

Essential Oils and Helpful Tips

Essential oils can be used to clean on their own or to enhance the smell of other natural cleaning products and to boost their performance. Adding these natural oils to your homemade cleaning products is a great way to not only make your house smell terrific, but to improve your cleaning results as well. Here are some of the most commonly used essential oils for cleaning.

A note on purchasing essential oils: Some oils, such as those found in bath and candle shops, are not quality medicinal-grade oils. You can find "real" essential oils in most health food shops -- look for variations in price, as the price is based on the raw ingredients of the oils. Bottles of different oils that all cost the same should be a red flag that the product is artificial or diluted. Also, do not purchase 'fragrance' oils as these are not the same as 'essential' oils.

A note on using essential oils: Because essential oils are very concentrated and potent, even small amounts can be harmful if used improperly. Do not apply essential oils undiluted to your skin as they can cause skin irritation or even a burn. Careful handling of these strong essential oils is necessary. If you spill a small amount on your skin when preparing solution, wash hands thoroughly. You may want to use disposable latex gloves to mix.

What we have at the workshop is highlighted in yellow text below:

Tea Tree Essential Oil

Tea tree oil is probably the most popular essential oil when it comes to cleaning. Why? Because it has strong antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties while at the same time being well tolerated by most people...even those with allergies. It is particularly useful for killing mold and mildew and disinfecting surfaces.

Lavender Essential Oil

Lavender oil has antiseptic, antibacterial and antifungal properties and is another favorite for cleaning products. It has a soothing, woody aroma. Avoid using lavender in areas where you need to stay alert and awake (such as in your car) since the calming effect of the aroma may cause drowsiness. Lavender essential oil also repels a variety of insects including flies, fleas, mosquitos and moths.

Many commercial household products now contain lavender. This lovely floral scent evokes calm and soothing memories, and has both anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties that will complement any natural cleaning formula. A few drops on a damp washcloth can be used in place of dryer sheets.

Oregano Essential Oil

Oregano oil has antibacterial, antifungal and antiseptic properties. It has a herbaceous aroma that makes it most suitable for cleaning applications in the kitchen. Try adding it to floor cleaner to disinfect your floors.

Clove Essential Oil

Clove oil has antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, and antiseptic properties. It smells great and is a good choice for cleaning kitchens. It also is great at repelling a variety of different insects. Try using it mixed in water for cleaning and protecting your cabinets from bugs. Or, mix with water in a spray bottle and spray it around your windows and doors to keep bugs out.

Grapefruit

Grapefruit oil can be used as a disinfectant and the aroma can be stimulating and energizing. Grapefruit oil works well both in the kitchen and the bathroom.

Thyme

Thyme oil has strong antibacterial, antiviral and antifungal properties and works as an excellent disinfectant. Use a few drops in water on a rag to disinfect door handles and other contact surfaces during cold and flu season to help stop the spread of germs.

Lemon / Orange

Citrus fragrances are the most universally familiar and definitely remind us of “clean!” They are excellent grease-cutters, and both are anti-bacterial. Add them to your baking soda cleaning formulas, and when used with vinegar formulas, they will mask the strong smell.

Eucalyptus

Instantly familiar, the woody and medicinal smell of eucalyptus can be a great addition to your cleaning. Teamed up with lavender, this fresh-smelling oil will boost your cleaning with anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-parasitic agents. When added to laundry detergent, it may kill dust mites in bedding.

Pine

The scent of pine is universally associated with clean! Pine is a very effective deodorizer, and has traditionally been used in floor cleaners. It has both anti-viral and anti-bacterial properties.

The majority of essential oils have antibacterial and antiseptic properties, and the oils listed below are antiviral and antifungal as well:

- Lavender
- Thyme
- Eucalyptus Lemon
- Tea Tree

Other oils for fighting bacteria

- Cinnamon, Clove (kitchen)
- Pine, Lime, Grapefruit (bathroom)

Cabinets: When moving to a new home or apartment, you can eliminate germs and musty odors from the insides of your kitchen and bathroom cabinets with any of the oils listed above. Lavender also has insect-repelling properties. Wash with pure soap to remove any dirt or large particles (if needed), then place two or three drops of oil on a clean, damp sponge or cloth and wipe thoroughly.

Fridge, Freezer, and Oven: After removing food and grease, add two or three drops of a citrus oil to a bowl of warm water and use a cloth or sponge to wipe surfaces. This both disinfects and deodorizes. Some suggested oils: Lime, Grapefruit, Orange, and Lemon.

Dishwashing Liquid: Add 10 drops of any oil or combination of oils to your existing liquid and shake well. Use citrus scents to give you a burst of energy, Lavender or Geranium for a calm feeling, or Bergamot -- which has been shown to have antidepressant properties (if doing the dishes is not your ideal way to spend the afternoon).

Bathroom and Kitchen Surfaces: Using any of the antibacterial oils listed above, place seven drops in a bowl of warm water, and use a clean cloth or sponge to wipe counter tops, tile, and fixtures. Then place two or three drops of Lavender, Thyme, Eucalyptus Lemon, or Tea Tree oil on a separate cloth and wipe doorknobs, faucet handle, microwave handles, etc. -- these antiviral oils prevent the spread of disease, especially during flu season.

<http://voices.yahoo.com/how-create-essential-oil-cleaning-kit-523310.html?cat=68>

Precautions for Cleaning with Essential Oils

- Extreme caution must be used when handling concentrated natural essential oils.
- Do not apply directly to your skin without investigating the use of carrier oils.
- Keep out of the reach of children and pets.
- As with any room spray, be careful around candle flames and open beverages.
- Do not take essential oils internally.
- Many internet sites and aromatherapy specialists can provide detailed information on usage and safety.
- Many essential oils, such as chamomile, clary sage, wintergreen, camphor, rose and pennyroyal, are dangerous for pregnant women. This is not the complete list, so please be sure you carefully investigate before purchasing and using essential oils during pregnancy.
- Label and store these mixtures as carefully as you would any other cleaning mixture. Although they are made from safe ingredients, they should be treated with caution.
- Always test your mixture on small, hidden areas of all surfaces and carpets to be certain there won't be any damage or discoloration.