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Spring Cleaning -- Keep it Pure and Simple

(ARA) - The best part of spring cleaning is opening the doors and windows to welcome fresh air and sunshine. Why not add to that spring freshness with natural cleaners?

Taken from the flowers, bark, leaves, and other parts of plants, essential oils are as natural as fresh air and sunshine. Many have their own properties as disinfectants, grease cutters and deterrents to pests -- and they impart fresh and pleasing aromas that linger long after your chores are finished.

Natural cleaning products are increasingly available in stores, but you can also easily and economically make your own mixtures with just a few basic ingredients. Chances are some of these ingredients, such as baking soda, white vinegar and borax, are already in your cupboards. One hundred percent pure essential oils can be found at natural products stores or online at www.auracacia.com.

Homemade natural cleaning products are versatile; many can be used for a variety of tasks. Because essential oils are in a highly concentrated form, often only a few drops are needed for a solution that can take you through several cleaning cycles. Not only do you save money -- your homemade cleansers will work just as well as commercially produced cleaners without harming the environment.

"Choices abound," says Tom Havran, aromatherapy product developer. "From pine or lemon oil, whose essences suggest more traditional cleaning aromas, to tea tree and grapefruit, which people might not think of as cleaning ingredients."

Not sure which oil to start with? Here are some of Havran's suggestions:

- * Pine is inexpensive and clean smelling. It is effective as both a disinfectant and deodorizer.
- * Lavender has a pleasing scent, is anti-bacterial and deters insects such as moths.
- * Tea tree oil has a sharp, spicy scent and is a good disinfectant and deodorizer.
- * Lemon is fresh and clean smelling. It's also acidic, providing antibacterial and antiseptic cleaning properties.
- * Grapefruit has a clean and uplifting aroma that eliminates odors -- even strong pet odors.

Making your own cleaning products with essential oils can be as simple as mixing 15 to 20 drops of any essential oil into a cup of baking soda, letting the mixture stand overnight so the oil can be absorbed, and then sprinkling the powder on carpet before you vacuum.

You can also make a quick and easy disinfecting toilet bowl cleanser by combining one cup of water, one-quarter cup of liquid castile soap and 20 drops of white thyme, lavender or lemon essential oil in a 22-oz. spray bottle.

Spring is a time of renewal that offers a perfect opportunity to replace chemical cleansers with pure and natural essential oils. Your whole family, including your pets, will benefit.

For more spring-cleaning formulas you can make yourself with essential oils visit www.auracacia.com/springcleaning. While you're there, be sure to get more information about Aura Cacia's live web chats with host Tim Blakley, and download previous chats to learn more about using essential oils that benefit you and your family, naturally.

Courtesy of ARAcontent

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Making an effort to help save Mother Earth is a great way to get involved, but it shouldn't only be the focus one day a year. The need for environmentally conscious behavior is ever-present. The United States Environmental Protection Agency estimates that each individual generates approximately 1.5 tons of waste per year -- that breaks down to 4.5 pounds per person, per day! This means that one individual making the decision to be more environmentally conscious can have a huge impact.