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green.

Secrets for cleaning with environmentally-friendly products

BY ANNE REBAR
Staff Reporter

As boxes are being packed, beds de-lofted and mini-fridges emptied, a sticky patch of what seems to be month-old spilled soda is uncovered behind a stack of textbooks that have been a fixture on the desk all semester.

Before running for the chemical-filled cleaning products, in honor of Earth Day, you can make spring dorm-cleaning greener by grabbing natural items, like water, and mixing them up with other materials you might have lying around.

Lately, a number of green cleaning services have emerged for people who would rather not use harsh chemicals to clean their homes, and all-natural cleaning products are appearing on store shelves.

Columbia resident Mary Kendrick runs her own green cleaning service out of her house in Columbia, Mo. She said she started the service because she had been laid off and was looking for something to keep her busy. She had been buying all-natural cleaning products for awhile, but she said that when she spoke to her friends, they were skeptical about whether they actually worked.

"I offered to clean their houses for them as a bet to show them the stuff actually worked, and, obviously, I won, so they paid me," Kendrick said. "I actually really enjoyed it, and

since I had so much time I decided to start my cleaning service, which is really only me cleaning a few of my neighbors' and friends' houses."

Kendrick said she cleans about five to seven houses a week depending on their size, which is just enough to keep her busy, and the green products are her favorite because they don't have such dangerous fumes. They are made from all-natural ingredients and are non-toxic, so people with children or pets don't have to worry about safety.

"It's nice to be able to clean in tight spaces without having to have all the doors and windows open because of the smell," Kendrick said. "For college students cleaning dorm rooms, I'm sure their roommates would really appreciate not having to walk into a room smelling of bleach."

When chemicals from non-green cleaners are washed down the sink, they are released into the environment, which can have harmful effects, Kendrick said. By using all-natural products, she cuts down on chemical waste.

The one downside to the all-natural products seen on the shelves right now is that they tend to be more expensive than normal cleaners. This is because the natural ingredients often cost more to manufacture than their counterparts, according to the website of Casa Bonita, a green cleaning service in Columbia.

However, there is a solution. Laine Jeep, a resident of Eureka, Mo., used to work for an environmentally friendly cleaning service and makes her own cleaning products using regular ingredients found around

the house.

"I've been using natural and environmentally friendly products since I was in college in the '70s," Jeep said. "It wasn't called 'green' then, it was just smart and cheap to do."

Jeep said that using green products in commercial cleaning companies like the one she worked for is much healthier for the employees because they reduce their exposure to harsh chemicals.

Cleaning Tips

Hydrogen peroxide can be used to remove mold and for washing floors and windows, while citric acid can aid the removal of dirt and grime from showers and faucets. Jeep said using cloth rags rather than paper towels is another way to clean green.

Truman senior Corinne Nagel is Jeep's daughter. Nagel said her mother taught her how to make her own cleaning products because they were cheaper, yet still environmentally friendly.

"Baking soda and water can be used on almost all surfaces," Nagel said. "Just mix baking soda and water in a bowl, making a paste and use a sponge to scrub it on. For extra tough spots you can add a bit of salt."

Lemon juice and vinegar mixed with water (about two tablespoons for every gallon of water) works for surfaces stained with mildew and soap scum and can also clean mirrors and windows, Nagel said. After washing the mirror, rubbing it with newspaper will get rid of streaks. Nagel said she has often used her mother's homemade cleaner recipes at her house off campus because it's much easier and cheaper than buying products at the store.

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