

# Uncommon Uses For Common Household Items



**Re-Cycle  
Re-Use  
AND  
Save  
Loads of  
Money  
...NOW!**



# ReUse, Repair & Reduce Household Bills

Extraordinary Uses for Ordinary Household Items



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## Introduction

In England alone we have to dispose of over 20 million tons of municipal waste in landfill sites every year. Can you imagine the waste mountains that could poison the earth in 100 years?

And what about the energy and artificial chemicals that are expended in making all these disposable items, most of which will never break down safely in the environment?

Have you ever thought about all the items that you personally throw away? Well, it has been published by the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs that statistically over 500kg of waste per person, in England, is collected every year. Isn't it time you thought about the consequences of this?

Have you ever seen a fish tank that is never cleaned out? It gets dirtier and dirtier until it is unable to support life and the fish are poisoned in their own waste. It may seem like a strange analogy, but a fish tank is a microcosm of the environment and a perfect example of how waste can build up if there is nothing there to deal with it. It is a fact that the industrialised world is running out of safe places to dispose of its waste.  
**We really do need to act now! Before it is too late.**

Okay, in an ideal world we would place a ban on pollutants and industry would work with only environmentally safe chemicals. Mr, Mrs, Miss and Ms Ideal would boycott all artificial and petrochemical by-products from their lives and would recycle everything, including their own biological waste. But, this is far from an 'Ideal' world, and realistically, an industrialised society would not allow this to happen, there is too much money, and power, at stake.

## **Introduction (Cont.)**

You really do not have to belong to the ‘Ideal’ family to make a change for the better. It is not suggested that you become one of those brave families who reject modern society and refuse to purchase any plastics or commercial products. But you can make a difference if you reuse some of this packaging instead of polluting the environment with it, and the things you cannot reuse you can take to a recycling bin. Can you imagine the beneficial effects it would have on the environment if everyone just took a little time to utilise their waste products every week? And it is very easy to do. So don’t wait until your neighbours do it, take control now. It could even save you a lot of money on your weekly shopping bill!

**Please ask yourself if you really need all those household cleaners. Or could you simply make your own with ingredients you already have in your cupboards?**

This book will show you how you can start to make a difference right now. And, as you use this book, you will probably begin to see how you can use more and more things without adding to the waste mountain that is set to blight our children’s lives. Remember: ‘reusing’ will save you so much money on your weekly shopping bill that you cannot afford not to do it. And, you will be doing your bit to help the environment for future generations.

**A-Z**

**How to ReUse  
Ordinary Household Items**



### **ALUMINIUM FOIL**

#### **Blackout and Insulated Curtains**

Line your curtains by sewing strips of aluminium foil between the curtain and liner. The foil acts as an insulator and a blackout. If applying foil to curtains that are made of a thinner material, be careful not to scrunch them up when opening or closing.

#### **Boot Insulator**

Using an insole as a template, cut out a couple of layers of tin or aluminium foil. Place under insoles to insulate the boots and make them warmer in winter.

#### **Cabbage and Carrot Collars**

Cut out rings of foil, make a small hole in the centre, just enough to take the stem of a cabbage or carrot plant (ring doughnut shaped) and place around cabbage or carrot plants, to deter cabbage root fly and carrot fly.

#### **Celebration Decorations**

- Cut strips of foil and staple them into interlocking rings to form a long silver chain, this can be used for bunting at celebrations such as Christmas, weddings, Divali, etc. NB: Small foil rings 1cm x 6cm made into a long chain can be draped over a Christmas tree in a spiral from top to bottom.
- Using an ordinary drinking glass as a template cut out rings of foil. Place at least six rings in a pile, fold in half and stitch or staple along the fold. Open out into a 'sphere' shape and attach a piece of cotton in a loop to hang up. Use for tree decorations etc. NB: small spheres using 2p pieces are also very effective.

See - Pest Repellents – below.

## **Aluminium Foil**

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### **Cocktail Stick Holder**

Cover a strainer or half a white cabbage with foil and push pineapple, cheese, cocktail sausages on sticks through the foil. It's great for children's parties.

### **Cooking Aid**

- Soften up those bread rolls: take newly baked rolls from the oven and place immediately in foil and they will become soft rolls.
- Keep the heat in cooked foods by wrapping immediately in foil.
- To keep pizzas or pies from burning around the edges by covering the edges with foil. Cut out a small ring from the middle of the foil so that the middle of the pizza or pie is allowed to cook normally.

### **Damp Stop**

If you have an area of damp and need a quick cosmetic fix, paste a piece of aluminium foil over the damp patch, make sure it is covered with a 15cm overlap. Then wallpaper over the foil and your wallpaper will be protected from the damp patch.

### **Electrical Interference**

If your electrical goods are so close together that they cause interference, which manifests as a snowy appearance on screens or a crackling sound, putting a 'pad' of aluminium foil between them may alleviate the problem.

### **Flower Power**

I don't know about you but I am hopeless at flower arranging. For an inexpensive way to make flower arranging easier, save up your foil sweet wrappers or odd bits of foil. Roll them between your fingers and palms and store them in the bottom of a vase. When

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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you have flowers just add water to the vase and the flowers will be supported by the foil spheres. Much easier! And they look very attractive in a glass vase too. Discard after use and begin again.

### **Heat Intensifier**

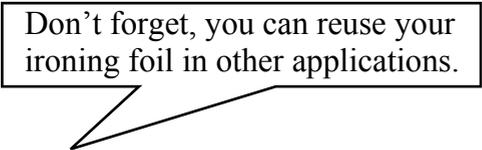
Cover thin heat-proof boards with foil and place behind the radiators, this will reflect the heat back into the room and not be absorbed by the wall. It will save quite a bit of money over the course of a year.

### **Hot Water Bottle Warmer**

Don't you just hate it when your hot water bottle has gone cold. Just wrap the hot water bottle in aluminium foil before putting on the cover and it will remain warm for longer.

### **Ice Lolly Catcher**

Put an ice lolly into a moulded piece of foil before you give it to a child, the melted ice will drip into the foil, and if the lolly breaks the foil will catch it.



Don't forget, you can reuse your ironing foil in other applications.

### **Ironing Mate**

Place a piece of aluminium foil on your ironing board and iron your clothes. The heat reflects back and the ironing takes less time and on most items you won't need to iron the other side.

### **Oven Liner**

Don't you just hate cleaning your oven? But, now you don't have to, when you line it with aluminium foil. This works with the grill pan too. It saves hours trying to scrub them clean or using harsh chemicals. NB: Do not line non-stick surfaces in the oven, it may scratch them.

## **Aluminium Foil**

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### **Painting Partner**

Fold the foil a few times so that it has one long straight edge. Place this butted up against a window frame, doorjamb, skirting board etc. to protect the unpainted surface. Fold the opposite side over tightly to form a handle, and it will be easier to keep the straight edge butted up against the painting surface.

### **Pan Scourers**

Scrunched up aluminium foil will clean your pans and bakeware beautifully, but remember not to use it on non-stick or easily scratched pans!

### **Pest Repellents**

The celebration decorations (page 13) made out of aluminium foil are perfect for draping over crops and protecting seedlings. They can repel both insects and birds.

### **Planting Pots**

Use up your old aluminium foil by making plant pots: cut into 25cm x 14cm rectangles, wrap around a deodorant can, with 3-4cm protruding at the bottom of the base. Press foil into the base and take off the can, you should now have a 'pot'. Cut down 2cms from top in 1cm strips to form a fringe around the top. These will act as light reflectors and protect your new seedlings from draughts. Don't forget to poke some drainage holes in the bottom.

Fill with a little gravel in the bottom, top up with potting compost and use for potting up seedlings, place in clean seed trays. Raise the fringe slightly to reflect the light onto seedlings and protect delicate stems from cold draughts.

### **Present Perfect**

So you have just gone out and bought a brilliant present but have forgotten to get any wrapping paper. Just cut a sheet of aluminium foil and wrap in hi-tech silver. You can even cut out pictures from

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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magazines or old greetings cards and stick onto the foil for an individual 'designer wrapped' present.

### **Silver Cleaner**

Did you know that a few strips of aluminium foil can be the ideal silver cleaner? Not many people do! But, if you line a bowl with aluminium foil, crumple a few bits and add to the bowl with hot water and dissolved washing soda, the chemical reaction between the aluminium and soda will clean all your silver. Do make sure that your silver touches the foil at some point in the cleaning process. The best thing about this is that you do not have to use harsh chemicals and it cleans in all the little intricate places normal rubbing misses. Rinse well, dry and buff with a soft, clean cloth.

NB: This must be pure 'aluminium' foil and not tin foil or kitchen foil or it will not work.

## **BABY WIPES**

### **Office Wipes**

Baby wipes are great for cleaning keyboards on computers, word processors and calculators. They are also good for keeping hands from becoming sweaty when typing.

## **BAKEWARE**

### **Aluminium Bird Scarer**

Old aluminium plates and dishes can be used as a bird deterrent when threaded on a line and hung around pea or bean plants etc.

### **Corn on the Cob Holder**

A ring jelly mould or angel cake tin (with a hole in the centre) is ideal for holding hot corn on the cob steady as you slice off the kernels of corn. Just pop the cob in the centre and cut. If the cob is

## **Bakeware / Balloons**

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too slim, wrap the bottom in a few layers of unbleached, food quality kitchen paper.

### **Desk Tidy**

An old 12 slot fairy-cake tin or muffin tin is ideal for holding paper clips, elastic bands, erasers, drawing pins, blue tak, tacks, etc. It can be fixed, with a screw and washer, to the underneath of a desk top or shelf, or can be simply placed in a drawer. If fixed, it can be swiveled out when needed and hidden away when not. Ideal for the shed, garage or office.

## **BALLOONS**

### **Bandage (Finger) Protectors**

Pop a long thin balloon over your bandage or hurt finger to protect it from moisture, especially when putting hands into water.

### **Flower Transporter**

Have you ever cut flowers and wished that you could take them to a relative or friend a few miles away without them wilting? The ideal solution is to put some water into the bottom of a balloon followed by the cut flowers. If necessary put an elastic band over the stems and balloon to keep it in place and make sure that you stand it upright during the journey. You can also use the same method to arrange flowers in a non-watertight vase or unusual receptacle. No one will ever know your secret.

### **Hand or Foot Warmer**

Put a little warm water in a balloon, tie the top and slip into the palm of your hand (and put some stretchy gloves on), or inside a pocket. It will keep your hands warm when you have to go outside. It can also be used slipped just inside wellington boots, and very good slipped inside gloves when handling snow or ice. Remember to tie the top tightly.

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### **Hat Saver**

An inflated balloon will help to keep your hat from losing its shape. Place the hat over the balloon when storing.

### **Ice Packs**

Going on a picnic and need larger ice packs that last longer? Just fill a balloon with water, leaving space for it to expand further, and freeze. Do not use the water to drink.

### **Mouthpiece Cover**

Slip a balloon over the mouthpiece of a musical instrument to keep it free of dust. Wipe before use.

### **Noisy Balloons**

Before blowing up balloon add few rounded lentils or small dried beans, place the balloon on a piece of elastic and bounce it off your hand for a very noisy time.

## **BANANA SKINS**

### **Compost Starter**

Banana skins added to the compost heap adds much needed nutrients, and helps the compost to rot down more efficiently.

### **Shoe Cleaner**

If you need a quick shine for your shoes use the inside of a banana skin and buff with a clean, soft cloth.

### **Silver Cleaner**

A mashed banana skin makes a good silver cleaner.

### **Potato Food**

When planting seed potatoes add a couple of banana skins to the soil around the potato, they will help to feed the growing plant with essential nutrients such as potassium etc.

## **Basting Syringe**

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### **BASTING SYRINGE**

Keep a spare basting syringe / turkey baster for using around the house. Use a different coloured baster for culinary use.

#### **Batter without Splatter**

Any type of runny batter can be sucked up by a basting syringe and deposited quickly and easily in relevant cooking tin/pan. Pancakes, drop scones, brandy snaps, muffins, etc.

#### **Candle Power**

Fill a glass candle or oil lamp with lamp oil using a basing syringe, but make sure that the syringe is not used for drinking water or culinary use afterwards.

#### **Flower Water Changer**

Quickly and easily change the water in your vase without moving the flower arrangement by using a turkey baster to first siphon the dirty water out and then squirt clean water back in.

#### **Fill a Water Reservoir**

It is difficult to fill the water reservoir in steam curlers, straightening irons, steam irons, etc. Not any more! A basting syringe is the ideal way to make sure that filling steam appliances is no longer a chore.

#### **Liquid Lifter**

Any spilled liquid can be quickly siphoned up using an ordinary turkey baster. Raw egg can be particularly difficult to clean up, with a baster it is easy.

#### **Pet's Water Bowl Filler**

Ever wondered how to change a pet's water bowl without opening their cage door? A basting syringe is the answer. It siphons up the old water and then you can fill the water pot with fresh, clean water

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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again using the washed siphon. It's great for changing the water of birds that are liable to escape whilst the door is open.

### **Seedling Waterer**

A turkey baster can be used to water seedlings, by dribbling the water in between the vulnerable plants without damaging them.

### **Siphon without Sucking**

Anyone who has tried to siphon liquid from a fish tank or fuel from a fuel tank will know that it is not nice when you get a mouthful of the liquid. With a basting syringe it is much easier to do. Just place the syringe at the end of the siphoning tube, squeeze to make sure of an airtight fit, and start off the siphoning process with the baster, not your mouth.

## **BEDDING**

### **Duvets and Pillows**

Old duvets and pillows can be washed and used as pet beds, if you don't want them, try your local animal sanctuary, they may be very pleased to have them.

### **Sheets**

Old sheets with no holes can be used for a variety of household chores:

- ◆ Before painting, lay an old sheet over carpets to stop any splashes.
- ◆ Old sheets make ideal dust covers for furniture, while away on holiday or while decorating.
- ◆ Use old sheets to catch hedge clippings, they can be folded and dragged to the compost heap for emptying.

## **Bedding / Belts**

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- ◆ Use an old sheet under a picnic blanket to protect it from grass stains.
- ◆ Use an old sheet to wrap around a natural Christmas tree before taking it outside. It catches the falling needles.
- ◆ Throw an old sheet over plants to protect them from overnight frosts.
- ◆ Pin an old sheet up in the greenhouse to protect plants from direct sunlight.

## **BELTS**

### **Belt Holder**

Use one old belt to hold all the rest.

### **Coat Hanger Holders**

Keep old belts, punch more holes down the strap and use for storing coat hangers. Fit the buckle over hook and hang the belt hanger holder on rail. They take up less space in the wardrobe. NB: Use a belt hanger holder to hang several light blouses or shirts.

### **Door Hinge**

A piece of old leather belt makes a handy door or gate hinge, until you can buy one from the DIY shop. Just fix a small piece to the door jamb and to the door.

### **Pet Collar**

Take a belt you don't use and cut it down to size, put holes in the appropriate places and use as a collar for your pet.

### **Pet Lead**

In an emergency a belt makes an impromptu pet lead.

### **BEER**

#### **Clean Wooden Furniture**

A small amount of beer on a clean cloth will clean wooden furniture. Just rub over with a moistened cloth and buff with a clean, lint-free cloth.

#### **Gold Shiner**

Place gold jewellery in beer for 30 minutes to bring out the natural lustre. Do not use on plated gold.

#### **Hair Styler**

Yes it's true! Beer and lager are great hair stylers, they work as well as styling gel, but you have to love the aroma. Towel dry hair and sprinkle on the beer or lager. Comb through and set into style or put into large rollers. Dry as normal.

#### **Slug Killer**

Save all your yogurt pots, especially those with reusable lids. Cut a small hole in the centre of the pot lid (just enough for the large slugs to get through); half fill with beer. Bitter is the best and replace the lid. Dig a small hole in the soil, place the yogurt pot in so that the lid lip just rests on the top of the soil. Place out at night and collect in the morning and dispose of.

### **BICARBONATE OF SODA**

Bicarbonate of soda is a natural, gentle alkali, it is perfect for cleaning, getting rid of bad odours and for softening the skin. Small culinary tubs of bicarbonate of soda (yes, it is even safe to eat) can work out very expensive so it is best to buy the kilo bags, they are much more cost effective. Washing soda is much stronger and should not be substituted for use on the skin, it can, however, be used as drain and sink cleaners, and as a laundry booster.

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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### **Air Freshener**

In an atomiser or plant mister, dissolve 3-4 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda in a pint of warm water, add two drops of lemon essential oil, shake well and finely mist around the room. A drop of tea tree oil can also help diminish airborne viruses, which is especially beneficial for cold and flu germs.

### **Antacid**

Add a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda to a glass of tepid water, stir well and drink. Do not use more than once a day, if symptoms persist see your GP.

### **Ant Bites**

Some plants and insects such as bees, ants and nettles have an acidic poison. Soak the area in a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda. Or soak tissues in solution and apply to area.

### **Ash Tray Deodoriser**

Add a few teaspoons of dry bicarbonate of soda to an ashtray. This will help to keep cigarette fumes to a minimum. See bicarbonate of soda deodoriser.

### **Bad Breath Remover**

Dissolve one teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda a glass of warm water and swish around mouth or gargle, then spit out. NB: Bad breath may be a sign of an illness or tooth decay, if you have consistent bad breath, see your doctor or dentist.

### **Balloon Inflator**

You know what it's like, the celebration is happening in a couple of hours and you've lost the balloon pump. After a few attempts at blowing up the balloons your throat hurts so much you know you won't be able to continue. Fret not, help is at hand. In a large glass bottle, add a few teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda, splash in some vinegar. Immediately put balloon over the bottle neck and

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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hold in place. When the balloon is inflated, take off the bottle, put on another balloon quickly, and then tie the first balloon. When finished or the reaction has subsided, don't waste the solution. Pour into a spray bottle, add water and a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid and use as a surface cleaner. You'll need a few bottles of surface cleaner after the party!

### **Bathroom Cleaner**

Dissolve one heaped tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda in 500ml of warm water in a large spray bottle. Dribble in a tablespoon of white vinegar, 3ml tea tree oil, 2 ml lemon oil, and a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid. Mix well and use as required. Spray onto bathroom surfaces and wipe with a clean, damp cloth. For more soiled areas, spray, allow to stand for a few minutes and rub with a plastic washing-up scourer (do not use scourer on easily damaged surfaces). Always abide by manufacturers cleaning instructions.

### **Bath Salts**

In a pretty airtight container/jar add a few handfuls each of bicarbonate of soda and sea salt, a couple of teaspoons grated nutmeg or a couple of halves of nutmeg (whichever you prefer), a couple of cinnamon sticks and or a vanilla pod, and a few drops of your favourite essential oil such as ylang ylang. (You can even add a few sprigs of fresh rosemary.) Shake well to incorporate all the aromas and leave for at least a couple of weeks to marinate. Shake a handful of the salts into a warm bath, taking care not to add the whole spices. NB: Finely grated citrus zest can also be used, if you do not like them floating in the bath, add whole dried zest for a couple of weeks, discard and renew often for a lovely citrusy aroma that compliments the spicy nutmeg or rosemary.

### **Bath Soak**

Add a couple of tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda and soak away your worries in a relaxing bath. Or see bath salts above.

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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### **Bath Tub Cleaner**

For tough stains, spray the bath with your bathroom cleaner (page 25), sprinkle a sponge with a couple of teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda and rub over the surface of the bath. Bicarbonate of soda is a gentle abrasive, but it may damage cheaper plastic surfaces, so always patch test a small area initially.

### **Bee Stings**

Bee stings have an acidic poison. Soak area in a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda.

### **Bicarbonate of Soda Deodoriser**

Many applications in this book call for a dry deodoriser to be used around the home. If you buy your bicarbonate of soda in large kilo bags, empty the whole packet into a clean, dry, ice-cream container. Add some whole spices or dried herbs such as mint, nutmegs, rosemary sprigs, cinnamon sticks, dried lemon or orange zest etc. and store until needed. Use the ‘scented’ bicarbonate of soda in applications that require a fragrance.

### **Bin Deodoriser**

Wash out bins with a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda, 2 tablespoons to every pint of warm water and a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid. When finished, tip the solution out of the bin, straight down the drain.

### **Brush and Comb Cleaner**

Once a week, soak your hair-care items (non-electrical) in a solution of bicarbonate of soda to remove the chemical hair styling products. 1-tablespoon bicarbonate of soda in a pint of warm water with a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid. If you do this to coincide with cleaning out your kitchen waste bins, you can use this same solution to deodorise your plastic bins, tip into drain after use, to help keep drains smelling fresh.

### **Car Interior Deodoriser**

Sprinkle the upholstery and vacuumed carpets with bicarbonate of soda or fragranced bicarbonate of soda deodoriser. Leave for 20 minutes, rub well in, then vacuum up the excess powder. It will also deodorise your vacuum cleaner at the same time. Do not use on damp carpets or upholstery.

### **Carpet Cleaner/Deodoriser**

Vacuum your carpets to remove surface grime, and sprinkle on bicarbonate of soda or fragranced bicarbonate of soda deodoriser, take a soft bristle brush and gently brush the bicarbonate of soda into the pile, leave for 20 minutes, then vacuum up the excess powder. It will also deodorise your vacuum cleaner at the same time.

For stubborn odours or grubby carpets, mix sugar soap and bicarbonate of soda, half and half, and rub well into the pile with a soft brush. Leave for 20 minutes, then vacuum well. If you empty your vacuum straight away into the bin it will help to cut down on bin odours. Do not use on damp carpets, and check for colour fastness on a small area before cleaning the whole carpet.

### **Ceiling Gum?**

Mix bicarbonate of soda with a little white glue to form a paste. Fill in the small cracks in a ceiling.

### **Cupboard Freshener**

Take an empty, clean, yogurt pot and put in a few teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda. Add a few strips of dried citrus zest and place in cupboard as a deodoriser. Replace every month, but do not just throw away, it can be used in applications such as bin freshener or carpet deodoriser or drain cleaner.

### **Curtain Freshener**

In atomiser / plant mister, dissolve 2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda in half a pint of warm water, add strips of citrus zest (optional).

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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Close the curtains and finely mist all the surfaces, but do not saturate. Leave the curtains closed (opened out) for at least 5 hours.

### **Dental Soak**

Soak dentures overnight in a solution of bicarbonate of soda (2-teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda in enough water to just cover the dentures. Rinse well before use.

### **Dishwasher Powder**

Run out of dishwashing powder? Don't worry! A couple of table-spoons of bicarbonate of soda is an effective substitute.

See Vinegar – Dishwashing Rinse

### **Drain Cleaner**

Just sprinkle a scoop of bicarbonate of soda around drains and wash down with a jug of warm water mixed with half a cup of vinegar. The resulting effervescence will clean the drain a treat. It is a good way of using up the bicarbonate of soda from other applications i.e. wardrobe or drawer freshener.

### **Drawer Freshener**

Place a couple of teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda in a small plastic bag and tie the end. Prick the bag all over with a pin, so that the air can get in but the powder cannot spill out. Leave in the back of drawers.

### **Dry Pet Shampoo**

You know what it's like when people walk into your home and ask where the dog is, before they even know you've got one! To stop those characteristic doggy odours it is necessary to bathe your pet, but sometimes it's not convenient. So what do you do? Easy... a dry bath. Just put some bicarbonate of soda (and mixed dried herbs – optional) into a sugar shaker and shake all over the coat, rub well in, leave for a few minutes (if possible) and brush out.

### **Dry Shampoo**

Need a quick shampoo? Haven't had time to wash your hair? Don't worry! With bicarbonate of soda to hand you'll always have the answer. Brush it through your hair and it will soon feel clean.

### **Facial Scrub**

If you have very sensitive skin then this is not for you. It's a pity, because it really does invigorate the circulation, and gets rid of dead skin cells too. Use your normal cleansing routine, add a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda crystals to your facial wash or soap and gently rub away those fine lines and dead skin cells.

### **Fire Extinguisher (minor)**

Keep a lidded container of bicarbonate of soda by the cooker. If you see the start of a minor fire, just douse it with the bicarbonate of soda, by throwing it onto the flames. If it is a serious fire, don't try to tackle it, get out of the house and make sure everyone does the same. Why not have a quick fire drill today, then everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency. Make sure that you have plenty of fire alarms around the house.

### **Flask Deodoriser**

Next time you put your flask into storage, make sure that it is clean and dry, then sprinkle some bicarbonate of soda into it and store.

### **Floors**

Keep your floors sparkling clean by washing them with a bicarbonate of soda solution and a little biodegradable washing-up liquid. Use 4 tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda to half a gallon of warm water and wash as normal. A few drops of your favourite essential oil can be used to fragrance the floors i.e. lemon or pine.

### **Foot Soak**

Put a couple of litres of warm water in a bowl and a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda. It helps to soften the skin.

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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### **Fresher Socks**

After washing, rinse socks in a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda and allow to dry. It will keep feet fresher all day.

### **Fresh Fruit Preserver**

Place the fruit you need to keep fresh in a large plastic bag. Add a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda to half a cup of water in a large basin and place inside the bag. Add a tablespoon of citric acid, then wait for the bubbling to subside. Close the bag. The bicarbonate of soda and citric acid give off carbon dioxide, which keeps the fruit from ripening. NB: stored fruit contains less nutrients than fresh fruit that is allowed to ripen naturally.

### **Fridge Freshener**

Take an empty, clean, yogurt pot and put in a few teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda; add a few strips of dried citrus peel and place in the refrigerator to help deodorise the interior.

### **Fruit De-acidifier**

When cooking fruit, add bicarbonate of soda (about two teaspoons to a pint of liquid), it will neutralise the fruit acid and you will not need to use so much sugar to sweeten it. NB: Bicarbonate of soda will also diminish vitamin C content.

### **Fruit & Vegetable Cleaner**

Bicarbonate of soda in a bowl of warm water with a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid will help to clean the fruit and get rid of pesticide residues from the fruit's skin.

### **Fruity Fizz Bath Bombs**

In a mixing bowl combine the following:

4 teaspoons citric acid

1 tablespoon powdered full fat milk

1-2 tablespoons icing sugar

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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5 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda

1 dessertspoon of salt

1 teaspoon dried citrus zest

Mix all ingredients together, add a few drops of Jojoba and your favourite essential oil. Mix to incorporate the oil into the ingredients, adding more oil as necessary. Form into spheres or push into small shapes,. Place on waxed paper to dry for 24-48 hours. Store in a pretty airtight container. Every time you run a bath drop a couple of the bath bombs in the water and watch them fizz. You can also use the recipe as ‘fizzing bath powder’, just add 1-2 tablespoons to your bath.

### **Furry Toy Dry Cleaner**

Place the furry toy that needs cleaning in a large plastic bag. Sprinkle on bicarbonate of soda or your specially made bicarbonate of soda deodoriser. Make sure that the surface of the toy is covered and rub well in. Seal the bag and leave overnight. Brush the toy and pat well to remove the bicarbonate of soda and either hang on a washing line or a clothes airer for a few hours.

NB: Keep plastic bags out of the reach of children.

### **Grease and Oil Stain Remover**

Bicarbonate of soda is very good for removing grease, oil and petrol stains from the garage floor, paving slabs or drive. Sprinkle onto the stain, add salt and some washing-up liquid. Scrub well and wash away with a hosepipe (it will also help to keep weeds from growing in between paving slabs). If there are plants near to the area omit the salt.

### **Hand Cleaner**

Put some liquid soap into the middle of your hand, add a dessertspoon of bicarbonate of soda and rub well into both your hands, rinse and repeat, if necessary.

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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### **Keyboard Cleaner**

To keep your keyboard clean, rub the keys with a solution of bicarbonate of soda diluted in warm water after every use, or at the end of the day. Make sure that none of the solution runs down between the keys, and dry or buff with a soft dry cloth after cleaning.

### **Kitchen Cleaner**

Dissolve two heaped tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda in 500ml of warm water in a spray bottle. Carefully dribble a tablespoon of white vinegar, a tablespoon lemon juice, 3ml tea tree oil, 2ml lemon oil, and a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid. Mix well and use as required. Spray onto kitchen surfaces and wipe with a clean, damp cloth. For more soiled areas, spray with the kitchen cleaner and sprinkle on bicarbonate of soda, rub with a cloth or scourer (but not on delicate surfaces).

### **Lampshade Cleaning Pad**

Cut a circle of gauze approx. 15cm. Mix a tablespoon of sugarsoap with a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda and place in the middle of the gauze circle. Gather up the gauze and twist so that the powder is trapped in the middle, secure with string or an elastic band. Rub the 'pad' over a lampshade to clean the surface. Brush off the excess.

### **Laundry Booster**

Add a tablespoon of washing soda or bicarbonate of soda to half the amount of washing powder that you normally use.

