

Cleaning Matters®

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

July/August 2009

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Calendar of Clean

July is ...

- **Independence Day: July 4**
See *The Lowdown on Dirty Dishes* article
- **Parent's Day: July 26**
See *Teaching the Next Generation* article
- **National Youth Sports Week: July 20–26**
See *Ask Nancy!* article
- **National Recreation and Parks Month**
See *Ask Nancy!* article

August is ...

- **Friendship Day: August 2**
See *Friendship Day* article
- **Back-to-School Month**
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Teaching the Next Generation to Clean

Tips for passing on cleaning skills

The fourth Sunday of every July is Parents' Day. This day of commemoration, similar to Mother's Day and Father's Day, is the result of a Congressional resolution that was signed into law in 1994 by President Bill Clinton. The day was created to recognize, uplift and support the role of parents in the rearing of children. In addition to being a day for honoring parents, it's also a good time for some self-reflection on our roles as parents.

One aspect of being a good parent is to teach our children life skills so that they can go forward as adults to lead happy, healthy and productive lives. These life skills include everyday tasks, like cooking, cleaning and doing laundry. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, offers some suggestions for effectively introducing children to these tasks.

Make sure the chore is age-appropriate. Preschoolers can put away unbreakable dishes and playthings. Older children can clear the table, help load the dishwasher and make their beds. Teens and preteens can clean their own rooms, assist with the laundry and help with dusting, cleaning and kitchen chores.

Make safety a priority. Always provide proper adult supervision. Don't allow children to use disinfectants, disinfectant cleaners, chlorine bleach or any product that has a warning on the label, such as "Keep out of reach of children."

more



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Teaching the Next Generation to Clean (cont.)

Let them choose the medium. For example, there are many ways to remove dust from the furniture. Only adults should apply spray products, but it's okay to let your child experiment and pick a microfiber cloth or mitt, microfiber duster, electrostatic dusting cloth or dust wipe to accomplish the task.

Develop a cleaning schedule. This can be difficult with today's busy households, but children do better when they know what's expected of them and when it's expected to happen.

Tap into your children's concern for the environment. Set a good example with sustainable practices. For example, purchase cleaning products in bulk sizes along with a smaller container of the product and refill the latter as needed. Follow label instructions as to the recommended amounts of product so you aren't wasting money by using more than is necessary. Dispose of empty containers in an environmentally responsible way.

Teach them to read product labels. Show them what can be found on cleaning product labels: ingredients list, usage directions, storage and/or disposal information, safety information, environmental information and the

manufacturer's name and address and/or a toll-free phone number. Note, too, that some cleaning product manufacturers are providing expanded ingredient information on their product labels and via supplementary information on their websites. This is a precursor to the Consumer Product Ingredient Communication Initiative, a proactive voluntary program being collaboratively launched by SDA, the Consumer Specialty Products Association (CSPA) and the Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association (CCSPA). It's designed to meet the changing needs of consumers and the marketplace by creating a uniform system for providing ingredient information to consumers in a way that's meaningful and easy to understand. This initiative provides different means to inform consumers about the ingredients in products: on the product label; on the manufacturer's, distributor's or importer's website; through a toll-free telephone number; or through some other nonelectronic means. This voluntary program will take effect in January 2010.

For more information about the Consumer Product Ingredient Communication Initiative, visit http://cleaning101.com/files/Consumer_Product_Ingredient_Communication_Initiative_description_11-24-08.pdf.

Sustainability Matters

Honoring Innovations in Sustainability

Glycerine is one of the most versatile and valuable chemical substances known to man. It's derived from both natural (predominantly) and petrochemical feedstocks and is obtained from fats and oils during soap and fatty acid production.

Glycerine possesses a unique combination of physical and chemical properties that are utilized in a variety of products. It has over 1,500 known end uses, including many applications as an ingredient or processing aid in cosmetics, toiletries, personal care, drugs and food products.

