

# Cleaning Matters®

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

March/April 2009

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## Calendar of Clean

### March is ...

- Poison Prevention Awareness Month  
See *Clean and Safe* and *News Flash* articles
- National Poison Prevention Week: March 15-21  
See *Clean and Safe* and *News Flash* articles
- Read Across America Day/Dr. Seuss Birthday: March 2  
See *Better Reading* article
- First day of Spring: March 20  
See *Clean Ideas* article

### April is ...

- Cancer Control Month  
See *Cleaning for a Reason* article
- Cleaning For A Reason Week: April 26 - May 2  
See *Cleaning for a Reason* article
- National Garden Month  
See *Ask Nancy* article
- Earth Day: April 22  
See *Clean Ideas* article
- Arbor Day: April 28  
See *Ask Nancy* article

## Cleaning for a Reason

### SDA's social sustainability partnership

A clean environment is especially important to women with cancer. The Soap and Detergent Association has partnered with the *Cleaning For A Reason Foundation* to support their efforts to help provide free cleaning services to women undergoing treatment for cancer. "Cancer patients and their families don't have to worry about cleaning their homes when this Foundation stands ready to lend a helping hand," says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association and board member of the *Cleaning For A Reason Foundation*.

Currently, approximately 370 residential services are providing free cleaning services to cancer patients in 41 states. To date, the Foundation has helped over 1,200 cancer patients. But more help is needed. If you're currently using a residential cleaning service to clean your home, or know someone who is, ask the owner if they're involved in the *Cleaning For A Reason Foundation* and encourage them to learn more at [www.cleaningforareason.org](http://www.cleaningforareason.org). The more maid services that join the cause, the more women can receive help during their time of treatment.

SDA is honored to support the work of the Foundation and hope you will too. To learn more about how you can help the *Cleaning For A Reason Foundation* make a difference, one home and one family at a time, contact Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, at [nbock@cleaning101.com](mailto:nbock@cleaning101.com).



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## News Flash

### Soap and Detergent Association Launches SDAScience.org

*New online initiative shares cleaning product research with consumers*

SDAScience.org is a new online initiative from The Soap and Detergent Association (SDA). This website, which is part of SDA's long-standing commitment to product stewardship, was created to share its vast portfolio of research on the safety and benefits of cleaning products and their ingredients with consumers.

Consumers who visit this site can find information on the human health and environmental safety of cleaning products and their ingredients, a compendium of information compiled through SDA's High Production Volume (HPV) Chemical Consortia, and a glossary of terminology commonly used in the cleaning products industry, among much more information.

Most of the available scientific information relates to the safety of cleaning products and their ingredients. Also presented is SDA's technical work on chemical management approaches and general issues undertaken as part of the industry's product stewardship efforts over the years. Much of this work was conducted in collaboration with industry, nonindustry and governmental organizations.

As SDA's extensive body of past work is compiled and posted, the initial set of research and technical information on the site will be expanded over the coming year. For more information, visit [www.SDAScience.org](http://www.SDAScience.org).

## Clean and Safe

### *Why home-brewed cleaning products can be a risky way to economize*

When it comes to health and hygiene, cleaning products are a necessity, not a luxury.

In an economy where everyone is looking for ways to save money, it's tempting to consider creating your own cleaning products. It may sound like a good idea, but there could be serious safety implications.

Consider:

- **Labels:** Homemade cleaning products aren't stored in properly labeled containers! While you may feel confident that you know what's in them, consider the fact that a child or a pet may get ahold of them when you're not around. How would other members of the household know what's inside or what to do in an emergency if there's no label with safety instructions?
- **Testing standards for safety:** Commercial products are tested to meet strict government safety standards, while alternative cleaners are not tested or held to any standards. Testing ensures that the chemicals are compatible and will remain stable over time. A homemade mixture may not be stable for storage and could even become a breeding ground for bacteria.
- **Testing standards for use:** Untested homemade mixtures may have unforeseen consequences, such as damaging your kitchen counters or stripping the finish from your brand-new wood floors.
- **Secure storage containers:** Child-resistant packaging, generally not used for homemade cleaners, is essential for the safety of your family. An ingredient may be labeled as "natural" but that doesn't mean it's safe for ingestion by children or pets.

