

The Self-Sufficiency

Shoppe

Newsletter

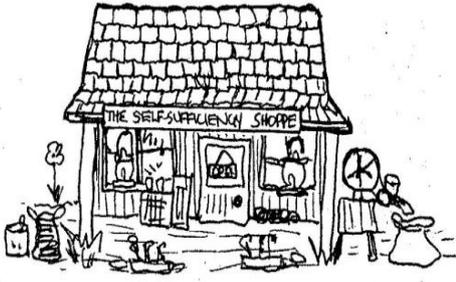
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Homemade vs. Commercially Made

In my work to encourage people to simplify their lifestyle for the sake of the planet (and themselves) the most common resistance comes from the belief that what is commercially-made must 'work better'.

Wow – the power of advertising!

So-much-so that I put together a display board displaying the equation below to convince people that it really is worth the effort to change their ways by using less commercial products and more simple alternatives or homemade products.

The 'Pro's & Con's'

Homemade Alternative

1. Less (or no) chemicals
2. Less impact on/destruction of the environment
3. Costs less
4. Not tested on animals (or use of animal products)
5. Does an 'average' job

vs.

Commercially-made

1. Chemically-based
2. Impacts on the environment (greatly)
3. More expensive
4. Most likely tested on something in some way
5. Works very well (in most cases)



When making the choice to use chemical free and environmentally-friendly techniques there will be disadvantages (like everything) – one being that it **may** not work as well. Big companies have invested millions of dollars in creating products that work, smell, feel and taste 'pleasing' to the consumer (so that we spend, spend, spend!). That's a lot to compete with. But when it comes to the health and welfare of: the planet (environment), humans, animals – 'competition' does not come into the equation. And to add more weight to the argument – using homemade or simple alternatives will invariably cost you less money. How can we beat that? It saves us money, uses less chemicals, helps the environment plus does not misuse or abuse any other living being (animals). It couldn't be any better. Whether it works as good as its commercial counterpart is but a minor point – I'd rather use something that has all of the

above attributes – if I loose a little of its ability to do the job effectively in the process – so be it – a small price to pay.

Just to complicate the argument – believe it or not - but some commercial products do not even work that well. Wow! A reflection of the great, great power of advertising. People buy because of the ploys and clever rationale presented via advertising – in the eyes of the manufacturer whether it works or not is secondary to the fact that the consumer **buys** the product to keep the money coming in and profits ‘up’.

So, much of making the change from using commercial to homemade is behavioural. First, is to realise that not everything we are told via advertising is necessarily true or honest. Second, its about putting effort into changing our habits – to spend time trying something different and getting used to using it. ‘Old habits die hard’ they say – but it’s not impossible. Just takes a little bit of convincing. I hope I’ve done that!

The Good All’ Rounders:

There are many ‘homemade’ or ‘alternative’ products that can be used in place of commercial products. In fact I like to believe that there is a simple alternative for absolutely everything commercial! However there are a few good all’ rounders that offer a great start on the road to using alternatives – starting with, of course, vinegar – it’s great for ‘almost everything’. Here’s a list of the most useful and versatile alternatives with reference to the relevant information source in the Shoppe’s publications:

