

JUNE 2008

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SPOTLIGHT



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InMotion

Our job is getting you to yours!

HOME DEPOT STEPS FORWARD

Home Depot will create the largest network of compact fluorescent light bulb recycling centers at its 1,973 U.S. stores, the *New York Times* reports.

Although CFLs have many environmental benefits, they do contain a small amount of mercury, and so need to be disposed of properly.

CFLs contain up to 5 milligrams of mercury, which is quite a small amount; compare that to older home thermostats and mercury fever thermometers, which contain from 500 to 3,000 milligrams. But given that nearly 300 million CFLs were sold in the U.S. in 2007, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, it can still be a concern.

Besides Home Depot, other options for recycling and safe disposal include Ikea and True Value stores, community hazardous waste collection sites and Sylvania's RECYCLEPAK program.

Home Depot's program will make it easier for more people to recycle, since there's a Home Depot within 10 miles of 75% of the American population, according to a Home Depot official quoted in the *Times*.

Disposing of used CFLs might seem like a bit of a pain, especially if you have to pay, but note that the recycling cost amounts to just about 1% of the total amount of money you'll spend on a bulb in its lifetime, since energy use is the lion's share. Also note that if you do have a broken bulb, don't handle it with bare hands. Pick up the fragments with a paper towel, seal in a plastic bag, and take to a recycling center. Ventilate the room thoroughly to push out any mercury vapor.



Happy July 4th!

Green Cleaning - Your Grandma would be proud!

It is easier than you think to clean your home in an environmentally friendly way! The most compelling reason to use green cleaners is to keep potent toxins out of your home. Many household cleaners contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which can cause eye, nose and throat irritation, headaches, loss of coordination, nausea, and damage to the central nervous system, as well as the liver and kidneys.

In 2000, cleaning products were responsible for nearly 10 percent of all toxic exposures report to the US poison control centers (over 206,000 calls).

Green cleaners contain ingredients to make them readily available and inexpensive. Basic ingredients for Green Cleaners are:

- White vinegar** – effective as anti-fungal and anti-bacterial
- Baking soda** – effective as scouring powder, odor eliminator
- Borax** – effective as odor eliminator, dirt remover, anti fungal
- Hydrogen peroxide** – effective as bleach, stain remover, disinfectant
- Club soda** – effective as stain remover, glass cleaner, polisher
- Lemon juice** – effective as bleach, grease-cutter, stain remover
- Liquid castile soap** (soap made from vegetable oil) – effective as all purpose cleaner, grease-cutter
- Corn meal** – effective as carpet spill absorber
- Olive oil** – effective as furniture polish
- Essential oils** – effective as scent additive

According to Earth Keeper – a few Green Cleaner recipes are:

- **All-purpose cleaning spray:** add 2 tablespoons white vinegar to 1 teaspoon borax powder in a spray bottle. Add very hot water, leaving room for ¼ cup castile soap and shake until borax is dissolved; add the castile soap.
- **Glass cleaner:** use club soda in a spray bottle or use ¼ cup vinegar and fill the spray bottle with water. Use newspaper or a clean terry cloth rag to finish the job.
- **Bathroom cleaner:** use baking soda or borax as a scouring powder; use club soda or baking soda to shine plumbing fixtures.
- **Bathroom bowl cleaner:** sprinkle baking soda or borax or pour white vinegar into the toilet and let sit for a few minutes. Scrub with a good toilet brush.
- **Wood polish:** use a mixture of one teaspoon olive oil and ½ cup white vinegar. Apply with a soft cloth terry cloth and rub.
- **Mold remover:** combine ½ cup hydrogen peroxide or white vinegar with 1 cup water. Spray on mold. Do not rinse.

Green cleaners are easy to make and so affordable. The Clean Air Partnership of Williamson County encourages you to keep toxins out of your home and away from your family, and clean with products that are good for the environment and will still get ride of dirt and germs.

Daily Air Quality Reports on the Air

WAKM AM950 broadcasts the Environmental Report™ each day on the major newscasts featuring the Air Quality Index, the Air Quality forecast, the UV index, and Heat/Cold index. In case of an Air Alert Day, WAKM AM950 broadcasts the information hourly until the situation eases.



Clean Air Partners of Williamson County 2008-09

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