Annually, The Soap and Detergent Association and the National Biodiesel Board offer the Glycerine Innovation Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement for

research into new applications for glycerine, with particular emphasis on commercial viability.

This year, we honored three researchers from Pittsburg State University in Kansas, who developed a new family of glycerine-based polyols – a series of organic molecules – suitable for use in rigid polyurethane foams. These foams, in turn, are used in thermal insulation (refrigeration industry and construction), packaging, transportation, adhesives, sealants and coatings.

Researchers Zoran Petrovic, Ivan Javni and Mihail Ionescu received their honor at the Annual Meeting of the American Oil Chemists' Society. You can find out more about past award winners online at www.cleaning101.com/oleo.

News Flash

National Custodian Award Winners Announced *Custodians honored for improving school environment*

Custodians from five schools across the country were recently recognized with the first-ever National C.L.E.A.N.® (Custodial Leaders for Environmental Advocacy Nationwide) Award, a joint initiative of The Soap and Detergent Association, the National Education Association Health Information Network and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of this program is to recognize the contributions that custodians make to public health in their schools, communities and their profession.

The top recipient, Pat Nicholson, of Washington State's Brownsville Elementary School, earned a \$5,000 cash award, cleaning products and a school celebration on National C.L.E.A.N.® Day.

The four runners-up are Briana Rivera, Saks Elementary School, Anniston, Alabama; Rick Johnson, Emmons Elementary School, Mishawaka, Indiana; Felicia Palmer, Round Top Elementary School, Blythewood, South Carolina; and John Smith, Cindy Fisher and Angela Gusinger, Hanover-Horton Middle School/High School, Horton, Michigan.

"These professionals work every day to properly and safely use cleaning products that help keep our schools clean and healthy," said Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association. "Their passion and commitment to improving their school environment – for students, teachers and all of their colleagues – showcase how important they are to communities around the nation."

Applicants for the C.L.E.A.N.® Award provided information about their worksite, cleaning responsibilities, how they have demonstrated leadership for school cleanliness achievements, evidence of collaboration and how their work has enhanced the image of the custodian. Applications were evaluated on originality, creativity, ability to sustain results, evidence of teamwork and program impact.

For additional information about the program and the award winners, visit www.cleaning101.com/awards/clean-award.cfm.

News about Automatic Dishwasher Detergents

Formula changes are on their way

Automatic dishwasher detergents (ADD) have been making news. You may have read news stories about consumers reacting to legislative decisions in some states to ban the use of phosphorus in household automatic dishwasher detergents. In January 2006, the Washington State Legislature passed a law limiting the amount of phosphorus in ADD for home use to 0.5% (considered to be virtual elimination) effective July 1, 2008 in Spokane County and effective statewide on July 1, 2010.

Since January 2006, SDA members who produce ADD for the home have conducted research and developed new products, adjusted manufacturing facilities, realigned their ingredient supply chains, and have begun to introduce these new products to ensure as seamless a transition as possible. In order for retail supply chains to be efficient nationwide, manufacturers are creating non-phosphate ADD that can be effective throughout the U.S. During this transition period, consumers all over the country will be seeing these new products added to store shelves.

This is a nationwide commitment on the industry's part and will occur even in those areas where the phosphorus content in ADD is not restricted.

What Are Phosphates?

Phosphates are derived from phosphorus and have historically been one of the main ingredients in detergents. In dishwashing detergents, phosphates help to tie up water hardness minerals so these minerals won't interfere with cleaning or leave deposits on surfaces. Phosphates also help keep food-soil particles suspended in water after removal from the soiled surfaces and prevent them from being re-deposited onto dishes.

Why Remove Phosphates from ADD nationwide?