Vinegar	White: Cleaning, Disinfecting, Deodorising, Anti-bacterial agent, Culinary, Insect Repellent, Preservative Cider: Hair conditioner, Skin astringent, Personal Deodorant, Therapeutic Uses	(e-Booklet) No. 33 Versatile Vinegar (<i>includes info on making vinegar</i>) No. 23 Green Cleaning No. 22 Home-made Air fresheners No. 30 Nat. Skin Care No. 2 Home-made Deodorants Also: No.’s 27,5, 37,7,12, 14, 59
Bicarb Soda	Abrasive Cleaner, Deodoriser, Whitener, Stain Removal, Teeth cleaner	No. 9 Amazing Bicarb! No. 23 Green Cleaning No. 1 Homemade Teeth Cleaners No. 12 How to Make Do Also: No.’s 2, 14, 27,35
Pure Soap (bar of soap or soap flakes)	Cleaning/Cleaning Products, Personal Cleaning, Garden Spray (insect repellent), Deodorising, General Household Use	No. 50 Recycling Soap No. 23 Green Cleaning No. 14 Natural Hair Care No. 21 Safe Org. Sprays Also: No. 3, 25, 5, 47, 55, 37,
Oatmeal	Mild abrasive cleaner, Skin Care & Cleanser, Water Softener, Culinary, Hair-care, Soap alternative	No. 58 Old-time Oatmeal No. 30 Nat. Skin Care Also No.’s 37, 50, 26
Eucalyptus Oil	Stain removal, Deodorising, Disinfecting, Cleaning, Therapeutic, Insect repellent	No. 51 Uses for Eucalyptus Oil No. 23 Green Cleaning Also: No.’s 20, 21, 38,35
Salt	Abrasive Cleaner, Disinfectant, Soot remover	No. 24 Back-to-Basics Cleaning. Also: No. 59,37
Lemons	Mild Bleach, Cleaning, Deodorising, Skin Care, Hair Care, Disinfectant, Culinary, Insect Repellent, Therapeutic	No. 10 Humble Lemon Also: No.’s 30, 5, 14, 37, 22, 12, 20
Beeswax	Emulsifying agent (for skin creams, salves), Sealant, Preservative, Polish	No. 4 Making Beeswax Products Also: No.’s 30, 13, 5, 55,

All e-booklets can be downloaded from www.theshoppe.com

Prices range from \$8.00 to \$12.00 each

Replacing Commercial Products with Homemade Alternatives:

One or more of the above items can be used in place of the following commercial products: oven cleaner, dish-washing detergent, laundry detergent, carpet deodorant, surface spray, floor cleaner, carpet shampoo/cleaner, wooden surface cleaners, surface sprays & cleaners, abrasive cleaners, deodorizing agents, bathroom cleaner, mould remover, disinfectant, toilet cleaner, drain cleaner, window cleaner, water softener, stain remover, skin cleansers and astringents, hair shampoo, toothpaste, shower gels and personal cleaners, liquid hand soap, some pet care products, hair conditioner, floor & wood polish, insect repellents, garden sprays, air fresheners and room deodorizers.

Unbelievable – but totally possible. Imagine the money we could save, the parts (remaining) of environment that could be ‘salvaged’ and the living beings that could be prevented from the horrors of product testing merely to please human ‘desires’ if we ceased to purchase all of the above in favour of simple non-commercial alternatives.

Cheap fix for stains

LONDON: Washing-up liquid will clean carpet stains more effectively than specialist products costing more than eight times as much, researchers claim.

Experts found that costly sprays and preparations were often not up to the task. Washing-up liquid was at least as effective as, and in many cases more so than, 13 out of 17 specialist products tested by British consumer group Which?

The Advertiser 27/2/09



Carpet Cleaning Alternatives

Not surprisingly testing has proven that expensive carpet stain removers are not as effective as we've been lead to believe!

Here's some cheaper alternatives:

- Sprinkle wet stain with Bicarb soda to soak up moisture. When dry vacuum or brush.
- Soap jelly (or biodegradable detergent) frothed in hot water and rubbed over stain. When dry: vacuum. One teaspoon cloudy ammonia added to soap mix will give some extra cleaning. A drop of eucalyptus oil will help eliminate odor.
- Remove chewing gum, glue or similar from carpet using eucalyptus oil to soften.
- Remove soot by covering the stain with salt. Leave one hour, then vacuum. Repeat if necessary
- Soda water poured onto fresh carpet stains will loosen the stain & help bring it to the surface so that it can be wiped away.

