

Vinegar

*An earth friendly alternative
to many chemicals*



You can reduce the number of environmentally harsh and toxic chemicals used around your home by replacing them with more earth friendly, cheap and common substances such as vinegar. Here's 22 handy vinegar tips to get you started.

A brief background on vinegar

Vinegar has been in use by humans for thousands of years; dating back to ancient Egypt. It was likely discovered by accident when wine went sour when left for too long.

Vinegar is created by the oxidizing of alcohol in products such as wine or beer or any other fermented liquid. The active component of vinegar that makes it so useful is acetic acid; which is a byproduct of a bacteria called acetobacter. Spores of this bacteria float freely in our atmosphere, although commercial production of vinegar employs the use of cultured acetobacter in controlled conditions to make a consistent product.

Most table vinegars contain around 5 percent acetic acid. The most common types are White (usually made from corn) Malt (barley), Red Wine, white wine and apple cider vinegar. Of these, probably the most versatile for non-consumption purposes is White vinegar.

White vinegar is incredibly cheap, particularly when bought in bulk (under a dollar per litre or quart) and has a long shelf life. If a scum should form in it, this substance is known as the "mother" and can be utilized as a starter culture for creating vinegar faster from opened bottles of wine that you might otherwise discard.

Vinegar is also suitable for using in conjunction with blackwater systems - just don't go overboard with it; otherwise you it may have an impact on the useful bacteria colonies in the system.

Important note: it appears that some brands of white vinegar may be derived from petroleum (crude oil) and fossil fuel products. Synthetic ethyl alcohol can be created from the liquefaction of coal or the hydration of ethylene. Ethylene is produced in the petrochemical industry. It's important to check the label or with the manufacturer to ensure that the brand you buy doesn't. It was rather unsettling to discover that this is yet another food additive with a direct connection to crude oil and fossil fuels.

Handy vinegar tips

- To remove calcium buildup on kettles and electric jugs, boil the kettle with half a cup of white vinegar and leave to soak for a while. Rinse with fresh water, reboil with same and your kettle should now be calcium deposit free.
- Place a small container of vinegar in your toilet and bathroom to eliminate odors.
- A half cup of vinegar added to a toilet bowl left overnight removes bowl odor. The smell of the vinegar will also dissipate overnight.
- A cotton ball soaked in vinegar and applied to bruises for an hour is said to speed up the healing process.
- Vinegar on minor burns and many sorts of stings can alleviate pain.
- For cleaning your dishwasher, vinegar frozen into ice cubes, then a couple added to the bottom of the dishwasher just prior to a cycle is an effective alternative to using heavy chemical cleaners.

- Old, stiff paintbrushes can be revived by dipping them into heated white vinegar for a couple of hours, followed by a rinse in soapy water. Beats using turpentine!
- Vinegar can be used as a nappy soak; simply add half a cup of white vinegar to the water in the nappy bucket
- Use it as a broad leaf weed killer - spray it neat onto the leaves of weeds, being careful to avoid plants you wish to keep. A mix of vinegar and salt can be used to keep weeds and grass out of driveway cement joints.
- Vinegar can be used as a benchtop disinfectant; but it's a good idea to wipe over at night in order that the smell dissipates.
- For pet owners, white vinegar poured onto pet urine mishaps on carpets, then blotted up with paper towel will prevent staining and odor.
- Save money on washing pre-spray by spraying neat vinegar on deodorant and other stains on garments just prior to washing.
- Spray a 50/50 mix of vinegar and water onto soap scum on shower screens, leave sit then wipe or rinse off.
- Neat vinegar sprayed onto mould affected bathroom/shower tiles will kill the mould.
- Vinegar can be used as a fabric softener by adding half the amount of vinegar as you would of your usual softening agent.
- I've seen many suggestions that a tablespoon of vinegar can be used as a replacement for hair conditioner.
- Vinegar can also be used as a glass cleaner either mixed with water or used neat in a spray bottle.
- Use full strength vinegar to polish chrome and stainless steel
- Use a 50/50 vinegar and water mix to clean your iron. Add the mixture to your iron and allow it steam itself clean

- Pour boiling white vinegar down a clogged drain to remove the obstruction
 - Used in an fine atomizer, vinegar is effective as room deodorizer
 - Ants hate vinegar; so spray it around doorways and other areas they frequent to repel them
- ... not to mention vinegar is great for chips and salad dressings :)

Michael Bloch [Green Living Tips.com](http://GreenLivingTips.com) Green Living Tips is an online resource powered by renewable energy offering a wide variety of earth friendly tips, green guides, advice and environment related news to help consumers and business reduce costs, consumption and environmental impact on the planet.