

CLEAN HOME ECOTEAMS

Clean Your Home With Pleasure

Activity Book

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Association of Conscious Consumers, 2019

The Green&Safe LIFE-styles project is supported by the LIFE programme of the European Union and co-financed by the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture. Project nr.: ENV GIE HU000622 Green&Safe LIFE-styles



Association of Conscious Consumers 2019



Are you a member of Clean Home EcoTeams? Not yet? The Activity Book was designed to complement EcoTeams activities, so we strongly recommend you to join the teams and use the book, simultaneously.

CLEAN HOME ECOTEAMS—Clean Your Home With Pleasure

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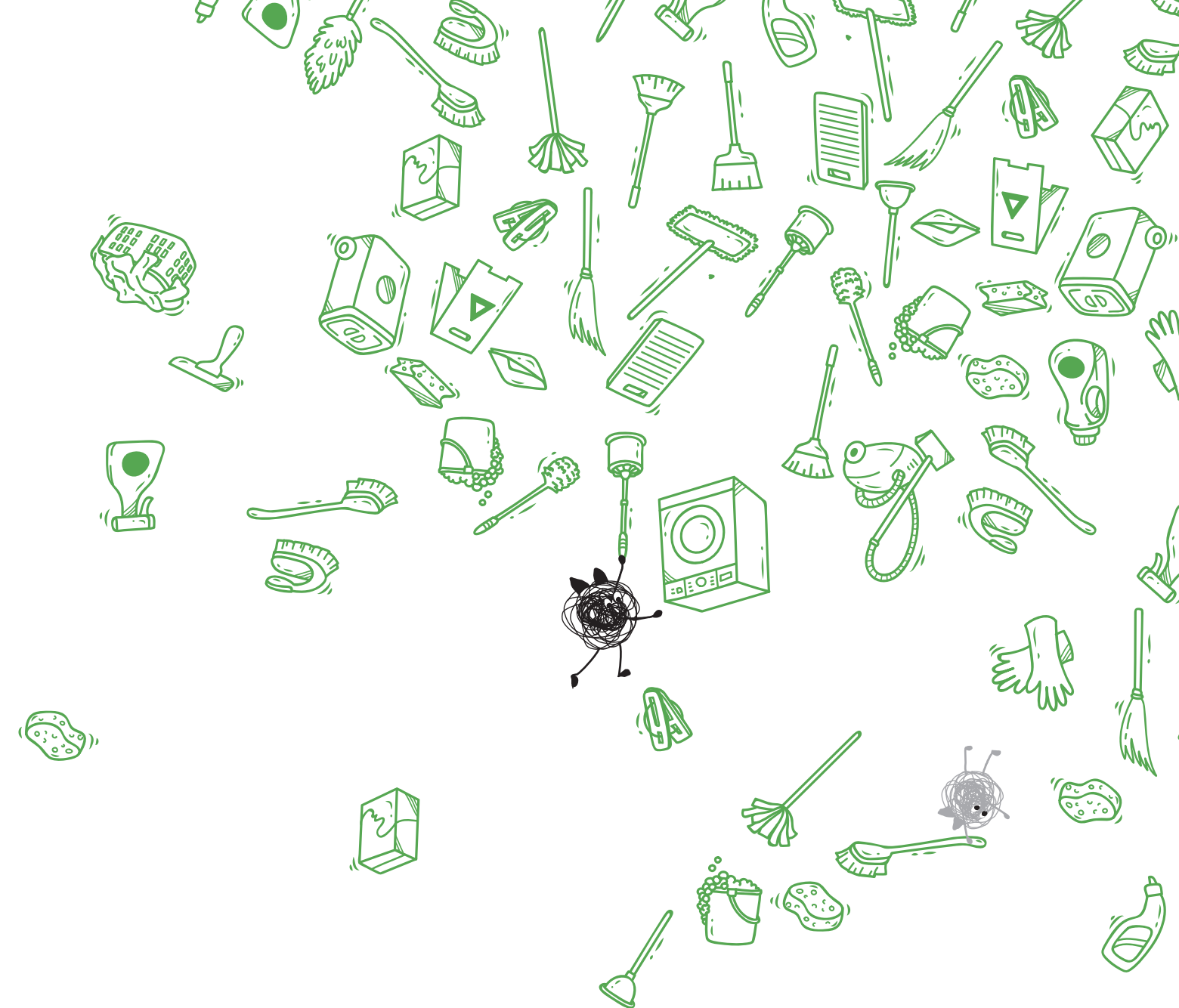
Special thanks to former EcoTeam members, our volunteers and ACC members who inspired Clean Home EcoTeams programme with their ideas and suggestions.

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Reports and results of previous EcoTeams:
<https://tudatosvasarlo.hu/okokorok>

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Clean Your Home With Pleasure

Activity Book

Association of Conscious Consumers, 2019






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About Clean Home EcoTeams

The Clean Home EcoTeams runs for five weeks and you will work with people who, just like you, care for their environment. EcoTeam members care about simple things, such as the air they breathe in, or the harmful chemicals they contact while cleaning.

EcoTeam members are open to...

- try out and share simple, eco-friendly, cost-effective and natural household cleaning practices, and to
- change gradually their everyday routines of using chemicals in the household.

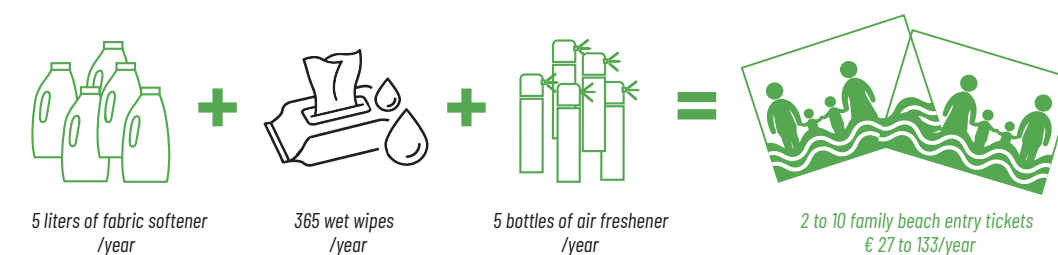
EcoTeams will give you the framework for an exciting learning process. You can be part of a small team, which will inspire and help you throughout the process.

Caring About Household Chemicals Is Important, Because...

...UNREASONABLY LOT IS SPENT ON CLEANING PRODUCTS

Hungarians spend € 97.480.282 on cleaning supplies each year. An average Hungarian household spends € 22 per year, which might not seem to be much, but in some cases this figure is as high as € 60 to 90, or more (*Nielsen, 2018*).

Imagine! If we just stopped buying the three most harmful and useless cleaning products (fabric softener, single use wet wipes and air fresheners), the money saved would be enough for at least two or even ten family beach entry tickets in a year. (*Calculation based on the min and max prices of supermarkets, 2019*)




...WE PAY WITH OUR HEALTH TOO

Tons of cleaning product ads taught us that buying more cleaning products means cleaner home. We often ignore dosage instructions indicated on the product packaging. When cleaning our home, we use a staggering amount of chemicals, and sometimes we clean unnecessarily. However, the large amount of chemicals do not make the cleaning efforts more effective but cause harm to human health by inhaling or directly contacting toxic substances. Clearly, this is the case even if it is difficult to establish an exclusive interrelation between, for example, skin allergy or asthma and hazardous detergent use. At the end of the day, we spend on detergents two times in our lifetime: first when we buy them, and later, when we have to get treated for skin, respiratory or other diseases. This is because the harmful effects of the chemicals add up and contribute to the slow development of serious conditions and diseases throughout the years.

According to European study carried out over a period of 20 years, involving 6.000 participants, asthma rates have increased among women who regularly clean the house and among professional cleaners too.

What?
Why?
What is
it like?
How?



...BECAUSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Although 91% of Hungarian consumers believe that economical use of chemicals would be good for both human health and the environment, 81% of them are not willing to reduce the amount of cleaning products they use. (*Nielsen, 2019*)

The plastic bottles of the cleaning products are usually considered hazardous waste due to their content. Therefore, they can only be disposed of in household waste recycling centers.

