

Vinegar and Its Many Uses



Vinegar: (Almost) the Only Cleaner You'll Ever Need

Cleaning with vinegar is powerful, natural--and cheap!

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Friday: Clean and Organized



Most cleaning products fall into one of two categories: toxic or expensive. While both types will clean almost anything (or at least, anything within their limited range of capabilities), there's a third option. It's inexpensive and not at all poisonous to humans. It's multi-purpose as well--one container will take care of laundry, kitchen cleaning, even bugs and weeds. This "miracle cleaner" is vinegar.

Vinegar is a weak form of acetic acid that forms through the fermentation of sugars or starches. It is completely edible, and cannot harm your stomach. And luckily for us, many things can be cleaned using it.

The uses of vinegar are nearly endless. In addition to cleaning, it is an excellent item for cooking and for home science experiments (remember the vinegar-and-baking soda volcanoes from grade school?). The health benefits are many as well.

In this article, we are focusing on the uses of vinegar as a cleaner. For information on some of its other uses, see the links at the end of the article. Note: plain white vinegar is the best for the following uses;


cider and other vinegars may have unwanted side effects. Vinegar is used in 100% concentration unless otherwise specified.

Your Vinegar Spray Bottles

In addition to your regular bottle of vinegar, a really useful item is a spray bottle. Ideally, you want two--one with pure vinegar, the other with a half vinegar, half water combination. Having vinegar in a dispenser of this type makes its use much simpler in many cases.

All Around the House

1. To remove stickers that have been used to "decorate" furniture and other surfaces, moisten with vinegar. Let sit for at least ten minutes, then remove.
2. For persistent room odors, place a bowl of vinegar in the room overnight.
3. For spills on carpet, use a sponge or cloth to soak up as much liquid as possible. Then spray with a mixture of half vinegar, half water. Let stand for about two minutes, then blot with towel or sponge. Repeat as needed.
4. For more persistent stains, use a mixture of 1 teaspoon vinegar, 1 teaspoon liquid dish soap, and 1 cup warm water. Proceed as suggested above. When finished cleaning, dry using a hairdryer set on low.
5. To clean windows, spray with half vinegar, half water. Wipe clean with either newspapers or cloth.
6. To clean silver, pewter, copper, or brass, dissolve 1 teaspoon salt in one cup vinegar. Add flour to create a paste (1/4 cup or more). Apply the paste to the metal item, and let stand for at least fifteen minutes. Rinse with warm water and polish with a soft cloth.
7. No-wax floors can be cleaned with a solution of 1 cup vinegar per gallon of water for a shinier surface.



8. To clean wood paneling, use a mixture of 1/2 cup olive oil, 1/2 cup vinegar, and 2 cups warm water. Apply to paneling with a soft cloth. Dry with a clean cloth.

In the Bathroom

9. To remove corrosion or chemical build-up from showerheads, soak in vinegar overnight.

10. Remove stains from the toilet bowl by spraying with vinegar.

11. To remove soap build-up from faucets, clean with a mixture of 1 part salt to four parts vinegar.

12. Spray shower walls and shower curtain with vinegar to help prevent mildew.

In the Kitchen

13. To keep ants away, spray vinegar along doorways, windowsills, countertops - anywhere that ants are likely to appear. If you find an ant trail (path that ants use repeatedly), clean it with vinegar.

14. To remove odors from the sink or garbage disposal, pour in a cup or more vinegar. Do not rinse out again for at least an hour.

15. For a clogged drain, first pour in 1/2 cup baking soda. Then add an equal amount of vinegar. When the mixture finishes bubbling, rinse with warm water. (Note: some garbage disposals do not react well to this cleaning method; check with the manufacturer first.)

16. Wipe your hands with vinegar after chopping. It will remove strong scents like onion and garlic, as well as stains from fruit juices.

17. To clean wooden cutting boards, wipe with vinegar.

18. Remove strong odors. Rinse jars with a half and half mixture of vinegar and water to remove garlic or other strong odors. Boil water with several spoonfuls of vinegar to remove the smell of burnt food from your kitchen.



19. Vinegar is an excellent cleaner for all kitchen surfaces - counters, refrigerators, stovetops.

20. To clean your microwave oven, put a microwave-safe bowl of 1/2 cup vinegar and 1 cup water in the oven, and cook long enough to boil. In addition to removing any lingering odors, this will loosen any baked-on food from the microwave's walls.

21. To remove coffee or tea stains from china, clean with a mixture of vinegar and salt.

In the Laundry

22. To keep colors from running in the wash, soak in vinegar before washing.

23. To decrease lint on clothing, add 1/2 cup vinegar to the rinse cycle.

24. Many persistent stains can be removed with vinegar: coffee, chocolate, ketchup, jam, cola, wine. Gently rub stain with vinegar, then wash.

25. To make your "brights brighter", add 1/2 cup vinegar to the rinse cycle.

26. For fresher cloth diapers, add one cup distilled vinegar to the rinse cycle. This will break down uric acid and remove both lingering stains and scents.

27. To remove scorch marks from an iron, rub with a mixture of vinegar and salt.

28. To remove soap residue from the washing machine, run an empty (no laundry) cycle with one cup vinegar added.

29. To remove the smell of smoke from clothing, add a cup of vinegar to a tub of hot water. Let clothing hang in the same room for several hours.

Vinegar and Its Many Uses Quiz: niV

1. Vinegar is..
a, mildly poisonous
b, edible
c, edible when boiled first
d, lethal when ingested

2. Around the house, vinegar can be used to..
a, remove persistent odors
b, cause an odor that will last up to three weeks
c, damage your tiles
d, vinegar has no use for the house, it is an outdoor product

3. In the bathroom vinegar can..
a, cause extra build up and corrode away your shower if left there
b, remove your bathroom floor
c, remove corrosion or chemical build up from showerhead
d, replace your contact solution

4. In the kitchen vinegar can...
a, keep ants away
b, remove odors from the sink or garbage disposal
c, clean wooden cutting boards
d, all of the above

5. Which of the following is not a laundry use for vinegar?
a, keep colors from running
b, shrink clothes that are too big
c, make brights brighter
d, remove the smell of smoke from clothing

6. The most effective vinegar to use for cleaning is...
a, plain white
b, cider vinegar
c, flavored vinegar
d, cane vinegar

Vinegar and Its Many Uses Quiz Answers:

1. B

2. A

3. C

4. D

5. B

6. A