Phosphates are essential to plants and they're a great fertilizer. However, high phosphate levels in lakes and streams can cause algae to bloom, which can diminish the amount of oxygen for other aquatic life such as fish. Phosphates from household ADD are a very small proportion of the total contribution of phosphates to the surface waters. In fact, the State of Minnesota estimated phosphate from ADD was less than 2% of the total phosphorus that reached the state's waters. However, since it would be inefficient to provide two versions of the same product in today's retail supply chain, manufacturers are removing phosphates from ADD nationwide. [Note: manufacturers have already voluntarily removed phosphorus from laundry detergents nationwide.]

What Do the ADD Formula Changes Mean for Consumers?

Cleaning ingredients get changed all the time. Sometimes it's the result of legislation, but more often cleaning formulas are altered because of new research and/or in response to changing consumer demands. The first of the new non-phosphorus products by mass marketers, which have begun to appear in stores, are proof of the industry's commitment to making non-phosphorus products available. This transition is a significant undertaking that poses complex logistical challenges. For these reasons, the uniform effective date of July 2010, which has been adopted by other states so far, is essential to its success. SDA members are committed to providing cost-effective products by that date and, thus, consumers should see no difference in the performance of their automatic dishwashing detergents.

For more information about the impact of phosphate and phosphate detergents on the environment, visit the SDA Science website page on phosphate at http://www.sdascience.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=61.

The Lowdown on Dirty Dishes

Tips for getting the job done in record time

When the lazy, hazy days of summer are in full swing, it's natural to want to give household chores short shrift. Who wants to spend time doing dishes when the outdoors beckons?

"While it's tempting to stock up on paper and plastic dinnerware, it's not necessarily the best solution," says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association. "In addition to environmental concerns and the extra expense involved in purchasing these disposable products, pots and pans still need to be cleaned!" So here are some tips for getting those dishes done at warp speed.

In the dishwasher:

- **Load promptly.** Make it a habit to put dirty dishes into the dishwasher as you use them. It gets clutter off the counter and keeps the process from becoming overwhelming.
- **Follow the directions** on the automatic dish detergent label so you use only as much detergent as is necessary to clean your dishes.

By hand:

- **Preplan.** Dishwashing is easier if food doesn't have a chance to dry on the dishes. So, when cooking or baking, fill the sink with dish soap and hot water before you start. When you finish with a pot, pan or utensil, put it directly in the water.
- **Presoak** so it's easier to remove burned-on stains and cooked-on soils. This gives the detergent's ingredients time to break down soils. As a result, it'll minimize the amount of detergent required and the scrubbing time needed.
- **Use hot water** when washing dishes by hand. The hot water helps cut grease and lift dirt away, which reduces scrubbing time. If you have sensitive hands, wear a pair of rubber gloves.
- **Air-dry** your dishes. It's a time-saver.

To learn more about products formulated to clean dishes by hand, check out The Soap and Detergent Association's new Dish Care Fact Sheet. To download it, visit <http://www.cleaning101.com/files/dish-care-fact-sheet.pdf>.

Friendship Day

Imaginative ways to show you care

Since 1935, thanks to a proclamation made by the U.S. Congress, the first Sunday in August is Friendship Day. No longer just a U.S. observance, this lovely custom has spread to many other parts of the globe. It's a day for honoring and celebrating the friends we hold dear.

There are many ways to celebrate the day. There's the expected exchange of cards and flowers. But sometimes the best way to show you care is to lend a helping hand in an unexpected way. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, has some ideas to share.

- **Make a cleaning date.** Done alone, cleaning a closet, an attic, a storage bin – something that holds forgotten treasures – can be a chore. Done with a friend, it's an opportunity to share stories and experiences.
- **Share cleaning supplies.** With the economy on everyone's minds, people are looking for ways to maximize budgets. One way is to buy cleaning supplies in multi-packs and split them up among your friends. Just be sure these products are properly labeled in case of an emergency.
- **Be the cleaning elf.** If someone dear to you is having life difficulties that are making it hard to cope with household cleaning, think about how you could make their burden lighter. It could be anything from doing a few loads of laundry to a top-to-bottom dusting and cleaning.
- **Share cleaning resources.** If you have a great cleaning service, share their contact information with your friends. Both parties will be grateful. If you're looking for a service, please patronize *Cleaning for a Reason* Foundation partners! These companies donate cleaning services for women with cancer. Learn more about the *Cleaning for a Reason* Foundation at www.cleaningforareason.org.