As single use wet wipes are not biodegradable, not only the packaging but the entire product ends up in the landfill or, worse, in the toilet, where it can cause clogging.

...WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHAT WE USE

Chemical manufacturers are not mandated to list all ingredients on the label. They use general terms like „anionic surfactant”, which in most cases means a mixture of several compounds. The exact names of the most harmful ingredients are often found in the Safety Data Sheet, which is not included with the product and is only available on request or online.

The challenges described in the Book do not require extra spending. You will need care, good planning and smart organization instead. Believe us. After just a few weeks of practice, the new tips and tricks will become part of your daily routine.

What Makes it All Work?

The secret of the Clean Home EcoTeam is ... teamwork! Why? Whenever you get stuck or your enthusiasm starts to wane, the team members will always be there to support you. Forming a team may foster individual commitments. Enthusiasm and perseverance are also stronger in team.

Seeing the progress is fundamental for feeling successful. Therefore: remember to fill in the questionnaire (EcoMirror) and make the measurements again at the end of the EcoTeams. This way you will be able to see the progress you have made with EcoTeams.

Success Stories

Let's make a difference together! EcoTeams has proved to be a success since it was launched in Hungary in 2010. Participants of the EcoTeams and EcoTeams Pantry have decided to green their entire household and lifestyle. Team members have changed the way they use water, energy and chemicals, reduced their household waste and looked for greener transportation alternatives and sustainable food consumption habits. Between 2010 and 2019 in Hungary, more than 1200 households participated in EcoTeams. By the end of the EcoTeams process, participants succeeded to...

- reduce their household waste by 23%,
- decrease their electricity consumption by 15%,
- cut their food waste by 24%,
- curb their gas consumption (for producing heat) by 31%,
- use 13% less water.

So far more than 20 countries have joined EcoTeams internationally, prompting millions of people to go green. And participants did experience how small steps can make a big difference. It's your turn now. Come and join the movement!

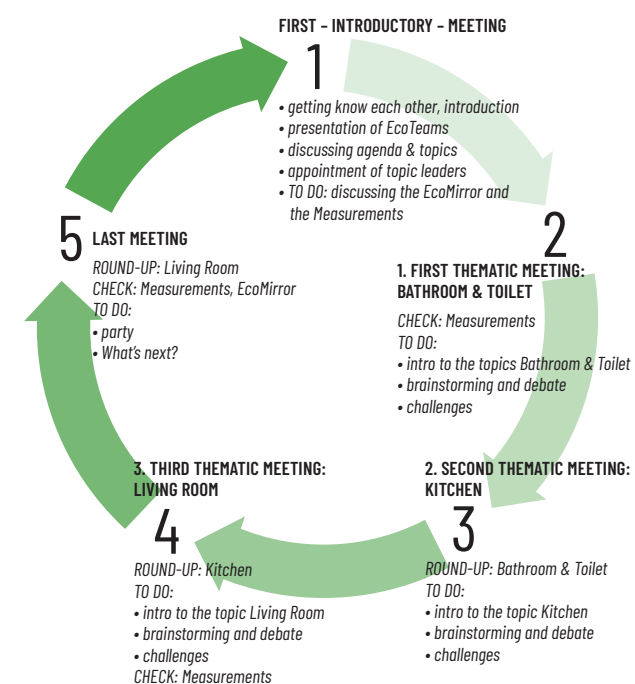
How to use the Activity Book

The Activity Book provides you with easy tips and tricks which will lead you to impressive benefits pretty soon. The small steps suggested in the Book will lead you to remarkable achievements, and you will see that individual action matters. We will not cover each and every topic, or discuss all topics down to the smallest detail. After all, this is not a lexicon. We wanted to inspire people. To inspire change. The Activity Book is yours: feel free to improve it, make corrections, take notes and shape it to your own needs.

The Activity Book is divided into three major chapters—Bathroom, Kitchen, Living Room. Each topic separates into a few sections, ex. Laundry and rinsing, Dishwashing, Carpet and Upholstery Cleaning.

Each chapter starts with some facts and data which may prompt discussion within your

How Does Clean Home Ecoteams Work?



Clean Home EcoTeams is an alliance between members who drive each other towards greener cleaning solutions.

After the first introductory meeting, you assess your own home and reflect on your cleaning routine: you count how much, what type etc. of cleaning products you use, to see clearly where you start from and how exactly you want to improve.

After the first intro meeting, you will have four additional weekly meetings. EcoTeams will guide you through the different rooms and the line of different cleaning products, until you have elaborated on all of the topics of the Activity Book (Bathroom, Kitchen, Living Room), and have tested new practices.

At the end of the five-week period, once you have finished working in the various rooms, you will take a final measurement in order to see how much your routines have changed. The Association of Conscious Consumers gathers the measurement data and presents the results so that members and fans can see how much the EcoTeams have contributed to a healthier lifestyle and sustainability.

Celebrate your achievements on the last meeting—you will have worked hard and even the smallest changes will make a difference in the world!

Finally, if you enjoyed EcoTeams and would be happy to continue, remember that you can be EcoTeam coach too. Interested? Sign up for the EcoTeam Coach Training at the Association of Conscious Consumers!