From e-Booklets No. 23 'Green Cleaning' and No. 24 'Back-to-Basics Cleaning'

All-Purpose Stain Remover

Mix together 1/3 cup each of water, cloudy ammonia and liquid soap-jelly (see above recipe) OR bio-degradable dishwashing detergent. Mix and store in recycled spray container. Label the container. *Very handy and excellent for removing stains on clothing (before washing) or spray onto surfaces to clean grime, grease and dirt from walls, vinyl, stove top, tiles, around light switches, etc* (Recipe from e-Booklet No 23 - Green Cleaning)



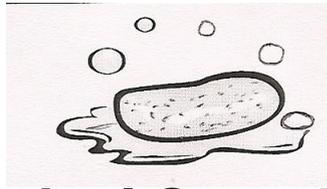
Green Cleaning Booklet Set

Safe, easy-to-follow suggestions and alternatives for commercial cleaning products. All environmentally friendly.

Contains: 10 Booklets: No. 23 Green Cleaning, No. 24 Back-to-Basics Cleaning, No. 9 Amazing Bi-carb, No.10 The Humble Lemon, No. 5 Homemade Polishes and Cleaners, No. 33 Versatile Vinegar, No. 51 Uses for Eucalyptus Oil, No. 50 Recycling Soap, No. 47 Making the Most of Your Soap-saver, No. 59 Caring for Natural Woods & Fibres. Price: **\$69.00 (Available for instant download - see page 4)**

“Men no longer love the soil. Landowners sell it, lease it, divide it into shares, prostitute it, bargain with it and treat it as an object of speculation. Farmers torture it, violate it, exhaust it and sacrifice it with their impatient desire for gain. They never become one with it”.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon



Practical Soap-Making

Making your own soap is surprisingly simple and very rewarding. Soap consists of three basic ingredients: Lard (fat), water and caustic soda (the cleaning agent). Other ingredients are added for texture and aroma - such as oatmeal, oil, herbs, etc.

During my soap-making workshops people are often intrigued by how quick and easy it is to make soap – the only ‘delay’ is that it takes three weeks for homemade soap to ‘mature’ ready for use. Many people are concerned about the ‘caustic’ component of soap – however for soap to ‘clean’ it needs to contain some type of cleaning agent – caustic soda being the most appropriate. Only about 2-3% of the soap is caustic soda – once it is diluted with the other ingredients its potency is no longer an issue.

Caustic soda is available from the laundry section of the supermarket. It can be derived naturally from the soda ash remaining from fires – but a bit difficult to obtain for the inexperienced. As a child on the farm I watched my grandmother make ‘bush’ soap using wood ash (from an outdoor fire), water and sheep lard (which she rendered down from the sheep carcass). She would make the soap outdoors in an old kerosene tin over an open fire. Being very experienced at making soap this way she would boil it for some time until it reached just the right consistency to set (when cold) to form hard bars of soap (that lasted much longer than the commercial counterpart!).

e-Booklet No. 3 ‘Simple Soap-Making’ outlines a simple procedure for making soap.

e- No. 25 ‘More Soap-Making Recipes’ contains additional soap recipes as well as information on ‘Grandma’s’ method for making ‘bush soap’.



Soap-Making Booklet Set

Pack Includes: No. 3 - Simple Soap-Making, No. 25 -More Soap-Making Recipes, No. 50 - Recycling Soap and No. 47 - Making the Most of your Soap-Saver.

Package Price: \$33.00

(download from www.theshoppe.com.au)



'Cheats' Oatmeal Soap

(If making your own soap seems a little to much effort here's quick and easy way to make oatmeal soap using scraps of soap)

1. Collect small scraps of used soap (soap scraps left-over from the bathroom) or use a bar of pure soap.
2. Grate the soap using a metal food grater. Place 2 tablespoons of the soap into a small bowl with 1 tablespoon oatmeal.
3. Using fingers blend 2 teaspoons cold water into the oatmeal soap mixture.
4. Keep working the mix - adding more water if it is too dry - until the mix comes together to form a ball.