A better way to economize is to look for sales, use coupons or purchase cleaning products in bulk.

Many bulk sizes are packaged with a corresponding smaller, refillable version of the product. If your choice doesn't come that way – and/or you want to keep the cleaner in multiple locations – purchase a smaller size and refill the container as necessary. That way, no matter where you use the product, it'll be properly labeled in case of an emergency.

March 15-21 is National Poison Prevention Week. It's the perfect time to review the way cleaning products are handled in your home. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, offers these guidelines:

- **Close cleaning product caps securely.** Even child-resistant packaging doesn't work if the container isn't properly closed.
- **Lock products up.** Store them in a location that's away from children, pets and food. Install child-resistant locks on cabinets and doors.
- **Keep cleaning products in their original containers.** If an accident occurs, the label provides information concerning the product's contents and advice on what immediate first-aid to perform.
- **Carefully dispose of empty cleaning containers.** Replace the caps and then discard in a sealed recycling bin or garbage container that's safe from curious children and pets.

If there's a poison-related emergency, contact the **U.S. Poison Control Center's** nationwide toll-free number: **1-800-222-1222**. Post this number, which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, next to every phone in the house and add it as a contact into all your cell phones. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1.

## Consumer Product Ingredient Communication Initiative

### *More information on the way*

Members of The Soap and Detergent Association (SDA) continuously strive to share relevant information with consumers for better understanding of the cleaning products they use in and around the home. Our industry is committed to providing today's consumers with information prior to and after purchase to ensure safe and proper use. This includes information about ingredients.

Now the information flow will be even more transparent under the new Consumer Product Ingredient Communication Initiative unveiled by SDA and two allied organizations in the U.S. and Canada: the Consumer Specialty Products Association and the Canadian Consumer Specialty Products Association. The program will provide consumers with information about the ingredients in products in four major categories:

- Air care
- Automotive care
- Cleaning
- Polishes and floor maintenance products

This proactive, voluntary initiative is aimed at meeting the changing needs of consumers and the marketplace by creating a uniform system for providing ingredient information to consumers in a meaningful and easy-to-understand way. The plan is to provide a variety of communication means to inform consumers about the ingredients in products: on the product label, on the manufacturers', distributors', or importers' website, through a toll-free telephone number, or through some other non-electronic means.

This initiative builds on the already-strong foundation the industry has established for sharing information with consumers. It's largely based on the labeling conventions in use today in the U.S. for food, drugs and cosmetics with which consumers are familiar.

Participating manufacturers, distributors and importers will take an additional, significant step toward meeting consumer desire for more information about the products they use.

The Consumer Product Ingredient Communication Initiative is scheduled to take effect in January 2010. For more details, visit SDA's website at [www.cleaning101.com/about/11-24-08.cfm](http://www.cleaning101.com/about/11-24-08.cfm).



## Better Reading for Better Living

*How to use daily household activities to reinforce the importance of reading*

Read Across America Day, developed by the National Education Association, was established to focus attention on the importance of motivating children to read. This day is celebrated each year on March 2nd, the birthday of beloved children's author Dr. Seuss.

Naturally, reading a book to – or with – a child is the prominent focus of the day. But Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, also suggests using the day to demonstrate to children how reading skills can help with household activities. Here are a few examples:

- Ask your child to check the weather forecast – either online or in the newspaper – and read it to you.
- Set out an assortment of cleaning products. Ask your child to read the product descriptions and determine

which are intended for floors, dishes, hands, laundry and surfaces.

- Schedule a laundry session and let your child assist you by reading the care labels and helping you sort the clothes accordingly.
- Go grocery-shopping. Your child can read the shopping list to you and check off the items as they are collected.
- Choose items that are labeled with cooking instructions and have your child help prepare dinner.
- Bake cookies together, reading the recipe or the instructions aloud.

At day's end, make a list of all the things you and your child did that were enhanced by the ability to read. And be sure to preface bedtime with a story!

## Cleaning Window Screens

*Simple steps for a better outlook*

Want to (literally!) improve your outlook? Then give your window screens a good spring cleaning! It'll improve the way the world looks from the comfort of your home – and it's a quick home spruce-up that costs you virtually nothing.