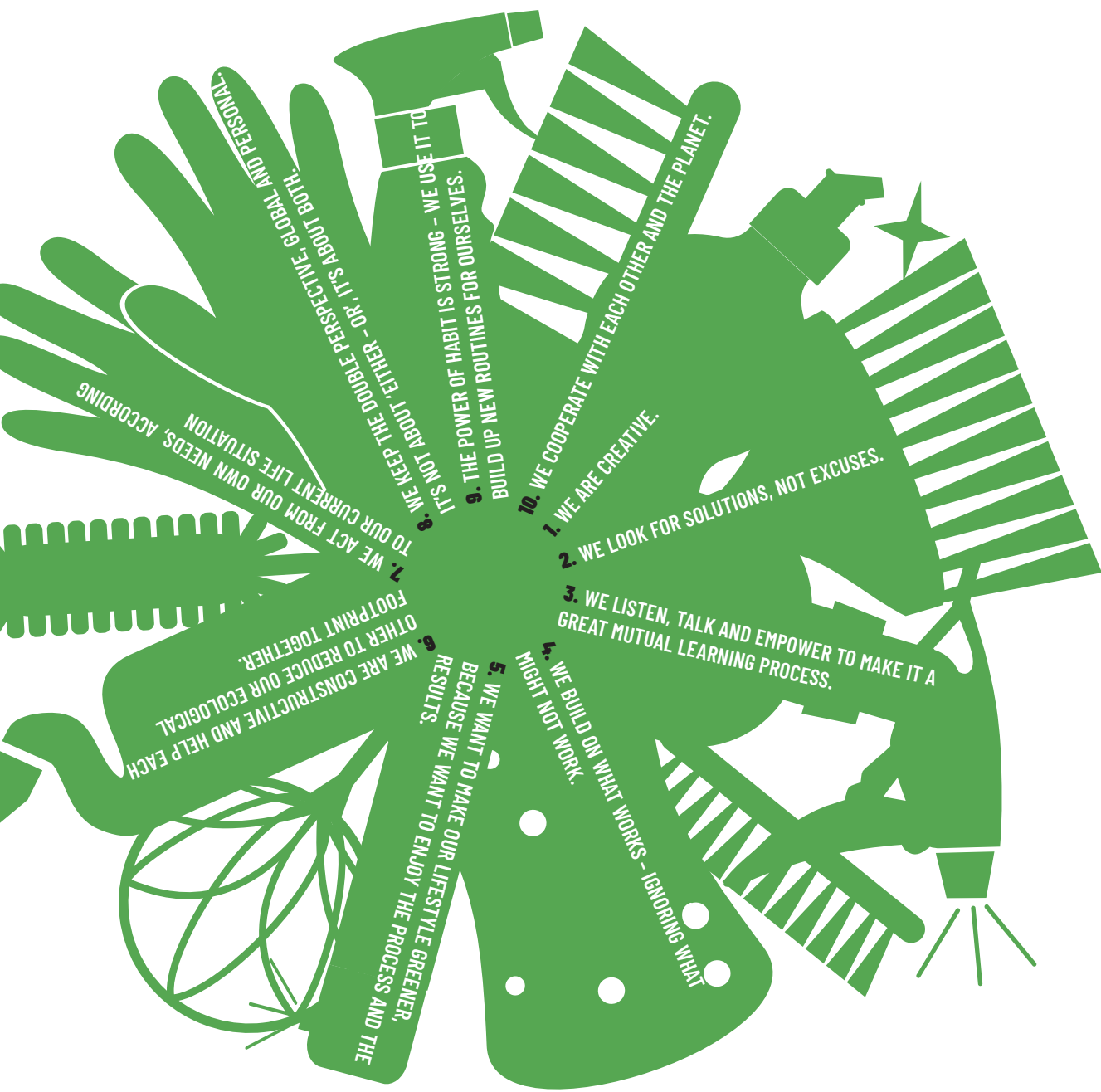
Benefits for You and for the Team

In the frame of the Clean Home EcoTeams, following the small steps and making small changes to your routines, you will eventually make your cleaning habits healthier, more cost-effective and, last but not least, more sustainable.

EcoTeam. Next comes a variety of challenges. Some seem to be easy, others too difficult for you. Pick the challenge that suits you best!

Before you start, do not forget to fill out the questionnaire (including EcoMirror) and to make the initial measurements.

The Ten Principles



The EcoMirror and the Measurements

The EcoMirror and the Measurements phase will make you see cut and dried how far you have gone in dealing with your challenges during the time spent in the EcoTeams. Therefore, it is important that you complete the questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the EcoTeams period too.

First, record the information in the Activity Book. Second, at the end of the EcoTeams, submit your data to the Association of Conscious Consumers' online interface. You receive the link in an email.

Six months after the EcoTeams, we invite you to report again on your cleaning routines. This will help you to see which of your commitments have become part of your daily routine in the long run.

At the end, all aggregated measurements will be compiled and published by the Association of Conscious Consumers so that other consumers can see how much the EcoTeams have contributed to a healthier and greener lifestyle on a larger scale. By providing data on you help us to show how tiny steps in the household make a big difference in the world. And this will encourage others to go green!

Why Is the Measurement Important?

Your cleaning routines make part of your long-established consumption habits and you probably do not even pay attention to what you do exactly when you clean. To be prepared for a change, the first step is to observe your daily routine closely.

- The EcoMirror will provide you with a quick overview of how sustainable and healthy your cleaning routine is.
- For getting accurate data on your cleaning habits, you will need to make a comprehensive Measurement. To get specific, numerical data, count the cleaning products that you store in each room and make a note at the beginning and at the end of the EcoTeams.

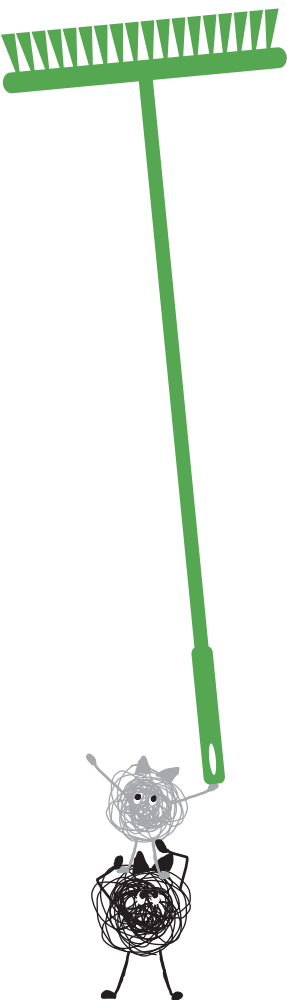
REMEMBER Detailed measurement is important to be made in order to assess your improvement. The measurement is never aimed at comparing your achievement with others. Challenges are aimed at your own development and not at the competition with others. Simply, it would not make sense to compare EcoTeam members being in different situations, having different opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses.

The Challenges

Remember: the challenges you take on are your future opportunities. Do not panic! As an example, let's take a look at 'Laundry and rinsing' in the chapter 'Bathroom'. Here, in the section of 'Laundry Detergents', depending on your strength and enthusiasm, you are free to choose a challenge that suits you best. Are you going to break your detergent use in half? Or are you tough enough to switch to an ecological detergent or washing soda right away? It is all up to you. Just make up your mind and take the challenge which suits you best!

Don't worry, taking only one challenge per chapter will be enough. It's okay if you accept a minor challenge first, important is that you really try it out and keep going with it till the end of the EcoTeams (and further). Are you stuck or having doubts? Ask your EcoTeam members for help. More experienced team members might be able to help you overcome difficulties. Of course, if you are very keen on changing all your habits, the sky's the limit! Most of the challenges recommended in the Book can be risen to within a week. DO NOT STOP doing the things which have worked and succeeded after the first probe week.

You will see that the descriptions of the challenges are not very detailed. They give you and your team space to brainstorm and puzzle together what exactly you want to go for.



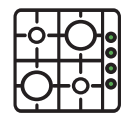
Marks and Symbols Used in the Book

THE THREE CHAPTERS

The Activity Book is segmented into three Chapters, each of them discussing a few topics.



You'll see this symbol at the Chapter 'Bathroom, Toilet'. But! As you use a certain cleaning product for a range of cleaning activities in different rooms, you might come across this symbol elsewhere too.



You'll see this symbol at the Chapter 'Kitchen'.



You'll see this symbol at the Chapter 'Living Room'.

WHY? HOW?



At the beginning of the chapters you will learn why it is important and useful to deal with the topic.



The descriptions of challenges are recommendations which will give you a hint where and how to start. Elaborating the tasks and rising to a challenge will always be your and your team's job!

TYPES AND DEGREES OF CHALLENGES



Prevent You will find a few tips here on how to prevent dirt. Prevention will save you hours of work and you can skip using chemicals.



Reduce quantity This symbol leads you to a bunch of tips that will help you to reduce the amount of detergent you usually use. (Without having to switch to another product.)



Do not use You will find this symbol at the cases in which the substances applied are so harmful (and, in our view, pointless) that you'd better abandon them or turn to a natural alternative solution.



Switch to an ecolabelled green product This symbol indicates our suggestions on gentle, ecolabelled products available in supermarkets, which could replace some of the hazardous detergents you have used so far.



Toxic-free green solutions If you want to get tips on alternative, Do It Yourself solutions, look for this symbol.



Tested and approved tips At this symbol, you will find specific tricks that you already know. Have you ever been confused by an abundance of good pieces of advice? Have you ever been unsure of what really works? We'll tell you what worked with us! The practices described in this section have been tried and tested by former EcoTeam members as well as the volunteers and staff of the Association of Conscious Consumers. These tricks have proven to work with us. We warmly recommend them.

AND...



This is how much money you may save up At this section you will see how much money you may save if you switch to a greener solution. Data on conventional commercial and ecofriendly cleaning products are based on retail chain webshop and green webshop prices.



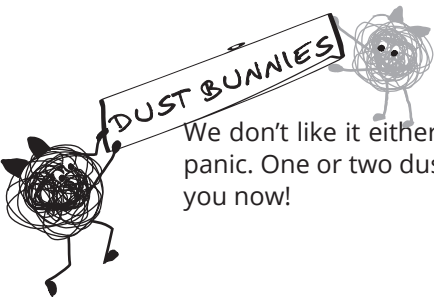
Packaging: This is the symbol for tips and tricks to reduce your Household Chemical Waste (HCW).



Your notes, ideas, recipes → → → → → → → → → →



Cut it out and take it with you on your shopping tour!



We don't like it either having too many of us in a small place. But please don't panic. One or two dust bunnies are no reasons to worry. In fact, we are helping you now!



Ecolabels

TAKE IT WITH YOU!



