

Recommended conduct to help lake conservation efforts

Bathroom and Kitchen Cleaners:

Ammonia: Fumes irritating & corrosive

- Damage to eyes, liver, kidneys, and lungs due to no ventilation or repeated exposure.

Bleach: Corrosive: Can cause severe skin & eye irritation

Bleach + Ammonia = toxic gas

Phenols: Found in spray, liquid, and wipe disinfectants

- Corrosive to eye, skin

Disinfecting: Soap & Hot Water with mechanical action works for most situations.

If need to disinfect: Use least toxic disinfectant

Do not use anti-bacterial soap as it destroys the good bacteria balance in the septic tank.

Laundry Room: Low phosphate product for both fabric softener and detergent. Downey is an example of a high phosphate fabric softener.

Shop/Garage:

PRODUCTS: Oil-based paints, Varnishes, Lacquers, Glues & adhesives, Degreasing/cleaning agents, Spot removers, Paint thinners and strippers

Purchase safer products: Read labels, Buy the least amount of product for the job, Avoid scented products, Avoid aerosols, Look at packaging

Look for products that are: Plant-based not petroleum-based, Concentrated, Pump-spray bottles, Packaged in recycled content containers

Proper Disposal: Do not throw it out or dump down drain! Give to someone who won't make the switch. Ask your retailer if they recycle or take back materials like used oil or paint. Check to see what your town accepts at the transfer station. Bring unwanted products to a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

Safer Alternatives:

- Antifreeze made with propylene glycol
- No or low -VOC (volatile organic chemicals) products – Check the label for this information – Avoid aerosols • Cedar blocks/chips instead of mothballs

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) • Vegetable or mineral oils for metal polish
- Sandpaper, a scraper or heat gun for stripping paint from small items
- Oil-based and solvent-based products contain many of the organic solvents that are hazardous to human health; these are the chemicals that produce the strong “fresh paint” odor
- Choose water-based paints, stains, sealants, strippers, adhesives and glues instead of oil-based or solventbased ones – Water- based products contain significantly fewer organic solvents

Lawn and Garden:

Fertilizers and pesticides are harmful to the environment. Please refrain from using either. Lake muck has two benefits, when you gather it you are increasing the lake depth and it is excellent compost that improves soil and supplies nutrients to garden plants.

Fertilizer use: It is best not to use any fertilizers because if it helps grow your lawn and plants, it helps grow weeds in the lake as well. If you must use fertilizer – have your soil tested first so the proper amount can be applied, and only use fertilizers which have no phosphorus (the middle number on the fertilizer bag) as even a little phosphorus may contribute to algae and weed growth in District waters.

Pesticides (insecticides, fungicides): is likewise to fertilizers. If it can control pest population it can disturb the natural ecological balance in the lake resulting in negative effects

Erosion Control: Erosion is a major contributor to poor lake health. Anything that goes into the storm drain by your home can go straight into the lake. This means that *everyone’s* property affects lake health. The use of plants, rocks, detention basins or similar impediments to water flow can help to minimize sediment getting into the lake.

Resources:

Household Alternatives for Reducing Toxic Products in Your Home:

<http://www.ct.gov/deep/greencleaning>

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) House

<http://www.epa.gov/ne/healthyhomes/pdfs/healthyhomes.pdf>

Household Products Database

<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov>

Women’s Voices for the Earth

<http://womensvoices.org/making-products-safe/safe-cleaningproducts/>

DEEP article containing more detailed information

[Household Alternatives for Reducing Toxic Products in Your Home](#)

Household Alternatives for Reducing Toxic Products in Your Home

There are alternatives to toxic products for every room in the house. Select a room to see what you can do to have a home that is healthier for you, your family, your pets *and* the environment.



Are you interested in using products around your home that are safer for your family and the environment than many commercially available cleaners? You are not alone.

Hazardous chemicals can often be found in common household products such as drain cleaners, floor-care products, oven cleaners, window sprays, bathroom cleaners, furniture and metal polishes, pesticides and laundry products.

You can learn to avoid these chemicals by reading the labels. Those labeled **Danger** or **Poison** are typically the most hazardous. Others may be labeled **Caution** or **Warning** because they are skin or eye irritants. Near these signal words will be a phrase that describes the nature of the hazard, such as "vapors harmful" or "extremely flammable".

Most products have environmentally friendly alternatives that are effective, less costly, and much safer for people, pets, and the natural world. Some are now available in stores, or you may also choose to make your own "green cleaners". Try these alternatives for some of the products you currently use or if you have other alternatives that work for you, please email [Mary Sherwin](#) or Connie Mendolia them to us. Other [green home](#) ideas.

Frequently Asked Questions about avoiding toxics at home and switching to green alternatives:

How can I learn more about what's toxic?

Check out our new presentations on [Toxics Under Your Sink](#) and [Toxics on the Workbench](#) for a basic overview of what you should avoid and better alternatives.

So what else should I know about environmentally friendly alternatives?

Be aware that some of the products may take longer to clean effectively or get rid of pests. You may have to let the product sit on the surface for longer than usual, apply more than once, or use more elbow grease. But by making your own products, you can save money and reduce the amount of hazardous chemicals that your family is exposed to. Be sure to label any containers carefully and store them out of the reach of children.

How can I make my own green cleaning products?

Follow our [recipes](#) for making simple, but effective cleaning products from items you probably have at home right now, like baking soda and white vinegar. You can find most of the ingredients at your grocery store or on the internet. (Also available in [Spanish](#).)

Where can I find the other recipes for home-made cleaning products?

There are many books you can reference (e.g. Better Basics For the Home by Annie Berthold-Bond) or the [Care2 website](#) (search on "green cleaning"). The Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) has tested, [DIY alternatives](#) to toxic household cleaners.

I prefer to buy my cleaning products. How do I know which ones are really "green"?

Review these [shopping tips](#). Also, don't just accept something as "green" just because the label says so. EPA has a [Safer Choice program](#) that includes an easy to identify [label](#) and a [list of safer products](#) or look for ones that are certified by [Green Seal](#) or [Ecologo](#).

What can I do with unwanted hazardous products?

Hazardous products should not be disposed of in the trash, flushed down the toilet or sink drains, or poured into storm drains or onto the ground. If you have any hazardous products in your house and do not wish to use them up, bring them to a local household hazardous waste collection. View a list of [collection days](#) in your community.

How can I bring this information to my community?

CT DEEP, Office of Pollution Prevention has developed an exhibit and presentations that you can use to teach others about using less toxic or hazardous ingredients for cleaning. The exhibit contains display case set up with the backdrop of a sink and workbench and includes props (e.g. empty containers of typical household items such as cleaners and home improvement products.). Alternative products, both store-bought and homemade, are also part of the display. You can also access training presentations for [Under the Sink](#) and [On the Workbench](#).

You can borrow this exhibit for an event in your town by contacting [Tatiana Abreu](#) by e-mail or phone (860-418-5919) or contact connie.mendolia@ct.gov. You will also need to complete a Display Loan Agreement form, see [fillable Word version](#) (preferred), or [pdf version](#).

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