### Screen Cleaning

The first – and maybe the most tedious – step is to remove the screens. As you do, assign a number to each screen and its corresponding window or door frame so that each one is returned to its proper location. Put any screws or bolts in a plastic bag and number that, too. That way, each screen can be returned to its proper location and you can avoid any confusion later. Even a slight size variation will prevent the screen from fitting in another window.

Once you've removed the screen(s), follow this simple procedure, provided by Nancy Bock, Vice President of

Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, for getting them clean:

1. Use the brush attachment on the vacuum cleaner to gently remove dust and loose grit from the mesh and frames.
2. Wet the screens thoroughly. Choose the method that's most convenient for you: a hose, a shower nozzle or a heavy-duty sponge.
3. Using an outdoor cleaner and a sponge, lightly wipe the solution all over the screen and frame until it's coated with suds.
4. Rinse the screen, using the hose, shower nozzle or sponge. Check for missed spots and, if necessary, lightly scrub again.
5. Give the screen a final rinse.
6. Lift the screen and shake off excess water. Let it air-dry before replacing it in the window.



Cleaning Questions? *Ask Nancy!*

**Q:** When spring comes, I spend a lot of time working in my garden. Since I'm on my knees a lot, grass stains are inevitable. How do I get them out?

**A:** Grass stains are a mixture of green chlorophyll plus protein and other organic matter. The chlorophyll tends to set into the fabric immediately, which is what makes grass stains challenging to remove. Add in the dirt that naturally accompanies grass, and you've often got several layers of concentrated soil to get rid of.

If it's muddy dirt, let it dry and then brush off as much as possible. Next, pretreat the garment with a prewash laundry product. Follow the product recommendations for the maximum amount of "setting" time, then launder, using the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. If any stain remains, launder again with detergent and chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric, or oxygen bleach.

**Q:** I've just taken the kids' soccer uniforms out of storage for the upcoming season and some stains have appeared. I'm sure I checked to make sure they were clean before putting them away. What happened?

**A:** Your uniforms are probably a victim of "invisible stains." When a clear substance, such as 7-Up, white grape juice, or club soda is spilled on a garment, it seemingly disappears when it dries. So if you used the "it looks clean, so it is clean" system of evaluating the status of garments for storage, the stains you couldn't see oxidized over the winter and turned brown. Try treating the stain with a prewash stain remover, then laundering, using both the type of bleach and the hottest water temperature that are safe for the fabric. Unfortunately, this type of discoloration is usually permanent – which is why it's essential to be sure everything is freshly laundered before storing.

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



## Clean Ideas

### Go Clean and Green

#### *Earth-friendly household practices*

Whether it's a spring cleaning sweep or everyday household practices, there are ways to go green while making things clean.

1. Unless you only run the dishwasher every few days, rinsing dishes before putting them in the dishwasher is an unnecessary step that wastes water. Scrape the dirty dishes, and then load the dishwasher.
2. When washing dishes by hand, use a sink filled with soap and water rather than washing under running water.
3. Replace incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL). According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if every household in the U.S. replaced one lightbulb with a CFL, it would prevent enough pollution to equal removing one million cars from the road.
4. Select the appropriate load size on the washing machine and follow the detergent manufacturer's instructions for the proper measure.
5. Sweep sidewalks and driveways rather than hosing them down.
6. Start a compost pile for food scraps, grass and other yard clippings, and dead plants. It'll reduce your amount of garbage and using compost will improve your garden.
7. Sort out the trash and recycle whatever you can. Recycle paper (printer paper, newspapers, mail, etc.), plastic, glass bottles, cardboard and aluminum cans. If your community doesn't collect recycling at the curb, take yours to a collection center.
8. Think before you throw something out. Donate duplicates or things you no longer use to a charity. You might also check out the web-based Freecycle Network. Freecycle is a grassroots, nonprofit movement of people who are giving and getting stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is moderated by a volunteer and membership is free. Visit [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) for more information.
9. Limit your use of paper cups, paper plates and paper napkins in favor of washable dinnerware and cloth napkins.
10. When replacing appliances, look for those that have an Energy Star rating. The right choices can save families about thirty percent (\$400 a year) while reducing our emissions of greenhouse gases.