EU ECOLABEL
The EU Ecolabel is a label of environmental excellence that is awarded to products and services meeting high environmental standards throughout their life-cycle: from raw material extraction, to production, distribution and disposal. The EU Ecolabel promotes the circular economy by encouraging producers to generate less waste and carbon-dioxide emission during the manufacturing process. The EU Ecolabel criteria also encourages companies to develop products that are durable, easy to repair and recycle.



THE BLUE ANGEL (DER BLAUE ENGEL)
The Blue Angel is the very first ecolabel, which has been in use since 1978. The Blue Angel is awarded by the Environmental Label Jury made up of independent experts, the Federal Ministry for the Environment (Germany) and the Federal Environmental Agency.



ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCT
Look for the, so called third-party certificates and trademarks of your own country which stand for eco-friendly products. As an example, see above/below a trademark from Hungary. The national third-party eco certificates in the European Union have equal for higher standards than the European Ecolabel.

Measurements, EcoMirror

The EcoMirror and the Measurement will give you an idea of how far you have gone and what exactly you have achieved. Make sure that you complete the questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the EcoTeams period.

Best is to fill in your Activity Book first and upload the data later to the online surface provided by the Association of Conscious Consumers.

Discuss your results and answers at the following meeting.

Please consult the ecolabels below in order to recognize them on the packaging of the products that you use.

Ecolabels



EU Ecolabel
The EU Ecolabel is a label of environmental excellence that is awarded to products and services meeting high environmental standards throughout their life-cycle: from raw material extraction, to production, distribution and disposal. The EU Ecolabel promotes the circular economy by encouraging producers to generate less waste and carbon-dioxide emission during the manufacturing process. The EU Ecolabel criteria also encourages companies to develop products that are durable, easy to repair and recycle.



The Blue Angel (Der Blaue Engel)
The Blue Angel is the very first ecolabel, which has been in use since 1978. The Blue Angel is awarded by the Environmental Label Jury made up of independent experts, the Federal Ministry for the Environment (Germany) and the Federal Environmental Agency.



Eco-friendly product
Look for the, so called third-party certificates and trademarks of your own country which stand for eco-friendly products. As an example, see above/below a trademark from Hungary. The national third-party eco certificates in the European Union have equal for higher standards than the European Ecolabel.

Measurement

Take a tour around the apartment and check out how many types of cleaning products you have.

PLEASE NOTE

- Several bottles/packages etc. of a certain product should be marked as one type. (ex. 6 plastic bottles of vinegar will be marked as 1 or 3 kilograms of washing soda will be marked as → 1.)
- The counting is by storage room to storage room. Do not count the cleaning products more than once. Each product should be indicated only once in the table even if you

use it for multiple functions. For example, if you store the detergent used for cleaning kitchen tiles, baths and toilets in your kitchen cabinet, then list it under the rubric 'Kitchen', and do not put it to any other part of the table.

Most probably you won't run out of your old cleaning products by the end of the EcoTeams. Don't pour them down the drain just to get better results at the end. 😊 It is important that you participate in the follow-up of EcoTeams. Within six months or a year you might be ready to replace your detergent cabinet with a smaller one.

MEASUREMENT	Non ecolabelled products (pcs)			Ecolabelled products (pcs) <small>To identify ecolabels please consult the previous page</small>			Washing soda, baking soda, vinegar, citric acid, washing soap, pharmacy alcohol (pcs)			Single use wet wipes		
	In the beginning of the EcoTeams	At the end of the EcoTeams	Six months later	In the beginning of the EcoTeams	At the end of the EcoTeams	Six months later	In the beginning of the EcoTeams	At the end of the EcoTeams	Six months later	In the beginning of the EcoTeams	At the end of the EcoTeams	Six months later
Bathroom, Toilet												
Kitchen												
Living Room, Room												
Total												

ECOMIRROR	1 never	2	3	4	5 always
What do you use to do the laundry and the dishes?					
Conventional (commercial) detergents					
Ecolabelled (commercial) detergents <small>To identify ecolabels please consult the previous page</small>					
Alternative (natural) detergents (vinegar, washing soda, baking soda, citric acid) <i>Never heard about them? Tick 'Never'.</i>					
What do you use for cleaning?					
Conventional (commercial) detergents					
Ecolabelled (commercial) detergents <small>To identify ecolabels please consult the previous page</small>					
Alternative (natural) detergents (vinegar, washing soda, baking soda, citric acid) <i>Never heard about them? Tick 'Never'.</i>					
I treat the detergent packaging according to the instructions I see on the label (ex. dustbin, household waste recycling center or other)					

1. Take a look at your cleaning products. Name those which you hardly used more than one or two times in the last 12 months.

.....

.....

.....

2. Are there any cleaners that you shouldn't have bought because you could have simply used one which you had had?

.....

.....

.....

3. Can you think of any other cleaning product that you have been planning to abandon or replace?

.....

.....

.....

4. Think about how many cleaning products you really need. Can you narrow down the line to a few cleaning products that you can use in multiple rooms? Ex. degreaser, descaling agent... Would you like to continue the list?

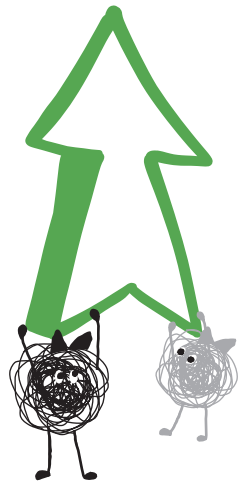
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TIP Before or during the Eco-Teams, you will come across with a range of recipes for DIY cleaning products. Make sure that you do not throw the empty plastic bottles and bottles away. They will be perfect for your homemade detergents. Too many empty bottles? Share them with your teammates.

TIP Find out about alternative cleaners listed in the catalogue attached in appendix. Remember. You can get the (natural) detergent you need, depending on the type of dirt and the surface, at any time, and do not have to buy several plastic bottles with different labels containing the very active ingredient!



Hazard Symbols and Pictograms

The rules of classification, labelling and packaging of chemical substances are defined by the European Union’s CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) Regulation. Household chemicals must be labelled according to their effects on humans and the environment.

Customers may be surprised, but eco-friendly cleaners and essential oils often carry hazard labels. How come?

Eco-friendly cleaners are often labelled with hazard symbols because of the concentration of their substance. For example, some 100% essential oils have both flammable and toxic labels, but of course one would not use them in large quantities undiluted or pour them down the drain.

In other words, even (labelled or natural) environmentally friendly products might be harmful at high concentrations. Of course you would not want to consume ecolabelled pure laundry detergent or citric acid, but the product must be given a hazard label anyway, because of the risks of high concentration use.



Citric acid and baking soda can be packaged either as food and labelled as edible products, or, as cleaning products, labelled with a few hazard symbols due to high concentration.

Dietary acetic acid and citric acid are both strong acids. Inhaling their concentrates is unpleasant. We recommend that you dilute the 20% acetic acid (vinegar) with water, at least half, if it’s for direct use. (For rinsing, you don’t need to dilute it as it will mix with several liters of water anyway). Always open the window when using vinegar. Make sure that you dilute vinegar when cleaning a small room with no windows. Leave the door open and take a break regularly during cleaning.

Do not soak your hands for too long in washing soda water, or use gloves, because washing soda, an excellent degreaser, removes dirt and grease not only from dirty clothes, but from your body parts too. It could cause permanent damage to your skin’s moisture barrier (which is the top layer of your epidermis). To hand-wash your clothing, use a gentle liquid detergent from soap nuts, or choose an eco-friendly, mild laundry detergent.

Never use vinegar to clean granite, marble, or natural stone countertops and tiles—it can damage the surface. Also, vinegar can corrode metal and enamel surfaces.



WARNING Irritant

Skin, eye, respiratory tract



CORROSION

Alkaline or acidic corrosive preparation. It may cause skin corrosion, burns and eye damage.



FLAMMABLE

Keep product and packaging away from sparks and flame.



DANGEROUS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Very toxic product. It has a long-lasting effect on living waters and aquatic life.



ACUTE TOXICITY

The product can cause severe poisoning.



