



10 Minutes For The Planet

Green-up with some DIY – part 2

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by Valentine Rinner

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's episode of 10 minutes for the Planet. This is the second episode of the DIY series on everyday-solutions for greening-up your lifestyle. Our topic today is laundry detergent.

Detergents and more generally household products are much less regulated than cosmetics and food. However, we are constantly exposed to them. We eat with dish-soap cleaned cutlery, we wear and sleep in detergent washed textiles and our whole interiors are covered with an army of products we use daily but that we aren't truly familiar with. It isn't mandatory to put the composition of household products on the label. Some manufacturers refer you to their websites, however they generally don't make it easy to puzzle out exactly what the products are made of. Instead they surf on the current bacteria-phobia and market the products simply as crucial cleaning agents.

Some NGOs and consumer groups have done tests on the composition of household products and the results aren't quite as clean as we think they are, even the so-called "green" selections and brands. You may ask yourself how can a cleaning product not be clean? It's very counterintuitive... they do indeed track the most resistant bacteria, hide persistent smells and dissolve fat. Yet most generic products today also contain a whole range of toxic substances that stay in the air or on surfaces and are harmful for our health, for the environment and usually for our wallets too. By hunting the dirt we bring in the toxicants.

There are some labels which authenticate real green detergent, however for those of you who wish to make the transition towards a greener lifestyle, making your own detergent is an easy first step. Making your own laundry detergent has multiple benefits. It's inexpensive, very quick and easy and you can control which products you use. It also works just as well and it's great for sensitive skins.

In just a few minutes, you can make enough laundry detergent to last a few months. The basic ingredient is pure Savon de Marseille, the genuine one that is, be careful of fake makes.

For 3 litres of detergent you start by cutting out or grating 40 grams of Savon de Marseille and melting it in 1 litre of boiling water. Use a whisk to mix up the blend. Once the soap is completely melted add 3 tablespoons of baking soda and 3 tablespoons of white vinegar. Let it cool down and later add 1 litre of lukewarm water. Whisk well.

Once the mixture is cool again and before transferring it to the final container, mix with one last litre of cold water. At this point you can add a few drops of essential oil to give a slight scent to your clothes. I personally really like the smell of lemon or verbena essential oils. Use your favourite one here, it's your turn to be creative!

Pure Savon de Marseille usually makes a detergent with a really smooth texture but with other types of soap the final product could have a few solid chunks in it. In this case simply put a marble in the container and shake it before use.

So bye everyone, happy experimenting and detoxing to all of you! And see you next week for a new episode of 10 minutes for the Planet.