### **Lunch Box Deodoriser**

Soak lunch boxes in a solution of bicarbonate of soda (1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda to 1 pint of warm water). If storing lunch boxes, sprinkle with dry bicarbonate of soda, replace lid and store. When you come to use the lunchbox again, the bicarbonate of soda can be used for other applications. Rinse and dry.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Mattress Dry Cleaner**

Sprinkle on bicarbonate of soda or bicarbonate of soda deodoriser, brush well in and allow to stand for a couple of hours, then vacuum the mattress.

### **Mildew Spray**

To make a anti-mildew spray for your roses, mix 30g of bicarbonate of soda with 250ml milk and 4 litres warm water, mix well. Spray often during the growing system.

### **Nappy Soak**

Make a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda (add 4 tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda to every litre of warm water and some soap flakes) and soak for a couple of hours then launder and dry as normal.

### **Oven Cleaner**

Put rubber gloves on, sprinkle the cold oven with bicarbonate of soda. Soak a pan scourer sponge with white vinegar and rub the powder over the oven surfaces, leave for 20 minutes and rinse off. Repeat as necessary. If the oven is very soiled the racks may need soaking overnight in a strong solution of vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. NB: do not use on non-stick surfaces.

### **Pan Scrub**

Add 4 tablespoons bicarbonate of soda to a pan with burnt food stuck to the surface. Add 4 tablespoons vinegar to the pan and abrade with a long handled pan scrubber. Add enough boiling water to cover the burnt areas, replace the lid and leave overnight. Rinse in the morning. Repeat if necessary. NB: For stubborn stains bring the bicarbonate of soda liquid to the boil and allow to stand.

**CAUTION: Do not use soda on aluminium pans, use vinegar or lemon juice instead.**

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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**Always check manufacturers instructions on cleaning before using any cleaning agents near your pan.**

### **Personal Deodorant**

Dust under arms with a teaspoon of powdered bicarbonate of soda mixed with a teaspoon of white cornflour on a powder puff.

Use excess on feet.

### **Pet Bed Deodoriser**

Sprinkle bicarbonate of soda or bicarbonate of soda deodoriser onto your pet's bed and allow to stand for at least 20 minutes. Brush or vacuum off the excess.

### **Plastic Container Deodoriser**

Soak plastic container(s) in a solution of bicarbonate of soda (1 tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda to 1 pint of warm water). If storing them, make sure that they are dry, then sprinkle with dry bicarbonate of soda, place lid on and store. When you come to use the containers again, the bicarbonate of soda can be used for other applications. Rinse the container before using.

### **Play & Moulding Clay**

Mix together the following ingredients:

2 cups bicarbonate of soda

1 cup of white cornflour

1¼ cups distilled water (approximately)

add to a saucepan and bring to the boil. Turn the heat right down and simmer, stirring all the time until very thick. Add food colouring if necessary and cool. Knead until pliable. This can be air-dried or stored in a polythene bag for a couple of days. If air-dried the surface will need to be protected with a sealer or it will degrade in damp weather.

NB: Put through a potato ricer or form into small balls and dry. They can be used in potpourri (coloured with food colouring); in an ashtray sprinkled with lemon, orange or peppermint essential oil to

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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freshen the room; or even in the cat litter tray if you run out of cat litter.

### **Play Paints**

Mix together the following ingredients:

2 tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda

2 tablespoons white cornflour

1 teaspoon salt

Mix to a paste with a little water, add natural food colouring. Cook in a saucepan until thickened. Cool and use. To dry, pour into small bun tin moulds and bake in a very slow oven. When dry store in an airtight container. To use, place a colour block in a small container, such as a yogurt pot or an old bun tin, dip paintbrush in water and rub over the block and paint your paper with it. These are ideal for use by small children, but do not leave unsupervised.

### **Powder Puff**

In your usual powder bowl add one part bicarbonate of soda to five parts white cornflour, mix well and dust body with powder puff.

NB: The 'powder' can be fragranced with a whole vanilla pod or a couple of drops of essential oil, store in airtight container for a couple of weeks for the aroma to impregnate the powder.

NB: Refill an empty powder bottle or sugar sprinkler and use.

### **Scouring Agent**

Mix together equal quantities of salt and bicarbonate of soda, sprinkle on surfaces that need a scouring agent and rub with a damp scourer.

### **Septic Tank**

Cleaning the toilet, drains and sink with bicarbonate of soda on a regular basis will make your septic tank less acidic, which means less smelly.

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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### **Shoe Deodoriser**

Sprinkle the inside of shoes with dry bicarbonate of soda or bicarbonate of soda deodoriser. Just before use, empty the contents of the shoes into the bin or down the drain.

### **Silver Cleaner**

Add a few tablespoons of bicarbonate of soda or washing soda to a bowl of warm water, tear a few strips of aluminium foil and crumple it up and place in the bowl. Add the silver, make sure that it is completely covered with the water. The chemical reaction between the soda and the aluminium foil will clean all the covered silver. NB: This must be pure 'aluminium' foil and not tin foil or kitchen foil or it will not work.

### **Sink Cleaner**

Sprinkle the bicarbonate of soda around the sink and down the plug hole. Spray on a mix of 50:50 lemon juice and water. Scour the surface with bicarbonate of soda powder and rinse well.

NB: make sure that the surface will not scratch before scouring.

NB: Do not use soda around an aluminium sink.

### **Sponge Freshener**

Dissolve 1-2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda on a damp sponge, leave for 20 mins, rinse well. It will leave the sponge smelling fresh and clean. To zap bugs, microwave sponge 1-2 mins and cool.

### **Sport or Gym Bag Deodoriser**

Sprinkle the inside of the bag with dry bicarbonate of soda, rub into all the surfaces with a soft dry cloth and leave for 20 minutes. Vacuum up all the powder and use the bag or store it away for future use.

### **Stain Remover**

Mix a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda with a teaspoon of white vinegar, add a couple of drops of tea tree oil and a squirt of

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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biodegradable washing-up liquid. Rub well into the stain, allow to stand for a few minutes then launder as normal. Always patch test on non-colourfast or delicate fabrics. This may damage the fabric or colour.

### **Sweeter Fruit**

A couple of teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda stirred into stewing fruit will cut down on the amount of sugar needed to sweeten it. NB: it also cuts down on the Vitamin C content of stewed fruit.

### **Teacup Cleaner**

Use dry bicarbonate of soda on a damp cloth to clean inside a heavily stained teacup or teapot. Don't forget the teapot spout, sprinkle with dry bicarbonate of soda and clean with a damp bottle brush.

### **Teapot Freshener**

Add a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda to the teapot and pour on boiling water, allow to stand and rinse well. If the teapot has a few stains, brush around the inside surface with a stiff brush. If badly stained use teacup/teapot cleaner above. When finished pour water and bicarbonate of soda down the drain, it will help to keep the drains fresh too.

### **Tooth Cleaner**

When cleaning teeth put toothpaste onto brush and sprinkle on a couple of pinches of bicarbonate of soda, clean teeth as normal. It whitens teeth and helps to cut down on the acidic compounds that occur naturally within the mouth. If left the acid can eat its way into healthy tooth enamel.

### **Upholstery Dry Cleaning Pad**

Cut a circle of gauze approx. 15cm. Mix a tablespoon of sugarsoap with a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda and place in the middle of the gauze circle. Gather up the gauze and twist so that the powder

## **Bicarbonate of Soda**

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is trapped in the middle, secure with string or an elastic band. Rub the 'pad' over your upholstery or small carpet, to clean the surface. Brush or vacuum off the excess. NB: You can use the foot of a pair of tights instead of gauze.

### **Vase Deodoriser**

Sprinkle on a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda and fill vase with warm/hot water, allow to stand for at least 30 minutes and discard water. To keep vases smelling fresh make sure that they are dry, then sprinkle a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in the bottom before storing.

### **Wardrobe Freshener**

Place a pot of bicarbonate of soda in the corner of the wardrobe to absorb smells. You can sprinkle them with essential oil of your choice to fragrance the area too. Don't worry if pot gets knocked over, you can rub the bicarbonate of soda into the base of the wardrobe and vacuum up, it will help to keep the floor fresh.

### **Waste Deodoriser**

Sprinkle a few teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda onto the contents of the bin at night. It will help to keep bin odours down. When emptying the bin wash it out with a solution of bicarbonate of soda and dry with kitchen towel before replacing liner.

### **Whiter Socks**

Presoak socks in a solution of bicarbonate of soda and launder as normal.

### **Windscreen Cleaner**

A strong solution of water and bicarbonate of soda, with a little vinegar in it will help to clean your windscreen, especially if bugs and bird droppings are stuck to it. Use a non-scratch plastic scourer to get rid of stubborn debris.

## **BOTTLES**

See Plastic Bottles, Page 102

## **BREAD**

### **Coffee Grinder Cleaner**

Putting a few crusts in your coffee grinder will clean the grinder. Discard the crumbs, and rub around grinder with soft cloth and a drop of vegetable oil.

### **Oil Painting Cleaner**

Gently rub over an oil painting with white bread to remove dust.

### **Suede Cleaner**

Use a piece of stale white bread to clean suede.

### **Wallpaper Cleaner**

Rub the crusts from a loaf of white bread carefully over wallpaper to gently remove finger marks, crayon marks and grease.

## **BROOM HANDLES**

### **Garden Dibber**

Slightly sharpen the end of a wooden broom handle or old spade/garden fork handle and use as a garden dibber. Ideal for planting small plants and seedlings.

### **Double Your Wardrobe Space**

Use a broom handle and two rod sockets i.e. towel rail ends (available from DIY shops) to put an extra rail in kid's wardrobes or to hang shirts.

### **CANDLES**

#### **Door Hinges**

A little melted wax on hinges will have them opening and closing like new.

#### **Pin Holder**

Pins or needles can be stuck into tea lights or small candles to keep them from scattering and getting lost. The wax not only keeps them safe it stops them from sticking into fingers and also helps them glide through the material.

#### **Squeaking floorboards**

Melted candle wax dribbled onto joists under squeaking floor boards should sort out the problem.

### **CARDBOARD TUBES**

Cardboard tubes are in plentiful supply in most people's shopping. Kitchen towels, toilet rolls, foil, greaseproof paper, wrapping paper, crisps, and sweet containers all come with free, very handy, cardboard tubes and lids.

#### **Button Store**

Small sweet tubes with a base and a lid are ideal for storing buttons, and if you stick a button to the outside of the lid they will be very easy to find when needed.

#### **Cable Holder**

Fold the cable of any appliance and carefully lodge into a cardboard tube, it will help keep the cable from unravelling when storing or traveling. No more tangled cables when you come to unpack them.

### **Coat Hanger Cover**

Cut a tube lengthways and cover the bar of a coat hanger. Tape over the cut, and hang a pair of trousers over the tube, they won't crease across the leg.

### **Ornament Protector**

Slip your favourite ornaments into paper tubes when moving house, it will keep them safe.

### **Paper Posters**

If you need to send important papers through the post, or just protect them, slip them into an appropriate sized paper tube and seal the ends.

### **Pencil Store**

A sweet tube with a lid and a base is ideal to store pens and pencils.

### **Plant Tubes**

Cut the tube into 3" lengths, place on a seed tray and fill with seed compost, sow the seed in the middle and when the plants grow they can be planted straight out in the garden.

### **Seedling Protector**

Place a cardboard tube around young plants to protect them from wind damage.

### **Sock Tidy**

Cut the tubes into lengths that fit upright in your sock draw. Push socks in pairs into the tubes. It will keep them tidy and easy to find. When you have just one sock, it is easy to just push it into a tube and push the matching one on top when you find it.

### **Teapot Spout Protector**

Slip a tube over a teapot spout before packing it, it will protect it from damage.

### **CARPET & CARPET UNDERLAY**

#### **Car Mats**

Cut some squares of carpet from the good bits of an old carpet or use remnants and cut to size. They make ideal car mats and will protect the original carpet from soiling and damage. Don't forget the boot!

#### **Carpet protector**

Take an off-cut from your carpet and cut to fit under sofa, table, chair legs and castors etc. In fact, anything that is not easily moved and just sits on the carpet. It will protect your carpet from being damaged.

#### **Cat Scratching Box**

Line a strong box with carpet and stick firmly down with double sided tape. You can also line a sturdy greaseproof or foil inner tube with carpet and stick down the centre of the box. Your cat will love scratching them, and leave your soft furnishings alone, hopefully.

#### **Comfort Sole for Wellingtons**

Take the left and right insoles from a pair of your old footwear to use as templates. Cut out a 'sole' from carpet off-cuts or underlay and use to line your wellingtons or boots.

#### **Easier Painting**

Stick a square of sturdy pile carpet to a wooden block of wood, it makes painting floors, sheds and fences a lot easier. Just dip the block into the paint to load the carpet, rub off excess on the edge of the container and rub over the surface area to be painted.

NB: To paint underneath the fence, gate or door, apply paint to a piece of old carpet and pull backwards and forwards to coat the underside of the item.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Exercise Mat**

Use a piece of carpet underlay to cushion yourself when exercising on the floor.

### **Hanging Basket Liner**

Keep the off-cuts of carpets or carpet underlay and use to line hanging baskets (patterned side facing inwards). Fill with potting compost and plants as usual.

### **Machine Cushion**

Place a piece of carpet or carpet underlay under machines that vibrate to cushion them and reduce noise. It can be used under washing machines, dryers, printers, etc.

### **Puppy Comforter**

Put one piece of carpet in your dog's bed when she has got puppies (one for each puppy). When the puppies go to new homes send each off with a piece of carpet to put in their new bed. The familiar smell of the carpet will ensure that the puppies settle down quicker in their new homes.

### **Rocking Chairs**

Glue strips of carpet underlay to the rockers, this will stop the chair ruining the finish on wooden floors or tiles etc.

### **Tyre Unsticker**

Line your car boot with carpet, it protects the boot and if you ever get stuck in the mud or in snow, some pieces of old carpet under the wheels should have you unstuck in no time. It is also invaluable if you ever have to change a tyre, you can kneel on it and keep your clothes clean.

### **Weed Suppressor**

When making a gravel or chipping path through the garden or lawn lay a strip of carpet or underlay on the base. This will stop the

## **Carpet / Cat Litter**

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longer rooted weeds taking over and make it easier to weed. It can also be used as a mulch in between rows of plants, not only will it be easier to walk on, it cuts down on weeding.

### **Wrist Rest**

Roll some carpet into a comfortable size, tape into position and use as a wrist rest whilst typing.

### **CAT LITTER (Unused)**

Fuller's earth cat litter should be used, preferably unperfumed, without additives.

### **Ashtray Freshener**

Fuller's earth makes a brilliant ashtray freshener; it can even be dyed with food colouring to match the decor. Sprinkle on a few drops of essential oil or potpourri freshener and leave in the ashtray.

### **Book Ends**

Take two lidded triangular-shaped sandwich containers, which are available in most large supermarkets. Fill with coloured cat litter (or gravel) and seal the lid to the base. This is very important because of the contents. Place on a bookshelf (well away from the edge).

### **Clean-up with Cat Litter**

Any liquid spills can be cleared up by sprinkling with cat litter, leave to soak in and brush or vacuum away.

### **Cupboard Fresheners**

Put 2 tablespoons of cat litter into a small plastic bag, sprinkle on favourite essential oil or potpourri freshener and knot the bag, prick the plastic all over with a pin to release the fragrance. Place in the centre of a round piece of lacy material (or cut a large ring from a net curtain) and draw up around the bag, tie in place with a ribbon, allowing a loop for hanging up. Hang in cupboard or wardrobe.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Refresh every month, by reusing the material and discarding the bag and filling a new one with cat litter and essential oils.

### **Flower Arranging**

Half-fill a clean, dry, vase with white-coloured cat litter when arranging artificial flowers or dried grasses. It will keep the vase stable and the flowers/grasses in place. In a glass vase it can be coloured with food colouring to compliment the arrangement or décor.

### **Shoe Fresheners**

When storing shoes or trainers in a wardrobe, the sweaty feet smell can penetrate the clothes and the whole area. It is very easy to stop this happening. Fill the feet of an old pair of socks with cat litter, which has been sprinkled with your favourite essential oil, sew or tie the tops to prevent spillage and place in the shoes, boots etc.

## **CEREAL BOXES**

### **Magazine/ Document Holder**

Take a cereal box and cut the top off, then cut off one of the top corners in a triangular wedge shape. Cover the box with wrapping paper or wallpaper and store your papers or magazines in it.

### **Postal Boxes**

Open an empty cereal box down the glued side and open up the flaps on the top and bottom of the box, turn the box inside out and glue or tape the side and bottom flaps, to form an 'inside-out' box. Put in the items to be mailed and seal. Write the address on the plain surface (that was the inside of the box), put on stamps and post. They are ideal postal boxes. Parcel tape around edges for security. NB: any small box can be used as a postal box.

### **CHARCOAL**

Charcoal can be purchased in many supermarkets for use on the barbeque. Make sure that you only purchase pure charcoal and not ones that have been treated with chemicals or have been processed. The best thing is that once you have used the charcoal around the home it can then be used on the barbeque.

### **Damp Stop**

Pure charcoal will absorb excess moisture in the air so is ideal for areas and items that are prone to damp.

- A cupboard that has a tendency to smell musty can be 'sweetened' by adding a bowl of charcoal to it. You can fill the feet and part of the leg of a pair of stockings with charcoal and hang it in the cupboard. Refresh every month or when the cupboard starts to smell damp again. Do not discard, use the charcoal for the barbeque.
- Books and clothes are particularly vulnerable to damp, a charcoal filled bowl or stocking, stored in the same area, will help to keep them safe.
- Caravans that are shut up for months on end need a few bowls of charcoal stored around and in the rooms. And, you can use the charcoal during the season on a barbeque.
- Store tents or gazebos away with a few bricks of charcoal, wrapped in absorbent kitchen paper to keep them fresh.
- Charcoal in a vase of cut flowers or when trying to root cuttings will keep the water sweet.
- Shoes or boots will store better if they have charcoal inside them. Fill a sock or the feet of a pair of tights with small pieces of charcoal and knot the top. Just pop them into the

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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footwear and when you come to wear them again they will be fresh and clean.

- A bowl or bricks of charcoal in appliances that are not being used for over a week will keep them from smelling musty.

NB: Remember never throw away your pieces of charcoal, they can still be used on the barbecue.

## **CLOTHES PEGS**

### **Bag Pegger**

When you have had enough crisps, sweets or snacks, just twist the packet top shut and peg it into place. They will keep fresher for longer.

### **Finger Saver**

Grab hold of a nail or tack with a clothes peg and you will be able to hammer it in safely, instead of hitting your fingers.

### **Shopping List and Pen Holder**

Fix 2 clothes pegs to the back of your kitchen door, or kitchen cabinet door, about 7cms apart. Cut some junk mail envelopes up into rectangles and use the two pegs to hold them in place, put a pen into the fork of the two pegs. When you are cooking and you run out of something you can quickly write it down on one of your notes. When you come to do your shopping just unpeg the note and take it with you.

### **Wall Pegs**

Fix clothes pegs to a wall, the end of your desk, shelves, etc. And you will have a handy clip to hang papers or useful things from.

### **COFFEE GROUNDS**

#### **Ash Remover**

Empty the moist grounds from your coffee pot onto the ash in the grate and it will stop the dust from rising as you clean it out.

#### **Bad Breath?**

Just suck a coffee bean.

#### **Carrot Saver**

When thinning out carrots replace the soil and sprinkle used coffee grounds on top, it will help to stop the carrot root fly from detecting the carrot patch.

#### **Floor Perfect**

When brushing wooden floors the dust usually rises and settles on surfaces. If you empty the moist coffee grounds or tea leaves from a teapot onto the floor first and brush the floor as normal the dust does not rise and the floor colour deepens.

#### **Furniture Restorer**

Grooves or nicks in dark wood furniture or floors can be easily restored by mixing instant coffee powder with melted candle wax. Dribble into the area, remove excess with the tip of an absorbent kitchen towel and allow to set. Polish as normal.

#### **Hair Highlights**

Coffee gone cold? Don't worry! Pour strong black coffee through brown or red hair to give added highlights.

#### **Handy Hint**

Mix coffee grounds with a little soap or moisturiser and rub over hands and thighs to get rid of dry skin. The caffeine may even help to remove areas of cellulite.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Musty No More**

Cut the foot from a pair of tights or stockings and fill with used, dry coffee grounds, hang in musty cupboards or rooms to remove the smell. You can even store them in washing machines while not in use. But do be careful to remove them when doing a wash or they will stain whites and light coloureds.

### **Sink Cleaner**

Pour coffee grounds down the sink add a squirt of washing-up liquid, followed by boiling water. It really does help to clear the sink pipes of grease and foul smells.

### **Slug Repellent**

Emptying coffee grounds around plants is said to repel snails from attacking vulnerable plants. The snails do not like the coffee or the gritty texture of the grounds.

\* Coffee grounds are also good for your outdoor plants.

## **COFFEE TINS**

750g or 1kg coffee tins are ideal for use around the house. Most come with an extra plastic lid. If you only need the tin, never throw the lid out, some uses need two lids.

### **Camping Essentials**

Take coffee tins filled with camping essentials i.e. toilet paper, tissues, matches, camera, and anything that should not get damp.

### **Charcoal Store**

Take an empty coffee tin and punch pea-sized holes in the bottom. When you have finished with your barbeque, carefully drop the hot charcoal into 1-2 coffee tins stand on three house bricks arranged in a triangle and douse with water to stop them burning away (stand well back to avoid splashes and steam). The ash should drain away

## **Coffee Tins**

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into the soil, while the unused charcoal remains in the tin to be dried and used another day.

### **Paint Brush Like New**

Use an empty coffee tin to restore or keep paint brushes. One coffee tin is ideal for 4 small brushes, 2 medium brushes or 1 large brush. Cut a cross (4 or 2 as required) in the snap on plastic lid. Push the handle through the underside of the lid making sure that the bristles are just above the bottom of the tin. Pour in cleaner or restorer and leave brushes to soak. When finished, wash brushes well, massage in a little washing up liquid and store in an identical, clean, dry, coffee tin in the same way.

### **Paint Holders**

A Coffee tin can be used to store surplus paint. Or when two people are painting a room, the paint can be halved. If you have two lids to the tin (a metal and plastic one), the plastic lid makes an ideal brush scraper. Just cut it in half and place the half lid back onto the tin. Every time you dip your brush into the paint you can scrape off the surplus on the cut lid and, with a bit of luck, the other half will snap fit onto your friend's paint tin too. Store the surplus paint in the tin with the metal airtight lid in place.

### **Pet food Store**

During the summer, when you have a half empty can of pet food left over, just pop the whole can and biscuits into a coffee tin, close the lid and store in the refrigerator. No more smelly dog food cans evident when you open the door. When you feed your pet, just take out the can and mix the dog food with the biscuits in the coffee tin and empty into the dog's food bowl. As simple as that!

### **Seed Sprinkler**

A coffee tin with two plastic lids is ideal for keeping and using lawn seed. Punch holes in the bottom of the tin so that it looks like a sieve. Place a lid over the perforations to seal. Fill the tin with grass

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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seed and lawn sand, mix well. Seal the top with the extra lid and store in a cool, dark shed. When you find a bald patch on your lawn just take the tin out, take off the bottom lid and sprinkle over the bald patch allowing the seed and sand to fall over the area. Keep watering the spot well. Replace the lid and store remaining seed in the shed until needed again.

### **Wall Storage**

Fix the bottoms of some coffee tins to the wall of office, shed or garage and use as storage tins to keep bits and bobs.

### **Wool Tidy**

If you are using several balls of wool to knit a garment. Put them into a clean, dry, coffee tin and thread each strand of wool through a specially punched hole in the plastic lid. Your wool will remain clean and tangle free.

## **COOKING OIL**

See Vegetable Oil page 120

### **Chamois Soft**

Keep your chamois leather soft after washing by rubbing in a little vegetable oil.

### **Door Hinges**

To keep door hinges opening smoothly and quietly squirt with a little vegetable oil. Wipe excess away with a soft cloth or some kitchen towel.

### **Easier Locking Locks**

Spray a little cooking oil through the keyhole of locks on doors, padlocks and car door locks etc. it makes them easier to open and may even stop them freezing up in winter.

## **Cooking Oil**

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### **Grate Great**

Rub a little olive oil over the cheese grater before grating cheese etc. it will be much easier to clean.

### **Great Grate**

Shine your fire grate and tiles with some vegetable oil on a duster.

### **Lawnmower Blades**

Keep lawnmower blades rust free by wiping over with cooking oil. An oily rag rubbed over the body of the mower will keep the paintwork clean too.

### **Non-Stick Spade**

Coat your spade with cooking oil before you begin and whatever you are digging, snow or soil, will slide off the spade without sticking.

### **Oily Rag**

Make your own oily rag, by sprinkling a strong duster with oil until it is 'damp' but not saturated, and keep in an airtight tin. Remember to return it to the tin after each use. When soiled, just wash in hot soapy water and replace the oil. Several oily rags can be kept in tins and labeled for different uses.

### **Paintwork**

Paintwork on cars and even electric tools can be kept clean by just wiping over with an oily rag. Buff with clean cloth to remove surplus.

### **Chrome**

Chrome can have a lovely sheen if wiped over with a clean oily rag.

### **Garden tools**

After each use, wash garden tools, dry and wipe over with an oily rag.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Pet's Coat Shiner**

Add a few drops of oil to your hands, rub hands together and lightly stroke your pet all over, then comb the oil through their fur.

### **Pet's Fur**

Vegetable oil is great for helping you to de-matt your pets fur. Just soak the area in oil for at least 20 minutes and gently slide the fur apart. It makes getting sticky buds and burrs out of the fur much easier.

NB: If you do have to cut the fur, remember, it looks better to cut it vertically instead of horizontally. Never use pointed scissors.

### **Pet Food**

Add a tablespoon of olive oil to add 'good fat' to your dog's diet. Try cod liver oil too, especially for older dogs.

### **Rubber Supple**

The seal on car doors and boots will have a much longer life if you rub over often with cooking oil. It will keep it from freezing up in the winter too.

NB: Also try this on your fridge and freezer, keeping the rubber seal supple may also prolong its life.

### **Shoe and Boot Shiner**

Rub over shoes and boots with a little vegetable oil on a soft cloth, for an instant shine. Buff with a clean cloth to remove surplus.

### **Sticky Stuff Remover**

Adhesive on plates, ornaments, even apples or sticking plasters can be removed by rubbing in a little cooking oil and then wipe away.

### **Tar Remover**

Soak the tar in a little vegetable oil for 30 minutes to soften it, mix some salt and washing up liquid and rub into the tar and wash. Repeat if necessary.

### **Top Models Recommend it!**

Yes, it's true. Forget expensive creams and lotions, after a bath rub in some vegetable cooking oil. It's great for dry skin and for avoiding stretch marks too!

See Quick Fix Beauty Tips page 183.

### **Wooden Utensils**

New wooden utensils should be soaked overnight in olive oil, wash, and dry with an absorbent kitchen towel. Wipe with oil after every washing. This will keep wooden utensils, boards and bowls in good condition.

## **CORK**

### **Appliance of Silence**

Cork tiles under appliances that tend to vibrate i.e. washing machines, tumble driers etc. will make them less noisy. Try this on your freezer and refrigerator too.

### **Bathing Beauties**

Isn't it annoying when the bath plug chain comes loose? Just thread the chain through a large cork from a jar or make a hole in the centres of a few wine corks and thread the chain through. Knot it at the top so that it is fixed to the cork/s and you will never lose the end of the chain again. It will be floating on top of the water.

### **Coasters**

Make your own coasters. Take a flat pickle jar lid and a cork tile. Using the lid as a template cut a ring out of the tile. Cut to fit inside the lid. A ready made, professional looking, coaster that no one will ever know you made yourself. Unless of course you can't help telling people!

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Cork Protectors**

Cut out small squares from a cork tile or slice a cork from a wine bottle into rings. Stick these pieces on the following items:

Corn holders: they can give a painful prod when stored in the knife draw. Not if you store them stuck into a whole cork!

Knitting Needles: Are you fed up with knitting needles making holes in your knitting bag or the knitting continuously falling off the end? All you need do is store your knitting away with the needle points stuck into a whole cork.

Knives: Store knives safely by sticking the points into whole corks.

Needles and Pins: stuck into a whole cork are easier to use and safer to store.

Ornaments: Sticking small pieces of cork onto the bottom of ornaments will make them less likely to slip off onto the floor. And will protect delicate surfaces from being scratched.

Paintings: stick cork on the back of a frame to allow the air to circulate and to protect the wall from wear.

Place Mats: small pieces of cork fixed underneath a table mat will give extra protection from hot dishes.

Scissors: sharp scissors are safer stored and transported with their ends wedged into a whole cork. This is especially good for little nail scissors when taking on holiday etc.

Skewers: store several sharp skewers with the points stuck into a whole cork.