HEALTH HAZARD

The product may cause acute toxicity, skin corrosion, severe eye damage, respiratory sensitization, reproductive toxicity.



Hazard Symbols and Pictograms

TAKE IT WITH YOU!



WARNING Irritant



CORROSION



FLAMMABLE



DANGEROUS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



ACUTE TOXICITY



HEALTH HAZARD



1. BATHROOM, TOILET

Laundry and Rinsing
Descaling
Scents and Air Fresheners

RECIPES

HOMEMADE GEL LAUNDRY DETERGENT

Ingredients:

- 200gr washing soda
- 150 to 200gr washing soap
- 6 tbs baking soda
- tea tree or lemon essential oil

Directions:

Boil 3 liters of water in a pot. Add washing soap shreds. Stir until dissolved and then set it aside. Boil 1 liter of water in a medium pot, then remove it from the stove and add washing soda. Stir until dissolved and leave to cool. When it is lukewarm, add the wash solution to the soapy juice. Add the baking soda and the essential oil. Blend them with an immersion blender until the mixture bleaches and reaches a consistency like pudding. Meanwhile, add water to make sure that your mixture doesn't get too dense. Your cooking will result in 7 liters of homemade gel laundry detergent. Reuse old containers, jars and plastic bottles to fill them with your fresh homemade detergent. Do you find your detergent too dense? Don't worry! You may dilute it with water later, any time you want.

RECIPES

HOMEMADE WASHING POWDER

Ingredients:

- 2 parts washing soda
- 1 part washing soap shreds
- a few drops of essential oil

Directions. Combine the ingredients in a jar and shake it well.

CAVEATS FOR THOSE WHO USE HOMEMADE LAUNDRY DETERGENT

- If you are using essential oil, do not make too much detergent at a time, as the essential oil may become rancid. Rather add essential oil afterwards.
- Clean your immersion blender well after preparing homemade cleaning products with it.
- Make sure to label the containers, jars and bottles which contain cleaning products. When storing, make sure that small children do not have easy access to your homemade products.

Laundry and rinsing



- In more than 90% of households, dishwashing detergents, laundry detergents and fabric softeners are the three most common cleaning products.
- Surfactants in fabric softeners settle and form a layer on textile fibers. Your clothes might feel soft after washing but the residues can irritate the eyes and respiratory passages. Is it worth taking the health risks for soft clothes?
- Rinse-cycle softeners usually contain cationic surfactants as the main active ingredient, which are not completely degradable. They get into the sewage and waterways posing a threat to aquatic species. Therefore, fabric softeners may not be ecolabelled at all.



Is it really necessary to do the laundry? If your clothes are not dirty or sweaty, just hang them out for a few hours—and forget about starting the washing machine. Have a discussion with your family and decide which items you may wear more than once before dumping them to the dirty laundry.

It is easy to prevent your washing machine from getting stinky. Leave both the washing machine door and the dispenser open after the wash cycle has finished, so that they can dry. Do not keep dirty laundry in the washing machine, put it in just before you start the wash cycle.

Make sure that you hang out the laundry as soon as you can after the wash cycle has finished. Look if you have a Rinse Hold option on your machine. The Rinse Hold option stops the washing machine from completing the cycle when you are not around, this helps to ensure creases and smells don't remain by keeping the clothes soaked in water until you are ready for the cycle to complete.



Consider recommended quantities and/or dosage instructions for your machine load.

Try using only half of the recommended quantity, gradually reducing it afterwards. See how efficient each washing cycle was and figure out the least necessary quantity of detergent that is still good for you. Now, mix this quantity (half/third/quarter of the original) of washing powder in half proportion with wash soda.



Try not to use fabric softeners. They are harmful and a waste of money. Do you want to make your clothes smell good? Check out our tips on how to naturally deodorize your clothing! (**Toxic-free green solutions**)



Next time you look for laundry detergent, choose an ecolabelled product.



Try one of these simple tricks when doing the laundry.

Washing soda—Put two tablespoons of washing soda into the drum or the dispenser.

Washing soap shreds—Mix a tablespoon of shreds with 200 ml of warm water and pour it into the drum.

Soap nuts for dark (!) clothes—Take 4 to 5 soap nuts and place them in a small canvas bag. Tie the bag and throw it in the drum after you've loaded your laundry (for washing above 40 °C).

Liquid detergent from soap nuts, for low temperature washing (30 °C) - Place 4 to 5 soap nuts in a bowl and add hot water. Soak the nuts overnight. Add some fresh water to the juice and pour it into the drum.

Use vinegar for the rinse cycle. You'll need 50 to 100 ml vinegar/wash cycle only. Do not fancy the smell of vinegar? Add 5 to 10 drops of essential oil or 2 to 5 drops of laundry perfume to get scented vinegar for your laundry.



STAIN REMOVAL

Coffee stain Take 2 to 3 drops of pharmacy alcohol and rub the stain thoroughly, working from the center. Then wash as you normally would.

Tomato stain If the fabric is washable, run cold water through the back of the stain as quickly as possible and let the fabric dry on the sun. Incredible, isn't it? The stain has gone!

Armpit stains (from deodorant or sweat) Rub the stain with a mixture of baking soda and water. Be careful with colored clothes. Pre-treat them with a small quantity.

Blood stain, baby poo stains from diaper, nasty shirt collar, dried stains Rub the stain with ox gall soap and leave for half an hour or an hour. Then rinse. Repeat this treatment if necessary. You may put it in the wash cycle without rinsing the soap off.

Chewing gum Put the item of clothes in the deep freezer. The frozen gum is easier to remove. Use ice cubes to get the gum out of the carpet.

For bleaching, *sodium perborate* has worked for us. Put 1 to 2 tablespoons of sodium perborate with the white laundry in the drum and wash at 40 or 60°C.

Did you know? UV light bleaches and disinfects your clothes. Dry your white clothes in the sun, if it's possible.



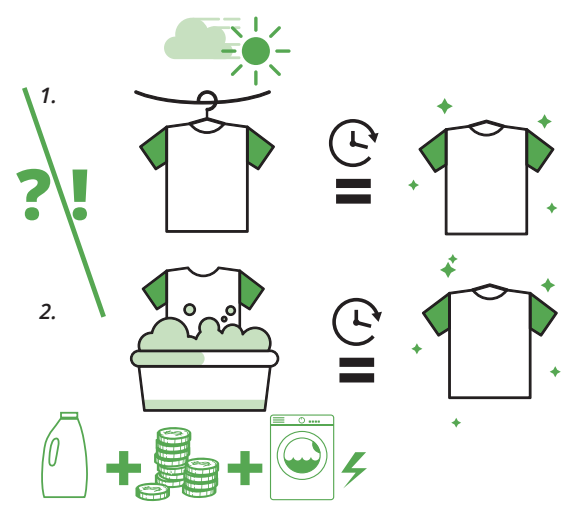
Washing soda, citric acid and baking soda are all available in paper packaging.

You can make your own homemade vinegar or buy it in bulk in a Package Free Shop nearby.

You can use citric acid (dissolved in a bottle of water) instead of vinegar, but please note that it is a weaker acid than vinegar.

This is how much money you may save up

Skip the fabric softener and you will save up to **€ 5 to 27 a year** (= 5 liters of fabric softener).



Try to calculate how much fabric softener you use in a year. How much does it cost for you? What do you think you'd rather spend this money on?



Descaling



- Descaling agents are strong acids, and drain cleaners are strong alkalis, all harmful when released into our sewage and waterways.
- Most disinfectants contain sodium hypochlorite, commonly referred to as bleach. It's a highly reactive, cell damaging agent.
- As soon as combined with an acidic cleanser (descaling agent, vinegar), bleach releases chlorine gas, which has a choking, eye irritating effect and damages the lungs (it's used in the military as a chemical weapon!).



Wiping surfaces dry immediately after showering or cleaning is key to preventing scale buildup.



Dilute your descaling agent and see if it still works.

Go on and dilute your solution further. See if you can still achieve the desired effect.



