Household Cleaners Packaging

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By Mrs. Green of ‘My Zero Waste’

- Have you cleaned your house recently? How many different products did you use?

When you go into a shop to buy supplies, the choices can be overwhelming. There are products for cleaning the sink, bath and toilet. Others to clean mirrors, tiles and windows. Further products for your kitchen work surfaces and floors. Not to mention bleach, laundry products and air fresheners!

In addition, the majority of cleaning products come in plastic bottles. Some products arrive in blister packs. This can contribute to the amount of landfill waste you throw out each week.

This is a difficult challenge to overcome. You want a clean house, but you don’t want the disposal of containers and packaging afterwards.

Here are 6 tips to minimise the amount of waste you produce through use of household cleaners.

1- Refill your containers

Companies such as Ecover offer a refill service. For a reduced price, you can take along your empty washing up liquid, fabric conditioner, multi surface cleaner and laundry liquid bottles for refill.

In our local farm shop, you get a huge, bank account happy

pound off a washing liquid refill. Not only do you stop plastic containers going into the landfill, but you save yourself some money in the process. That's the sort of win-win situation I like!

To find details of your nearest refill location, check out the Ecover Website.

2- Buy in bulk

Buying in bulk reduces the amount of waste you have to send to landfill. I'm not talking about buying an entire case of small products as this is counter-productive. I'm talking about buying products in large containers.

It is estimated that buying one large container of something (say 5lts of fabric conditioner) uses 40% less plastic than buying five 1 ltr containers of the same product. Hook up with a friend and share if you cannot afford this option or don't have storage.

3- Try to avoid buying over packaged goods

Dishwashing tablets that come individually wrapped in plastic create more waste than a box of loose powder. Think about your choices and have a look at what you will be left with to dispose of once you've finished the product.

4- KISS

Keep it simple sweetheart. Instead of buying different products for different cleaning jobs, opt for multi-purpose cleaners. We tend to have just one bottle of multi-purpose cream cleaner at Chez Green that we use on kitchen worksurfaces, the hob, bath, sink and shower. It saves time on the housework as you're not looking for the 'right bottle'. It saves cupboard space too!

5- Use washable cloths

Instead of thin disposable cloths, invest in a few e-Cloths which can be washed and reused over and over again. The beauty of e-cloths is that they attract dust and dirt which means you can use *less* products to clean your home with. In fact, they can be used with just water. Hard to believe I know, but it's absolutely true!

6- Spray, don't plug!

If you use air fresheners then steer clear of the plugin ones which are made from brittle non-recyclable plastic and often come in blister packs and the gel ones which also come in plastic. Opt for spray air fresheners (aerosol cans can be recycled at many local recycling facilities across the UK). For more natural ways, try using an oil burner or pot pourri.

7- Go au naturelle

You can use kitchen ingredients as effective and safe cleaning products too. Three of my favourites are fresh lemons, white vinegar and bicarbonate of soda (baking soda).
White vinegar can be used to clean mirrors and glass. Add a tablespoon to a bucket of water to clean hard floors and keep a vinegar spray in the bathroom to spray over the tiles. Soaking your showerhead in vinegar will remove limescale, as will using it in the kettle occasionally.
Fresh lemon juice is a good stain remover and has a mild bleaching property. It will help dissolve soap scum and hard water deposits. In the kitchen it is antiseptic, so good for cleaning cutting boards. Using fresh lemons is a true zero waste product!
Bicarbonate of soda is a versatile cleaner. It works magic on a burnt saucepan and you can use it to clean your hob and oven. It's great on baths and sinks too. In addition, bicarbonate of soda eliminates odours.