## **Cork**

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### **Drill Thrill**

If you need to monitor how deep the hole should be drilled, just fix a cork onto the drill bit to the depth you need and you can be sure of drilling to the right depth.

### **Fish Tank**

A cork tile under a fish tank will protect any surface it is standing on.

### **Floor Saver**

If you have an annoying hole in your new wooden or cork floor, just take some pieces of a wine cork, mix with glue and floor stain and push into hole and allow to dry. Trim off any irregular pieces that jut out. Press some wax polish into any irregularity and buff.

### **Lid Handle**

Have you any lids where the handle has broken? Just find a cork with a knob on the top, make a hole in the centre to take the lid handle screw and fix it to the lid. Now you have a new lid handle that will not get hot when used.

### **Notice board**

Cork tiles stuck onto a wall makes a handy notice board.

### **Pan Trivet**

Collect a few wine corks, cut them in half lengthways and stick them to a piece of plywood cut to a size that would comfortably fit the base of most of your pans and ovenproof dishes. Cut 'feet' rings from a whole cork and stick to the underside. Now you have a cork trivet ready to use.

### **Table Protectors**

Cork tiles covering a table under the tablecloth will give extra protection against hot oven-to-tableware, without the need to cover a pretty tablecloth with tablemats.

### **CORNFLOUR**

#### **Ant Repellent**

Find out where the ant's entrance is and sprinkle the area with cornflour, the ants should not use that way in again. Now you have to find all their little entrances and your house will be ant free without nasty poisons.

#### **Athlete's Foot Preventer**

If you leave your feet damp after washing or having a shower it can contribute to Athlete's foot. Sprinkle cornflour between toes to prevent it.

#### **Avocado Ripener**

Bury unripe avocados in a bowl or bag of flour and they will ripen faster.

#### **Bed Maker**

When the nights are hot and sticky, sprinkle some fragranced cornflour onto bed sheets and they will feel cool and never stick to you again.

#### **Dry Hair Shampoo**

Cornflour can be used in between washing your hair. It will remove excess grease and keep hair clean until it's time for washing again. NB: fragranced 'talcum powder' substitute can be used on the hair too. See below.

#### **Easy Fit Rubber Gloves**

Sprinkle some cornflour into rubber gloves before putting them on and they will fit much easier.

#### **Festive Snow**

Mix cornflour with a little water to a thick paste, dab onto Christmas tree or festive decorations to look like snow.

### **Festive Window Paints**

Mix cornflour with a little water to a thick paste, fix festive stencils to a window and, using a stencil brush, apply the cornflour mix. After festive season, just scrape away.

### **Grease Decrease**

If you have ever dropped oil onto your carpet you know that it is very hard to get out. Just sprinkle liberally with cornflour, rub well into the carpet and Hoover. You can also use the same method on furniture fabrics too.

### **Grease Remover**

If you have splattered grease onto your clothing, pat on some cornflour and rub the grease spot away.

### **Liquid Absorber**

Any spilled liquid can quickly be absorbed with cornflour. Sprinkle over, rub well in and vacuum up.

### **Playing Card Shuffler**

Playing cards often get stuck together, which makes shuffling them very difficult. Just sprinkle them with cornflour and they will be like new.

### **Playtime Fun**

See Bicarbonate of Soda / Play and Moulding Clay, page 34.

See Bicarbonate of Soda / Play Paints, page 35.

### **Spray Starch**

Mix 2-3 tablespoons cornflour in a plant mister with a little water, make up to 400ml with water, shake well and spray white clothes that need starching. Iron as usual. Adding floral water to the water reservoir will give clothes a nice fragrance too.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Squeaky Floor Stopper**

Brush copious amounts of cornflour through squeaky floorboards, they may need a couple of applications, but it does eventually stop the squeak.

### **Sunburn Soothe**

Mix cornflour and a plain yogurt to a paste and spread over areas of sunburn.

### **Talcum Powder Substitute**

Make your own talcum powder without the talc, which is a known carcinogen. Use cornflour instead. Add a few drops of your favourite essential oil or a whole vanilla pod, to fragrance the powder.

### **Wet Sand Remover**

It's nice to stroll along the beach or watch children playing in a sand pit, but afterwards the sand can be quite a nuisance. The best solution is to rub some cornflour into feet and areas that are coated, and the sand will just fall off and can be vacuumed up quickly or left to just blow away in the wind.

## **CRAYONS**

### **Faded Hemlines**

If you have a faded hemline and need to take the garment down, just iron the cloth, and colour in the faded part with crayon of the same colour. The warmth from the ironed fabric should make it easier to apply the colour. The colour will need to be applied after each wash.

### **Furniture Grazes**

Just find a crayon or felt pen that matches, and colour over the problem

## **Crayons / Deodorant Bottles**

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### **Ornament mend**

Mend your ornament with glue, allow to set, then just colour over with a permanent ink pen. If the ornament is just chipped, match the pattern of the ornament on the chipped piece with a permanent ink pen. Glaze over with some clear nail varnish, if necessary. It will be as good as new.

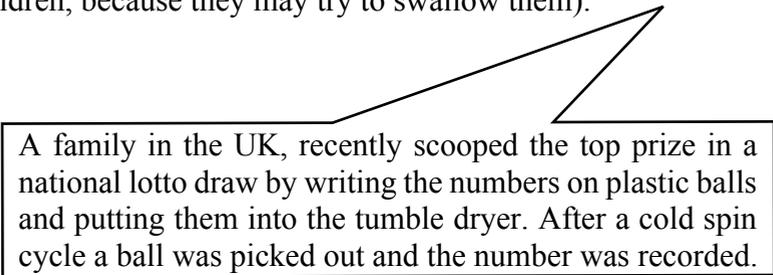
### **Shoe Scuffs**

Use a crayon or a felt pen over the problem area and apply a little polish and buff gently with a soft cloth

## **DEODORANT BOTTLES**

### **Giant marbles**

Remember that the clean roller-ball from a deodorant bottle can be used for children's games like marbles (don't give to very young children, because they may try to swallow them).



A family in the UK, recently scooped the top prize in a national lotto draw by writing the numbers on plastic balls and putting them into the tumble dryer. After a cold spin cycle a ball was picked out and the number was recorded.

### **Flower Arranger**

The roller balls from deodorant bottles can be used inside vases to keep the flowers in place.

### **Glue Roll-on**

Carefully remove the ball from a plastic deodorant bottle. Wash well and dry. Fill with glue, or a flour and water paste (for small children), and replace the ball. They will have a lot of fun without the glue spilling over everything.

### **Light Pull and Jewellery Keeper**

Carefully remove the roller ball from a roll-on deodorant bottle and use for another application. Make a hole in the lid and thread the light cord through and knot. Unscrew the lid and safely place in small items of jewellery. It makes an ideal light pull and you'll always be able to find your jewellery in the morning.

### **Quaint Paint**

Carefully remove the ball from a plastic deodorant bottle. Wash well and dry. Fill with coloured poster paint or a flour based water paint (for small children), and replace the ball. They will have a lot of fun painting their roller-ball pictures and there will be no messy paint brushes or water pots to clear away.

### **Sun Lotion Roll-on**

Carefully remove the ball from a plastic deodorant bottle. Wash well and dry. Fill with suntan lotion, and replace the ball. It is easier to apply and will not spill. Don't forget to change the label.

## **DENTAL FLOSS**

### **Beads Lead**

Restring your favourite beads onto dental floss, you will never lose them again. Remember, it is best to have a catch / fastener that will break in an emergency.

### **Cookie Crumbles**

Not any more! Get them off that baking sheet with dental floss.

### **Easy Cheesy**

Restring your cheese cutter with plain dental floss, no one will ever know.

## **Dental Floss / Denture Cleaning Tablets**

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### **Layer Cake**

Tie a piece of plain, thin dental floss around a couple of wooden spoons and use it as a cutter to layer cakes, cut through scones, buns, etc. too.

### **Nice Slice**

Tie a piece of plain, thin dental floss around a couple of wooden spoons and use it as a cutter to slice cakes. Where a knife cuts down and dislodges the layers, this cutter will make the perfect slice. Use it for tarts, flans etc.

### **On the Mend**

Use thin dental floss for any strong repair work on coats, bags, shoes, trainers etc.

## **DENTURE CLEANING TABLETS**

### **Clean Flasks**

Drop a denture cleaning tablet in some water in a flask and leave overnight. Pour liquid down toilet after use to keep it clean.

### **Cut Glass**

Your little cut glass ornaments will benefit from standing in warm water with a denture tablet added. But be careful of any stuck on adornments, it may loosen them.

### **Decanters**

A denture cleaning tablet is ideal for cleaning out bottles, decanters and even vases.

### **Sparkling Jewels**

Drop a denture tablet in water with your jewels and fizz them clean. It may damage plated or cheaper surfaces.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Toilet Bowls**

Help to remove limescale from your toilet by dropping a denture cleaning tablet into the cistern, or into the toilet bowl water.

## **EGG CARTONS**

### **Delicates Safe**

Use empty egg cartons for transporting any small delicates. Keep them closed with an elastic band.

### **Desk Tidy**

A small egg tray with paper clips, drawing pins, etc. in, is ideal to keep on the desk. It can be placed inside a draw when not in use.

### **Festive Decorations**

Store your precious baubles in an egg box. Place an elastic band around to keep the lid closed and they will keep safely for many years.

### **Firelighters**

Charcoal and a few dry twigs placed into a cardboard egg box and sealed is an ideal portable firelighter. Great for camping or trips to the beach. Just place egg box in the middle of the fire or barbecue and light the box.

### **Golf Tidy**

Store golf balls in an empty egg carton and you will never have to rummage through your bag looking for spare balls.

### **Ice Cube Trays**

Need some large ice cubes for packing around food? Just fill some plastic egg trays with water. Remember: If the ice cubes have to come into contact with food or drink, sterilise the egg trays with a cold, liquid, baby-bottle steriliser first.

## **Egg Cartons / Egg Shells**

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### **Paint Holder**

Plastic egg cartons are great for holding poster paints for your budding artist. Use the lid for mixing too!

See bicarbonate of Soda / Play Paints, page 35.

### **Taco Holder**

Sterilise a plastic egg carton with a cold, liquid, baby-bottle steriliser and dry well. Turn upside down and use as a taco holder, it is great for keeping tacos steady and upright while you fill some more.

## **EGGSHELLS**

### **Coffee Grounds**

Add crushed eggshells to your coffee grounds in the filter paper of your percolator (eggs stamped with the little lion mark are amongst the safest to use). It really does take all the bitterness of the coffee beans away.

### **Compost**

Liquidise eggshells with water and pour into your compost bin to add much needed minerals to your compost.

### **Glass Clean**

Liquidise white vinegar and eggshells together, soak stained glass-ware or crockery in the liquid overnight.

### **Plant Food**

Liquidise your eggshells with water and use as plant food. Especially good for flowing plants, ferns and tomatoes.

Remember: Don't waste the water after boiling eggs (or vegetables), allow to cool and water your plants with it.

### **ELASTIC BANDS**

#### **Flower Arranger**

Put an elastic band over your wrist. Group up a bunch of flowers in your hand and loosely pull the band over the stems. Immediately put the flowers with the elastic band still in place into a vase and straighten the flowers so they look nicely arranged. Fill with water as usual. NB: Adding a teaspoon of sugar to flowers and changing water every other day, helps to make them last longer.

#### **Paintbrush Scraper**

Put a large elastic band around an open paint tin (top to bottom) to act as a scraper for your paintbrush. Paint tins with a handle can support an elastic band fixed across either side of the handle.

### **ESSENTIAL OILS**

Out-of-date essential oils should not be used on the skin, but they make very good household maintenance and cleaning products.

#### **Cable Safe**

Is your cat or dog prone to playing with electrical cables? For their own safety, just mix some eucalyptus oil with vegetable oil and smear it along the area where they usually start chewing. It should deter them from going anywhere near. Keep an eye on them though initially, they may love it!

#### **Carpet Freshener**

For a nice aromatic welcome, sprinkle a few drops of essential oil onto carpets when expecting guests. NB: always patch test a small piece, some essential oils may damage cheaper man-made fibres.

#### **Furniture Polish**

Take a clean duster and sprinkle with essential oil and a few drops of carrier oil i.e. olive oil, almond oil etc. store in an airtight tin and

## Essential Oils

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use as necessary to polish furniture. Wash and renew the oil when the duster is soiled.

### **Garden Furniture Restorer**

Add a few drops of essential oil to teak oil or make your own oil with 100ml olive oil or almond oil and a teaspoon of essential oil. It can also be used to oil any unpainted wooden items in the garden from rose trellis to fences. And, add a few drops to hinges to keep them free of rust.

### **Garden Tool Restorer**

Old spades, forks, blades, shears, lawnmowers etc. often become rusty and useless; liberally apply an essential oil that is also a solvent, such as tea tree oil or lavender oil and abrade away the rust (only works on light surface rust). Next time you use the implement, remember to rub over a few drops from a mixture of 100ml carrier oil i.e. olive oil or almond oil and a teaspoon of essential oil. This will help to keep them free of rust.

### **Hinge Oiler**

Add a few drops of essential oil to the hinges of doors or gates to keep them working perfectly.

### **Hoover Freshener**

Add a few drops of essential oil to the bag of the hoover, it will keep it smelling fresh.

### **Oil Painting Cleaner**

Do not use this on your \*expensive paintings; make sure that you always patch test a small area (hidden by frame), if any damage occurs do not use on the whole painting. Add a few drops of tea tree oil to a soft cloth and lightly rub over the surface of the painting. It will remove grime and help to keep the paint from becoming too dry. \*Seek the advice of a restorer, but tell him about tea tree oil!

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Peaceful Picnic**

Citronella oil sprinkled over the ground around your picnic area should keep wasps at bay. You can place a bowl or cup with a little warm liquid in the middle of your picnic blanket (tea or coffee) and add some drops of citronella, it should deter those flying pests. But remember not to drink it!

### **Rust Spot Remover**

Dab on some tea tree oil and rub into area. Abrade and buff.

### **Shoe Polisher**

With a kitchen towel, wipe a few drops essential oil over shoes (that are normally cleaned with shoe polish), for a quick aromatic shine, it also helps to remove surface grime and light scratches too. NB: Olive oil or cooking oil can also be used for a quick shine.

If you use citronella oil on shoes just before going out, it will keep the gnats and flying pests away.

### **White Ring Remover**

White rings on polished wood furniture can be removed with essential oils that also act as solvents i.e. tea tree oil and lavender oil. Add a few drops of your chosen essential oil to the tip of a duster and rub round and round the ring with slight to medium pressure. Repeat as often as necessary. It may take a few minutes but it will work eventually. It all depends how deep the ring is and how long it has been there.

## **FABRIC CONDITIONER**

### **Car Freshener**

A sheet of fabric conditioner will freshen the air in your car if placed under the front seat.

## **Fabric Conditioner**

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### **Cotton Untangler**

Run a needle and cotton through a sheet of fabric conditioner to eliminate the static cling on the thread before sewing. The thread is less likely to knot up as you sew.

### **Deep Clean Baked on Food**

Place a sheet of fabric conditioner in a pan that needs deep cleaning. Fill the pan with water, let it sit overnight, and sponge clean in the morning. The antistatic agents seem to weaken the bond between the food and the pan while the fabric softening agents soften the baked-on food.

NB: Ordinary liquid fabric conditioner can also be used. Just put a measure into the pan

### **Hair Today**

Use a used sheet of fabric conditioner to gently rub over your hair to prevent flyaway hair.

### **Heating Vent**

Get rid of nasty odours by putting a sheet of fabric conditioner in a heating vent.

### **Longer Lasting Furniture Polish**

Take a teaspoon of fabric conditioner mix well with half a teaspoon of vegetable oil, apply to a clean duster and use instead of your normal furniture polish when polishing wood. It eliminates excess static, which means that you will not need to polish the woodwork so often.

NB: The sheets of fabric conditioner that are used in a tumble dryer can be used to polish furniture. It will also reduce the static that attracts dust to the polished surfaces and will mean that you will not have to dust so often. Magic!

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Moth Repellent**

Hang a sheet of fabric conditioner in your wardrobe, or place in draws to repel moths and to fragrance your clothes.

### **Nylon Cling**

Eliminate static cling from tights and underskirts. Rub a damp, used sheet of fabric condition over the outside of the garments to reduce the static cling.

### **Pet Hair Collector**

Rub the pet hair covered item with a sheet of fabric conditioner. It should magnetically attract all the loose hairs.

### **Repel Insects**

Thread a sheet of fabric conditioner (one that was used in a tumble dryer) around the band of your hat or through a belt loop. It will repel flying insects when you go for a walk in the countryside.

### **Shining Floors**

Add a cup of fabric conditioner to a bucket of water when mopping the floor.

### **Shoe or Trainer Deodoriser**

Place a sheet of fabric conditioner in your footwear overnight. They smell great in the morning.

### **Shower Screen Cleaner**

A sheet of fabric conditioner that has been used in your tumble dryer is ideal for cleaning soap scum from shower screens.

### **Suitcase Store**

When you use suitcases just once a year, they can get quite smelly. Place an individual sheet of fabric conditioner inside empty luggage before storing away.

## **Fabric Conditioner / Filters**

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### **Television Screen Cleaner**

The static from televisions makes the dust cling to the screens. If you clean the screen with a sheet of fabric conditioner it will reduce the surface static.

### **Venetian Blind Cleaner**

Wipe the blinds with a sheet of fabric conditioner to prevent dust from settling due to static.

### **Video Nasty**

Get rid of dirty videos by rubbing over the case with a sheet of fabric conditioner.

### **Waste Bin Freshener**

Place a sheet of fabric conditioner at the bottom of a waste bin, it is particularly useful in bathroom or kitchen bins.

## **FILTERS**

### **Egg Separator**

Take a paper cone-shaped coffee filter and cut the bottom off, so a small hole is exposed. Crack an egg into the filter and the white will drop through leaving the yolk in the filter.

### **Fat Filter**

Use a coffee filter to filter gravy before you thicken it. The liquid will quickly filter through while the fat stays in the coffee filter longer.

### **Ice Lolly Catcher**

Put an ice lolly into a coffee filter before you give it to a child, the melted ice will stay in the filter and if the lolly breaks, the filter will catch it.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Icing Easy**

Take a paper cone-shaped filter and cut a small hole in the bottom, insert an icing nozzle and fill with icing, close the top and ice cake.

### **Planters**

At the bottom of a large outdoor plant pot put a used coffee filter with the coffee grounds still in it. The filter will stop the soil from clogging the hole and discourage earwigs, woodlice and other pests from entering the pot via the drainage hole.

### **Splatter Matter**

Place an oil filter or a coffee filter (depending on size of dish) over a dish while cooking in the microwave, it will stop food splattering around the oven.

### **Taco Holder**

A new coffee filter is the right shape for holding a messy taco while you eat it. For a taco party, dip the filters in different coloured food colouring and allow to dry. You can make some very colourful taco holders and be the envy of your friends.

### **Window Pain**

Take the pain out of smear-free panes by rubbing a new coffee or oil filter over the glass after cleaning it.

### **Wine Clear**

If you break a cork into a bottle of wine, filter the wine through a coffee filter.

## **FIRE ALARMS**

### **Dog Trainers**

An old fire alarm can be used as a dog trainer. Puppies do not like loud noises, so when they start any antisocial behaviour, a quick press on the fire alarm button should serve to chastise them.

NB: Only use an old fire alarm that has a button tester on the top that can be pressed to sound the alarm. Do not take a fire alarm out of service to use as a dog trainer.

### **FIZZY DRINKS**

#### **Flower Feeder**

Fill a glass vase with stale carbonated lemonade or similar drink, the sugar in the drink makes perfect flower food. You can also co-ordinate the colour of the fizzy drink with your décor (when used in a glass vase), or add your own food colouring to clear drinks.

#### **Cola Restorer**

Cola is particularly good for restoring metals that have been subject to alkali build up, such as battery terminals. Just soak and see the difference. Rinse well and pat dry.

#### **Brass Shiner**

Soak brass in cola to bring it up like new. (Not to be used on coated brass or 'brass' that should not be cleaned with metal polish).

#### **Washing Machine /Dishwasher Cleaner**

A litre of fizzy drink and 1 litre of cheap vinegar should be allowed to stand in appliance for a couple of hours, then run through cycle on economy wash.

### **FLORIST'S FOAM**

#### **Cutting Starter**

Use old pieces of florist foam for rooting cuttings, just push cuttings into the foam and keep moist, but not wet. A weak solution of plant food mixed with a pinch of hormone rooting powder can also help the cuttings to root. When cuttings are rooted just pot up or plant out with the foam still around the root.

### **FOOD COLOURING**

See Ashtray Freshener (Cat Litter page 44)

See Bookends (Cat Litter page 44)

See Flower Arranger (Cat Litter page 44)

See Flower Feeder (Fizzy Drinks page 72)

### **FOOD CONTAINERS**

Most processed food now comes in very handy plastic containers that can be used to store and package many items around the home, garage and greenhouse. Please be sure to wash the packaging carefully, especially raw meat containers, which should be sterilised with a ‘Milton’ type cold-water bottle steriliser before use. Ice cream cartons with lids are especially useful. Only ‘food quality’ plastic should be used to store food.

**See also Plastic Bottles p102 and Plastic Containers p106.**

### **Booklet Supports**

The plastic triangular sandwich containers found in the fresh sandwich refrigerated units can be utilised as booklet/leaflet supports on a bookshelf. Discard the lid and place upright (at right-angles), flat against the shelf and the wall, fill with the leaflets, magazines or booklets, it will keep them neatly and discretely upright on any type of bookshelf.

### **Mini Greenhouse**

Make your own mini greenhouse with plastic trays. You will need two shallow black plastic trays and one clear plastic tray. Prick one black tray to provide adequate drainage, use the other black tray as a drip tray to catch any moisture from the seed tray. Fill the seed tray with good quality seed compost, place in the drip tray. Plant the seeds and place the clear plastic tray on top to form a domed greenhouse. It’s perfect for growing seeds on a windowsill.

## **Food Containers / Freezer**

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### **Potpourri Holder**

Make some holes in a plastic container and fill with potpourri, they are ideal fragrancers to slip into drawers or small spaces.

See Plastic bottles page 102.

### **Seed Trays**

Many of the tray type of food containers can be utilised in the greenhouse or on a windowsill as seed trays. For the windowsill, it is better to use two trays, one pierced to let the excess water drip away from the seeds/seedlings and one whole to use as the drip tray. Just fill with pierced tray with a good quality seed compost and plant as directed on the packet.

See Plant Pots, (Newspapers page 99).

### **Water Reservoirs for Planters**

Use a tray type of food container as a water reservoir in the base of containers and hanging baskets that are packed with plants and get a good deal of direct sunlight. Add gravel, broken crockery or polystyrene bits to the base of the planter. Place the container (do not pierce) on top of the gravel, make sure that it does not fill the space entirely, it should have a gap around each edge to allow excess water to drain away. Fill whole thing and container with potting compost and plant as usual.

## **FREEZER**

Did you know that your freezer can do more for you than preserve food?

### **Al Fresco Eating**

When dining outside with cold food, freeze water in shallow plastic cartons and place under serving plates. This will keep the food cool and fresh.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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NB: It may also help to freeze serving dishes beforehand (but do not use frozen servers for salad leaves or they may get frost bite, chill them in the refrigerator instead it will help to keep the leaves crisp.

### **Better Batter**

When making Yorkshire puddings, allow batter to stand for 20 minutes inside the freezer, your puddings will rise and rise.

### **Drink Coolers**

Unwaxed lemons can be sliced and frozen on a plate and put into the freezer. When frozen, transfer to a resealable plastic freezer box or bag and use as necessary. Pop a slice of lemon into drinks and teas for an instant, delicious lemon, cooling effect.

### **Fresher Spices**

Spices are much fresher if used straight from freezer. Powdered spices do not freeze solid and can be easily used straight from the freezer.

### **Glassware Saver**

If glasses stick together after they have been washed, just stick them in the freezer for an hour and they should come apart easily.

### **Instant Puddings**

Freeze fruit, fruit juice (with or without alcohol), or sweetened black coffee. When needed, just liquidise for an instant granita. Can be used as a starter, slushy drink, or as a light dessert served with cream.

### **Longer Lasting Candles**

Keep a bag of candles in the freezer, they last longer, drip less and you will always know where to find them in an emergency.

### **Superb Herbs on Tap**

Chop fresh herbs and put 1-2 teaspoons into compartment on ice cube tray, add water to cover herb and freeze. Just put frozen cubes into a freezer box or bag to store and use as necessary. Pop into soups, sauces or dishes whilst cooking or defrost and use as applicable.

### **Vegetable Peelers**

1. Freeze garlic in individual cloves and peel easier under a warm tap.
2. Freeze large tomatoes, then run under a cold tap, all the skin will crack and be really easy to remove. Defrost, before frying or just pop into a stew or sauce.
3. Keep root ginger in a bag in the freezer, when needed just grate some into a recipe.

## **GARDEN CANES**

### **Reusable Paint**

When storing half-used paint, stand a length of clean garden cane in the middle and seal with the lid. When the lid is removed, pull out the stick and the paint skin will come with it, discard the skin and use the cane to stir the paint.

## **GARDEN HOSE / TUBING**

### **Cable Tidy**

If you have a lot of cables hanging from a computer or TV equipment, to stop them getting tangled up, make a slit down one side of a garden hose, cut air holes along the opposite edge and slip the cables inside.

### **Cable Tracker**

Small pieces of hose pipe are ideal to use in the shed or out in the garden for keeping cables on track. Cut 7cm lengths and make a slit lengthways and diagonally across the length of hose. Fix these along the area where you need the cable to run. It can be along a skirting board, underneath a shelf or along the back of a work bench etc. Next just slip the cable into the lengths through the diagonal slit and they will keep them secure.

NB: they can also be used to keep the cable safe on drills, lawn mowers etc. Just fix the hose to your belt or an old pair of strong work trousers and the cable with trail safely behind you. Fix the hose at regular intervals down a wooden ladder or glued safely to the side of a metal ladder and the cable can be trailed safely down the ladder and will not trip you up. If you happen to drop the tool it can slow its decent and, in most cases, can even stop it from falling to the ground.

### **Carrier Bag Handles**

Cut a small length of hose pipe (10cms) and cut it down lengthways, keep it in your handbag. Next time you go to the supermarket or on a shopping trip, put two carrier bags inside each other, fill with groceries and slip all four handles inside the length of hose. You now have a strong carrier that won't cut into your hands and, if you happen to drop it, it is less likely to spill the contents all over the floor.

### **Flower Bed Waterer**

See Gardening Section pages 170-182

### **Handle Grips**

See Gardening Section pages 170-182

### **Hinge Emergency**

A piece of garden hose fixed to the post and a gate or door will act as an emergency hinge if a hinge has snapped.

## **Garden Hose**

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### **Lawn Perfect**

Bury some lengths of old hose (which has had some holes cut into it) underneath your new lawn. It is much easier to water it by coupling up the old hose to your new hose or outdoor tap. Much more efficient and cost effective than a lawn sprinkler.

### **Skipping Rope**

A piece of thick rope knotted about 15cms from each end, then knotted again to keep a piece of 'hose' handle at both ends, makes an ideal skipping rope. The hose allows the rope to turn freely and the knots keep it in place.

### **String Thing**

String is without doubt one of the greatest inventions. Where would we be without it? There is a problem with it though. When it is used to tie things and is pulled tight it can cut into the item and your hands. The solution is simple! Just use an old piece of hose on the points where it is likely to dig in and it safely and securely holds it in place. Try it when you are tying in plants, around trees, saplings and shrubs. Fly that kite safely with a piece of 'hose' handle. Impromptu string dog lead needs a 'hose' handle. Etc. Etc. In fact it is so useful with string, why not keep lengths of hose ready cut, and store with your string?

### **Swing Time**

Thread the chains of a garden swing through hose pipe to make it easier and safer to grip.

### **Tool Safe**

Sharp tools in a shed or garage are always a danger. But not if you cut a length of hose to fit the blade. Slit the hose lengthways and slip over the sharp edge to keep it covered. It can be used for hoes, knives, blades, saws, etc.

### **GLYCERINE**

Glycerine is a by-product of animal or vegetable fat processing. It can also be a by-product of the petrochemical industry. You should be sure which you are buying, because it is not always clear on the label.

#### **Freezer Clear**

After defrosting your freezer, wipe area over with glycerine and it will be easier to defrost next time.

#### **Glass Clear**

Put a few drops of glycerine onto a clean lint-free cloth and rub over windows or mirrors to stop them steaming up

#### **Hand Cleaner**

Rub into hands and rinse. For a more anti-bacterial hand cleaner add 1 drop of lemon or tea tree essential oil for every 5ml glycerine.

#### **Nice Icing**

Add some drops of glycerine to keep your icing soft.