Leave as a 'wash-ball' or press the soap mix into moulds - such as cookie moulds to form interesting soap shapes. Leave to set for 1 week before using.

(A little lavender or rose oil on the hands before rolling will impart a pleasant aroma into the soap balls. Wear gloves if strong perfume on hands is unpleasant. A little added spice or powdered dried herbs may also enhance the aroma and texture of the soap)

(From e-booklet No. 58 - Old-time Oatmeal - \$12.00 - download from [ww.theshoppe.com.au](http://www.theshoppe.com.au))

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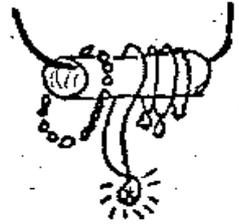
'Recycler's Corner'

Over the years since publishing the Information Booklet range on recycling many people have contributed their own clever recycling ideas. Here's a selection – with more to come in future issues of the Shoppe Newsletter. Your ideas are welcome – send them to The Shoppe address or email.

Following on from '50 Ways to Recycle a Tin Can' (No. 15) here's a few more suggestions for recycling tin cans :

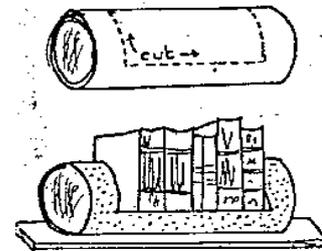
Mrs B. Fitzgerald of Moss Vale, N.S.W. suggests :

- Small tin cans and tin cans of unusual shapes make useful cutters for pastry and dough when making scones, biscuits, pizza bases, etc. Just make sure the can is clean
- Use a tin can to make a useful jewellery holder (as illustrated). When attached to the side of a dressing table or wardrobe it becomes a handy display for jewellery.



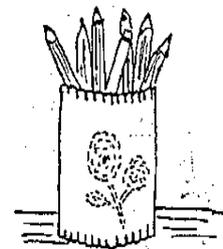
Brian Logan of Narrogin, W.A. recommends:

- Paste 6 to 8 layers of brown paper, over the top of a medium to large tin can, then varnish it to create a toy drum for children.
- Turn a very large tin (with sealing lid) into a book rack by first tightly securing the lid with strong glue. Then using tin cutters remove a section of the tin as illustrated: Cover the tin with contact or similar material, making sure to cover the sharp edges of the cut section. Secure the tin onto a flat wooden base using tacks or nails. The books will fit snugly into the rack as shown:



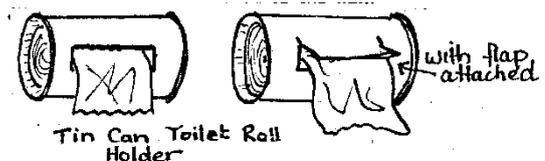
A reader from Prospect, Sth Aust. recycles tin cans by covering them with fabric - it is a method he also uses to cover telephone books:

Measure the height and circumference of the tin can. Cut a piece of woollen or felt fabric according to these measurements adding another 1 cm for allowance. Using thick yarn of contrasting colour and a large darning needle sew blanket stitch along the top and bottom of the fabric. If you are handy with the sewing needle embroider a design in the centre of the fabric. Cover the can with glue and firmly secure the fabric around the can. Leave to dry. The can will suffice as pencil/utensil holder.



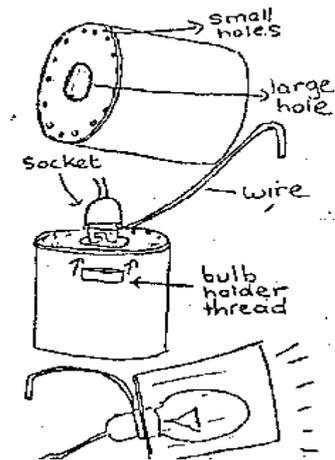
From Jenni Pettett of Waikerie SA, comes the following suggestions:

- A biscuit tin with holes drilled in the lid and sides is ideal for burning mozzie coils - especially in the kid's room. If anything falls on the burning coil (in the tin) it won't catch alight .
- A tin can with top and bottom removed is good for cutting small trees or plants out of the ground without disturbing the roots. Simply place the can over the plant and press into the ground around the plant to loosen the soil to make it easier to remove from the ground.
- Make a toilet roll holder by cutting a hole in the side of a large enough for the paper to pull through. Make sure the edges of the tin are folded over so that the sharpness does not cut hands or fingers. If you have an outside toilet a tin with a lid is advisable - particularly when it rains so that the toilet paper does not get wet! By leaving the flap attached (as illustrated) this also helps keep the paper dry. The holder is nailed or screwed to the wall.

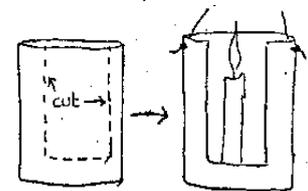


A very ingenious Mr. R. Cattle of Victoria suggests:

- Turn tin cans into light shades as follows: Cut a hole (about 2 cms in diameter - you will need to measure the size of the light bulb head) in the centre of the base of a suitably sized tin can. The recommended way to do this is to punch a circle of small holes using a hammer and nail, as close together as possible so that the central piece can be removed. File the rough edges of the hole to make smooth. Punch another circle of holes this time only about 1 ½ cms apart and 1 ½ cms from the central hole. This will enable the heat from the light to escape. Unscrew the bulb holder thread from the socket (the section which holds the light bulb). Attach a length of heavy wire around the socket as illustrated opposite. This will act as a means to hang the light. Push the socket through the hole in the can. Screw in the bulb holder thread. Hang in a suitable position.



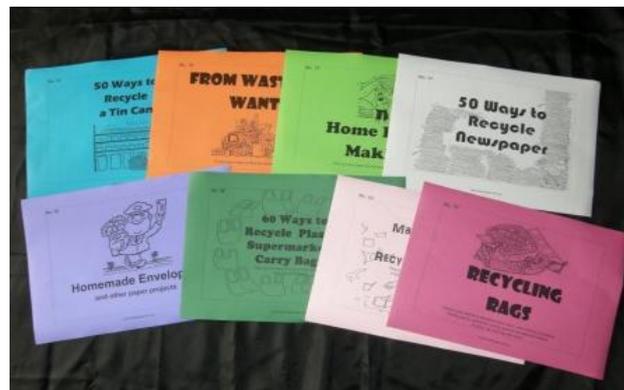
- Turn tin cans into hanging lanterns by removing a strip of tin (as illustrated) from the side of a long fruit juice type can. Punch two holes (opposite each other) through the top edge of the can and attach a length of wire. A candle is then placed in the base of the can. Light the candle and hang in a suitable place. These lanterns make very attractive and economical decorative lights for outdoor parties, barbecues, etc. at night.



- To make an emergency stove: Cut strips of cardboard (corrugated cardboard is best) the same width as the height of the can. Coil these strips tightly inside the can. Pour in melted wax to fill the can. (Make up quite a few and store ready for use, as each one burns out, it can quickly be replaced with another).



How to use: Light the cardboard and wax base, use as a bare flame to heat the billy or place under a grill for cooking or barbecuing.



Recycling for the Planet Booklet Set

Packed full of lots of resourceful and clever ideas that will save \$\$\$'s and aid the planet!

8 Booklets: No. 15 – 60 Ways to Recycle a Tin Can, No. 16 – Waste Not Want Not. No. 17 – Home Paper-Making, No. 31 – 50 Ways to Recycle Newspaper, No. 32 – Home-Made Envelopes & Other Paper Projects, No. 48 – 60 Ways to Recycle Plastic Supermarket Carry Bags, No. 63 – Making Play-toys from Recycled Materials, No. 77 – Recycling Rags.

Price: \$69.00 (Available for instant download from www.theshoppe.com.au)