

Rebecca's Herbal Tips

Let's Do Some Cleaning

Here recently all the herb information I have been giving you is exclusively on a particular herb. I want to start giving you recipes; not necessarily recipes used in cooking, but herb information you can use all around your home- sort of like "housework herbs" that you can concoct instead of using store bought cleaners. With these recipes, you can have a cleaner and safer home and environment. The good part is they really work!

You were cleaning the stove after sweet, little Johnny made you breakfast. There were grits everywhere, stuck to the stove like glue. He had been giving them a Ninja stir after absentmindedly adding too much water. Anyway, you were using your plastic scouring pad (because you did not want to scratch the stove) just scrubbing away- not a care in the world. But then you realized that you have been scrubbing the same spot for over two minutes, back and forth, back and forth, and it did not work! Don't fear, here's an idea. Next time use a horsetail! No, not a real live horse tail. Use a reed from the plant horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). They grow great in or near water, but we have grown them for years in regular North Carolina clay. They were used by people a long time ago to clean pots and pans and were called scouring rushes.

Is it time to give the house a little deep down cleaning? Here are two great recipes for that. It all depends on which one you like the best. Who knows, you might like them both! (1) Lemon Disinfectant: mix with 6 drops of essential oil of lemon with 1 teaspoon of isopropyl alcohol (to aid dispersal), and add to 2 quarts of tepid water (hot water will make the oil evaporate too fast). Some

other oils to use instead of lemon are thyme, orange, bergamot, lavender, peppermint, and rosemary. (2) Rosemary: simmer some leaves and stems of rosemary for approximately 30 minutes in water; the less water, the more disinfecting power. Strain and use to clean sinks and bathrooms or to give a fresh scent to rooms.



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by Rebecca Britt
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Add dishwashing liquid to get rid of grease on surfaces. Store any excess in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Now, back to horsetails. Other than a great natural scouring pad, they are also used in this metal polish recipe. (3) Metal Polish: make a strong infusion of fresh horsetail using 1 ounce to 2 1/2 cups of water. Soak for at least 2 hours, then simmer in the same water for 15 minutes and strain. Pour the infusion over metal articles and soak them for 5 minutes. Remove the articles and allow them to dry slowly, then polish with a soft cloth. If the article is too big to soak, simply wipe it with a cloth dipped in the solution, allow to dry, then polish with a soft cloth.

For a natural wood shine, try this furniture polish. (4) Sweet Marjoram furniture Wax: 4 oz. beeswax, 1 Tbsp. olive oil base soap, 2 1/2 cups turpentine, 1 1/2 cups strong infusion of sweet marjoram, essential oil of sweet marjoram, (optional). Grate the beeswax into the turpentine and leave to dissolve, which may take a few days. Alternatively, warm the beeswax and turpentine carefully over a flameless heat until the wax melts. Turpentine can easily burst into flames, so it's safest to warm over boiling water. In a separate pan, bring the infusion to boiling point and stir in the grated soap until melted. Allow both mixtures to cool, then blend slowly stirring until it resembles thick cream. Stir in a few drops of essential oil. Pour into a wide-mouth container and label.

Enjoy using these recipes and until next time keep reading more about herbs!

All recipes are taken from, The Complete Book of Herbs, by Lesley Bremness.

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