#### **Soften Fabrics**

Add glycerine to final rinse water. A shower curtain can be kept supple if glycerine is added to final rinse water.

#### **Sore throats**

A teaspoon of vegetable glycerine can be used instead of sore throat medicine.

\* Add lemon juice for tonsillitis

\* Add a mashed clove of garlic and put through a fine mesh sieve for use as an expectorant.

#### **Stain Remover**

Rub glycerine into mustard, grass, food stains and laundry.

### **GREASEPROOF PAPER**

#### **Icing Magic**

Fold a sheet of greaseproof paper into a cone shape and snip off the end. Fit it with an icing nozzle and it makes a very good icing bag.

#### **No More Plasticisers**

Plastic bags can release plasticisers into food. These chemicals are hormone disrupters and can cause damage to your body in the long-term. Always be sure to wrap food in greaseproof paper before putting it into plastic bags or wrap. The food never needs to come into contact with the harmful plastic.

#### **Tracing Paper**

Your children will have hours of fun tracing their favourite characters from books with greaseproof paper.

### **GREETING CARDS**

#### **Bag Tags**

Use distinctive birthday or Christmas cards and cut a small tag about 10cms X 7cms. Write name and address (or selected details) on back and completely cover with sellotape. Punch a hole in the card and strengthen with more tape or use hole strengtheners. Thread through some strong string and attach firmly to luggage. You will be able to see at a glance where your luggage is with such distinctive markers.

#### **Christmas Tree Decorations**

Angels, robins, decorated Christmas trees make ideal Christmas tree decorations. Cut around each suitable item, attach a ribbon and hang on the tree.

### **Post Cards**

The front from greetings cards make ideal postcards.

### **Present Labels**

Cut out shapes on the greetings cards, punch a hole through the top and thread through narrow piece of ribbon. Ideal for labeling presents.

## **HAIRDRYER**

### **Clean Flowers**

Use a hairdryer on low setting to gently blow the dust from plastic or artificial flowers.

### **Come Clean**

A hairdryer on a low setting can be used to clean little intricately carved pieces such as ornaments, furniture, picture frames, pelmets, etc.

### **Fire Starter**

Forget a set of bellows! A hairdryer on a gentle setting will fan the flames of a newly lit fire. NB: It is safer to position the dryer the other side of a wire fire guard so that it and you are protected from sparks or falling wood.

### **Frozen or Blocked Pipes**

A hairdryer can be used to thaw frozen pipes. It can also be used to unblock pips that are gummed up with grease. NB: be careful not to damage plastic pipes or sealant with too high a heat.

### **Holiday Drying**

Wash undies on holiday and blow dry them with a hairdryer. Also works well with thin, lightweight tops etc.

## **Hair Dryer/Hair Grips / Herbs & Spices**

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### **Remove Plasters**

Plasters are easier to remove if you go over them with a hairdryer to soften the adhesive. Make sure that the heat setting isn't uncomfortably high.

## **HAIR GRIPS**

### **Nail Holder**

Hold a nail steady with a hair grip while you hammer it in. It will save your fingers if you miss.

### **Page Saver**

Isn't it maddening when you are half way through a book and the book mark drops out? But if you had placed a hair grip over the page, it won't mark the book and will keep your place safe.

## **HERBS & SPICES**

### **Flower Arranger**

Fresh herbs add greenery and fragrance to a flower arrangement. They are easy to grow and save you money, because you will not need to buy as many flowers. Mint, fennel (especially bronzed leaf fennel), chive flowers, tall sprigs of basil, rosemary sprigs, tarragon, etc. all look nice in a flower arrangement.

### **Fresh Pomander**

Chopped fresh herbs in warm water make a lovely fresh pomander to fragrance a room.

### **Pet Off**

Sprinkle cayenne or chili powder on patches where a dog or cat defecates and you don't want them too.

### **Squirrel Scare**

If you don't like squirrels taking food from the bird feeders just mix the seed with cayenne. The squirrels don't like the taste, but the birds don't mind it.

## **ICE CUBE TRAY**

### **Herb Savers**

When you have too many herbs (including chives) in the summer, regular harvesting will keep them from going to seed. Chop them and store in ice cube trays, freeze and put into plastic bags. They are invaluable for popping into soups and sauces.

### **Sauce / Gravy Pots**

Left over sauces or gravy can be stored in ice cube trays, frozen and put into a freezer bag. They are ideal to add body to new sauces or gravy.

### **Sow Your Seeds**

Make a few holes in the bottom of each cube to allow drainage. Fill with seed compost and plant a seed in each one. When the seedling grows a second pair of leaves transplant the whole cube to a larger container.

### **Vegetable Keepers**

Save any chopped vegetables (cooked or raw) in little ice cube trays, when frozen put into a plastic bag. Add to soups or liquidise with sauces.

## **INNER TUBES**

### **Roof Rack Band**

Use an inner tube from a bike on a roof rack to hold things in place (like a large elastic band).

### **JARS**

#### **Storage Solutions**

Fix jar lids to the underneath of shelves in a shed or office etc. using a screw fixing. Fill the jar with light objects and replace the jar onto the fixed lid. The jar hangs from underneath the shelf and is easily assessable. It is an ideal storage solution.

NB: Jars can be attached underneath kitchen shelves or under kitchen units to store pasta, rice, spices etc. It has the added advantage that if you are cooking, you only need one hand to twist the jar away from the top.

#### **Vase inside a Vase**

If you have a lovely decorative vase, but it is too big for the flowers you have, just slip a glass jam jar into the vase and arrange the flowers in the jar and fill with water.

### **JUMPERS**

#### **Carrier Bag Dispenser**

Detach the arms from old jumpers, long-sleeved blouses or cardigans, they make ideal carrier bag dispensers. Just make a loop at the widest end to hang on a hook, then stuff the carrier bags in, and take out from the smallest end when needed. NB: don't forget to keep the buttons from these old garments, they are very useful for replacing buttons on your clothes.

#### **Duster**

Wrap a soft, old jumper around an old broom and use it to dust polished floors, or reach cobwebs from the ceiling.

#### **Hanging Basket Liner**

Old Jumpers make very good hanging basket liners, just line your hanging basket and fill with a good compost. If you detach the

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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sleeves before using you can even use the arms in the carrier bag dispenser, above.

### **JUNK MAIL**

#### **Shopping Lists**

Cut up envelopes from junk mail into squares and use for shopping lists or notes.

#### **Seed Collectors**

Inside most junk mail envelopes are smaller envelopes, they are perfect for collecting seed from plants in the autumn. Use old seed catalogues for planting information. Write the details on the back of envelope and stick a picture of the plant on the front. Your seeds should last at least 3 years if stored in a cool dry place.

### **KITCHEN TOWELS**

#### **Iron it off**

To remove grease or wax crayon from a carpet or clothes, cover with a couple of layers of kitchen paper and apply a hot iron.

#### **Banana Storage**

The tubes from kitchen rolls can be used for transporting bananas for a picnic or school lunches, just cut tube to size.

#### **Carrot Store**

If you need to keep carrots, wrap individually in kitchen towel and store in a cool place.

#### **Postal Tubes**

Send papers through the post by rolling up and placing inside a kitchen roll tube. Tape the ends to keep papers in, label, stamp and send.

### **LEMONS**

#### **Fragrant Garbage Disposal**

Freeze all your lemon or citrus peel in a large bag. When your garbage disposal gets a bit smelly, throw in a few pieces of citrus peel and it will fragrance the whole room.

#### **Grease Destroyer**

Lemon Rings will clear grease from a cooker top. Just place a slice over the grease and a few hours later it will just wipe away easily. \*For stubborn grease spots, half a lemon dipped in salt will scour away burnt on food and grease, allow to stand and wipe away.

#### **Ivory Cleaner**

Clean pieces of yellowing ivory with a piece of lemon dipped in salt.

#### **Microwave Cleaner**

Put a couple of slices of lemon in a basin, add a cup of water and microwave on high for 5-10 minutes. Wipe out the inside of the microwave with a soft dry cloth or absorbent paper. It has an added bonus of making your kitchen smell fresh too.

#### **Natural Flea Repellent**

Save all your squeezed lemon halves in the freezer, when you have about 5-6, simmer them in a litre of water for 45 minutes. Turn off the heat, put a lid on the pan and leave overnight to steep. When cold spray the liquid onto pet, avoiding eye area. If irritation occurs discontinue use.

#### **Sink and Draining Board Cleaner**

The end of a lemon dipped in salt will clean a stainless steel sink and restore the shine.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Use it for stainless steel pans and cutlery to.

### **Smelly Hand Cleaner**

A slice of lemon or a squeezed half rubbed over hands will make them smell lemon fresh.

### **Stainless Steel Cleaner**

Run over stainless steel with a surplus squeezed lemon half and buff with a cloth.

### **Tooth Whitener**

A slice of lemon rubbed over teeth will help clean away stains.

## **LEMON JUICE**

### **Secret Writing**

If you write on a plain piece of paper with lemon juice, the writing will be invisible. Just expose it to light (sunlight or hold it just above a light bulb) the writing will appear again.

See Vinegar page 121.

See Lemons page 86.

## **MAGAZINES**

### **Plug Identifier**

Cut out pictures from magazines of appliances and stick to the corresponding plugs. You will always know which plug is which.

## **MILK CARTONS / BOTTLES**

See Plastic lids page 106

See Plastic bottles page 102

### **Bird Feeder**

A large plastic milk bottle makes an ideal bird feeder. Cut a large hole in both sides through the middle about 4cms above the base. In between the base and the hole thread a skewer or a long chopstick through to act as a perch, on both sides of the feeder. Fill the base with suitable bird feed or peanuts and hang on the eaves of a shed, or a tree etc. Now sit back and watch the birds landing on the perch and feeding. You can put another one up with water in, but don't forget to change it regularly.

### **Carrier Bag Holder / Dispenser**

Wash and dry an empty 3-litre plastic milk bottle. Cut a hole in one side about 6cms in diameter and fill with plastic bags. You can fix the bottle to a door or hang up the dispenser on a hook

### **Freezer Pack**

Fill a sterilised plastic milk bottle with water (but not right up to the top). Freeze and use in your ice box as a large freezer pack, and, if you need it, you have cold water 'on tap' for your journey. It will save a fortune because you won't have to buy bottled water.

### **Mix and Store Batter**

An empty plastic milk bottle is ideal for mixing and storing batter just put all the ingredients into the bottle and close lid. Shake very well to mix all the ingredients or mix with a long handled salad fork. Just pour out into the pan and store what is not needed for up to 3 days in the refrigerator.

### **Pen Holders**

Cut the top off an empty milk carton, wash and dry well, cover with tin foil, wrapping paper or stick on some material. It makes an ideal pen store, for the kitchen or desk. It won't break if you drop it, and if it does, you could just make a new one.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Play Scoop**

If your child has a sand pit, this is a must. See scoops below, but make sure that there are no sharp edges on the cut sides, go over them with sandpaper until they are smooth and safe for a child to use. Give your child different sized scoops to play with. They can take the lid off and watch the sand trickle through.

NB: A large play scoop is ideal for picking up small toys or lego bricks etc.

### **Pooper Scooper**

A small plastic milk bottle (250ml-500ml) can be made into a handy disposable scoop (just like a pooper scooper). Cut a wedge diagonally from underneath the handle to the bottom of the base on the opposite side. This is the front of your scoop (the bottle top should be at the opposite end, behind the handle). A small milk bottle is ideal to scoop dog poos when going for a walk. Either place into a plastic bag or dispose of it into a bin. Larger bottles make scoops for cat litter trays (one to scoop clean litter and one to scoop used litter), and even to clean out rabbit pens etc.

### **Scoops**

A sterilised plastic milk bottle can be made into a handy scoop. Cut a wedge diagonally from underneath the handle to the bottom of base on the opposite side (leaving the bottle top on, behind the handle). A small milk bottle can be used to scoop dry food stuff such as breakfast cereals, dried beans, flour, dry dog food etc. Use one for potting up plants or use to scoop washing powder. Larger scoops are great for keeping in the cupboard and scooping up small items or food that has been accidentally dropped.

NB: sterilise with a cold (baby bottle) steriliser for food use.

### **Sugar Pourer**

A sterilised dry plastic milk bottle is ideal to keep sugar in. You can easily get a teaspoon in the top or it is easily poured out onto a spoon. No more spilled sugar or ripped bags.

NB: sterilise with cold baby bottle steriliser.

## **Milk Cartons / Milk Bottles / Miscellaneous**

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### **Waste Disposal?**

Keep a couple of clean, empty milk cartons under the sink, they are perfect for disposing of broken glass (or keep plastic milk bottles with lids for disposing of old cooking oil). You can even use cartons when cooking dinner or lunch, keep one (fully opened) on the kitchen top whilst preparing food; you can just dispose of any waste quickly and easily without having to keep going to the bin. Discard immediately after food preparation, do not leave 'full' on kitchen top for any length of time.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Apple Peel / Aluminium Pan Shine**

Boil some cooking apple peel in an aluminium pan to restore shine to aluminium pans.

### **Apples / Potato Preserver**

Place two green apples in newly opened bag of potatoes, it will keep potatoes fresh.

### **Avocado Skins / Moisturiser**

Use old avocado skins for rubbing onto knees or elbows, they help to clear dry skin.

### **Avocado Skins / Slug Traps**

After using the avocado skins as a moisturiser (above), you can put them out in the garden to trap slugs. Check often and dispose of any resting slugs as necessary.

See Melon Skins (Miscellaneous), below.

### **Blue Tac / Quick Decorating filler**

When decorating, quickly fill small nail holes with blue tac and paint or paper over.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Broom Handle / Window Lock**

Use a broom handle or an appropriately sized piece of wood to secure sliding doors or windows. If you lay it in the track of the opening frame, it will completely stop the door from opening. Cut it 10-15cms short and it will allow the window or door to be opened slightly but not enough for anyone to enter. When you need to open it fully, just lift the wood away from the track, it's as simple as that.

### **Bubble Bag Envelopes / Safety Wrapping**

Save all your old bubble bag envelopes in an old carrier bag. When you need to send a parcel or at Christmas (when packaging fragile presents/items) you will find them invaluable. Just take an envelope and pull it apart at the seams, so that you have two halves. Either, separate the 'bubble' material from the paper and use as a wrap, or roll the half into a sausage shape (bubble side out) and tape, then use as a wedge to keep the contents of a parcel or box safe.

### **Bulldog Clips / Handy Hangers**

Plastic bulldog clips are ideal for clipping a tea towel or towel to a kitchen hook (with a hole in the handle the clip just slips over a hook while holding the cloth in place). They are great for holding shading in a greenhouse or for holding bubblewrap insulation over plants in greenhouse or against walls.

### **Cashew Nuts / Dairy Free Cream**

Grind cashew nuts with a little water and serve as a pouring dairy-free cream.

### **Chalk / Damp Stop**

Save all your small odd pieces of chalk. Put them into an old pair of clean tights and cut off the desired length. Hang them up in dark closets to stop the damp.

### **Children's Glow Stars / Light switch Finder**

Glow in the dark stars are very good for attaching to light switches. When going into a dark room or cupboard you will always be able

## **Miscellaneous**

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to locate the light switch, straight away. They can also be used on the stopcock under the sink, in an emergency it is easier to find. Or paint the entire light switch, bathroom light pull string, stopcock etc. with glow-in-the-dark paint.

### **Cloth Remnants / Sumptuous Wrapping Cloth**

Use cloth remnants cut to size to sumptuously wrap special presents, and tie with a satin bow. Flimsier cloth looks better if you starch it well before wrapping up the present.

### **Comics / Children's Wrapping Paper.**

Use pages from comics or the comic style supplement from your newspaper, to wrap up presents intended for children.

### **Cotton Reel / Clamp**

Slip a long, thin, nut and bolt through two cotton reels to make an impromptu clamp. Ideal for small jobs.

### **Cotton Wool Drawstring Bag / Wet Stuff Carrier**

Keep the handy drawstring bags that cotton wool products come in and use for carrying wet face flannels or wet bathers when on holiday or visiting swimming baths.

### **Gravel / Flower Holder**

Put a couple of handfuls of washed gravel in the bottom of a vase, it makes it much easier to hold the flowers in place. Once dried, gravel can be used for arranging fresh, dried or artificial flowers or grasses.

### **Eyebrow Pencil / Instant Hair Colour Patch**

Have you ever been getting ready to go out, when you notice that your roots/grey hair are showing through? Don't despair! Rub some eyebrow pencil (that matches your shade) onto your fingertip, then rub your finger over the offending area (try to follow the natural flow of your hair) to blend it in with the rest of your hair.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Make sure that you wash your hair well, before colouring, or it will act as a mask and the hair in that area will not take up the colour.

### **Freezer Shelving / Greenhouse Shelving / Shed Tidy**

Take the wire shelves / baskets from old fridges and freezers, they are perfect for use in the greenhouse and cold frame. They make it easier to move or store newly potted-up plants and seed trays, or they can be used for stacking trays and even for shelving. You can use the baskets to create more space for potted plants by suspending them from the greenhouse frame with garden wire. A seed tray in a basket can be topped with a shelf on which another seed tray can be placed, it doubles the space in your greenhouse. Or you can line them, fill with a good quality potting compost and use as planters.

### **Guttering Hooks / Wallpaper Holder**

Fix three semicircular guttering hooks to your pasting table. They hold the roll safely and you can draw off as much as you need.

### **Hair Dryer / Dust Mite Destroyer**

Dust mites can cause a very nasty allergy in susceptible people, but it is surprisingly easy to get rid of them. All you need is a hair dryer! Just set the dryer to the highest heat setting and once a week go over your mattress and surrounding carpet.

### **Ironing Board Cover / Oven Cloths or Mitts**

Use the good bits from an old padded ironing board cover to make heat resistant squares suitable to remove hot dishes from the oven. If you are more adventurous you could cut out 4 mitten shapes and sew two together to form a mitten, repeat with the other two, for a pair of mittens. Remember, the cover must be padded to stop the heat from reaching your hands, or why not use double thickness, just to be on the safe side.

### **Iron / Renew Playing Cards**

If your playing cards look the worst for wear, just iron them with a hot iron, between 4 sheets of kitchen towel (2 sheets each side).

## **Miscellaneous**

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Sprinkle with cornflour and stack until all have been ironed, place a heavy book on the deck and allow to cool overnight. Brush off surplus cornflour.

### **Leather Dog Lead or Belt / Garage Tidy**

A length of strong leather nailed across a shed or garage wall makes an ideal holder for tools. If the spaces between nails are just a few inches it makes an ideal small hand tool holder.

### **Melon Skins / Slug Catcher**

Place empty melon skins around the garden on top of the soil, in the morning collect, and humanely dispose of, the sheltering snails.

### **Microwave / Potpourri Refresher**

To refresh potpourri stand half a cup of water in the middle of a dinner plate, arrange the potpourri around the edge and microwave on high for 30-60 seconds. Sprinkle on favourite essential oils when cool. To clean the potpourri, sprinkle in some bicarbonate of soda (before refreshing with essential oils), stir/mix in vigorously taking care not to damage any fragile parts and then sieve away the soda, using a medium/large mesh sieve.

### **Nail File / Seedling Separator**

A metal nail file makes an ideal seedling separator. The curved end can hook a small seedling and help to repot it.

### **Nappy Pins / Pinning Fiddly Clothes to Clothesline**

Keep old nappy pins they are great for pinning fiddly clothing, such as strappy dresses, T-shirts and underwear, to a washing line, invaluable on a windy day.

### **Net Curtain / Stencil**

Use a pretty net curtain as a stencil. Fix to the object i.e. a tray, wall covering, tablecloth (using fabric paint), box, even a window! Then spray or stencil the appropriate paint over the net curtain. Leave to

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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dry and peel back the net. The pretty pattern will be ‘etched’ onto the item.

### **Nuts / Scratch Remover**

Break a peanut, pecan or walnut in half, rub the cut side into the scratch. Ideal for polished wood such as mahogany.

### **Paint Brush / Duster**

Use a soft paint brush, shaving brush or baby’s hair brush to clean in hard to reach areas or in crevices.

### **Paper Tablecloth / Wrapping Paper**

If you need to wrap a large present a decorated tablecloth comes in very handy!

### **Pizza Cutter / Free Over-Painted Windows**

If your windows are stuck because they have been painted shut, take a pizza cutter and run all around the windows in the grooves and cut those windows open.

### **Plastic Ring Holders from 4-6pack of Cans / Planting Frame**

Place a 6 or 4 ring plastic drinks can holder over a growing plant to hold shoots together (but not too tightly compacted), it may be necessary to use more than one on a growing shrub. The four corners can be attached to canes for added support. Also fix together 10+ plastic holders to make a trellis as on page 180.

### **Shoehorn / Seedling Planter**

An old shoehorn makes a very good trowel for planting out seedlings. It is also very good for easing out potted plants from their pots.

### **Software Boxes / Postal Boxes**

Next time you buy software, keep the box; just open up and turn inside out, then fix back together and glue or tape. They make

## **Miscellaneous**

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excellent postal boxes for small gifts and books, and are safer than sending in an envelope. Item given by Jan Nicklin, Staffordshire.

### **Stainless Steel Spoon / Hand Cleaner**

When you have been peeling onions or garlic or skinning fish your hands carry the odour for hours; a quick way of clearing this offensive pong is by putting them under a running cold tap, whilst rubbing every part of your hand with the back of a stainless steel spoon.

### **Super Glue / Button Keeper**

Put a very small spot of super glue on the cotton, holding buttons onto fabric. It is unlikely that you will ever lose them through loose thread. NB: cover garment with paper to avoid accidental splashes while using glue near fabric.

### **Skate Board / Shelf**

Do you ever wish that you had a good place to store the skateboard? Well why not make it into a temporary shelf in his room! Just put up a couple of shelf brackets and hang the skateboard on the wall. It's easily assessable when needed. You could even try a surf board shelf.

### **Tea Tree Oil / Nail Varnish Remover**

Add 50 drops (2.5ml) tea tree oil to a teaspoon and fill the teaspoon with vodka or other alcohol i.e. gin or surgical spirit. (Keep away from children, fire and polished surfaces). Dip in cotton wool and place onto the varnished nail. Wait for a couple of minutes and start to rub off the varnish. This will ensure that you do not come into contact with the harmful chemicals and vapours in commercial nail varnish remover.

### **Tennis Balls / Pillow Fluffer**

Place freshly laundered feather pillows in the tumble dryer. Add some tennis balls and dry. The tennis balls make sure the feathers

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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in the pillows do not clump together. When nearly dry, take the pillows out of the dryer and plump them by hand to ensure that the feathers are not clumping, return to the dryer and finish the drying cycle.

### **Toothpaste Tops / Door Stop**

Some toothpaste tubes have large 3cm tops that unscrew from the tube and with a hole in the middle, which is perfect to put a woodscrew through to fix to a wooden skirting board.

### **Toothpaste lids / Shelf Supports**

The small toothpaste tops can be used to hold up shelves. Just fix them into the four corners with a screw in each and rest the shelf on them.

### **Tumble Dryer Sheets / Storage Freshener**

When packing away blankets or the seasonal duvet fold with a tumble dryer sheet in the middle, they will smell fresh and clean when you come to unpack them.

### **Washers / Handy Hang-ups**

Old washers, as long as they are still quite strong, can be used to hang up any item they can easily be attached to (either by glue or sewn onto fabric etc.) Towels, bath mats, cushions, books, etc.

### **Washing Machine Drums / Stylish Planters for Free**

When you scrap a washing machine or tumble dryer, ask someone to remove the drum for you, they make very stylish steel planters. Either line the base and sides with inside out carpet/underlay or place a large pot inside. They look great on the patio.

### **Water / Juicier Poultry**

Before cooking poultry, immerse the carcass in a large bowl or bucket of water for a few hours or overnight. Cook as normal. NB: be careful of bacteria from raw carcasses. The water should be

## **Miscellaneous / Nail Varnish**

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disposed of safely and any spills and bucket should be sterilised. Wash hands well after handling carcass.

### **Wax Candle / Smooth Drawers**

If drawers stick or squeak when opened, run a wax candle along the runners.

### **Wire Baskets from Freezers and Refrigerators / Cupboard Storage**

Keep the baskets from your old fridge or freezer, they can be used in cupboards, airing cupboards or wardrobes to store clothes, groceries or tin cans to free up some space in your kitchen cupboards and bedroom closets.

## **NAIL VARNISH**

### **Lace Saver**

Fraying laces can be saved by painting the frayed edges with clear nail varnish and quickly wrapping around cotton or wool in the same colour (or near match). Remember to wrap the cotton or wool tightly and finish off by painting the end to stop it unravelling.

### **Tights/Stocking Saver**

As soon as you notice a small hole or tag in your tights or stockings, quickly paint with a small amount of clear nail varnish, all around the area. The emergency repair will stop embarrassing, unsightly ladders.

### **Paint Touch-up Bottles**

Keep all your old nail varnish bottles, when you next do a paint job, fill the nail varnish bottle with the paint and keep until the finish needs a touch-up. You have the paint and brush at the ready to do the repair.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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### **Stop Rust**

When your car paintwork is chipped, dab on some nail varnish remover to stop the chip becoming rusty and spreading along or through the bodywork.

## **NECK TIES**

### **Glasses Case**

Cut the larger end from an old tie and hem the thinner end. Pop your glasses into the tie. If you put a loop on the end (or sew on a washer) it's easy to hang up and easier to find your glasses.

### **Knitting Needle Holder**

Cut a length from the thin end of a tie that is about 3cms longer than your needles. Hem the bottom and attach a press stud to the opposite end of the inside of the holder. Now you have a colourful knitting needle case that will safely store your needles.

NB: If you have one of the old wider kipper ties, they make a great umbrella holder, just make up as described above.

### **Pen Holder**

Cut a length from the end of a colourful tie and make up a holder as in 'Knitting Needle Holder' above.

## **NEWSPAPERS**

### **Cake Saver**

When baking a cake that has to be in oven for over an hour the best way to stop the cake getting a hard crust is to wrap a newspaper 'collar' (approx. 4 sheets thick) around the cake tin and overlapping the top. Either fold the top down or place a piece of greaseproof paper on top. Fasten with a piece of cotton string and bake as normal.

## **Newspapers**

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### **Firelighters**

Take two complete sheets (4 numbered pages) from the newspaper and starting at a corner, roll up into a long sausage shape. Wrap the rolled up newspaper around your hand as far as it will go and tuck in the remaining 7cms (approx.) to lock the whole 'firelighter' together. When lighting fire put two sheets of crumpled newspaper on the bottom layer (this is the layer that is lit to start the fire off), with about a dozen 'firelighters' on top, then some twigs and coal. You will have no problem lighting your fire ever again. NB: if the coal or twigs are damp you will need more fire lighters.

### **Masking Strips**

Strips of damp / wet newspaper stuck down the edge of a window pane should stop any paint from going onto the glass. It is easier to remove than masking tape.

### **Mulch**

Cut strips of paper up and soak in water, tip onto the garden compost. Use the paper in layers in between a few inches of vegetable kitchen waste. Newspapers can also be used to line a trench before planting potatoes.

### **Paper Pots**

Cut strips of newspaper approx. 25cms x 14cms. Take one strip and wrap lengthways around the bottom of a spray aerosol can i.e. deodorant etc. with an overlap of approx. 4cms. Fold the overlap into the concave aerosol can base to form the pot. Take off, fill with seed compost and arrange in a seed tray with other filled paper pots. Plant individual seeds as per instructions on packet. When ready plant the seedling out into the garden, no need to discard the pot.

### **Potato Store**

Wrap potatoes in newspaper to keep them from going green, they will also last longer. NB: If you have to store a few kilos of

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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potatoes, put them in a strong cardboard box with newspaper between the layers and cover with more newspaper.

Newspaper is ideal for lining wire or plastic vegetable racks to stop the potatoes going green from light exposure.

### **Shoe Stopper**

Stuff crumpled newspaper in wet leather shoes, pack it in very well, and they will keep their shape as they dry out.

## **ORANGE PEEL**

Remember to save all your orange or citrus peel in a bag in the freezer. It really does come in handy. Try to use organic oranges as normal oranges are usually coated in a chemical wax to keep them looking good.

### **Ant Repellent**

Liquidise orange peel (from 4 oranges), cucumber peel and 2 teaspoons cayenne in 1-litre water. Pour over the ant's nest.

### **Bath Vinegars**

Orange zest in vinegar on the side of the bath in a fancy jar looks good and makes a nice refreshing bath.

### **Potpourri**

Dried citrus zest is an ideal addition to the potpourri bowl.

## **PAINT ROLLERS**

### **Fluff Remover**

Wrap sellotape (sticky side out) around a clean paint roller (without the paint pad) and roll over clothes to remove fluff and hairs.