Try vinegar or alcohol to clean and descale chrome-plated surfaces. Don't like the smell of vinegar? Use citric acid dissolved in water. Citric acid is gentler than vinegar.



Are you facing a clogged drain or limescale in your toilet? Heat 1 liter of water with 100ml vinegar in the kettle and pour it down the drain or toilet. A 2 in 1 trick: a brilliant unclogging technique and a trick to descale your kettle. (Please note that this trick does not fit a kettle with a silicone seal strip on the bottom.) Make sure the water is not too hot in order to prevent the toilet bowl from cracking or damaging the drain.

Do you want to descale ceramic or metal surface? Pour 10% vinegar on an absorbent rag and leave the cloth for several hours on the surface to be cleaned



Commercial descaling agents and scouring & abrasive preparations all come in plastic bottles. You can get vinegar in the Package Free Shop in bulk. Citric acid and baking soda are sold in paper packages.

Discover your neighbourhood with the EcoTeams and find a shop where you can get washing soda, baking soda, citric acid and vinegar in bulk or without packaging. Haven't found a local shop? Order the magic products online, together with your team so that you can save up on delivery costs.

Scents and Air Fresheners



- Air fresheners release Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) to the air, which might lead to eye, nose, and throat irritation; headaches, loss of coordination, nausea; they may increase the risk of developing asthma and allergy.
- Warnings, such as '*Inhaling the spray is forbidden*' and '*Use only in well ventilated areas*', are often indicated on the labels of air fresheners. But the thing is: you will inhale the spray for sure and if you open the window to get some fresh air, why on Earth would you use an artificial air freshener?



Use it less often. Ask yourself each time: do I really need to use this spray now?



It is strongly recommended that you stop using air fresheners as well as fabric softeners because they are detrimental to health. Do not even look for an ecolabelled air freshener or fabric softener. There is no such a thing!



Open the windows more often. This will refresh the air in your home.

Use essential oils instead. While some essential oils are used for anxiety, others have an invigorating effect. Check out the varieties and try out the one you like.



If you are keen on the idea of filling your home with a lovely scent, it's time to make your own air freshener.

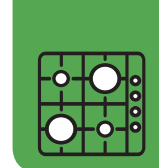
Homemade air freshener from baking soda. This is one of the simplest ways to make your own air freshener. Put a few spoons of baking soda and a couple of drops of essential oil into a small jar with holes in the lid. That's all.

Dried flower home air freshener. Add a few drops of essential oil on dried flowers. Plant fibers act as aroma diffusers and your bouquet will have a lovely scent for several days.



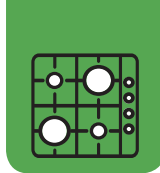
Aerosol cans should be disposed of as hazardous waste. If dumped in the waste rest they might explode at high temperatures generated on the landfill, therefore they must be disposed of at the household waste recycling center. Essential oils are sold in reusable or recyclable bottles. Also, they're tiny, so they don't take up much space.





2. KITCHEN

Dishwashing
Scouring Liquids, Degreasers, Cooktop Cleaners
Mopping, All Purpose Cleaning Products



Dishwashing



- SLS (Sodium Lauryl Sulfate) is the active ingredient in a range of personal care and cleaning products, such as liquid soap, shower gel, shampoo and dishwashing detergents. SLS is inexpensive to produce, cleans brilliantly and is a very effective foaming agent. BUT! It's harsh on your skin. As a chemical exfoliant, it strips the skin of its natural oils which damages your skin's defense system and may lead to dry skin, irritation and reactions. In extreme cases, SLS may be associated with the development of eczema.

- Dishwasher detergents may also cause skin irritation. As it is often indicated on the label, the substances should not contact the human body. So how come we let them contact our plates and glasses?

- Most dishwasher detergents contain phosphate, phosphonate and chlorine which are harmful to health and aquatic life.



Try to keep up with the washing up, as you will need to spend much more time and energy washing dry dishes. If you can't do them immediately, soak them or just use the plug while you do the washing, so the dirtiest dishes left at the end will „soak“ by the time you wash the glasses.



Dilute your hand dishwashing detergent and keep the dose (ex. 1 drop) that you used before.

Break dishwasher tablets in half. Be careful. As it is indicated on some of the dishwasher tablets' packages, tablets might have a hazardous effect on your skin. Check the label and if this is the case, put the rubber gloves on.



Ecolabelled hand dishwashing detergents and dishwasher tablets are now available at most of the supermarkets and drugstores. Give it a try!



Next time you wash up, instead of rinse aids put vinegar or citric acid in the dispenser. You won't have any water spots left on your dishes! Vinegar and citric acid are excellent, toxic-free descaling agents.



Washing soda is a fantastic degreaser. The outer layer of grease on old dishes can be cut by soaking in lukewarm washing water with washing soda. Let it sit an hour or two and scour gently.

Baking soda also works well alone as a degreaser. Are you challenged by coffee and tea stains on your old jars, pots, mugs and cups? Let the dish sit in a solution of water and baking soda overnight. The day after, rinse with water without rubbing too much.

Glue left on the jar by the label or sticker can easily be removed with a mixture of baking soda and oil. Apply a thick but spreadable paste by rubbing the glue left by the sticker.

Want to avoid stains left on your dishes after wash up? A combination of vinegar and alcohol placed in the dispenser of the dishwasher is the trick!



Hand dishwashing detergents in bulk have been on offer in Package Free Shops. Find the places where you can refill your plastic bottle with natural hand dishwashing detergent.

Most dishwasher tablets come individually wrapped in a plastic bag, plus packed in paper containers. In contrast, some eco-friendly brand products are available in paper packaging only. Ingredients of the homemade dishwasher tablets are available in paper packaging.

Scouring Liquids, Degreasers, Cooktop Cleaners



- Scouring powders contain chlorinated active ingredient and phosphate, while some dish cleaners contain strong acids or alkalis (sodium or potassium hydroxide). They damage the human skin and respiratory organs when inhaling, and the aquatic life when getting into wastewater.

- Natural and synthetic degreasers could cause permanent damage to your skin's moisture barrier, which is the top layer of your epidermis.



Let dirty dishes sit in water overnight first, then try rubbing. This way, you might be able to skip scouring liquids/powder.

Wipe off any stains, such as spilled milk, as quickly as you can. Or else, scrubbing off burn stains from the stovetop will take you much more time and energy.



Cut your kitchen chemical use in half. See what happens. Do you really need to use as much as you used to?

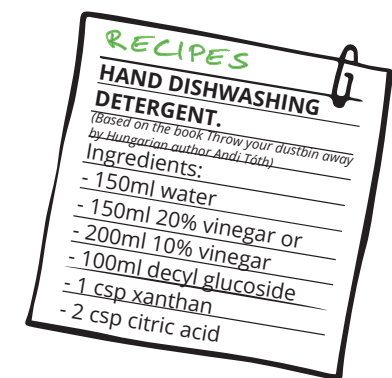
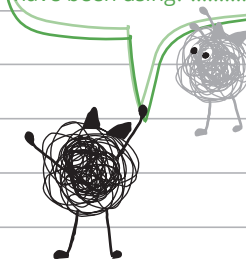


Try and use baking soda or table salt as degreaser.

Do you want to clean your dishes? Try lemon or vinegar.



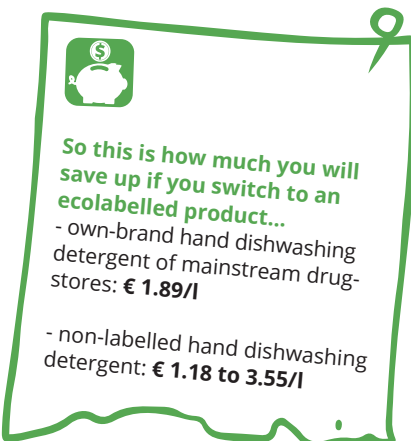
Check out what types of EU Ecolabelled hand dishwashing detergents are offered by the supermarkets and drugstores in your neighbourhood. How much are they?€/l
How much is the product you have been using?€/l



Directions:
Stir ingredients in a bowl. To make tablets, spray water with a spray bottle until thick like play dough. Put in ice cube tray or make balls. Dry a couple of days.