Cleaning Questions? *Ask Nancy!*

Q: I used chlorine bleach on my tennis whites and they came out yellow. Do you have any idea why?

A: The most likely cause is the quality of your water. Sudden changes in water quality frequently occur in the summer months, particularly in rural areas or where the water comes from a well. You probably have metals (iron or manganese) either in the water itself or in the pipes. These metals react with sodium hypochlorite, which is an active ingredient in chlorine bleach. The interaction creates colored materials that deposit onto the garments. After drying, the garments are essentially dyed with the colored material. To prevent this from happening in the future, investigate using a product specially formulated to treat your water supply. To reclaim the stained tennis whites, look for a product that is designed to remove rust stains in the laundry.

Q: Everyone in my family is diligent about using sunscreen and my daughter uses a self-tanner when she wants that tanned look. This is all good for our family's skin, but not necessarily for our clothes, as both products occasionally produce stains. How do I remove these stains?

A: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover, and then launder, using the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. In the case of the self-tanner, line-dry the garment, then check to make sure the stain has disappeared. If the stain remains, pretreat and wash again. In the unlikely event that the stain remains and you really want to salvage the garment, try this: Dab a 3% hydrogen peroxide solution – the kind used for first aid – directly onto the stain. (Test first on an inconspicuous place on the garment to be sure the peroxide doesn't harm the fabric.) Then rub glycerin into the stain. Launder in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric.

Nancy Bock is Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association

Clean Ideas

End-of-Summer Cleanup

Tips for getting things ready for storage

Before you get caught up in all the back-to-school activities, spend some end-of-summer time returning items to their best possible state before you store them away. This will prove to be a time saver when you want to use them again next spring.

- **Musty beach towels:** Launder, using the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. Add a small amount of fabric softener to the final rinse. Machine-dry thoroughly.
- **Sandy sleeping bag:** Turn the bag inside out. If the sand is damp, let the bag air out until the sand is dry. Shake the bag to remove as much loose sand as possible; then brush or vacuum away the remaining residue. If the bag is soiled, clean according to the sleeping bag's care label instructions.
- **Muddy tennis shoes:** Let the mud dry completely. Then take the shoes outside and bang the soles together to remove as much of the dried mud as possible. Using a solution of warm water and hand dishwashing liquid and an old toothbrush, scrub gently to remove the remaining dirt. For stubborn dirt marks, scrub with a nylon pad. Wipe with a damp sponge or damp paper towels. Stuff the tennis shoes with clean paper towels and let them air-dry.
- **Grungy plastic tablecloths:** A wipe-down with a soapy sponge may clean the top of the tablecloth, but not the flannel backing. To clean the whole thing, machine-wash, using the gentle cycle. Machine-dry on the delicate cycle for about 15 minutes. This is just enough time to remove the creases caused by machine washing, but not long enough to harm the vinyl. If the cloth is still damp, line-dry.
- **Grubby molded-resin outdoor furniture:** Clean with a mild detergent and water. Avoid abrasive powders, chlorine bleaches and silicone cleaners.
- **Soiled outdoor cushions:** Acrylic, polyester and cotton fabrics should be spot-cleaned by sponging with a solution of liquid dishwashing detergent and lukewarm water. Rinse with clear water and air-dry.
- **Dirty plastic pool toys:** Mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of chlorine bleach per gallon of warm water. Soak the prewashed toys for five minutes. Rinse and then air-dry. If the toys aren't used during the winter, store them in a closed container so they'll stay clean and dust-free.