### **Hanging Wallpaper**

Use a paint roller to apply wallpaper paste to the walls and to the back of wallpaper, it is much quicker than using a brush.

### **Smoothing out Wallpaper**

A clean, dry paint roller is invaluable for getting rid of air bubbles from wallpaper after hanging it.

### **Window and Mirror Cleaner**

Lightly spray a 1-part vinegar to 4-parts water mix over the windows and rub over with a crumpled newspaper, for a really professional shine. It's great for getting grime off windscreens, but try not to get any on paintwork. If you do, rinse off straight away.

## **PLASTIC BOTTLES**

See Plastic Lids from Containers page 106.

See Also Milk Cartons / Bottles page 87.

### **Advent Calendar**

Cut the tops from 25 plastic bottles, so that you still have about 4cms of the plastic bottle with the colourful screw lid still in place. Take a large piece of hardboard and cut it in the shape of a Christmas tree and cover it with shiny green paper. Next, cut tabs around each bottle, then you can either slice corresponding holes into the hardboard and fit the tabs through and sellotape on the back or open the tabs out, as you carefully squash the bottle against the hardboard. Tape the tabs into place with double sided tape and cover with a ring of tinsel around the bottle neck to hide the tabs. When you have stuck on all 25, unscrew the tops and place a little wrapped present in each one. Return the tops to the bottles (which look like Christmas tree lights). In permanent ink write a number 1-25 on each bottle top. The Advent calendar will last many years and it is a nice alternative to the chocolate ones.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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See Plastic Bottles - Plant Bells, below, to use the 25 bottle bottoms.

### **Candle Holders**

Cut the bottom off a plastic bottle and fill with coloured sand or just ordinary sand from the beach, or cat litter (fuller's earth) that has been coloured with food colouring. Place your candles in the middle of the sand and press down, so the sand safely holds the candle.

### **Door Knob Holders**

When you need to paint anything fiddly like new door knobs, place them in bottles to hold them while you paint. Fill the plastic bottle with water or sand to keep it stable.

### **Funnel Vision**

Cut the bottom off plastic bottles and discard the top. They make excellent disposable funnels.

### **Plant Bells**

Cut the bottom off a large plastic bottle and use as a plant bell. They are ideal for protecting small plants, such as cabbage plants from the weather. Just sink deep into the soil, enclosing the plant inside. At night close the bell by putting on the screw top; in the sun or during the middle of the day, make sure that the top is actually open. In strong sunlight it is best to take the 'bell' away altogether or the plant may become too hot.

NB: Bottle bottoms can easily be used, (see Advent Calendar) especially in an emergency when there is a threat of frost. Just cut some air holes in the top and place over the tender plant or seedling.

### **Plastic Bag Dispenser**

Fix a wide-neck plastic bottle to your kitchen cabinet door. Take your freezer or sandwich bags out of their box and push up into the neck of the bottle. It makes a handy dispenser especially when you

## **Plastic Bottles**

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are busy and you need a bag quickly. You can use different bottles (and label them) to take different bags. Bags that are attached at the bottom can be threaded through an appropriately sized hole in the bottle's lid. It will make them much easier to pull out.

### **Potpourri Holder**

Make some holes in a plastic bottle and fill with potpourri, they are ideal fragrancers to slip into cupboards or wardrobes.

**See also Food Containers.**

### **Seedling Waterers**

A large plastic bottle makes an ideal seedling waterer. Pierce the plastic lid to resemble a watering can 'rose'. It is possible to do this with a drill, but use a vice for the top and keep hands well away. Pierce the body of the bottle about 4cms down from the top with a small sharp dibber or similar. Half fill with rainwater and leave in greenhouse. Water the seedlings gently when necessary (remember to keep the 'air hole' on the bottle to the top, when watering to allow a gentle stream of water through the rose). The water will be the right temperature, if left to stand.

### **Shrub or Tree Oasis**

When planting a large shrub or sapling use a plastic bottle filled with gravel to help to keep it watered. Take a plastic bottle, discard the top and cut off the base. Put in a few larger pieces of gravel in to 'clog' the 'neck' of the bottle and smaller pieces to fill to the edge of the base. When planting, sink the whole bottle into the ground near to the roots and make sure that the base is the same height as the soil level around the newly planted shrub/tree. When watering, water straight into the 'bottle' and you will know that it will reach the roots.

### **Slug Traps**

Take a large plastic bottle, a lemonade bottle is perfect, and cut the top third off carefully with a sharp knife or a sharp pair of scissors.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Discard the bottle cap and turn the top around so that it is facing into the base and place inside the bottle and staple or clip all the way around to hold the two parts together. Either sprinkle in some slug pellets or beer into the base and half bury in the soil or place bricks on top of the trap so that it does not blow about in the wind. This is the only safe way to use slug pellets, the poison does not sink into the ground and it is away from wildlife. When it has caught a few slugs, discard in the bin and make a new one.

### **String Holder**

Use a bottle that is adequate for the size of string you are using. Cut off the bottom and fix upside down to the shed or garage wall. Pop the string in the top and thread the end through the bottle neck. It is easier to use and you will always know where the string is when you need it.

### **Vase Within a Vase**

A plastic bottle with the top cut off makes an ideal container to slip inside a large vase. The flowers and the water are contained in the smaller 'inner' and on the outside the flowers look nicely arranged and no one will ever know. If the inner needs stabilising, either put pebbles, or sand between the inner and outer vases. NB if you use the container in a glass vase, filling both the outer and inner vases with water to make the inner plastic bottle vanish in the haze.

## **PLASTIC CARRIER BAGS**

### **Car Waste Bin**

A supermarket carrier bag can be the perfect 'bin' when taking the kids on a long trip.

### **Free Bin Liners**

Use the plastic bags from supermarkets as bin liners; the handles can be used as ties.

### **Nappy Disposal**

Use free supermarket carrier bags as emergency nappy disposal bags when out and about. But please take the nappy home or put in relevant bin for disposal. There is nothing worse than a full nappy bag sitting in the middle of a supermarket car park.

### **Postal Sacks**

Plastic carrier bags make ideal postal bags especially for clothes or material, just turn them inside out, tape and label.

## **PLASTIC CONTAINERS**

Caution: Do not use ordinary plastic non-food containers with food. Plastic should always be food quality if used to store food.

**See also Food Containers Page 73**

### **Freezer Supporter**

If you fill plastic containers (with a space at the top to compensate for expanding ice) with water and place in a part empty freezer it will help the freezer to run more efficiently. NB: You can use the frozen containers to keep food chilled while on the table. Just place plate or bowl on top of it.

### **Sink Plunger**

Small, strong, flexible cartons from decorating filler can be used as an emergency sink plunger. Place over the outlet and push firmly down with the heel of your hand.

## **PLASTIC LIDS FROM CONTAINERS OR BOTTLES**

**Also See: Food Containers page 73.**

### **Carpet Saver**

To stop castors or furniture damaging your carpet, find comparable size matching lids and place under the castors or legs of your furniture.

### **Citrus Saver**

A plastic lid from a food container can store half a citrus fruit, place the cut side down on the lid and place the whole thing inside a food quality plastic bag. This keeps the citrus half better than just placing inside a plastic bag.

### **Egg Cups**

The large tops that are on fabric conditioner bottles can easily be used as an egg cup. This is especially good for children who tend to break the china ones.

### **Measuring Cups**

Translucent tops from fabric conditioner or liquid detergent bottles make ideal measuring cups for use in the garage or garden. Put 10ml of water in, mark the line with a permanent ink pen on the outside of the lid, now mark 20ml, 25ml, 30ml if possible. This type of measure is invaluable when measuring feed or weed killer in the garden. Most products have an integral lid / measurer but when you use these you will either get some of the product running down the bottle after use, or, if you wash it out, some water will get into the bottle and contaminate the product. It is much better to have a measuring cup for feed, one for treatment washes and one for weed killer, all colour coded for use.

### **Paint Stopper**

To stop paint dripping off your paint brush onto your hands take a large plastic lid and cut a X-shaped slit into it and push a paint brush handle through it. The drips fall onto the lid, not your hands.

### **Plastic Bag Stoppers**

Small plastic lids from fruit juices or milk bottles are ideal. Carefully cut a cross (X) in the sterilised lid and keep in the cutlery draw. When you come to close a plastic bag, take a bottle top and pull the twisted top of a bag through the cross to firmly seal.

## **Plastic Lids / Plastic Spray Bottles / Polystyrene Packaging**

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**NB:** If the item is to be frozen you can write the date and contents on the top with a pen suitable for freezer use.

**NB:** Use different coloured tops for labeling freezer bags, red tops for meat, green for vegetables and blue for fruit, and so on. You will always know at a glance where the type of food is.

### **PLASTIC SPRAY BOTTLES**

Most antibacterial products and kitchen cleaners come in handy spray bottles that can be reused when the product has run out. Make sure that they are thoroughly washed out with soap and water, before using.

#### **Tomcat Stopper**

Next time you catch your tomcat spraying in the home, take a spray bottle filled with water and just spray him back. It will stop this annoying habit. Never allow children to do this.

#### **Air Freshener**

Add a few drops of your favourite essential oil to 250ml of warm water and two teaspoons of bicarbonate of soda. Shake the bottle well and finely mist the room as necessary.

#### **Ironing Mister**

When doing the ironing, sometimes the steam just isn't enough, a spray bottle is invaluable to make up the moisture your clothes need.

### **POLYSTYRENE PACKAGING**

#### **Bean Bag**

Save all your polystyrene packing from goods (crumble the larger pieces) and pack into a very large floor cushion cover or make a cube from old material by sewing six squares together (size according to taste) pack the polystyrene into the cube and use as a stool.

### **Beany Toys**

Instead of expensive stuffing, when making stuffed toys use the polystyrene packing from goods, some polystyrene is already in 'bean' sized pieces, if not, crumble the larger pieces before use.

### **Pet Bed**

Use two squares of strong material, sew along three edges and pack with polystyrene beans, sew up fully. It is best to make a separate cover for your pet so that it can be washed often.

### **Plant Pot Drainage.**

Instead of using broken crocks etc., use pieces of polystyrene in the bottom of plant pots or tubs to allow good drainage.

### **Plant Duvets**

Plants can be damaged by frost, even when inside the greenhouse, so why not make some duvets that can be thrown over the plants to protect them during the night? All you need is a plastic bag or some old bubble wrap taken from padded envelopes, fill with polystyrene and tape or knot. When a severe frost is expected, just cover the plant or build up several duvets around the plant/s.

## **RUBBER GLOVES**

### **Cleaning Gloves**

Use a pair of woollen gloves over your rubber gloves or a pair of fleece lined rubber gloves turned inside out. Put on the gloves and spray with the appropriate cleaner or polish, then use the gloves to clean and polish between slatted blinds or louvre panels. Fleece lined rubber gloves can be used to wash very soiled blinds, just turn gloves inside out and dip into 50:50 water and vinegar with a squirt of washing-up liquid and use your fingers in the gloves to apply gentle pressure to the slats while cleaning.

## **Rubber Gloves**

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### **Gardening Gloves**

An old pair of rubber gloves makes the perfect cover for protecting your hands while gardening. They are effective in stopping your hands getting stung by nettles when weeding.

NB: Latex gloves are great for potting or planting, they keep your hands looking great and are not as thick or heavy as rubber gloves.

NB: Latex or rubber gloves can also be used inside ordinary gardening gloves to protect hands.

### **Finger Puppets**

Cut the fingers off old rubber gloves and give them to children aged 4+ to make their own finger puppets.

SEE tool belt below.

### **Stop Gardening Tools Slipping**

Slip cut fingers from an old rubber glove over the handle of gardening tools. When you prop them up against a door, wall or shed, they will not slip down.

### **Ironing board feet**

If the Ironing board has lost its rubber feet, cut the fingers from an old pair of rubber gloves and fix around the bottom of the leg to stop it damaging the floor.

### **Pet Hair Remover**

Put on a pair of rubber gloves and gently rub your fabric upholstery. Pet hairs will just roll themselves into a ball for easy removal.

### **Rubber Bands**

Make your own rubber bands by cutting an old rubber glove into sections.

### **Tool belt**

An old glove with the fingers cut out can be attached to a belt and used as a tool belt.

### **SALT**

#### **Bath**

Add a few tablespoons of salt to a bath, it softens the water and will also help to keep wounds clean.

#### **First Aid Wound Wash**

A salt wash is ideal for cleaning wounds. Just put 1-2 tablespoons salt in warm water and wash the area with cotton wool swabs. Midwives used to recommend salt baths after giving birth.

#### **Ice Defroster**

Sprinkle salt onto paths or onto built up ice in the freezer, salt water has a lower freezing temperature and will either help to defrost the area or keep it from freezing.

#### **Slug Killer**

Slugs on paths or the driveway can be killed by sprinkling them with salt, it will also keep the weeds down. NB: Keep salt off soil, or it will spoil it for planting and will kill the plants. Discard the snails in the bin, do not bury in the soil or put on the compost heap.

#### **Tar Remover**

Salt mixed with washing-up liquid is ideal for getting tar off clothes, pets, or hands.

#### **Washing booster**

A tablespoon of salt in your washing machine dispenser will help to soften the water and allow you to use less washing powder.

#### **Washing Machine Cleaner**

Add a tablespoon of salt and a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda to washing powder and a teaspoon of vinegar or lemon juice to clothes softener to keep your machine, calcium deposit free.

## **Salt / Soap / Sticky Tape**

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### **Washing-up Liquid Saver**

A teaspoon of salt in your washing-up bowl will soften the water and you will not need as much to wash your dishes.

### **Weed Stopper on Paths**

Sprinkle salt into the crevices on paths or directly on weeds on the drive to kill them. NB: Do not let salt come into contact with healthy planting soil or it will kill your plants.

## **SOAP**

### **Aphid Killer**

Soap dissolved into water and sprayed onto indoor or outdoor plants will kill aphids.

### **Bathroom Spray**

Soap dissolved into water and half a cup of vinegar, with added essential oil such as tea tree oil, can be put into a spray bottle and used to clean bathroom surfaces.

See Bicarbonate of Soda pages 23-39.

### **Draw Freshener**

Once you have unwrapped your soap use the wrapper to fragrance drawers.

## **STICKY TAPE**

### **DeFuzz Clothes**

Wrap the sticky backed plastic a few times around your hand or a small paint roller and rub over the area to remove light fuzzing and bits.

### **TIGHTS / STOCKINGS**

#### **Apple Picker**

Open out a wire coat hanger, form into a circle with a long handle by wrapping around a large wine bottle base and twisting the remaining wire into a long handle. Fix tights over the circle to form a net, large enough to take an apple. Fix the 'net' onto a long pole. You can attach the wire coat hanger handle to the pole with parcel tape. If you bend the net back slightly it will be easier to net the apples. It is much safer to pick fruit this way rather than climb up the tree. It can be used for plums, damsons, etc.

#### **Chair Repair**

Pull a loose chair leg until it comes free, wrap the leg from a pair of tights very tightly around the male joint and apply glue. Wedge into the opening for a tight fit. Trim tights if necessary.

#### **Cushion and Cuddly Toy Stuffing**

Wash and dry the tights. Cut into small pieces and store until you have enough to stuff a cushion. They make ideal stuffing for toys and cushions.

#### **Fish Net**

Open out a wire coat hanger, form into a circle with a long handle by wrapping around a large wine bottle base and twisting the remaining wire into a long handle. Fix tights over the circle to form a net. Sterilise the net and you can fish out anything from the fish tank.

#### **Fruit and Veg Saver**

Attach pieces of hosiery to the fruit that may be subject to insect attack. Stretch over marrows, cucumbers, etc. The leg of a pair of tights or stockings stretches as the vegetable grows and protects it from attack.

## **Tights and Stockings**

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### **Carrots**

Are you plagued by slugs attacking your carrots? Well, why not plant them in a length of hosiery? It may sound bizarre, but it is very easy to do and forms a barrier between the carrot and the garden pests. Start your carrots off in paper pots. When you come to plant out knot a length of hosiery and fill with potting compost. Plant the paper pot into the hosiery and plant it all into the garden. The carrot will grow happily in its pots. Make sure that the hosiery is above the soil and gathered in at the top to stop slugs getting inside.

### **Garden Ties**

A length of nylon hosiery is ideal for tying in trees or saplings to stakes. The nylon material stretches to allow the tree to grow naturally.

### **Hoover Safe**

Fix a piece of stretched nylon tights over the vacuum nozzle and secure with an elastic band. It is now safe to vacuum between small objects or areas such as the top of cupboards where you cannot see what you may be picking up.

### **Lampshade Cleaners**

Cut lengths from old white or colourfast light-coloured tights, knot one end and fill with a mixture of sugar soap and bicarbonate of soda, knot the other end and it's ready to use. Rub over a dry fabric lampshade and watch the colours come to life again. Remove excess with a soft brush.

### **Moth Repellent**

Use the foot out of old clean tights to form a pomander to hang in your wardrobes or cupboards, just fill with cloves, cedar wood shavings or potpourri with citronella added. Tie end into a knot and place in the area needed to repel moths.

### **Packing Perfect**

If you roll up items of clothing they won't become so creased. If you pack the clothing into a pair of tights or strips cut from an old pair of tights and put the clothes inside, it keeps them in a roll, making them easier to pack.

### **Plant Food**

Pack comfrey leaves into the leg of a pair of tights, put in a couple of large stones to make it sink. Knot the top to make a giant tea bag. Throw into your water butt (one that is only used for watering plants) and within a few days you will have plant food on tap. Just watch your garden grow!

### **Powder Holders**

Cut lengths from old white or colourfast light-coloured tights, knot one end and fill with washing powder, knot the other end and store in the box. When in a hurry just pop one into your wash, no messing with measuring powder. Quick and easy!

### **Soap Holder**

If your hands are dirty whilst out in the garden and you don't want to come in and wash them in the sink. Fill the foot from an old pair of clean tights or stockings with soap bits and hang on an outside tap. It will be accessible to use whenever you need to wash your hands. Just rub between your hands under running water. NB: You can use the mesh bags that onions come in, they act as a scourer too. Just fill with soap, tie the top with string and hang around the outdoor tap.

### **Spongies**

Make your own 'Spongies'. They can be used to wash garden furniture, car, barbecue etc. etc. Just cut a slit in the sponge and fill it with soap slivers. Put it into the foot of an old pair of tights and knot the end. Your spongie will last for ages and be very useful for washing loads of items around the garage, garden and greenhouse.

## **Tights and Stockings**

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### **Sweater or Blouse Dryer**

An ideal way to dry sweaters or blouses without getting peg marks in the fabric is to thread each leg of a pair of tights through each arm and peg the top and each foot of the tights to the line. Perfect, the tights get pegged to the line not the sweater or blouse, so no unsightly peg marks.

### **‘Waist’ Bin Bag Holder**

The waistband from a pair of tights makes an ideal bin bag holder, just insert the bag into the bin and fold the bag over the top of the bin, place the waistband over the top to hold the bag in place. It can easily be washed with each bag change.

### **Water Cleaner**

If you have a water butt you can tie the foot from a pair of clean tights over the down pipe from the guttering. It will strain the water as it enters the container.

A garden sprayer needs very clean water, if any bits get into the sprayer it can stop the flow of the water. You can still use water from a water butt if you strain it through a pair of tights first.

Strain rainwater through tights before using it in your electrical appliances that need water. It's much cheaper than using distilled water and works just as well.

### **Wrapping Paper Holder**

The legs of tights can be cut down to hold tubes of wrapping paper so that they can be hung up on the wall. Just sew a washer on the end to hang over a hook. Or keep the pair of tights intact and balance over a rail with a roll of wrapping paper in each leg. It may sound funny, but who's to know? No one but you will see it in the cupboard and they do make very effective holders.

### **TOOTHPASTE**

#### **Cutlery Cleaner**

Put a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on a damp cloth and rub stained cutlery, rinse and repeat if necessary.

#### **Scuff Marks on Floors**

Rub with some toothpaste to remove.

#### **Scuff Marks on Shoes or Trainers**

Rub with a small amount of toothpaste to remove scuff, then immediately rub over area with a coloured crayon the same colour as the shoes or trainers.

#### **Silver Cleaner**

Put a small amount of toothpaste onto a damp cloth and rub over items of silver. It is ideal for silver jewellery that has gone black. It will bring it up to a brilliant shine. Do not use on plated silver.

### **TWIGS**

#### **Kindling**

Next time you go for a walk, take a carrier bag and pick up fallen twigs. Store on a shelf in the coal store and use to light the fire with newspaper firelighters.

#### **Flower Arranging**

Use twigs in winter flower arrangements, they are cheap, look good and will help to arrange the flowers in the vase.

#### **Plant stakes**

Use larger twigs to stake plants. Just push into the ground around the plant.

## **TYPISTS CORRECTION FLUID**

### **Chipped China Corrector**

Chips on vases or ornaments can be 'corrected' with correction fluid in the same colour. Try dabbing on a little clear nail varnish to look like a glaze.

### **Christmas Decorations**

Windows can be painted using small stencils with correction fluid.

### **Lace Whitener**

Keep laces white by rubbing in correction fluid.

### **Magic Marker**

Correction fluid, especially the corrector pens, is ideal for marking jars and writing on shiny surfaces. Comes in all colours too.

### **Melamine Correction**

Any chips in the surface of your melamine furniture can be covered with a little correction fluid.

### **Trainer or Shoe Whitener**

Any marks on trainers, pumps and shoes can be painted with correction fluid in a matching colour.

## **TYRES**

### **Garden Maker**

Cut car tyres in half and arrange around the area you would like landscaped. Back fill with soil. If you cover the tyres with cladding made from equal quantities of soil, sand and cement (mix in water to form a paste and coat the outside of the tyre), no one will ever know that they are tyres, they look like stone curves. NB

You may need to paint tyres with a rubber primer or ESP (every surface primer) to make sure that the cladding sticks securely to the tyres.

### **Planters**

Large round planters can be made with a couple of car tyres. If you cover the tyres with cladding made from equal quantities of soil, sand and cement (mix in water to form a paste and coat the outside of the tyre), no one will ever know that they are tyres, they look like stone curves.

NB You may need to paint tyres with a rubber primer or an ‘every surface primer’ to make sure that the cladding stays on the tyres.

### **Potato Planter**

Save your old car tyres, they make perfect potato planters for the greenhouse or garden. Stuff each tyre with crumpled newspapers and a few banana skins (to break down as plant food), stack two tyres together, fill the first inner ring with potting compost and plant the seed potatoes, cover with soil to the next ring, as the plants grow add more tyres and compost. When you need to harvest them, just take away the tyres and the potatoes will fall out, no strenuous digging.

### **Tree Bumper**

An old car tyre cut and put around a tree to give a ‘bumper’ effect is ideal for saving the tree from being damaged by a lawnmower or strimmer. You can fill the tyre with potting compost and even cover the tyre with cladding made from equal quantities of soil, sand and cement. Mix with water to a paste and coat the outside of the tyre.

NB You may need to paint tyres with a rubber primer or ESP (every surface primer) to make sure that the cladding sticks to the tyres.

### **Vegetable Oil**

See Cooking Oil page 51.

### **Body Oil**

Vegetable oil is not just for frying or salad dressings. Massaged straight into the skin it makes an inexpensive moisturiser for the body. Try Grapeseed oil or your favourite vegetable or nut oil, they have a good content of vitamin E.

### **Boost Hair Conditioner**

If your usual hair conditioner is not doing its job, add a few drops of vegetable oil (up to 50:50 for very dry or damaged hair) mix well and use as stated on the bottle.

### **Cooker Clean**

Grease your hob and oven before cooking a meal, afterwards you can easily rub away food splashes.

### **Furniture Polish**

A few drops of vegetable oil on a clean duster will shine furniture as good as commercial polish.

### **Hand & Nail Salve**

Rub in vegetable or nut oils every time you have washed your hands, it will stop chafing and make your hands feel lovely and soft, and your nails less brittle.

### **Shinier Stainless Steel**

After cleaning the stainless steel item(s) with a piece of lemon dipped in salt, sprinkle a soft, clean cloth with a few drops of vegetable oil and buff, it keeps the shine longer.

### **Shoe Shine**

A few drops of vegetable oil on a clean duster will give shoes a quick shine. If your shoes are scuffed, just colour in with an

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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appropriate coloured felt pen or permanent marker before shining with the oil.

### **VIDEO CASES**

#### **Keepsake Box**

Take out the video and the paper insert (if any) from the box. Cut out pictures of flowers etc. from a magazine and glue on the box with PVA glue, in a decoupage effect. Give the pictures a coat of PVA glue and allow to dry. This will give you a pretty box to keep all your keepsakes in and you will always know where to find it. It is very handy for keeping the TV licence in so you have it to hand.

#### **Valuable Safe**

Save all your old video cases, they make a perfect safe store for valuables. Take out the videos and store your valuables in the case. Put it on the shelf and no one will know what it contains.

### **VINEGAR**

Vinegar is a 3%-5% acid and can be used for all manner of cleaning around the home. If you do not like the smell, for some applications, lemon juice can be used instead.

#### **Acid Loving Plants**

Put a 1 teaspoon of vinegar in half a gallon of limy water when watering your hydrangeas, heathers, rhododendrons, azaleas, berberis, pieris, etc. But make sure not to water the leaves or it may damage them.

#### **Ant Deterrent**

Mix vinegar 50:50 with water and spray around the holes that the ants use to enter your home.

## **Vinegar**

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NB: Hot vinegar poured over an ants nest will destroy the nest. But, if on the grass, it will kill the grass too.

### **Brass Cleaner**

Sprinkle some vinegar onto a duster and rub over brass, rinse and buff with a clean, soft cloth. DO NOT use on plated or coated brass.

### **Cake Maker**

For a lighter cake, scones or sponge, stir in a teaspoon of vinegar just before baking. It reacts with the baking powder (self raising flour) to make the cake rise.

### **Chrome Cleaner**

White vinegar on a soft cloth will clean chrome. On the inside of chrome items add salt, sprinkle with vinegar and rub well. Rinse item and dry.

### **Clearer Glassware**

Soak glassware in hot water: vinegar 4:1 or neat vinegar depending on how badly stained it is. The vinegar will soon have it gleaming again. Rinse well and dry. Repeat as necessary. Be careful if the glassware has a gold or silver rim, vinegar will damage it.

### **Copper Cleaner**

Sprinkle some vinegar onto a clean cloth and rub onto copper ornaments etc. Rinse and buff with a soft, clean duster.

### **Decking Clear**

If you have moss or algae growing on paths or decking, paint with vinegar, leave for about an hour, rinse down and it will soon go.

### **Dishwashing Rinse**

Put half a cup of vinegar in the final rinse water (especially good after using bicarbonate of soda in the powder dispenser). It will keep glassware and pottery gleaming.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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NB: Adding vinegar to your dishwashing liquid will boost the cleaning power.

### **Drain Cleaner**

Sprinkle a cup of washing soda crystals down the drain, pour 500ml vinegar and leave for 20 minutes, and then add a full kettle of boiling water.

### **Enamel, Stain Remover**

**\*\* Caution\*\* patch test first before doing the whole area.**

Apply a paste of salt and vinegar to the enamel, leave for a minute and rinse well. **Do not use on porcelain enamel and some cheaper enamel surfaces will be damaged by the acid.**

### **Glue Gone**

Hot vinegar will soften old glue.

### **Grass killer**

Get rid of unwanted grass in between paving slabs, dose it with neat vinegar.

### **Hard Water Stains**

Soak items in full strength vinegar to remove hard water stains. For delicate items dilute vinegar with water.

### **Jar Cleaner**

Soak the jar and label in warmed vinegar until label peels off.

### **Kettle Descaler**

Add vinegar to kettle, cover the scaling and leave overnight. In morning fill with water and boil. Discard the liquid and rinse well.

### **Limescale Remover**

Dip an old toothbrush in vinegar and go around the areas of limescale (mineral deposits) around taps and plug holes in the

## Vinegar

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kitchen and the bathroom. Leave for a few minutes then gently dislodge the limescale. It may need several applications, depending on severity. Do not mix with bleach. Don't use on porcelain enamel.

For more stubborn applications: soak a kitchen towel in vinegar and lay on the area, cover with cling film and leave overnight. It should have softened the limescale enough to be rubbed away.

### **Morning Refresher**

When you wake, drink 1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water to get your system going. Especially beneficial for people over 50.

### **Metal Cleaner**

Make your own metal cleaner with a mixture of vinegar, salt and cornflour, mix to a paste, paint on with a toothbrush and rub off (crevices may need rinsing). Stubborn stains can be removed with soaking in neat vinegar. NB: do not use on coated or plated chrome, brass or metal. Rinse well after use.

### **Paint Brushes Renewed**

Steep old paint brushes in hot vinegar to have them looking like new, repeat if necessary. Rub in a little vegetable oil to keep the bristles supple.

