



REMOVE THE TOXICS

Many household products contain hazardous ingredients which, if not properly handled, may end up in our waterways. We can limit our impact by reducing or eliminating the most toxic products and choosing alternatives that are less harmful.

The Problem

Many people think products offered for sale on the grocery shelf are safe. Not true! Many household products contain hazardous ingredients.

Common cleaning products, hobby supplies, and drain cleaners contain a host of chemicals we don't want in our waterways.

Cleaners, stains, varnishes, pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, automotive batteries, antifreeze, brake fluids, motor oil and filters, aerosols, household batteries, oil and latex paints, and solvents are a few of the common household products that are hazardous wastes. When these substances are not stored and disposed of properly they are a health risk to humans and the environment. Exposure to hazardous wastes can have short-term and long-term effects ranging from temporary dizziness to cancer.

Excess nutrients, chemicals and pathogens degrade water quality and harm wildlife, aquatic and human life. Organic matter, such as leaves and grass, animal waste and harmful chemicals in runoff or seepage can get into our groundwater from spills or improper disposal.

The Solution

When choosing a product, take a moment to read the label. Key words alert us to the hazardous nature of many products. "Caution," "Warning" and "Danger" signify potential hazards to human health and the environment. Choose the least toxic alternative, and if you must use a hazardous product, make sure it is used up or disposed of properly when you are through. Follow directions carefully and read warning labels on all products. Even small amounts of these materials in the surface water can threaten fish, waterfowl, insects, household pets, and humans.

Reduce or eliminate the use of chemicals where possible by using non toxic or less toxic products. Buy only the amounts needed and use product as instructed on the label.

Try making your own cleaning compounds – it worked for Grandma, and saves money, too! Use one or more of these alternative cleaning products:

- **All purpose cleaner:** mix a cup of vinegar in a pail of water. Use for floors and surfaces.
- **Window cleaner:** Mix one part vinegar to four parts water in a spray bottle.
- **Bathtub and sink cleaner:** Sprinkle baking soda, scrub, and rinse.
- **Toilet cleaner:** mix 1/2 cup borax with 1 gallon warm water. Pour into toilet bowl, then scrub with toilet brush. Or use baking soda and vinegar or a non-chlorinated scouring powder.
- **Laundry soap:** Use a phosphate-free soap.
- **Carpet spot cleaner:** Apply club soda immediately, blot dry, then repeat. Or sprinkle with cornmeal and cornstarch and vacuum after 30 minutes.
- **Drain cleaner:** pour 1/2 cup baking soda down the drain, followed by 2 cups vinegar. Cover with a pot lid for 10 minutes. Then pour 2 quarts of boiling water down. (You may have to repeat these steps, but it works!)
- **Furniture/wood polish:** Rub furniture with 1 tablespoon of lemon oil mixed in one pint of mineral oil.
- **Oven cleaner:** mix 2 teaspoons borax and 2 tablespoons liquid soap in a spray bottle of warm water. Spray in warm oven. Let stand for 20 minutes, then wipe clean.
- **Ant control:** Pour a line of cream of tartar, red chili powder,

Did you know?

American households throw away more than 14 million pounds of hazardous waste each year.

Did you know?

Our homes produce up to 20% of all toxic pollution in municipal sewage.

paprika, or dried peppermint leaves at point of entry.

- **Flea control:** Give pets nutritional yeast, garlic tablets, or vitamin B as preventatives; prepare herbal baths with fennel, rue or rosemary to repel fleas.
- **Deodorizers:** Use an open box of baking soda in your refrigerator or closets; for rooms, simmer cinnamon and cloves in water or place potpourri (herbs or dried flowers treated with scented oils) in open dishes.
- **Chlorine bleach:** Use oxygen bleaches, borax or OxyClean as a safer alternative.

Properly Store and Dispose

Properly store unused hazardous items in a cool, dry area away from children, pets and the water. Store materials in a safe, dry place where they will not leak into the environment or be washed into surface waters when it rains. Keep products in their original container, or ensure they are properly labeled if placed in another container.

Manage household hazardous waste, such as left over latex paint, by giving it to a neighbor, or donating it to a non profit organization. Dispose of left over hazardous household products by taking them to the transfer station (aka "the dump"). The Town of Eliot holds an annual hazardous waste day – check with the Town Hall for more information. The Town of Kittery Transfer Station accepts hazardous waste all year long. See http://www.kittery.org/Pages/KitteryME_DPW/RecoveryFees.pdf for more information and fees.

Never dump items such as used motor oil, cleaners, paint or other hazardous materials down a storm drain, on the ground, or into your septic system. Storm drains lead directly to our waterways. Materials dumped on the ground or washed into septic systems could seep into soils and contaminate the groundwater supply.

Did you know?

150 chemicals found in the home are connected to allergies, birth defects, cancer and psychological disorders.

Recycle

- **Motor oil:** Both Eliot and Kittery's Transfer Stations accept used motor oil.
- **Antifreeze:** Some local garages recycle antifreeze. Also, you can reuse antifreeze; strain it through a pair of nylons and mix with fresh antifreeze. Do not leave outside to evaporate. Antifreeze tastes sweet to children and animals but is highly toxic! Disposal in a septic system or sewer system may kill the bacteria that make these systems function properly.
- **Old gasoline:** Some local garages accept old gasoline. You can also mix one part old gas with five parts fresh gas and use normally.
- **All other materials:** If the substance has not become unusable, share it with friends or family.
- **Computers and televisions:** <http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/recycle/computerrecy.htm>
- **Rechargeable batteries:** <http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/recycle/nicad.htm>
- **Thermostats:** <http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/mercury/hgthermo.htm>

Kittery Transfer Station information: http://www.kittery.org/Pages/KitteryME_DPW/Recyclinglist.pdf

Eliot Transfer Station information: <http://www.eliotmaine.org/RecyclingHomePage.html>

Report All Hazardous Waste Spills

To report a hazardous waste spill, call the Maine Department of Environmental Protection 24-hour at 800-452-4664. For oil spills, call the Maine DEP at 800-482-0777. You can call these numbers for any problem that requires immediate attention. For more information on spills, visit <http://www.maine.gov/dep/rwm/emergspillresp/faqs.htm>.



Spruce Creek Watershed Improvement Project

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