.

Not just for Mother Earth

There are plenty of green and eco-friendly cleaners on the market (as well as some that are marginally green), but some local cleaning companies have eschewed name-brand cleaners for variations made from household staples such as vinegar, borax and plain old soap.

Kris Koenig, CEO of **Natura Clean**, makes all her cleaners from scratch, using

those household staples. Because “ingredient labels” aren't legally required for cleaning products, it's impossible to know what you're really putting on your countertops, floors and sinks, says Koenig. And many of those undisclosed ingredients are dangerous.

Don't believe it? A few years ago, the non-profit Environmental Working Group found that adults have, on average, over 95 chemicals in their bloodstream; infants are born with over 150, and many are known carcinogens and neurotoxins.

“[Green cleaning products] might take more elbow grease, but isn't your health worth it?” asks Koenig, whose company offers residential and commercial cleaning.

Samantha Rayas, owner of **Green Cleaners**, echoes that sentiment. “It is important to use green cleaning for your overall health. You will suffer less headaches (sic) and nausea from harsh chemicals, which you may have not even realized was the cause [in the first place].”

Rayas started her company in January 2008 and uses a combination of self-made cleaners with eco-friendly products available in stores, such as Whole Foods, in her residential, commercial and post-construction cleaning business. Rayas notes that employees

enjoy work more because they aren't inhaling toxic fumes and “even the customers who did not stress the importance of green cleaning notice the difference in their health from better-smelling, less-harmful cleaning products.”

So skip the lemony fresh smell this spring-cleaning season.

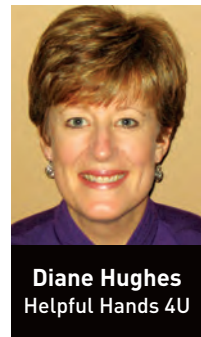
Sustainably organized

Spring cleaning also involves clearing clutter and reorganizing your spaces. And this spring, **Diane Hughes**, owner of **Helpful Hands 4U**, encourages you to organize it green.

In addition to the 3Rs, add “rehome” and “repurpose.”

A professional organizer, as part of her services Hughes does the legwork to keep as much stuff as possible from going into landfills by making trips to St. Vincent's, Half Price Books and similar places.

When going through your drawers and



Diane Hughes
Helpful Hands 4U

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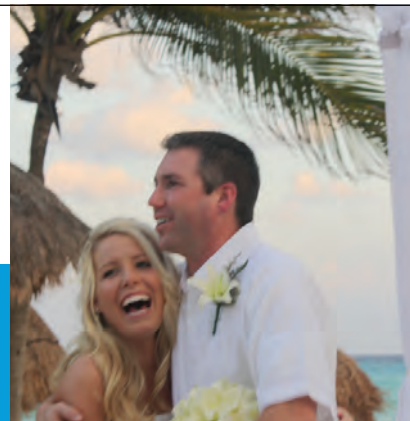
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closets this spring, Hughes suggests sorting first, organizing second.

“Oftentimes, people want to try organizing before they’ve sorted through everything. They want to go out and buy containers,” says Hughes. “But wait until you’ve sorted things to know what you have and then try to repurpose what you have without going out consuming, buying more.”

And once your home is clean, sorted and organized, start “precycling,” says Hughes.

“Think about the life cycle of things. Do you really need it? Do you have something else that will work just the same? It’s been so easy for so many years to just go get something new, but with the economic times, we need to slow that down and work with what we have.”

Amanda N. Wegner’s husband used to love conventional cleaning products and “buying crap” they didn’t need. She has successfully broken him of the first and is hard at work on the second.

Green recipe

Alice’s Wonder Spray All-Purpose Household Cleaner

To make: In a 16-ounce spray bottle, mix 2Tbsp. vinegar with 1 tsp. borax. Fill the rest of the bottle with very hot water, preferably purified or distilled. Shake until the borax is dissolved. Add 1/4 cup liquid soap or 1/8 cup liquid detergent. To scent, add 10 to 15 drops of an essential oil, such as lavender or lemon. (It’s important to follow this order so the ingredients don’t clump.)

To use: Spray and wipe. Use like any other all-purpose household cleaner.

From *Clean House, Clean Planet* by Karen Logan



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