Cleaning Products that Don’t Pollute
(from the Springfield Utility Board)

Glass Cleaner
Fill a spray bottle with 1 quart water and add 1 tablespoon white vinegar. Use and store instead of ammonia products. For larger jobs like floors and tiles, add ½ cup white vinegar to 1 gallon hot water.

Sink and Toilet Cleaner
Mix a paste of either baking soda or borax with water and add a squeeze of lemon juice. Borax or baking soda are also good alone to replace abrasive cleansers. For toilets, drop either a few vitamin C or denture cleaning tablets into the bowl and let sit overnight.

Disinfectants
Mix ½ cup borax in 1 gallon hot water for counters, floors, and tiles. When vacuuming, freshen the air by soaking a cotton ball with scented oil and add to the vacuum bag.

Mildew
Make a paste of vinegar and salt. Or wash the area with strong Thyme tea.

Carpet freshener/cleaner
For odors, sprinkle dry cornstarch or baking soda on carpet, then vacuum. Or leave 2 parts cornstarch and 1 part borax on for an hour, then vacuum. For stains, rub borax into dampened area, dry, then vacuum or repeatedly blot with vinegar and soapy water.

Spray Starch
Fill a spray bottle with 2 pints of cold water. Mix in 2 tablespoons of cornstarch. Shake before each use. For delicate fabrics, dissolve a package of unflavored gelatin or 2 tablespoons granulated sugar in 2 cubs of hot water. If fabric dries sticky, add more water.

Furniture Polish
Add ½ cup lemon juice to 1 cup vegetable oil, olive oil, or mayonnaise. Store in refrigerator between uses.

Oven Cleaner
Use a paste of baking soda and water, scrubbing stains with steel wool. For tougher stains, add salt, except for self-cleaning ovens.

Drain Opener
Pour 1/4 cup baking soda down drain. Follow with ½ cup vinegar. Cover with either a cloth or cup so fizzing pressure is forced down through the pipe. When fizzing stops, flush with a few cups boiling water. For severe problems, use a plunger or plumber’s snake.

Polish
Silver: Add a tablespoon each of baking soda and salt to boiling water. Drop in silver
and boil for 3 minutes. Polish with a soft cloth. For larger pieces, rub with cream toothpaste and warm water.

Copper: Rub with a mixture of lemon juice (fresh or reconstituted) and salt. Rinse with water after washing.

Chrome: Use rubbing alcohol or white flour on a dry rag. Or cut a lemon in half and rub on chrome.

Brass: Rub with fresh or reconstituted lemon juice or Worcestershire sauce. Rinse with water after cleaning.

Shoes: Rub with the inside of a banana peel, then buff.

Fireplace
Clean flue of soot by throwing ½ cup salt into the fire (not a yellow fire).

Air Freshener
Simmer cinnamon, cloves, or other sweet herbs or spices. Several herbs (thyme, rosemary, sage, and others) have proven antiseptic powers. Simmer them on a stove and spray the “tea” water with a mister.

Bleach
Substitute ½ cup borax per wash load to whiten whites and brighten colors. Adding 1/4 cup vinegar to the wash also has a bleaching effect and removes odors. Or soak in lemon juice and dry in direct sunlight. If needed, occasionally use powdered bleach.

Paint on Hands
Remove with baby oil or mineral oil.

Paint on Brushes
Clean with hot vinegar.

Paint Remover
Mix 1 pound tri sodium phosphate (TSP, a natural mineral-based cleaning powder available at paint and hardware stores) into 1 gallon hot water. Wear rubber gloves to avoid skin irritation and brush on mixture. Let sit for ½ hour, then remove softened paint with a scaper. May also be used to clean surfaces in preparation for painting.