### **Salt Stains on Leather Items**

Salt stains on leather shoes can be rinsed away with vinegar.

### **Shower Cleaner**

Spray the shower with a mix of 50:50 vinegar and water after using it. Every week, spray and wipe with a cloth. Do not use a plastic or harsher scourer on plastic fittings. A scourer can be used to keep glass shower screens free of limescale.

### **Showerhead Cleaner**

Most showerheads are easily taken apart, and each piece can be soaked in vinegar and brushed clean. If the showerhead won't come apart, put it in a glass container, cover with vinegar and leave overnight. The limescale should just rub away in the morning.

### **Small Appliance Cleaner**

Don't wait for your appliances to become clogged. Vinegar can keep your coffee machine, tea maker, iron, steam appliances, etc. clear if you regularly put vinegar (or lemon juice) in the water and allow it to work through.

### **Stain Remover**

Make your own stain remover. In an empty shampoo bottle, no need to rinse it out, just add 50:50 vinegar and washing up liquid, mix well. Next time you do a wash squirt the liquid over any stains before putting them in the machine.

### **Window Clear**

Add a couple of teaspoons of vinegar to a couple of tablespoons of water, dampen a crumpled newspaper (not too wet) with it and rub over windows and mirrors to give them a sparkle.

### **Washing Machine Woes**

Buying large quantities of vinegar is quite inexpensive, yet the benefits are phenomenal. Put a cupful of vinegar in the rinse cycle and it will stop limescale build-up. Every month (or every two weeks in hard water areas, put a pint of vinegar in the machine and allow to stand. Put it on rinse cycle, economy wash, and allow the vinegar to run through, it will keep your drains fresh too.

### **Whiter Whites**

Add a couple of tablespoons of white vinegar to a whites wash to whiten them.

### WASHERS

#### Stop Rugs Moving

Sew little washers or the rubber rings from jars on the underside of rugs to stop them moving across the floor.

### WASHING-UP LIQUID

#### Bubbles

I'm forever blowing bubbles! Well now your children can too. When their bubble container is empty just top up with a natural bio-degradable, organic washing-up liquid.

#### Clean Car

Why pay the earth for specialist car shampoo when ordinary washing-up liquid will do.

#### Greenfly Killer

Add a good squirt of biodegradable natural washing-up liquid to a pint of water in a sprayer and spray around roses and other plants to prevent aphid attack.

#### Emulsion Improver

If you are trying to paint over wallpaper with a sheen to it some emulsion paints will not stick to it smoothly. Just add a squirt of non-coloured washing-up liquid, mix well, and it will improve the smoothness of the application.

#### Hair Care

Run out of shampoo? Don't worry, just mix in some jojoba oil to your ordinary organic washing-up liquid and wash your hair.

#### Indoor Plant Cleaner

Give your indoor plants a quick spruce up with a soft cloth and some diluted biodegradable, organic washing up liquid.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Remember: the cheaper liquid may have too many chemicals for your plants.

### **Mirror/Window Demister**

Put a drop of washing-up liquid onto a paper kitchen towel and rub all over glass or mirrored surfaces, it will stop them from becoming covered in condensation.

### **Window Paint**

Mix poster paint with some washing-up liquid to paint birthday or seasonal messages on glass mirrors or window panes. It is much easier to remove (add some vinegar to the rinse water).

## **WAX CRAYONS**

### **Drawer Runner**

If you have old wooden furniture, you'll know that it is very annoying when the drawers do not run smoothly. All you need to do is empty the drawer and run an old wax crayon or candle along the bottom of the drawer runner and the runner inside the cabinet. It will instantly fix the problem.

### **Furniture Scratch Remover**

Scatched wooden furniture makes a room look shabby. For an instant repair, find a wax crayon that matches the colour of the item and run it along the scratch, build up the layers and polish. If a chip, groove or sliver of wood has been taken out, just gently melt the crayon, until it becomes malleable and ease it into place with a plastic scraper or knife, making sure it is flush with the surface and smooth. Allow to cool, and polish as normal.

## **WIRE COAT HANGERS**

### **Bigger Bubbles**

Untangle a wire coat hanger, now reshape it into a tennis racquet shape (a circle with a handle on the end). Next put some washing-

## **Wire Coat Hangers / Wood Ash**

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liquid onto a baking sheet or tray that will take the circular wire. Dip the circular wire into the washing-up liquid and blow gently to release the giant bubbles. NB: do not allow children to work the coat hanger into a circular shape by themselves.

### **De-static!**

Hold a wire coat hanger by the hook and run the long end over your skirt and hair. The static should transfer to the coat hanger.

### **Drying Clothes**

Slip a wire coat hanger into blouses and cardigans etc. Button them up to keep them on the hanger and place on washing line with a peg on the hook to hold it in place. It saves pegs and ensures there are no peg marks on your garment.

### **Flush Rush**

If you think that the flush on your loo is not strong enough, maybe the holes under the rim are blocked. Take a wire coat hanger, unbend it and prod the holes with the end of the coat hanger to get rid of stubborn limescale etc.

### **Rewiring**

To thread electrical wire in between wall cavities, just twist a wire coat hanger to resemble a giant needle and thread the wire up to where it should be.

## **WOOD ASH**

### **Pewter Cleaner**

Ash from a wood fire is ideal for cleaning pewter, just rub some flakes over the pewter with a soft cloth and buff with a clean cloth.

# QUICK FIX MONEY SAVERS

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## Saving Electricity or Gas

- ✓ When boiling food in a saucepan turn to high at first, then simmer on a lower heat. Turn electric plates off 10 minutes before the end of cooking and leave the lid on. Cut vegetables into smaller pieces, they will cook quicker. Par cook colourful vegetables, they take less fuel and are much healthier.
- ✓ If on Economy 7 heating (cheaper at night). Make sure that appliances are set to run at night. The freezer can be set higher at night, if you take out every thing you need to defrost at night, and it can be turned to low during the day. Remember: when adding fresh food to the freezer, put them in at night when the freezer is running higher.
- ✓ Place some water filled containers into your freezer to keep it 'stocked up'. It will be cheaper to run and keep it colder.
- ✓ Turn down a heating thermostat by 4 degrees, you won't notice the difference but your bill will be lighter.
- ✓ Switch the lights off when you leave an empty room, you will be surprised by how much that saves.
- ✓ Economy light bulbs are now available in supermarkets at very reasonable prices.
- ✓ Make sure that all your doors, windows and loft are adequately insulated, especially in winter.

## Saving on Your Water Bill

- ✓ Fit a water butt to catch the rainfall from your roof. You will never need to water your garden or pot plants from the tap.

## **Quick Fix Money Savers**

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- ✓ Fit a water butt connected to your bath outlet pipe. Think of all the water you can catch to water your garden with. But remember not to use harsh chemical cleaners in your bath or they will damage your plants.
- ✓ Place some bricks or water filled containers into your toilet cistern. You will save water every time you flush because the cistern will not have to completely fill up with water.
- ✓ Use a smaller bowl when you wash up, and tip the water into a watering can once you have finished.
- ✓ Save all the washing-up and do in one go, if possible.
- ✓ Take a shower instead of a bath, it uses less water.

It may not seem like a great saving to just do these little things, but everything adds up over the course of a year.

## **Steam Clean Your Home**

If you invest in a steam cleaner you will not have to waste money buying a lot of chemical cleaners that aren't very good for your health anyway! See instructions included with your steamer on how to use.

**GARDENERS TIP:** use your steamer to steam-clean flowerpots (not the very flimsy plastic ones). You can even use it to treat soil so that you can use it as a seed compost. The hot steam kills off moulds, pests, and viruses so the seedlings are healthier. It will save you money because there is no need to buy expensive seed compost. See manufacturer's guidelines.

# QUICK FIX MONEY MAKERS

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The advice in this book is for information purposes only. If the reader uses this information it is at their own risk. Any money made from these money making schemes is taxable and information should be sought from the local Tax Office. Trading is subject to current trading laws, information should be sought from your local Trading Standards Office.

## **BIN WASHING SERVICE**

Find out which day bin day is in a local area and do a leaflet drop a couple of days beforehand. Most people will be pleased that they have a clean bin that is returned to its home after it is emptied. Make sure that you arrange to use an outside tap.

## **CAR WASHING SERVICE**

Advertise a car washing service in your local paper, parish magazine or do a leaflet drop in an area. You will soon build up a client base and will have a regular supply of customers.

## **CLOTH PIECES**

If you have a few brightly coloured remnants or know someone who has some on a regular basis you can cut them into hexagonals, squares and triangles and sell them on [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk) as quilting pieces. Invest in a pair of pinking shears, to cut the shapes out.

A bag of 100 can fetch anything up to £5 and it's a great way to use up those scraps of material.

## **DOG WALKING**

Dogs will always need walking and there will be some owners who will not have the time to do it. Design some leaflets and distribute them around the area. Call into your local dog training class and see if your services are needed. When you have built up a clientele, you could advertise a looking after a dog/pet in their own home service. You will have plenty of references and will be able to build a nice little income and keep yourself fit at the same time.

### **DRIFTWOOD**

If you live near a beach, collect all the pieces of driftwood you can find. You can sell them from your home or even at craft fairs or carboot sales.

### **FIREWOOD**

A local sawmill will let you have loads of logs for a very reasonable sum. Collect a load and sell it on, delivered.

### **FLOWER BOXES**

Find your local sawmill and see if they have any offcuts that would be suitable for making planters. Sometimes they will have treated pieces that have been cut from fencing stakes. All you need to do is make them into boxes or rings, add soil and a few plants. (Large trunk pieces can be sliced into very popular wooden stepping stones).

If you cannot find a sawmill, look for wooden pallets and pull them apart to make the planters. If all else fails, you could buy some cheap ceramic pots from carboot sales, spruce them up, fill them with plants and sell for a profit. Nearly everyone loves buying containers and hanging baskets already planted.

They can be sold empty or filled from outside your home, at a car boot sale or in the free ads of newspapers.

### **GARDEN ORNAMENTS**

Purchase some cheap galvanised watering cans, jugs and buckets. Paint them, stencil or draw scenes, patterns on them and sell them as garden ornaments.

Find old metal wheelbarrows, there are usually plenty of tips, even ones with tyres or wheels missing (you can make do with an old wheel or make your own with a round piece of wood). Paint black or green, make drainage holes in the bottom and plant up with plants.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Invest in some concrete moulds, birds, woodland scenes, or paving etc. Mix your own concrete and make garden ornaments. You can make yours look different by covering them with a soil and cement mix, to make them look weathered. Concrete toadstools are a particular favourite at the moment.

You can sell them from your home, carboot or craft sales. Why not do a leaflet drop?

### **PAINTED HORSESHOES**

A local stables or blacksmiths may be able to save you their old horseshoes. Just give them a lick of paint and either draw on little flowers or invest in a stencil and stencil a pattern onto them. They can be sold at [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk), in the free ads section of local newspaper, outside your home, or at local carboot or craft sales.

### **PLANTS**

Anyone with a windowsill can grow seedlings. Have a look in the gardening section of this book, which gives tips on using containers and making your own newspaper pots. Your only outlay will be the seeds, and if you have a garden you can even grow your own seeds for free. Nearly everyone is interested in purchasing more plants, especially in the spring and winter flowering plants in the autumn.

### **SHOPPING**

Everyone needs weekly groceries, why not do a leaflet drop and see if anyone would like you to do their shopping for them. If you do the shopping for a few friends first, you could get some references and put those on your leaflet with contact details.

### **SWEET SUCCESS**

If you enjoy making your own sweets and small cakes, you could make them for other people too. Sell by leaflet drop (maybe with a sample), advertise in the paper, parish magazine, parish notice

## **Quick Fix Money Makers**

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board, craft fairs, etc. Make yours stand out from the crowd and go organic, they are different and will probably guarantee a niche market.

**NB:** Make sure that you find out about any European legislation that may now govern the sale of food.

### **TELEPHONE BOX CLEANING**

Contact British Telecom and see if you can get a contract for cleaning the telephone boxes in your area. They don't pay very much, but every little helps.

### **WHERE THERE'S MUCK!**

Most stables or farms will gladly get rid of surplus manure. Bag it (make sure it is not airtight) and sell it on. Or deliver loads to neighbours etc. Why not put an advert in parish magazines or local newspapers. Before you know it you will have your own little business.

### **WHOLESALE**

Go around charity shops, pick up inexpensive items in local paper, or print yourself a letterhead and register at a wholesalers. Then sell your finds on [www.ebay.co.uk](http://www.ebay.co.uk) or at a carboot sale.

Remember: hiring a village hall is only about £20-£50 per day or even less, you could easily cover that by hiring out some stalls, or selling refreshments. If you go to a few local fetes and fairs you could probably get a few stall holders interested in coming to your sale. Most village halls have facilities, tables and chairs, so you have an inexpensive venue with all the pros.

**NB:** Make sure that you advertise the event. Leaflet drops, parish magazines, village notice boards, supermarket notice boards are all cheap ways of advertising your sale. See if local radio or newspapers will offer a good deal.

# QUICK FIX CLEANING TIPS

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This book is written for information purposes only. If the reader uses this information it is at their own risk. Some finishes and surfaces may be damaged by substances recommended within this book. Always patch test a small hidden area before using on your items.

## **Air Freshener**

Boil together cloves, cinnamon and lemon peel to quickly clear kitchen odours.

## **See Bicarbonate of Soda pages 23-39.**

For many cleaning without chemicals ideas.

## **Bottle Neck**

If you have bottles with small necks and you're not sure how to clean them, just mix water and vinegar 50:50, half fill the bottle and quarter fill with rice. Shake bottle very well for a few minutes, to remove the soiling. When you are sure it is clean, rinse well.

## **Brass Cleaner**

After rubbing brass with a little Worcestershire sauce or salt and lemon juice, rinse the surface, dry and apply some petroleum jelly on a soft, clean cloth and rub over the surface. It will keep the brass looking good for longer.

## **Car Defroster**

If your windows or locks keep getting frozen up during the winter. Make up some extra windscreen wash (suitable for winter use in windscreen bottle) and put into a spray bottle. Spray into locks and along windowsills to stop them getting iced up.

## **Clean Between**

Unravel a wire coat hanger until it is straight. Bend it in half so that it resembles an elongated U shape, with about 2-3cms between the prongs. Now you can either fit an old woolly sock on the end (kept in place by an elastic band) or you can thread scouring pads or sponges down the prongs (actually stick the prongs through the

## **Quick Fix Cleaning Tips**

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pads and thread them down to the U bend, which keeps them in place). It is ideal to clean or dust under appliances, in between kitchen cupboards, along picture rails, behind radiators etc. etc. NB: You can also paint behind radiators with paint on the sponges.

### **Clean Credit Rating**

A old credit card makes a very good scraper. It is tough but gentle enough not to damage most surfaces. It is also great as a spatula for filling surfaces.

### **Copper Pan Cleaner**

Rub Worcestershire sauce or ketchup into your copper pans to keep them shining. Buff with a little vegetable oil on a soft cloth to keep the shine longer.

### **Corrosion Cleaner**

Clean corrosion from battery terminals by soaking in cola, tango or lemonade.

### **Crystal Clear**

If you have intricate bits of crystal that need cleaning, try using a shaving brush and shaving soap and rinse. It really works.

**See Denture Cleaning Tablets page 62**

**See Fabric Conditioner page 67**

### **Fabric Stiffener**

Add dissolved gelatine to the final rinse of curtains or any item that needs stiffening. NB: It works better if the rinse water is warm.

### **Free Scourer**

Place an old plastic mesh fruit or onion bag around a sponge and you have a ready made scourer for use in the home, garage or garden.

### **Glazed Cotton**

When glazed cotton loses its sheen the best way to restore it is to add a packet of dissolved gelatine to the final rinse water. NB: It works better if the rinse water is warm. Spin very well on high.

### **Grout Clout**

Give mould and mildew the elbow with white car wax. After grouting and when dry, rub in the wax over tiles and especially grouting, and, they will be protected for up to a year from unsightly mould growth.

**See Lemons, page 86**

### **Lipstick on Glass or Ceramics**

Rub with salt before washing to remove. (Not on plated rim)

### **Loo Soak**

Last thing at night pour some lemonade and vinegar around the toilet bowl and leave overnight. In the morning, wake up to a sparkling loo.

### **Metal Polish**

Make your own metal polish.

- Put half a cup of vinegar and a tablespoon of salt into a cup, add flour to make a paste and spread on brass ornaments. Wash off and buff with a rag that has a few drops of essential oil on it.
- Dip half a squeezed lemon in salt and rub over brass ornaments. Rinse and buff.
- The starchy water from potatoes is said to clean silver, leave it to soak overnight, rinse well.

## **Quick Fix Cleaning Tips**

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- Toothpaste rubbed onto metal with a soft cloth will clean it.
- Rub bruised (raw) cabbage leaves over pewter to clean it. Rinse and dry, rub in a little olive oil to protect the sheen.

NB: Be careful of plated brass or coated metal it may damage the surface. See Brass Cleaner, above.

### **Moth Repellent**

Hang little bags of cloves (the spice) around the wardrobe, moths hate them.

### **Paint Smells**

Eradicate paint smells from a freshly painted room by peeling and cutting 2 onions in half and leaving the 4 halves around the room in shallow dishes of water.

### **Outdoor Wooden Furniture**

Wash with a soapy solution, allow to dry, mix 1 part lemon juice with 2 parts vegetable oil and rub into the wood, buff with a soft cloth. When storing the furniture away, add citronella and eucalyptus oil to the mix, it will stop insect attack while they over-winter. Patch test a small area first to avoid discolouration.

### **Oven Spills**

Sprinkle salt or bicarbonate of soda liberally onto oven spills while still hot. Allow to cool then just wipe up.

### **Quick Clean-ups**

Keep all your used fabric conditioner sheets and use to shine taps, mirrors and for quick cleaning of furniture, television and computer screens etc.

## ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills

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### **Silver Coating** (Keep out of the reach of children)

Mix enough gelatine with warm water (as stated on packet) to make a syrupy liquid. Add potassium bichromate to give a light lemon colour. Brush on the warm liquid in a fine even coating, or dip smaller intricate objects and drain. Ordinary daylight will convert it to a tough colourless film that protects your silver from tarnishing. Wear rubber gloves and apron, wash off splashes.

### **Sofa So Good**

Get some saddle soap and clean that leather sofa, it removes all the stains and leaves it feeling lovely and soft. Read and abide by manufacturers instructions for cleaning before trying your own methods. Mix egg white and 5ml alcohol to buff leather to a shine.

## **STAIN REMOVERS**

These are for washable fabrics, and always wash clothes according to their labels. Before using any stain remover always patch test initially, because some stain removers will damage some natural dyes and manmade fabrics.

\* Putting a couple of tablespoons of cheap table salt in with your wash will soften the water and allow the powder to work more effectively.

- Smear stain with shampoo before washing. Especially good for greasy stains. For thick greasy stains or wax, ironing the garment between a couple of thicknesses of absorbent kitchen towel, beneath and above the stain will remove the excess. This should be done before applying a stain remover and laundering. You can also try rubbing in liberal amounts of cornflour and just rub away the excess grease.
- Ink, wet gloss paint, creosote, tar stains etc. need a solvent type cleaner. Try tea tree oil and rub with washing up liquid

## Quick Fix Cleaning Tips

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and salt, or try surgical spirit and rub with washing up liquid. See Solvents.

- ❑ Toothpaste rubbed into a stain can help to loosen it before laundering. It can also be used for removing stains from trainers and white shoes.
- ❑ Organic stains like blood, perspiration or grass stains should be dealt with when fresh. Soak in a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda with salt for a few hours or overnight. When soaked, treat area with lemon juice and salt before laundering.  
NB: Only use cold water as hot or warm water sets the stain and makes it more difficult to get out.
- ❑ Coffee Stains: If the coffee is fresh, rub in some glycerine and launder. Old coffee stains may need the help of a solvent.
- ❑ Rust stains can be removed with salt and lemon juice.
- ❑ Wine stains can be flooded with white vinegar and sprinkled with liberal amounts of salt and then brushed away or dabbed with absorbent kitchen paper, depending where the stain is. Dried wine stains can be treated with a solvent.
- ❑ Minor scorch marks on cotton or linen can usually be removed by boiling two peeled onions with 15g castille soap (or washing soap flakes and 60g fuller's earth. When thickened spread over the stain and allow to dry. Brush well, repeat if necessary. Launder as usual.
- ❑ White wine vinegar and water will remove most stains from leather. To restore the polish to leather furniture mix well 1 teaspoon spirit alcohol with 1 egg white and apply

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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on a soft cloth. Allow to dry and buff with a clean cloth. Remember to patch test a small area initially as discolouration may occur on some leathers. Do not smoke and always ventilate the room well while cleaning.

- ❑ NB: Alcohol is inflammable, do not use near naked flame.

## **SOLVENTS**

Natural Solvents can be used around the home to remove stains from fabrics, carpets etc. Solvents will also damage some man-made fabrics, plastics and polished surfaces. A patch-test must be carried out on a small area before the whole area is cleaned. Some of the stronger solvents are inflammable so care should be taken when using them. Do not use in the proximity of a naked flame.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol can be used to remove stains. Apply on cotton wool and dab the stain.

### **Essential Oil**

Some essential oils have solvent properties including: lavender oil and tea tree oil. Good for removing glue and gunge from surfaces.

### **Glycerine**

Glycerine, available from chemists, is a mild solvent.

### **Hair Spray**

Hair spray should be sprayed onto cotton wool and dabbed onto the stain.

### **Lemon Juice**

Lemon juice has mild solvent properties and can be flooded onto areas of stain. Rub in salt for extra cleaning power.

## **Quick Fix Cleaning Tips**

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### **Surgical spirit**

Surgical spirit can be used as a solvent.

### **Tar Remover**

Soak the tar in a little vegetable oil for 30 minutes to soften it, mix some salt and washing up liquid and rub into the tar and wash. Repeat if necessary.

### **See Vinegar page 121**

Vinegar has mild solvent properties and can be used to soak the stain before laundering. Vinegar is good for cleaning without chemicals. NB: Do not use vinegar on porcelain enamel.

### **See Washing-Up Liquid**

Washing-up liquid is very good at dissolving grease on contact, even on clothes. Add or rub in salt to boost its effectiveness.

### **Washing-Up Booster**

Add half a cup of vinegar to your washing-up water to boost the cleaning power.

### **Window Wiper**

Use an old car windscreen wiper to give the perfect finish to windows and mirrors.

### **Wooden Furniture Cleaner**

Mix one part lemon juice to 2 parts grapeseed oil, apply with a soft cloth and buff to a shine.

# QUICK FIX HEALTH TIPS

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If anyone suspects that they may have an illness as described they should make an appointment with their own GP. The information in this book should not substitute medical advice. It is written for information purposes only. If the reader uses this information it is at their own risk.

## Acne

Mix 3-5 drops tea tree oil *Melaleuca alternifolia* with a teaspoon of Jojoba oil. Up to 10 drops of tea tree oil per teaspoon of Jojoba can be used on non-sensitive skin. Dab the mixed oil onto the raised spots using a cotton wool bud up to twice per day. Avoid the eye area.

NB: Make sure that the tea tree oil is within its expiry date, if no expiry date on bottle or the botanical name '*Melaleuca alternifolia*', do not use in the facial area or on sensitive skin.

- Grandma's Remedy was lemon juice dabbed onto the spots twice a day, (dilute with water and top with jojoba for sensitive skin).
- Toothpaste dabbed onto the most prominent spots at night is said to dry them out overnight.
- Mix 1 tablespoon of vinegar with 50-100ml water (depending on skin sensitivity) and apply after cleansing the face to areas of spotty skin on cotton wool. If irritation occurs discontinue use.

## Antibacterial Cream

In 50ml non-perfumed base cream mix 2 ml tea tree oil. Stir well and keep in an airtight dark glass jar. Use within 3 months. See ointment - page 152-153.

## Antifungal Cream

In 50ml non-perfumed base cream mix 1 teaspoon wild yam tincture, 1 teaspoon black walnut hull tincture and 1ml tea tree oil. Use within 3 months.

### **Blocked Nose**

Grandma's recipe for a blocked nose and stuffy head: warm some vinegar in a pan, and inhale the vapours. Not too close, they can be quite strong.

Take a teaspoon of cider or balsamic vinegar in a little honey at regular intervals.

**See Inhaler page 149.**

### **Bronchial Medicine**

Crush 2 cloves chopped garlic, to a teaspoon apple cider vinegar and honey to taste. Take morning and night after food.

NB: Garlic has been known to irritate a delicate stomach. If in doubt do not eat raw.

### **Burns (minor)**

Cool burn under cold running water for a few minutes. Mix a little pure lavender essential oil (*Lavandula angustifolia*) with Jojoba oil and splash onto a burn 2-3 times a day. Do not cover a burn with a plaster, if the area is susceptible to knocks try covering with gauze and securing with surgical tape. See ointment - page 152-153.

### **Chicken Pox**

See Herpes

### **Cholesterol**

Researchers have found that a diet rich in good fats, fish oils, olive oil, perilla oil, is better at reducing bad cholesterol than a low or no-fat diet.

Eating half an avocado a day can help reduce bad cholesterol levels.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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Lecithin sprinkled onto porridge or muesli can help to reduce bad cholesterol levels.

### **Colds**

A curry containing garlic, chilli, ginger, and turmeric can help to alleviate some symptoms of a cold.

Turmeric in honey is said to help alleviate cold symptoms. Take a teaspoon of each twice per day for the duration of the cold.

Change diet to easily digested food and eat more food containing vitamin C: blackcurrants, papaya, areola cherries, blueberries, cranberries, elderberries (collect in autumn and freeze for use over the winter NB: to avoid contamination, do not use elderberries that are close to a main road). Eating little and often of lightly cooked food, chicken soup, fruit smoothies etc. helps your system to cope with fighting the virus instead of having to digest heavy meals.

Suck a zinc lozenge at regular intervals has been shown to lessen the duration of a cold.

Elderflower and elderberry extracts help to lessen the duration of a cold.

A couple of drops of Eucalyptus oil on a tissue in a small plastic bag will help sufferer to breathe more easily. Should not be used for young children.

Chicken soup is a good reliever of symptoms and may even lessen the duration of a cold. Simmer the chicken on the carcass until the meat falls off the bone, add onions, carrots, olive oil, a few spices such as garlic, ginger, turmeric etc. half way through cooking, season to taste. Discard the bone and serve.

## **Quick Fix Health Tips**

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Loquat syrup, with herbs can be purchased from your nearest Chinese supermarket or wholesaler.

### **Colic**

Boil bruised fennel seeds in a little water for 3-5 minutes and sip the cooled water.

### **Cystitis**

Drink cranberry juice every couple of hours until symptoms subside. Try to find a natural cranberry juice without any additives.

### **Diarrhoea**

6-12 drops grapefruit seed extract (Citricidal) in fruit juice and water. Take 2-3 times per day until symptoms subside or see label in case of proprietary brands. Replenish your good bacteria too, eat a lot of live bio yogurt (preferably without sugar).

NB: Recurrent diarrhoea or food poisoning should have the advice of a medical practitioner as soon as possible.

See Upset Stomach

### **Digestion**

A teaspoon apple cider vinegar in pineapple juice taken 20 minutes before a meal will help to regulate digestion.

### **Earache**

As long as the ear drum has not been perforated, mix 1-2 drops tea tree oil in a teaspoon olive oil, warm and dribble into the ear. It will help with minor infections and to remove foreign bodies from the ear.

### **Eye Infections**

Natural calendula tea can help with eye infections. Just steep a few petals or calendula tea bag (without additives) in boiled water, add a good pinch of salt, cool, bathe eyes in a sterilised eye bath when

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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water has cooled. A new piece of cotton wool, or a sterilised eye bath should be used for each eye. The tepid herb tea bags can be placed straight onto closed eyes.

NB: Colloidal silver can also be used for eye infections as long as it states that it is suitable for use in the eyes on the label.

### **Gout**

Eat 100g of fresh cherries or cherry concentrate per day. Cherries help to naturally get rid of uric acid, which causes gout.

Dandelion leaves lightly sautéed in olive oil with garlic is said to help alleviate gout. Try drinking dandelion tea, it's delicious with a slice of lemon and a little honey..

### **Hangover**

A hangover is caused by dehydration. Make sure that you drink a small cup of water at regular intervals during and after a drinking session. Vitamin B5 and B3 taken before and after drinking is said to help to stave off a hangover. A good mineral supplement is beneficial after a drinking session.

### **Heartburn**

Mix half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda with a little water and drink. If heartburn is recurring on a regular basis a doctor should be consulted.

### **Headaches**

Frequent headaches need to be checked by a doctor, in case of an underlying medical condition.

- ✓ Lie down in a darkened room with a cold flannel across your forehead. A few drops of pure lavender oil on top of the flannel may help.

