Safe Alternatives for Common Household Products

Ants (in the house)
Locate every point and seal with caulk. Kill visible ants with soapy water. Remove all food sources.

Air Freshener
Simmer cinnamon and cloves.

Aluminum Spot Removal
Use two tablespoons of cream of tartar and one quart of hot water.

Bleach
Use borax.

Brass Polish
Polish with Worcestershire sauce.

Car Battery Corrosion Removal
Use baking soda and water.

Cleaners (general household)
Use one teaspoon of liquid soap, one teaspoon of borax, and one squeeze of lemon in a quart of warm water.

Chrome Polish
Polish with apple cider vinegar.

Copper Cleaner
Clean with lemon juice and salt.

Coffee Cup Stain Removal
Wash with moist salt.

Coffee Pot Stain Removal
Soak in vinegar.

Decal Removal
Soak with white vinegar.

Dishwashing (cutting grease)
Use liquid soap and vinegar.

Drain Cleaner
Use a plunger, followed by ½ cup of vinegar mixed with two quarts of boiling water.

Fleas (in the house) *
Vacuum twice a week and dispose of vacuum bags.

Fleas (on pets) *
Wash pet bedding. Treat pet and bedding with flea soap or a citrus oil product.

Fertilizer
Spread compost and vermicompost (worm compost).

Furniture Polish
Use linseed or almond oil.

Garbage Disposal Deodorizer
Place lemons or baking soda in the disposal.

Grease Removal
Use borax on a damp cloth.

Hand Cleaner (paint/grease)
Use baby oil.

Ink Spot Removal
Wash with cold water plus one tablespoon of cream of tartar and one tablespoon of lemon juice.

Insects on Plants *
Use soapy water on leaves and then rinse.

Laundry Detergent
Use basic soap, phosphate free.

Linoleum Cleaner
Use one cup of white vinegar mixed in two gallons of water.
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Mildew Removal
Wash with equal parts vinegar and salt.

Mosquito Repellant
Burn citronella candles or citronella oil.

Moths *
Clean woolens before storing. Store clothes with cedar chips in cloth sachets.

Oil Stain Removal
Rub white chalk into stain before laundering.

Oven Cleaner
Clean with two tablespoons liquid soap mixed with two teaspoons of borax in warm water.

Paint Brush Softener
Soak in hot vinegar.

Paint Usage (oil-based/stain/spray)
Use water-based, non-aerosol paints.

Perspiration Stain Removal
Use white vinegar mixed in water.

Pet Odor Removal
Use cider vinegar.

Porcelain Stain Removal
Use baking soda.

Refrigerator Deodorizer
Place an open box of baking soda inside the refrigerator.

Roaches *
Remove all sources of food and water. Caulk or plug cracks and crevices. Only use boric acid as the last resort (a poison). Boric acid must be kept away from children and pets.

Rug/Carpet Cleaner
Use club soda.

Rug Deodorizer
Liberally sprinkle baking soda over carpet, wait 15 to 20 minutes, then vacuum. Repeat this as necessary. This also will work as a method of flea removal with repeated use and disposal of vacuum bags.

Rust Removal (clothing)
Use lemon juice, plus salt and sunlight.

Rusty Bolt/Nut Removal
Use a carbonated beverage to loosen bolt or nut.

Scorch Mark Removal
Use a grated onion.

Scouring Powder
Use baking soda.

Shaving Cream
Use a shaving brush with shaving soap.

Slugs and Snails *
Remove tall grass and debris from the vicinity of your garden. Use beer traps or perform a late evening search and destroy.

Spot Removal.
Use club soda, lemon juice or salt.

Stainless Steel Polish
Use mineral oil.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner
Use a paste of borax and lemon juice.

Tub and Tile Cleaner
Use ¼ cup of baking soda and ½ cup of white vinegar mixed in warm water.

Upholstery Spot Removal
Use club soda.

Water Softener
Use ¼ cup of vinegar.

Window Cleaner
Use ¼ cup of vinegar with one quart of warm water.

* Getting rid of pests is more complicated than the “recipes” listed above. If you would like more information on getting rid of pests, please contact your County Extension Agent.