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Stir ingredients in a bowl. To make tablets, spray water with a spray bottle until thick like play dough. Put in ice cube tray or make balls. Dry a couple of days.



RECIPES

ALL PURPOSE CLEANER
(Based on the book Throw your dustbin away by Hungarian author Andi Tóth)

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp washing soda
- hot water
- (a few drops of hand dish-washing detergent)

Directions:
Place washing soda in a spray bottle (of 1liter) and fill it almost up with water. Add other ingredients. Grease stains can easily be removed from walls and piles.

Leave stand after application, if necessary. Then rub gently. Finally, wipe it off with wet cloth to prevent the build-up of sediment resulting from the saponification of the greasy dirt.

RECIPES

ALL PURPOSE CLEANING SPRAY
(Based on the book Throw your dustbin away by Hungarian author Andi Tóth)

Ingredients:

- 700ml water
- 300ml vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of hand dish-washing detergent or liquid detergent from soap nuts
- 1 coffeespoon citric acid (essential oil)

Directions:
Fill the mixture in a spray bottle and shake it well. You're done! Always shake well before using.



The best remedy for a scorched pan (unless it's a Teflon) is a combination of baking soda and boiling water. Place water and baking soda in the pan, bring to a boil and cool. Remove the burned-on food with a wooden spatula and enjoy that you can skip scrubbing.

Give your oven and baking pan a vinegar steam bath. Place a large metal baking dish filled with water and about 1/2 cup of white vinegar. Heat at 350° and let the water bubble, steam, and do its thing. When done, scrub the oven. If you wish to do this in an energy efficient manner, turn the oven off after baking and use the heat for the steam bath. Don't stand over the oven door when opening it – the blast of hot air and steam could be dangerous. Do not steam clean enamel ovens.

Apply washing soda to remove greasy buildups and baking soda instead of abrasive preparations. Apply a mixture of one part washing soda and one part baking soda in case both actions are necessary.



Most of the ingredients of this recipe are available in paper packaging.

Mopping, All Purpose Cleaning Products



- With a turnover of € 38 401 323, all purpose cleaners are the most popular cleaning products in Hungary.
- The recently extremely popular single use wet wipes are made of non-degradable plastics and are impregnated with risky chemicals. To make it all worse, a range of such products is available for different surfaces. Do you really need them? Yes? Then make your own cleaning wipes!



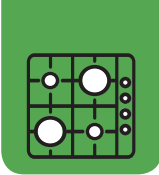
Don't place potted plants on wood furniture or on the parquet. Use a tray or a rolling plant stand. Spilled water thus easily could be cleaned up.



Cut your cleaner agent use in half and see how efficient the cleaning was. Next time reduce this quantity again and see what happens.



Next time you go shopping, search for an ecolabelled green product



Just two ingredients, warm water and vinegar, will give you everything you need to clean and shine your parquet floor.
Do not apply vinegar on hardwood floor.
Clean ceramic tile with a solution of washing soda or soap and warm water.



Place soap nuts into a pot of water and boil or soak. To make mop water or wipe off the dust, mix in a tablespoon of your homemade detergent to warm water.

Did you know? You may mop up and wipe off the dust with a single piece of wet cloth. Without any substances added. Cleaning tile floors with hot water is more effective than using cold water.

To wash your mop head, create a mixture of 3 tablespoons of washing soda and 1 tablespoon of baking soda and half a bucket of warm water. Soak the mop head in the solution for a night.

Vinegar and alcohol are amazing all purpose cleaners but vinegar is not a great degreaser, so do not use it for massive grease buildups.



Most of the ingredients of this recipe are available without packaging, in a refill bottle or in paper packaging.

Find out where (in your neighbourhood) to get washing soda or citric acid in bulk. How much are they?

..... €/kg washing soda

..... €/kg citric acid

This is how much money you may save up

- 5 liters of commercial all-purpose cleaning products cost you **€ 11.8/year**
- 5 liters of the homemade product would be just **€ 1.18/year**



3. THE LIVING ROOM

Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners
Wooden Furniture and Parquet Floor
Windows and Mirrors
Single Use Wet Wipes



Directions:
Shake well, and apply to the leather using a soft cloth. Work in a circular motion, covering the entire surface. Rub in thoroughly, let it sit for about 10 minutes, then buff with a soft cloth to bring a shine to the leather surface.

Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners



During the manufacture of carpets and upholstery, products are treated with flame retardants, stain and water repellents, anti-mould agents and fungicides, which are all highly fluorinated substances and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These chemicals, released in our home, raise grave concern about indoor air pollution, therefore we strongly recommend you to skip the use of risky 'cleaning' agents.



Frequent use, light and fresh air are natural enemies of moths. To fight the moths, reverse or move your carpet at least once every six months.

When placing potted plant on the carpet, put a large tray under its plate. This way, if the flower pot is leaking or overflows, you won't have to clean the carpet.

Use a tray when eating or drinking on the sofa. It is much easier to remove stains from the tray compared to the upholstery and the top cushion of the sofa.



Try to reduce the quantity of cleaning products that you use. Next time reduce this quantity further and see what happens.



Next time you go shopping look around and see if you can find an ecolabelled green product.



To make your carpet shiny, apply a solution of water and a bit of vinegar.

Have you stained your carpet with red wine? Quickly pour transparent alcohol on the stain (white wine, vodka, or pharmacy alcohol), and then cover the entire stain with salt. As the salt dries, it should suck up the stain. Then, use a wet sponge to clean.



CARPETS, RUGS AND UPHOLSTERIES

If you have a rug and it is not too big, you can throw it in the washing machine. Lay the wool carpet in fresh, thick snow and rub the exposed surface with snow. Shake the rug out, turn it over on a fresh patch of snow, and rub the other side. The colors come alive. Only recommended if you have the space and ability to dry completely afterwards! Ask your friends if someone has a carpet steam cleaner. They will surely lend it to you once in a year. Or rent one together with your friends or neighbours. Before using the steam cleaner, check whether you may use it on your carpet. Not recommended for wool and Persian carpets.

To remove grease stain from the sofa, rub the surface with a solution of 100ml lukewarm water and 1 tablespoon of washing soda, let it sit for a while and wipe it off with a clean wet sponge.



FOR LEATHER FURNITURE

To remove ink from a leather couch, apply a solution of one part 10% vinegar and one part water.

In case the leather is very dirty or has a lot of stains, mix a tablespoon of vinegar in a bucket of lukewarm water. Wipe the surface thoroughly with a twisted cloth or sponge, then go over the treated area of the leather with a soft towel.

Wooden Furniture and Parquet Floor



The materials of floors and furniture are treated with flame retardants, fungicides and preservatives, which can have a harmful effect on the nervous system, hormone balance and may also lead to allergic reactions. Harmful ingredients in cleaning products contribute to poor air quality in your home.

If solvents in paste wax do not evaporate but penetrate deeper, they might soften or remove the lower wax layer from the traditionally polished or waxed wooden surface. Hard waxes (such as beeswax) do not contain any solvent.



Put a large plate under potted plants which are placed on the top of a wooden furniture piece.

Untreated wooden table surface should be protected with a wax cloth.

Do not waste money on risky furniture care products. Instead, wipe off wooden surfaces regularly with a dry, or wet but well twisted cloth.



Cut your cleaner agent use in half. See how efficient the cleaning is. Next time reduce this quantity again and see what happens.



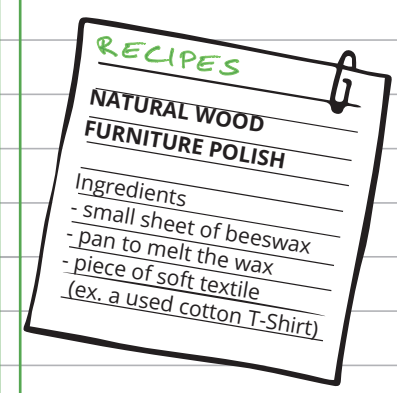
Next time you go shopping pick an ecolabelled product.