## Quick Fix Health Tips

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- ✓ Feverfew may help, it can be purchased in capsule form or try chewing a few leaves (the leaves can be quite bitter).
- ✓ Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) has had some remarkable success stories with headaches, see [www.emofree.com](http://www.emofree.com) for a free download book.

### Herpes

L-lysine HCL a natural amino acid, a natural component of protein. The herpes virus, is killed by L-lysine and cannot replicate. Many people that have tried it say that it takes all the pain from shingles and chicken pox and lessens the duration of the illness. L-lysine HCL is available from health food shops and should be taken in between meals 500 mg 3x per day with the same of vitamin C for 5 days. Children should take a half dose of each. People who should not eat too much protein, as in liver or kidney disease should see their practitioner before taking L-lysine HCL.

### High Blood Pressure

Half a teaspoon of cayenne in a glass of water and sipped at regular intervals, was an old remedy for reducing high blood pressure.

Researchers in America have found that deep breathing is a good way to lower high blood pressure. Breathe in for seven seconds, hold breathe for three seconds. Breathe out for twelve seconds, and hold for three.

NB: Your doctor should be consulted if you think you have high blood pressure or before you try any new breathing exercises.

### Indigestion

- ✓ Mix half a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda in half a glass of water and sip, it should help with indigestion. If you regularly suffer from indigestion you should see your doctor for advice and a check-up.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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- ✓ Suck a strong peppermint to help relieve symptoms of indigestion. Or sip strong peppermint tea.
- ✓ Eat a few cubes of fresh pineapple or chew the core from a fresh pineapple before meals.

### **Inhaler**

In a small screw-top glass jar place some rock salt clumps, add a few drops of eucalyptus oil. Breathe in the vapours as necessary. Replace lid when not in use. Refresh every couple of days with more oil. Replace salt as necessary.

NB: Young children should not inhale eucalyptus oils.

### **Insect Repellent**

Mix a few drops of citronella oil (*Cymbopogon nardus*) with baby oil and apply to skin. Always patch test initially for sensitivities. The pure oil can also be spotted onto hat brims, socks, shoulders, cuffs and even spread over footwear to keep away gnats and flies.

Citronella sprinkled onto the ground around a picnic blanket/area is a good way of keeping away wasps.

### **Insect Stings**

A cold tea bag is very good at reducing the pain of insect bites. You could always make yourself a cup of tea and store a few used tea bags in the freezer in case of emergency. Thaw by running under the cold tap for a couple of minutes and apply to the bite.

Onion juice is said to relieve bee stings, liquidise and strain, apply juice to the sting on cotton wool. Or apply a slice of onion.

\*\* A strong solution of bicarbonate of soda will alleviate ant bites and bee stings by neutralising the acidic bite.

\*\*Vinegar will neutralise the alkaline poison of a wasp sting.

## **Quick Fix Health Tips**

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**\*\*Soak the tea bags in an acidic or alkaline substance, clearly label and store in the freezer. A ready made anti-sting pack.**

### **Insomnia**

Lettuce contains a natural sedative, liquidise a quarter of lettuce, including the stalk, in water or juice, with some sprigs of lemon balm and some cashew or almond nuts, sweeten with honey and sip before going to bed. Strain and add a couple of peppermint leaves to improve the taste, if necessary.

Help yourself with a natural relaxation technique. Curl up in the foetal position and pretend you are back in the womb, it's warm and dark and you feel so safe and relaxed.

A hop pillow may help. Put dried hops and dried lavender into a lace bag and keep near to your pillow, the aroma is said to aid restful sleep.

Put a drop of pure lavender oil or sweet orange oil on the corner of your pillow.

### **Irritable Bowel Syndrome**

If irritable bowel syndrome is brought on by stress and is intermittent, try taking 6-12 drops Citricidal (grapefruit seed extract) in a glass of blackcurrant or apple juice, twice a day for 3 days. If no improvement, discontinue use. NB: It will not help sufferers of IBS when it is caused by a food intolerance.

Flaxseeds form a gelatinous pulp when mixed with water. They can be ground in a coffee grinder and added to soya or cashew nut milk shakes. Sprinkled into porridge and even fruit juice i.e. Pineapple juice or fruit smoothies. Frequent use is said to calm an irritable bowel over a period of time.

### **Menopause**

Sage tea is said to alleviate some symptoms of the menopause.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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If you do not like soya milk, try mixing it half and half with ordinary milk. Soya milk or soya yogurt can be liquidised with banana and strawberries to make a delicious fruit smoothie.

Beetroot tops and fresh young dandelion leaves are very nutritive and can be added to salads.

Fresh carrot juice mixed 50:50 with orange juice is said to help.

Foods that are good for men and women going through this time of life: Fresh fruit and vegetables, fish oils (make sure that they are tested to be free of contamination), ginkgo biloba, oats, flaxseeds and flaxseed oil, porridge, sprouted seeds, lecithin, grains, berries, mixed nuts, blue green algae, chromium enriched brewers yeast, magnesium, selenium (or a good quality trace mineral supplement), olive oil, tomatoes, garlic and onions, spinach (raw in salads or par-cooked), broccoli. If you have a sensitivity to any of the foods listed, they should not be consumed.

Cut down on animal protein and fat, refined sugar, heated or stale polyunsaturated vegetable oils, potatoes especially chips; artificial sweeteners, colourings, flavourings, preservatives; refined breakfast cereals (which have a high content of overcooked carbohydrates (acrylamides) that act as a poison to the nervous system of humans and animals); processed foods, deep fried carbohydrates, cakes, biscuits, crackers, sweets all contain acrylamides and have the potential to damage your health and cause degenerative diseases. It is especially important for people over 50 to avoid these foods, or at least keep them to a minimum.

Avoid dark hair dyes that contain Paraphenylenediamine (PPD), try to use natural cosmetics, toiletries, shampoos. At this time in your life it is important to only use natural chemicals on your body and in and in your body. Any hormone disrupters that are commonly

## Quick Fix Health Tips

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found in food packaging and toiletries can have very nasty effects on your health, especially long-term.

### **Mouth Ulcers**

Steep 3-4 sprigs mint in a cup of hot water, allow to cool slightly, stir in half a teaspoon salt and stir to cool. Strain and when just warm take a mouthful of liquid and hold over the area, spit out and repeat. Do not swallow the liquid.

**Muscle Aches** - See Muscle Soother - Quick Fix Beauty Tips, p184.

### **Nausea**

Chop a teaspoon ginger in a heatproof jug, add a cup of boiling water and allow to steep. Sip the tepid liquid. Add honey to taste or concentrated apple juice if you find the drink unpalatable. Not to be used for people suffering from stomach ulcers.

A couple of drops of peppermint oil on a tissue and enclosed in a plastic bag to breathe the vapours, helps the symptoms of nausea. DO not use for young children. See reviver below.

### **Nettle Rash**

A cold bicarbonate of soda compress should help relieve nettle stings. Just make a strong solution of bicarbonate of soda (two tablespoons in half a cup of cold water, stir well and soak a face flannel. Wring out and apply to the area).

### **Ointment**

Mix your own ointment, by combining 2 parts warmed glycerine, 1 part melted cocoa-butter, 1 part coconut oil. Mix well until set. This is on the oily side and is good as a barrier ointment, for areas of chapped skin, nappy rash, sore hands etc.

NB: ingredients can be warmed by placing in a basin over a pan of hot water until melted, do not boil the water. Take off the heat while mixing.

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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NB: 10 drops of tea tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) can be added for every 50ml of ‘ointment.’ This will give the ointment mild antibacterial properties. 10-20 drops of tea tree oil may be mixed in per 50ml for general use. 10-20 drops lavender oil can be added per 50ml, to make an ointment to soothe minor burns (always cool the burn under cold running water before applying the ointment).

### **Probiotics**

If you are prescribed antibiotics, always finish the course (do not stop as soon as the infection seems to have cleared) AND always take a good, strong probiotic for at least 2 months afterwards.

### **Reviver**

In a small screw tap glass jar add some clumps of rock salt. Sprinkle on 3 drops of peppermint essential oil or a few drops of peppermint essence and replace the lid. Whenever you feel a bit tired or nauseous, open the lip and breath in the vapours. Refresh every couple of days with more oil. Replace salt as necessary.

NB: Young children should not inhale peppermint oil, although peppermint essence for culinary use is not as strong and can be used instead.

### **Rheumatism**

Add 30g Cinnamon to two cups of water, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 mins, add 20g ginger and steep until cool. Sip the liquid three times per day. Ginger should not be used in cases of stomach irritation without medical advice.

Sip a teaspoon of cider vinegar in water twice per day.

### **Shingles**

See Herpes

### **Sore Throat**

Mix glycerine and lemon juice and take a teaspoon every couple of hours. Honey can be used to substitute glycerine. NB: Glycerine can be a by-product of the petrochemical industry, from an animal source or from a vegetable source. Make sure you know where yours comes from.

Gargle with a cup of tepid water, half a teaspoon salt, 1-2 drops tea tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) and 2 tablespoons of glycerine. Mix well before each swig, spit out excess, do not swallow.

See Tonsillitis below. See Colds p145.

### **Stings**

See Nettle Rash p152

See Insect Stings p149

### **Stomach Ache**

See Upset Stomach p155.

### **Strenuous Exercise**

Eating a banana and taking a chromium supplement 30 minutes before exercise is said to help sustain energy.

A good isotonic drink is: fresh orange juice diluted with water and a good pinch of Epsom salts and a good pinch of sea salt. This should prevent cramping.

### **Sunburn**

If you find you have been out in the sun too long, liquidise some calendula petals, olive oil, strawberries and yogurt together and smear over the inflamed areas. If extensive see doctor.

### **Tonsillitis**

Spray tonsils with a good quality colloidal silver as soon as a sore throat starts.

### **Toothache**

Book an appointment with your dentist as soon as possible. While you are waiting you can apply some tea tree oil on a soft cloth or clove oil. If you don't have either, crush a few whole cloves in warm water, add a good pinch of salt, steep and strain. Keep the liquid over the tooth to stop the pain. And, if you don't have cloves, use a strong solution of salt water. Do not swallow liquid in any of these remedies, always spit out.

### **Upset Stomach**

Many cases of upset stomach are caused by not having enough good bacteria in your system. If you regularly suffer from an upset stomach go and see your doctor to eliminate any serious cause. Then take a strong probiotic (only available from health food shops or by mail order) regularly for a few months and particularly if you have been prescribed antibiotics, the pill, HRT or are prone to stress. It is also useful to take a good probiotic before and during going abroad on holiday.

Boil some brown rice, strain the rice water into a jug, add a pinch of sea salt, apple juice concentrate or honey can be used to sweeten the liquid and drink. The rice can be eaten if hungry.

Arrowroot powder mixed with a little water and yogurt can be taken for an upset stomach.

Grapefruit seed extract (6-12 drops in a tumbler of blackcurrant or apple juice taken 2-3 times per day) can get rid of any nasty stomach bugs. Replenish your good bacteria, after taking GSE.

### **Varicose Veins**

Cider vinegar wraps are said to help, soak natural kitchen towels in \*vinegar and apply the areas of varicose veins, elevate legs for 30 minutes. Apply twice a day for a month. Also take a teaspoon of

## **Quick Fix Health Tips**

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cider vinegar in a little water twice a day for a month. There should be some improvement. \*Dilute with water for sensitive skin.

Vitamin P, is a type of bioflavonoid found in red vine leaves, grape seeds, pine bark (pycnogenols) etc. and rutin found in grains, is said to help alleviate some of the symptoms of varicose veins.

### **Wound Wash**

Add a tablespoon salt to a 500ml of warm, just boiled water. Test temperature with elbow, and if not too hot, bathe minor wounds. Large wound should have medical attention.

NB: Salt baths can be very soothing.

See Salt p111

# QUICK FIX FOOD TIPS

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This book is written for information purposes only. If the reader uses this information it is at their own risk. Good hygiene must be practiced at all times. On no account should out-of-date foods be consumed.

## **Al Fresco Eating**

When dining outside with cold food, freeze water in shallow plastic cartons and place under serving plates. This will keep the food cool and fresh.

NB: It may also help to freeze serving dishes beforehand (but do not use frozen servers for salad leaves or they may get frost bite, chill them in the refrigerator instead it will help to keep the leaves crisp.

## **Banana Barbecue**

After a barbeque why not throw on a few bananas still in their skins? 10 minutes on medium heat, stand for 10 minutes and by the time you have finished your meal, you have a delicious dessert - just open up, and serve with cream, yogurt, crème fraiche or ice cream.

## **Banana Savvy**

To preserve bananas for fruit smoothies or for use in recipes. Just peel and mash with a little lemon juice, store in a freezer container in the freezer, for up to 6 months. This is useful for buying bananas while they are cheap, you can freeze them until you need them. They taste delicious as a base for fruit smoothies and milk shakes, or just liquidise frozen banana puree with some cream or yogurt, sweeten to taste and you have instant banana ice cream.

Try this delicious recipe: mix tropical fruit juice with a little apple juice and liquidise with 1-2 peeled bananas. That is all you need do to have the most delicious fruit smoothies. To make it more creamier add a scoop of ice cream or a few cashew nuts and liquidise again.

## Quick Fix Food Tips

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### **Better Batter**

When making Yorkshire puddings, allow batter to stand for 20 minutes inside the freezer, or overnight in the refrigerator, your puddings will rise and rise.

### **Breadcrumbs**

To make breadcrumbs for sauces or puddings, place the bread in a coffee grinder and grind. Breadcrumbs can be frozen for later use.

Use breadcrumbs to:

- ◆ Make a queen of puddings, treacle tart or bread and butter pudding.
- ◆ Toast the breadcrumbs under a grill or spread out on a baking tray; place in an oven that has just been turned off but still hot. When cool store in an airtight jar. Use as a crunchy coating for meat, fish, potatoes etc.
- ◆ Season to taste, add herbs or curry powder etc. and coat potato wedges; bake in olive oil in the oven.
- ◆ Fry fresh breadcrumbs with butter and brown sugar to make a quick crunchy topping for ice creams and desserts. (Brown bread can be used).

### **Bread Saver**

Keeping a stick of celery in a loaf of bread is said to keep the bread from going stale.

### **Cake Maker**

Replace 1 tablespoon flour with 1 tablespoon cornflour, it will make the cake lighter.

### **Cake Topping**

Melt a child's chocolate bar in a microwave or in a basin over hot water and spread over the top of a cooled, baked cake. Mars bars, chocolate bars, caramel bars, bounty (coconut) bars, all make

interesting toppings. Or mix melted chocolate with coconut, chopped jellies or fruit for a range of tasty toppings.

### **Candle Holders**

Sweets make very good candle holders for birthday cakes. Make a hole in a jelly and fix to cake using stiff icing. Licorice Allsorts are ready made candle holders, choose the round ones and take out the black centre. Attach to the cake and stand candle in hole. Add more icing if the candle is too loose.

### **Celery Keeper**

Take the celery out of its supermarket bag and store upright in the refrigerator in a tumbler or jug with a little water. Change the water every day. The celery will keep its fresh crispness for longer.

### **Crunchy Coating**

To make a crunchy coating for fish or chicken, mix crushed breakfast cereal i.e. cornflakes or crisps with a sprinkling of dried herbs (optional) and coat the meat or fish. Fry or oven cook, until done.

### **Dessert Topping**

Mix 1 dessertspoon honey per person with 2 pimento berries or 2 cloves, and some citrus zest i.e. orange, heat, bring to the boil and simmer for a couple of minutes (careful not to burn). Strain, cool and use as a dessert topping.

### **Drink Coolers**

Unwaxed lemons can be sliced and frozen on a plate and put into the freezer. When frozen transfer to a resealable plastic freezer box or bag and use as necessary. Pop a slice of lemon into drinks and teas for an instant, delicious lemon, cooling effect.

NB whole pitted cherries and even stuffed or pitted olives can be frozen. It cools the drink without diluting it.

## Quick Fix Food Tips

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### Easier Mash

Wash potatoes well. Microwave for 5 minutes, 8 minutes for two potatoes or until soft. Cut into half and scoop out the middle. Mash and serve. NB: you could serve the mash in the skins.

### Eggs Benefit

- Add a teaspoon of vinegar to the water while poaching eggs, for perfect results.
- Add a tablespoon of vinegar to boiled egg water to make them easier to peel and to seal any cracks before your egg escapes into the water.
- Add half a teaspoon of cornflour for every 2 eggs to make fluffier scrambled eggs or omelettes. Sieve in the flour when adding, to avoid lumps and mix well until smooth.
- After boiling eggs, plunge them into ice cold water then back into boiling water, it will make them easier to peel.
- It's easier to peel a boiled egg if you start at the larger end first.

Check the freshness of your eggs before using:

Place the egg in a bowl of cold water. If it lies on its side it's fresh. If it points upwards at an angle it's at least 3 days old. But if it points totally upwards on one end it's at least 10 days old. If it floats, discard it.

### Egg Whites

To make it easier to whip egg whites, make sure that the whisk and bowl is spotlessly clean, add a pinch of salt and whisk. Any fat deposits or a speck of egg yolk will stop the whites from becoming fluffy.

### Fish Odour Remover

Keep your old squeezed lemon halves in a freezer, when you have been handling fish rub a defrosted lemon half over your hands to get rid of the odour. Pop the lemon half in an ovenproof dish with some water and place it in the oven with the fish, leave the lemon

## **ReUse, Repair and Reduce Household Bills**

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in the oven after the fish is removed. This will cut down on the unpleasant odours.

### **Food Saver**

When defrosting your freezer, store your frozen food in your cold oven with freezer ice blocks. Your oven is insulated and will keep the food frozen for longer. Return food ASAP to freezer.

### **Freezer Magic**

1. Peel garlic easier, freeze first and zap for 15 seconds in microwave.
2. Freeze large tomatoes, then run under a cold tap, all the skin will crack and be really easy to remove. Defrost, before frying or just pop into a stew or sauce.
3. Keep root ginger in a bag in the freezer, when needed just grate some into recipe and return to freezer.
4. Coffee grounds will remain fresher and retain flavour for longer if kept in an air-tight container in the refrigerator once opened. They do not freeze solid so are easy to use straight from the freezer.
5. Partially freeze an onion and chop or slice without tears.
6. Keep marshmallows fresh by storing in freezer.
7. Freeze well wrapped cuddly toys, blankets, etc. For 24-48 hours to kill moth larvae.

### **Fresher Spices**

Spices are much fresher if used straight from freezer. Powdered spices do not freeze solid and can be used easily when deep-frozen, straight from the bag or jar.

### **Fresher Tomatoes**

Tomatoes will remain fresher for longer if you store them stem side down.

## Quick Fix Food Tips

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### **Fruity Cake**

Toss all dried fruit in cornflour and shake off excess, before putting them into a cake mixture, it will stop them sinking to the bottom.

### **Garlic Odour Remover**

After you have peeled garlic or onions the smell seems to linger for a long time. An ordinary stainless steel spoon, rubbed over every part of your hands, while rinsing under a tap, will help to remove the odour.

### **Healthier Butter**

Cutting fat totally from your diet is a bad idea, unless you have a medical condition that prohibits fat, every body needs some fat, even saturated fat. Organic saturated animal fat is healthier than non-organic because it has more of the good polyunsaturated fats from grass-fed cows. Saturated fat from vegetable sources is healthier still. Try this mix for a healthier butter. Mix 150g organic butter, 75g coconut oil, until light and fluffy (do not warm the coconut oil too much or it will turn to liquid very quickly). Whisk in 75ml extra virgin olive oil, little by little. Store in an empty, clean, airtight container in the refrigerator. You can spread straight from the fridge (blend with more olive oil if too stiff to spread).

NB: This is a very good mix for shallow frying food and is healthier than heating vegetable oil to a high temperature.

### **Healthier Fried Eggs**

Cover a non-stick frying pan base with water, add a teaspoon of olive oil. Heat until water bubbles gently, crack an egg into the pan backwards and forwards to baste with the oil and water mixture, or use a spatula. Tip the pan to baste the egg. Serve as fried eggs. With a bit of practice you will soon not be able to tell the difference between these eggs and fried eggs.

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### **Herb Easy**

If you don't like chopping herbs with a knife, just pop them into a basin and cut with a pair of scissors until they have a fine chopped appearance. It's easier than chopping with a knife.

NB: If you don't have time to do that, just put herbs into a liquidiser with a little water and liquidise them to quickly add to a recipe.

### **Honey Runny**

To keep honey from sticking to the spoon, simply oil the utensil with salad oil before putting it into the honey.

### **Ice Nice**

Place a slice of lemon, a cherry or mint leaves into an ice cube before freezing.

### **Icing Bottle**

Clean and sterilise an old squeezable ketchup or mustard bottle and allow to dry. Mix some icing that is just runny and place inside the bottle, return the lid and use it to ice cakes. It makes writing icing really simple to do, and it's much cheaper than buying the writing icing kits. (Only use plastic bottles that have once held food, for use with food. Non-food bottles may not be made from food quality plastic).

### **Icing Sugar**

To make your own icing sugar, half fill a small coffee grinder with granulated sugar and grind until you have the consistency of icing sugar.

### **Instant Barbecue Sauce**

\* Take a plain yogurt, mix in a teaspoon of tomato ketchup, finely diced sweet pepper, 1 minced spring onion or finely chopped chives and some sweetcorn kernels, pour over barbecued meat for a lovely, tangy sauce.

## **Quick Fix Food Tips**

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\* Add chopped mint, chopped chives or chopped your favourite herbs to a plain yogurt, mix and pour over barbecued meat, fish or vegetables.

### **Instant Ice Cream**

Liquidise frozen fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, pitted cherries, currants etc. with cold custard, cream, yogurt, fromage frais or crème fraiche. Sweeten as necessary and serve immediately.

### **Instant Parsley Sauce**

Add chopped parsley to a plain bio yogurt and heat through, but do not boil. Pour over fish. Season to taste.

### **Instant Pudding**

Summer Crumble: Mix chopped fruit and yogurt, top with crushed shortcake biscuits and serve. Any fruit can be used, and paired with your favourite biscuit topping.

### **Jelly Mould**

Keep your jelly firmer by adding a teaspoon of vinegar to the mix, stir well and pour into mould.

### **Juicier Citrus Fruit**

Citrus fruit will yield more juice if warmed slightly in an oven or a microwave before being juiced.

### **Meat Tenderiser**

Cook meat in ordinary tea, the natural tannins work to tenderise meat. NB: Tannins can be bitter, add honey to counteract any bitterness.

### **Nutty Problem Solver**

Soak walnuts and pecans overnight in salted water, they will be much easier to crack and extract the nut meat.

### **Oil Spray**

Refill an empty culinary spray oil container. It's much cheaper to do refills than buying new. (To wash out, use hot soapy water and vinegar, between refills).

### **Peaked Cream**

To keep the peaks in cream for longer, dissolve gelatine in warm water, as per instructions on packet, but using less water (if it states 1-pint, use a quarter of a pint, so that it is concentrated). When cooled, but not quite beginning to set, fold in 1-part of the gelatine mixture to 5-8 parts whipped double cream. Chill well and serve.

### **Potato Saver**

Store an apple in a paper bag with your potatoes to slow down their tendency to sprout.

### **Quick Ice sculptures**

Take a decorative jelly mould and fill with water, freeze and turn out onto a plate (run under cold water to loosen), or put into the middle of a fruit punch. Instant ice sculptures to impress your guests.

### **Quicker Baked Potatoes**

Boil the whole potatoes in salted water for 15 minutes and bake for 20 minutes in hot oven (larger potatoes may need longer boiling time).

### **Quick Nutty Fudge**

Blend 1-part softened dark (hard) chocolate to 3 parts soaked and drained cashew nuts on high until smooth, roll into balls and coat with cocoa powder, crushed biscuit crumbs or cake crumbs and refrigerate to set.

### **Real Fresh Instant Coffee**

Make a pot of very strong coffee, using 3-4 dessertspoons of coffee grounds per person, sweeten to taste. Cool and fill an ice cube tray

## **Quick Fix Food Tips**

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with the coffee, and freeze. Whenever you need a quick cup of coffee just pop 2-3 coffee cubes into a cup and pour on boiling water or liquidise with a glass of milk for an iced coffee. Real instant coffee without the bother.

### **Salad Cream**

If you run out of salad cream or mayonnaise, just add a teaspoon or less of mild mustard to a plain bio yogurt or crème fraiche, sweeten (optional) with concentrated apple juice or a little honey. Mix well and use as dressing. Mix in chopped mint, parsley or chopped chives to give an appetising tang to your meat or fish dishes.

### **Salad Dressing**

In an empty squeezable ketchup bottle combine salad oil and apple cider vinegar and a few chopped herbs, shake well to combine and sprinkle over a green salad. Store excess in the refrigerator for up to three days.

### **Salt Saver**

Store a few grains of rice in your salt cellar to keep the salt from getting damp and clumping together.

### **Sauce**

For a quick, no-nonsense sauce, open a can of soup, heat and pour over cooked meat.

### **Shrimp Cleaner**

Take the black veins from shrimps with a small crochet hook.

### **Sour Cream**

Add lemon juice to milk, it is ideal for use in cooking i.e. Scones, etc.

### **Spaghetti Sauce**

Add tomato juice to a pan, sprinkle with oregano or basil, heat, season with onion salt and thicken. Pour over cooked spaghetti or pasta.

NB: Open and heat a can of tomato or cream of mushroom soup and pour over cooked pasta. Top with grated cheese and chives.

### **Sweet and Sour Dipping Sauce**

Strain orange marmalade or apricot jam to eliminate bits (they can be left in if preferred). Mix 50:50 with tomato ketchup for instant sweet and sour sauce. Can also be used warmed in microwave or pan.

### **Sweet and Sour pasta Sauce**

Thinly chop a spring onion, add a little grated carrot, pineapple juice and a few dashes of tomato ketchup to taste. Add water, stir well and simmer for a few minutes until onion is tender.

### **Tender Turkey**

In a sterilised bucket soak the turkey overnight in weak, cold tea. If you have some lemon juice, add half a cup or a whole chopped lemon too. Put bird into Roaster. (Discard excess water carefully, sterilise all items you have used, and wash hands very well). Place stuffing, bacon, butter and / or sausagemeat under the skin and place some oiled waxed paper on top of the skin. Roast with a bowl of the soaking water in the oven to par-steam it. Delicious!

NB: Remember to sterilise hands and utensils after handling any raw meat.

### **Toast Toppers**

Spread some thick condensed soup onto hot buttered toast, sprinkle with grated cheese and grill until it bubbles.

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### **Vegetable Containers and Canapé Holders**

Hollow out different coloured peppers, slice a piece off the bottom so they will stand on their own and fill with dips. You can even make a cucumber basket, cut a strip from the bottom to make it stable. Cut it, leaving a piece in the middle for a handle and scoop out some of the inside to make a basket. Now fill with your favourite dip. (You can also stick canapés on cocktail sticks into the sides.)

### **Vegetable Leftovers**

Freeze all your cooked vegetable left-overs, they make ideal fillers for soups, just pop into a saucepan with stock. They can also be liquidised to help to thicken gravy and sauces.

### **Yogurt Maker**

Yogurt is so easy to make and it is much nicer than commercial varieties. You can purchase your own yogurt maker, but there are other ways of making it too.

#### **Vacuum Flask Method**

Mix a live organic bio yogurt with 750ml of freshly boiled and cooled organic milk. The milk should be cooled to just above blood heat (warm to the touch), stir in the live yogurt and place inside a vacuum flask over-night. In the morning you should have fresh delicious yogurt. Sweeten to taste with concentrated apple juice or honey.

#### **Oven Method**

If you have an oven that can be turned to a very low (just warm) setting you will be able to use your oven to make yogurt. Place 750ml milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil and set aside to cool to just above blood heat. Place milk a large covered bowl and add one pot of live, plain, organic, bio yogurt and stir well. Replace lid and leave in a just warm oven overnight. In the morning you

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should have a bowl of delicious yogurt. Sweeten to taste with concentrated apple juice or honey.

NB: The milk will not turn to yogurt if the heat is too much for the friendly bacteria to replicate. If the yogurt is not 'live' or it contains thickeners and additives etc. it will not be able to turn the milk to yogurt.

And remember: Yogurt can be used as a salad dressing, impromptu sauces, fruit smoothies, in ice creams, etc. It has many health-giving properties, it can soothe sore throats, ease stomach upsets, calm diarrhoea, aid digestion, stop thrush, etc. It can be used as a face pack, a cleanser to calm inflamed skin, body creams, in the bath, to soothe sunburn and minor burns. It is the most versatile and helpful food around.

To make delicious yogurt cheese: pour 500ml live yogurt into a clean, dry cheesecloth bag, a cheesecloth lined sieve or a clean coffee filter. Drain at room temperature for 5 hours and refrigerated for 24 hours, by which time the liquid will have drained and can be used in fruit smoothies, milk shakes, etc. And the cheese will have thickened for food use. Season to taste and add chopped chives etc. Use as cream cheese, add to recipes, use as a dip, spread on toast or crackers etc. Keep refrigerated, use within 3 days.

### **Yummy Hot Salad**

Cut broccoli stalks, carrots, butternut squash, courgette, sweet pepper, spring onion, etc. into matchsticks and saute in a little olive oil and water. (Add favourite stir-fry vegetables such as sprouted sunflower seeds and sweetcorn etc.) Place into a serving dish, top with shredded baby spinach leaves and then top with grated cheese. Grill to just melt cheese and serve immediately.

# QUICK FIX GARDENING TIPS

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This book is written for information purposes only. If the reader uses this information it is at their own risk.

## **Aphid and Pest Deterrent**

Liquidise 2 cloves of garlic and 3 whole cloves (the spice) in water, strain and add to a watering can of water. Add a squirt of biodegradable washing-up liquid and spray over the flowers, especially at night, to prevent pests from damaging the plants

\* Plant garlic in between rows of potatoes, carrots and tomatoes etc. to keep away pests.

\* Plant some spice cloves 3-4 cm from planting your seed potatoes and it will keep the soil pests away from your crop. NB Add some more as you earth up the soil.

\* Plant French marigolds (Tagetes) around tomato plants in a greenhouse.

## **Aphid / Greenfly Killer**

See Soap page 112.

See Washing-Up Liquid page 126.

## **Borders**

Need a new border, with curves? Use a garden hose to mark out the curving lines on the lawn. Cut around with a spade or a lawn edger and then remove the hose to dig out the surplus grass.

## **Cutlery Tools**

Save your old blunt cutlery, they make very good potting tools.

Fork – Ideal as a weeder for tubs and pots.

Knife – Ideal for planting seedlings.

Spoon – Ideal for using as a small trowel in planters and pots.

Kitchen Knife – Ideal for weeding between paving stones.

### **Cutting Starter**

See Florist's Foam page 72.

### **Earwig Traps**

Earwigs can be a nuisance especially in soft fruit beds. Fill some shallow tin cans with water and put a couple of teaspoons of oil on top. The earwigs will enter the water but will not be able to climb out because of the oil. Check the traps each morning, discard the contents and refill.

### **Easier Sowing**

Always sow lawn seed or dry fertiliser with ordinary flour, you will always be able to see the area treated and the patches you have missed.

### **Easier Tomato Germination**

Freeze tomato seeds before planting, it makes germination easier.

### **Fingernail Cleaner**

To keep nails clean, dig them into a bar of soap so that it lodges underneath the nails. When you have finished gardening your nails can be scrubbed with a nail brush to remove the soap, it's much nicer than having to clean clogged soil from underneath your nails.

### **Fish Tank Garden**

Take an old fish tank (make sure that it doesn't leak) and place gravel and charcoal in the base to guard against over-watering. Add about 6cms of a good quality potting compost. You can also add larger stones for added interest, but do not add wood (it may harbour disease). Now you are ready to plant. Choose plants that will tolerate the warm, moist conditions such as African violets, ferns, gloxinia etc. Do not use cactus or succulents. Place in a sunny position or use in a dark corner with a full-spectrum light tube fitted into the lid.

## **Quick Fix Gardening Tips**

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### **Flower Bed Waterer**

Use an old hose, doesn't matter if it's split. Make more holes in it and bury it around your plants. Leave the end sticking out inconspicuously, and attach a hose coupler. When you need the garden watering just attach your garden hose to the coupler and turn on the tap, the garden will just water itself.

### **Frost Protector**

Save old bubble wrap from packaging and envelopes and tape them together. Throw over plants and secure when a frost is expected.

See Polystyrene page 108.

See Bedding / Sheets page 21.

### **Garden Dibber**

See Broom Handles page 39

### **Gardening Gloves**

See Rubber Gloves page 109.

### **Garden Tool Restorer**

See Essential Oils page 65.

### **Garlic Grower**

Put cloves in water on a kitchen windowsill, change water twice per day, they should start to sprout in a few days. Keep changing water and they will eventually form small bulbs. The whole bulb and leaves can be used in recipes, straight from your windowsill. Or you can plant them in the garden.

### **Ginger / House Plant**

If you would like an inexpensive exotic houseplant, ginger is amongst the best. They are so easy to grow and you will have a beautiful plant in just a few months. All you need is to buy some root ginger from the greengrocers. Make sure that it is firm and

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healthy. If it has been treated or irradiated it will not grow, only natural roots have a chance of sprouting into a plant. Cut a piece from the root that has 1 or 2 nodules on it (similar to the eyes on potatoes). You can use the rest in cooking or herb teas. Bury the root 2cms -3cms deep, in a small pot with good draining compost. Keep the root moist and warm. After about 4 weeks the first little shoots should appear. Repot when necessary, and you can begin to harvest your own root ginger after about 12-18 months.

### **Grass Stopper**

Any unwanted grass or weeds on tarmac, between paving slabs or in walls etc. can be killed with either a salt application or vinegar. Do not apply onto a flower bed or where you want plants to continue to grow.

### **Greenhouse Bug Stopper**

Never throw away old net curtains, they can be used for netting in the garden or greenhouse.

Garden:            Throw over a frame and peg down.

Greenhouse:     Put a cane through the hem, to act as a curtain pole and hang over the door or window frames to keep the bugs out. If you also put stones in the bottom hem it will stop them blowing about in the breeze. NB: This will stop beneficial insects getting in to pollinate the plants. You can either pollinate them yourself, with a feather, or introduce the pollinating insects separately.

### **Greenhouse Shading**

Water down some old, white emulsion paint (not vinyl or matt silk or they will be more permanent) and paint the glass inside or outside to guard against sun exposure.

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See Bedding / Sheets page 21.

### **Greenhouse Shelving**

See Miscellaneous – Pages 90 - 98. Freezer Shelving / Greenhouse Shelving / Shed Tidy.

### **Green-up Lawns**

Add 2 teaspoons Epsom salts or magnesium sulphate to 1 gallon (4.5 litres) water and water lawn.

NB Also works to green-up plants that have faded or yellowing leaves.

### **Hand Cleaner**

For stubborn stains, scrub hands with toothpaste.

See Tights and Stockings - pages 113-117 - Soap Holder

See Bicarbonate of Soda – pages 23-39 - Hand Cleaner

### **Handle Grips**

Use garden hose or similar tubing to cover hand grips on garden tools etc.

### **Hanging Basket Liner**

See Carpet and Carpet Underlay p42.

See Jumpers p84.

### **Lawn Perfect**

See Garden Hose in main section page 76.

### **Mildew Spray**

To make a anti-mildew spray for your roses, mix 30g of bicarbonate of soda with 250ml milk and 4 litres warm water, mix well. Spray often during the growing system. Also add some biodegradable washing-up liquid to get rid of greenfly etc.

### **Mini Greenhouses**

See Food Containers page 73.

### **Mulch**

See Newspapers page 99.

### **Large Pest Deterrent**

If you have a problem with dogs, cats, pigeons or other animals squashing your seedlings before they have a chance to grow, just make a net by pushing stakes into the ground all around the bed that needs protecting. Thread some old fishing line or string around the stakes to make a net. When the plants grow, the string or fishing line will be hardly visible and will help to support the plants.

### **Leaf Shine**

Dip a piece of cotton wool in milk, wring out and clean leaves of shiny leafed plants.

### **Measuring Cups**

See Plastic Bottle Lids / Measuring Cups. Pages 106-108.

### **Plant Bells**

See Plastic Bottles page 102.

### **Plant Duvets**

A unique way to stop plants succumbing to seasonal drops in temperature. See Polystyrene Packaging page 108.

<p>If you live in an area with hard water you will have a problem with watering acid-loving plants (because your tap water will be alkaline). Just put 1-2 teaspoons of vinegar into a watering can full of water and water your acid-loving plants at the base (never over the leaves).</p>
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## **Quick Fix Gardening Tips**

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### **Plant Food**

See Tights and Stockings page 113.

### **Planting Mat**

A good way of planting seeds is in toilet paper. Yes, toilet paper! Just roll out a length, spray with water to dampen and place seeds across it, spaced out as you would in the garden. Place another length of toilet paper on top to trap the seeds in between. Spray again to slightly dampen. Plant the 'seed mat' to the depth specified on packet, sprinkle with soil and keep watered. You can plant many rows of seeds in paper and just plant the lengths of mat out into the garden. Ideal for people with bad backs.

### **Planting Tube**

When starting off plants in the greenhouse i.e. lettuce, etc. plant them in a length of old plastic guttering. To plant out all you need do is to dig a trench, the same size as the guttering, tap the guttering to loosen the soil and gently edge out the plants into the trench, then firm in. It's much easier than planting each out individually.

### **Pond Cleaner**

Using an old tennis racquet, you can easily scoop out the larger debris in and on your pond. If you need a finer mesh, line the racquet with an old net curtain.

NB: Barley straw packed into plastic netting will keep the pond from going green at certain times of the year. Ask a local farmer.

### **Potato Planter**

See Miscellaneous – Pages 90-98. Tyres

### **Seed Collectors**

See Junk Mail page 85.

### **Seed Planter**

If you have ever had backache due to planting seeds, you will love this inventive idea. All you need is about a metre length piece of rigid pipe (or the size you find most comfortable), just position the end of the pipe where you want the seed to drop and place seed in the top of the pipe, then let it fall into its planting hole and brush soil on top. Perfect! No bending. It's ideal for beans and peas etc.

### **Seedling Planter**

See Miscellaneous – pages 90-98. Shoe Horn / Nail File.  
See Coffee Tins page 49.

### **Seedling Pots**

See Aluminium Foil page 13.  
See Newspapers page 99.

### **Seedling Waterers**

See Plastic Bottles page 102.  
See Basting Syringe page 20.

### **Seed Trays**

See Food Containers page 73.  
See Ice Cube Tray page 83.

### **Shrub or Tree Oasis**

See Plastic Bottles page 102.

### **Slug Contact Sprayer**

Put a couple of tablespoons of Epsom salts into a spray bottle add 250ml of warm water and contact spray the slugs. 1-2 drops of eucalyptus can also be added.

### **Slug Stoppers**

- Crushed egg shells placed around plants help to stop the

## Quick Fix Gardening Tips

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slugs, they hate going over the rough edges. When the shells break down they add calcium and vital minerals to the soil.

- Crushed seashells is said to help to keep snails at bay. You could also try sharp sand and grit.
- Sharp sand with a few pinches of Epsom salts (but not too much) helps to stop slugs.
- Sawdust is said to help stop the slug. It sticks to them and slows them down.
- Old coarse sanding disk papers are ideal to put down as slug repellent collars around susceptible plants. Sprinkle them with just a pinch of Epsom salts to make doubly sure. Save your old sandpaper and cut your own collars.
- Wood ash, in moderation, will not hurt the garden, but slugs hate it, sprinkle it around alkaline loving plants.
- A thick layer of wheat bran around plants will protect them
- Limed soil is unattractive to snails, but it should not be used around acid loving plants.
- Pine needles from a Christmas tree sprinkled around plants in a thick mulch helps to keep slugs away.

When you have tried everything else, the best way to keep snails off your plants is to introduce predators into the garden. Slow worms, frogs and toads do an excellent job of keeping down the slug population and they are an unobtrusive addition to an organic gardener's arsenal.

Strip the copper wire from any old flex and wind around your plant pots. Slugs are said to get an electrical charge from the wire when they try to crawl over it. And, if nothing else, it turns your pots into decorative 'designer' pots to impress the neighbours!

See BEER – page 23. Slug Killer

See Coffee Grounds – page 48. Slug Repellent

See Miscellaneous – pages 90-98. Avocado Skins / Slug Traps & Melon Skins / Slug Traps

See Plastic Bottles - page 102. Slug Traps.

### **Soil Protector**

Burying chicken wire, just under the soil surface, around your plants discourages pets /animals from digging. They stop as soon as their paws scrape against the wire.

### **Soil Sieve**

Punch large holes in a large coffee or catering tin and use as a soil sieve.

### **Stylish Planters**

See Miscellaneous (pages 90-98) – Washing Machine Drums / Stylish Planters for Free.

### **Tall Plant Support**

If you have daffodils or amaryllis growing on your windowsill you will probably need to support the plant during the flowering season. The cheap way to do this is to get an appropriate sized round plastic tub lid and cut out the centre, making sure that there are no sharp edges that can damage the plant. Suspend this on 2-3 small, narrow green canes (remember to cut the canes to size). Stick the

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canes into the edge of the pot, carefully bring the leaves and stems of the plant together; place the 'plant ring' over the top the plant and let it slip down over the leaves until you are at the point were the plant needs support, then rest it on the canes.

### **Tools – Replacing Grip**

Wrap some elastic bands around the handles of your garden tools. It will make them much easier to grip when holding them with gardening gloves on.

### **Tree or Shrub Holder**

It is easier to tie-in young shoots of trees or shrubs if you first hold the shoot in place on the training wire with a clothes peg. In some cases you can use the clothes peg to keep the young branches apart, if you use the fork of the peg as a support for a higher or lower branch.

### **Tree Tubes**

Cut the tops and bottoms from plastic bottles or milk bottles and place over a tree seedling or sapling. This will protect them from the elements, but remember to remove them and discard within 18 months or when trees have outgrown them.

See Tyres - p118.

### **Trellis**

To make your own garden trellis, save old plastic bottles until you have quite a few (depending on the size of your trellis). Cut rings from your plastic bottles, about 2-3 cms depth. Either thread them together with garden string or tie them individually together using garden wire or fishing line. Tie as many together in a blanket effect or make rows for bowers.

### **Water Reservoir for Containers**

See Food Containers - page 73.

### **Weed Suppressor**

See Carpet and Carpet Underlay page 42.

### **Weed Kill Cup?**

Cut a small square or circle from the bottom of a plastic disposable cup or the bottom of a plastic bottle (you can use the nozzle as a template and cut with a craft knife - using a jar or sturdy bottle as a firm rest inside the item). Place hole snugly over spray nozzle, the cup ensures only weeds get zapped, because the cup stops the fine mist drifting onto other plants.

### **Weed Killer?**

If your dutch hoe has lost its blade, just string some wire across the prongs (you may need to solder it in place). It is worth the effort, Nothing cuts the head off weeds better. It should be patented! If weed heads are cut off consistently, even the most persistent ones will eventually die through lack of essential sunlight.

### **Wheelbarrow Planter**

Paint an old wheelbarrow black, make drainage holes in the bottom, sprinkle a layer of stones or grit into the bottom, and fill with potting compost. Plant with flowers and place in a prominent place in the garden.

### **Wildlife in the Garden**

It is best to encourage as much wildlife in the garden as possible. They really do help to keep away the pests. A compost heap can be an economical addition and provides a good habitat for wildlife.

Grow a couple of roots of comfrey by your compost heap, cut to the ground up to four times a year and spread leaves over the compost. It will help to break down the compost and keep it sweet as well as providing extra nutrients.

## Quick Fix Gardening Tips

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A compost heap means that will have less waste and it is cheaper to compost hedge clippings, grass cuttings, leaves, vegetable peelings, etc. than arrange for the council to collect it all. It also provides a good habitat for slow worms, which do their bit to eat the offending slugs. When it has broken down and resembles crumbly soil with no smell (12-18 months), spread it onto flowerbeds or onto the tops of pots to keep down weeds and supply essential nutrients.

### **Introduce a bird table into your garden:**

Only stock it with food October to March. The birds need to find their own natural food when rearing chicks. They can eat: fat, suet, wild bird seeds, fresh raw unsalted peanuts or sunflower seeds, wholemeal breadcrumbs, unprocessed nuts, dried fruit or unprocessed whole cereals. **Do not put out:** raw meat or meat products, salted products (including salted peanuts), dried coconut, white bread or over-cooked food.

See Bird Feeder page 88.

<p>To deter pets and rodents from climbing up onto the bird table it should be at least 5ft high and 6ft from walls or branches. Thread an upturned biscuit tin (facing downwards) around the pole, about 15cms underneath the table and fix into place. Put the supporting pole in some old drainpipe so that pets or rodents will not be able to grip the post (wire mesh around the pole will just assist the climb and should be avoided).</p>
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# QUICK FIX BEAUTY TIPS

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This book is written for information purposes only. If the reader uses this information it is at their own risk. Some substances may cause local irritation in susceptible people, when used on the skin

## **Bath Time**

### **Bath Salts**

Purchase some rock salt or very course sea salt. Tip into an airtight glass jar, sprinkle on your favourite essential oil, close the lid and leave for a few days. Use as bath salts, sprinkled into bath water.

### **Bath Bombs**

Combine 25g citric acid, 25g bicarbonate of soda, 10g salt, 30g icing sugar, mix well with a few drops of oil i.e. jojoba and your favourite essential oil. Form into shapes i.e. hearts, flowers, spheres (you may need to add a few more drops of oil). Place on waxed paper to dry for 24-48 hours. Store in airtight jar.

See Bicarbonate of Soda - p23-p39. Fruity Fizz Bath Bombs.

### **Bath Tea**

Yes, you've guessed it! Two ordinary tea bags or green tea bags infused in hot water, added to bath with a couple of tablespoons of full fat powdered milk is pure heaven for your skin.

### **Floral Vinegar**

Not everyone likes the aroma of bath vinegars, but they are mildly antifungal and very good for the skin. Just liquidise some rose petals with white wine vinegar and strain. Store in a pretty bottle and add 15ml or 30ml to each bath.

### **Floral Water**

For those who do not like bath vinegars you can substitute water for the vinegar and liquidise rose petals with just water. Strain and use in the bath. DO NOT STORE. It can be kept for up to 5 days in the refrigerator.

### **Magnesium Bath**

Epsom salts or magnesium sulphate added to the bath is very therapeutic, it helps to draw out toxins from the skin and relaxes muscles. Add to your bath salts jar.

### **Oatmilk Soother**

Grind some rolled oats and add 2-3 cups to the foot of an old pair of tights, hang under the cold tap, so that the water runs gently through the oats, add hot water. A very soothing bath for your skin.

## **Body Care**

### **Body Oil**

Vegetable oil is not just for frying or salad dressings. Massaged straight into the skin it makes an inexpensive moisturiser for the body. Try Grapeseed oil or your favourite vegetable or nut oil, they have a good content of vitamin E.

### **Magnesium Scrub**

Epsom salts or magnesium sulphate mixed with powdered kelp is an ideal dry body scrub. It can be done whilst standing in a bath. Rub well into areas of cellulite all over the body. Allow the excess to drop into the warm water in a bath, sit down in the bath and soak for twenty minutes.

### **Muscle Soothe**

Fill an old, clean woollen or cotton sock with wheat or barley berries (available from health food shops), Add cloves and cinnamon sticks. Sew up the end. Store in the freezer for a cold compress or heat in the microwave for a warm compress to soothe muscle aches. Try using it as a warming pack when you have a sore throat or if you have neck ache, but not too hot. Wrap in a tea towel if you leave it in the microwave for too long. Return to freezer when not in use.

## **Cleansing Lotions**

### **Strawberry Cream**

30ml vegetable glycerine (available from chemists)

50ml distilled water

1-2 large strawberries

1 tablespoon plain bio yogurt

Liquidise, strain and use as required to cleanse face and neck. It should be kept refrigerated in an airtight bottle for up to 5 days. But make sure that you label it, or it may be eaten! Add the date because it will go off if stored for longer than 5 days.

### **Herbal Cleanser**

Make an infusion of herbs of choice or use a mixed herb bouquet garni or an ordinary tea bag, green tea, or chamomile tea. When cool, add 50ml of the 'tea' to 30ml vegetable glycerine. Mix well. To use, sprinkle onto cotton wool and cleanse face. It should be kept refrigerated in an airtight bottle for up to 5 days.

## **Close Shave**

### **Aloe Vera**

Keep an aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*) plant on your windowsill and you will never run out of shaving gel or burn salve. Just pick out a leaf, split it and use the gel. Some people may experience an allergic reaction, so if you have sensitive skin mix with 2-4 parts of glycerine.

### **Smooth Mayo**

Mayonnaise is perfect for a close shave when you run out of shaving gel.

### **Eye Soothers**

#### **Cucumber**

Slices of cucumber is ideal to help soothe tired eyes. Lie back with a chilled slice on each eye.

#### **Tea**

Green, white, or ordinary tea bags can be used. After making yourself a cup of tea, put the used tea bags into a refrigerator to chill. Place one tea bag on each eye for a few minutes.

### **Facial Scrub**

After cleansing and toning your face it may be worthwhile to do a facial scrub to remove dead skin cells. Be careful if you have very sensitive skin. To prepare your skin, first open up the pores either by placing your face comfortably over a bowl of hot water or apply a hot damp towel to your face and stand for 5 minutes, you can now apply the facial scrub as below.

#### **Almond Scrub**

Mix together equal quantities of ground almonds, ground whole rolled oats and yellow cornmeal. Mix with a little plain yogurt to moisten and some gentle soap. Rub gently into area of facial skin. Be careful not to drag the delicate skin that surrounds the eyes because it encourages bags to form. This scrub will help to nourish the skin as it gently exfoliates.

### **Hair Care**

#### **Chlorine Remover**

Chlorine in swimming pool water can damage hair and even alter the colour. As soon as you come out of the pool comb some tomato juice through hair for 3 minutes. Wash hair as normal and apply a good conditioner.

### **Deep Heat Treatment**

Warm some vegetable oil and soak hair with the oil. Wrap hair in a carrier bag and then wrap head in a large towel to form a turban effect. Leave for at least 30 minutes then wash and condition hair as normal. This is especially good for coloured, very dry or heat treated hair.

### **Egg and Oil Hair Pack**

Beat an egg, add jojoba oil while beating, when thickened add some vinegar. Apply to hair. Wrap hair in a plastic bag and then a warmed towel. Leave for up to 20 minutes and wash as usual.

### **Mayo Conditioner**

Comb through some mayonnaise or salad dressing and rinse as normal. Put some lemon juice in the final rinse water to disperse any residual oils.

### **Hair Pack**

For normal hair, a hair pack can really help to stop it drying out and keep it in good condition. Warm half a cup of full fat cream (less for shorter hair), whipping it will make it thicker and easier to apply, and rub into hair and scalp, wrap hair in a large plastic bag and wrap a towel around, to keep heat in. Leave for up to half an hour and wash as normal.

### **Jojoba Care**

Jojoba is a very good conditioning oil for all hair and skin types. It is not too expensive when purchased in litres, from selected essential oil suppliers.

#### **Dry and very dry hair**

Rub one teaspoon of jojoba into the hair (depending on length and dryness of hair - use less for short styles - more can easily be added later if hair is still dry and brittle). Pay particular attention to the ends. Brush through and it should be absorbed by the hair. It is

## **Quick Fix Beauty Tips**

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particularly useful when using heated appliances. It can be used when the hair is wet and dried with a hairdryer or on dry hair when using straightening irons or curling tongs.

Normal and greasy hair

Mix a few drops of lemon juice with 1 teaspoon jojoba and comb through the hair. Wash and condition as normal. Jojoba is one of the few oils that helps to regulate overly greasy hair.

For greasy hair: put 2 tablespoons lemon juice or vinegar in the final rinse water.

NB: Any vegetable oil or nut oil can be substituted for jojoba, but it will be a lot greasier, so should only be used for very dry or damaged hair.

### **Static Remover**

Does your hair flyaway at the least provocation; if so, it may be full of static. A quick way to remove static from your hair is to rub your hairbrush with a natural fabric conditioner and brush your hair. Remember to only use one containing natural ingredients, a synthetic fabric conditioner may contain too many chemicals and cause a nasty allergic reaction.

\*\* A sheet fabric conditioner can also be used, rub over ALL the bristles of your comb or brush, this will also help to eliminate static cling.

## **Hand Care**

### **Cheaper Liquid Soap**

Buy a cheap bottle of supermarket shampoo, fill an empty liquid soap bottle and use to wash your hands. It is a fraction of the price of liquid soap.

### Clean Hands and Nails

Put your fingers into a squeezed lemon half and scrape it with your nails. Rinse well and you will be surprised at how fresh and clean your nails become.

### Grandma's Hand Lotion

5-10ml vegetable oil (oil can be grapeseed oil, hazelnut oil or jojoba)

30ml vegetable glycerine

50ml rosewater or your favourite floral water (hydrosol).

Shake the ingredients together, store in an airtight glass bottle or sprayer bottle. Shake bottle well before each application.

### Intensive Hand Care

Every time you do the washing up, rub a little vegetable oil into your hands and put on some cotton-lined rubber gloves. The heat from the water will deep condition hands and nails while you wash the dishes. Wipe excess with tissues when you remove the gloves.

NB: Add hand cream and or jojoba oil to liquid hand soap and mix well. It is kinder to your hands. Dispense as normal.

### Nail Oil

Vegetable oil can be used to keep nails in tip-top condition. Soak nails in warmed oil for a few minutes each night. Add a few drops of essential oil, tea tree, palmarosa, or myrrh.

### Nail Soak

Add rosemary sprigs to full fat milk and a few drops vegetable oil. Warm all ingredients together and soak nails for 10 minutes.

### Soap

Save your slivers of soap, liquidise them with a little hand cream and either a little distilled water or hydrosol (floral water). Add 20 drops (1ml) of tea tree oil (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) for every 100ml

of liquid soap. Blend well and pour into an empty liquid soap pump dispenser.

### **Setting Lotion**

#### **Beer Set**

Beer has been used for decades. The flavoured beers may have a more pleasing aroma. Comb through hair and allow to set, dry hair naturally or with dryer.

#### **Jelly Set**

Dissolve some gelatine in warm water and comb sparingly through hair, allow to dry naturally.

#### **Lemon Set**

This is especially good for greasy hair. Strain the juice of a lemon and comb through hair, do not rinse. Allow to dry.

#### **Sugar Spray**

Dissolve 2 tablespoons sugar in a cup of hot water and allow to cool. Spray onto hair as necessary.

### **Sunburnt Skin**

#### **Aloe Vera Salve**

Keep an aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*) plant on your windowsill It is useful for all sorts of emergencies. Just pick out a leaf, split it and use the gel, spread liberally over the affected area. Patch test initially for sensitivities. Mix with glycerine for sensitive skin.

#### **Mayo Soothe**

Apply liberal amounts of mayonnaise straight from the fridge, onto areas over sunburned skin.

### **Yogurt Cool**

Open a carton of yogurt and splash over the sunburned area, it will cool it down, soothe it and help to avoid peeling.

### **Toner (Facial)**

After cleansing your skin you may need an astringent toner to close the pores and remove residual cleanser. No need to buy an expensive one, you can use items you already have in your home.

#### **Rose Toner**

Natural rosewater from essential oil distillation tanks is often sold as hydrosol. It is ideal to use as a toner. Rosewater is very good for the skin, and tea tree hydrosol is ideal for areas of problem skin.

#### **Tea Toner**

Tea is an astringent and good for the skin. It can be used straight from the refrigerator. Green tea is also very good. Because there are no additional preservatives it should be discarded after 5 days. Simply place tea bag in hot water for 5 minutes, discard and allow liquid to cool before using.

For a more astringent toner use 50:50 with witch hazel, mix and apply to a cleansed face and neck. Always patch test a small area before using over whole area of face. Avoid eye area.

#### **Vinegar Toner**

Mix apple cider vinegar with a little water and tone skin with it, allow to dry, especially good for very oily skin. Avoid eye area.

### **Tooth Whiteners**

#### **Burnt Toast**

Grandma's answer for cleaning teeth was to cut off an area of burnt toast and use it to clean teeth with. But remember, you should rinse thoroughly to remove the black bits from your mouth.

### **Lemon Fresh**

A piece of lemon rubbed over the front teeth will quickly brighten a smile.

### **Soda White**

A mixture of bicarbonate of soda and salt helps to clear stains from teeth. To use, sprinkle onto a toothbrush, with or without toothpaste, and clean teeth as usual.

## **WRINKLES**

- \* Always wear a hat in the sun.
  
- \* Once a week make a face pack with 1-part beta carotene oil, 1-part flax seed oil and 1-part jojoba. Add a few drops of wild yam oil (if you can find any). Tear off a large piece of cotton wool from a roll that just covers your face and neck, make a breathing hole in the cotton wool for your nose. Soak the cotton wool in the mixture of oil and place over your face and neck. Let it stand for at least 20 minutes then cleanse face and neck as normal.
  
- \* Make sure that your diet is rich in natural nutrients, especially vitamin C and E.
  
- \* Make sure that you have a good supply of mixed essential fatty acids in your diet, to keep your skin supple.
  
- \* Haemorrhoid cream is said get rid of wrinkles and bags under the eyes, check the instructions before using on the face. Always patch test initially.

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