Melted beeswax is excellent for lacquered wood surface. Wipe the surface every 2 to 3 months.

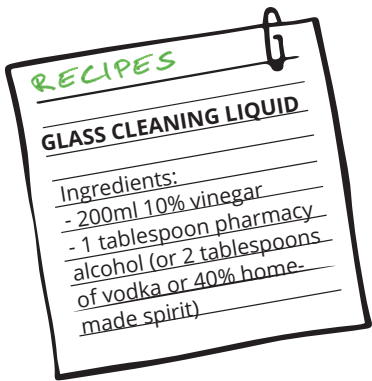


Get your beeswax directly from beekeepers at fairs, without packaging!



Directions:
Clean the surface thoroughly or wipe off the dust if it is necessary. Melt the beeswax over steam and spread it evenly on the surface. Let it cool, then wipe with a clean, soft cloth.





Directions:
Place ingredients in a half liter spray bottle. Fill the bottle up with water. Streaks on the window? Add more alcohol to your solution.

Windows and Mirrors



- Glass cleaners generally contain diethylene glycol. This substance can irritate your nose, mouth and throat and regular use can cause damage to the nervous system, liver and kidneys.
- Most fragrance cleaners, especially windscreen washer fluid, detergent and rinse aid are based on phthalates that are released by a slow and prolonged evaporation. Phthalates also cause a reaction in the endocrine system that leads to disruption and ultimately impacts reproductive health.



Cut your cleaner agent use in half. See how efficient the cleaning is. Next time reduce this quantity again and see what happens.



Next time you buy a glass cleaner, be brave and choose an ecolabelled product.



Try a mixture of vinegar and water for cleaning the windows.

Compared to cloths or wipes, it's amazing how effective non-glossy newspapers are! No streaks or stains!



Adding a small amount of pharmacy alcohol (vodka or home-made spirit) to your mixture dries the surface without leaving any streaks or stains.



Get the vinegar in bulk and the alcohol in bottle. If you use home-made spirit, you will surely be able to reuse the bottle 😊

Single Use Wet Wipes



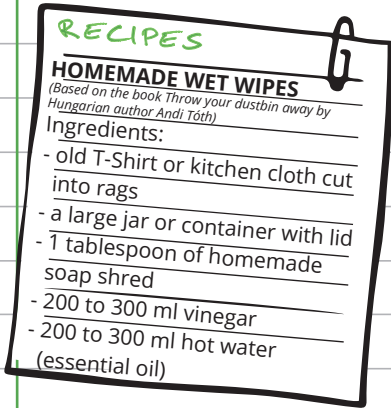
- Material: Non-biodegradable conventional plastics or PLA. This latter can be degraded abiotically by industrial mechanisms only.
- In Hungary, almost € 6 million is spent on single use wet wipes each year.
- Flushing regular wipes down the toilet will clog your drain because they don't biodegrade.
- They are impregnated with preservatives and fragrances, which might be harmful for the environment and human health.



Here is an alternative to the evil wipes!
Make your own dusting mitts out of old t-shirts! + pharmacy alcohol or denatured alcohol



Because wipes + their packaging normally end up in the waste rest, they pose a challenge for waste management experts.



Directions:
Dissolve soap shred in a bowl of warm water and mix with other ingredients. Dip the cloth one by one into the mixture, squeeze them thoroughly and fold them into the container.



What's next?

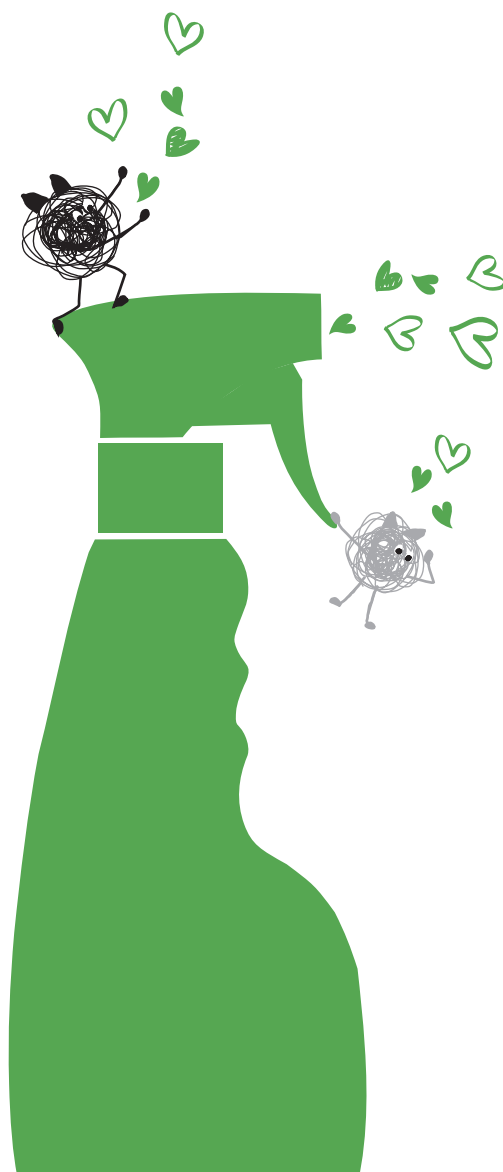
THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THE ECOTEAM JOURNEY.

Now lean back and take a break. You deserve a friendly hug, a pat on the shoulder. Participating in the EcoTeams was surely not an everyday adventure. The time has come to celebrate together!

Look back on your journey and realize how much you managed to change. You did some of the tasks easily while others were a real challenge. Be happy about the changes that you have made and do not bother about the unmet challenges. You have done so much!

Now, keep going with the changes, which have made your everyday life more sustainable, healthier, more varied or cheaper. Keep going with the changes, which have given you success and self-confidence. Keep the changes which have given you respect within the family and those which helped you get together with new people or get closer with your friends and neighbours.

There is still work to be done though. The secret of the EcoTeams is to advance beyond your personal achievement and prompt others to go green and healthy in their households. Do you feel the power to be one of the EcoTeam coaches in the future? Apply now for the EcoTeam Coach Training of the Association of Conscious Consumers! Recruit new members among your friends and let's get started! For more information visit → www.tudatosvasarlo.hu/okokorok



The **Association of Conscious Consumers** has been promoting ethical, environmentally sustainable and socially conscious consumption and lifestyle since 2002. Our team has been doing its utmost to ensure that environmental and social aspects are considered when consumers make their choice.

We build on cooperation and look for positive responses, progressive solutions. However, success won't be achieved without **You! Be a member of our community!**

The activities of the Association of Conscious Consumers

CONSCIOUS CONSUMER MAGAZINE

Check out our online magazine and be up-to-date on ethical consumption issues—the magazine is a selection of hand-picked articles and videos to help you go green.

→ <http://tudatosvasarlo.hu>

PRODUCT AND SERVICE TESTING

Based on lab tests and labels, our tests will help you choose the more sustainable, healthier, more durable and environmental-friendly products. The test results can be filtered by multiple criteria. → <http://tesztek.tudatosvasarlar.hu>

WHICH DETERGENT SHALL I CHOOSE?—THE CONSCIOUS CONSUMER APP

Would you like to know how risky your laundry/ dishwashing detergent is to your health and the environment? Scan the barcode with your phone and the Conscious Consumer App will tell you the environmental and health ranking of the product. The Green&Safe LIFE-styles project offers information materials and campaigns to you so that you can go green when cleaning your home.

LABEL DATABASE

Are you puzzled by the labels? Anxious about greenwashing? Check out our database containing almost one hundred different labels of products and services.

→ <http://tudatosvasarlo.hu/cimke>

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

Join this project and buy your local and seasonal food directly from farmers. The Association of Conscious Consumers promotes CSA through trainings, articles, videos and databases. Through the CSA project farmers and consumers find each other and start building new communities. ➔ <http://tudatosvasarlo.hu/csa>

FAIR TRADE

Studies, campaigns, articles and videos about fair trade.

→ http://tudatosvasarlo.hu/meltanyos_kereskedelem