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Window cleaner martini anyone?



Image: www.womenandenvironment.org

(Apr 1, 2008) Now that we know about the health hazards associated with plastics, what's happening to the Tupperware party? Thanks to an innovative women's group from Missoula, Montana -- those parties have gone green.

Change starts at home

The idea for green parties was started by the Montana-based environmental health group, [Women's Voices for the Earth](#) (WVE) and launched during National Poison Prevention Week (March 16 to 22). WVE is encouraging people across North America to host parties where friends and family get together to make their own green cleaning products using all natural ingredients that are safe and non-toxic.

"For many people, springtime means deep cleaning," said Dori Gilels, executive director of WVA. "But some of the products consumers rely on to create a clean, healthy environment can actually lead to long-term health problems."

Have fun going green

Very much a grass roots movement, these parties are organized by local women. More than 100 people across North America, south to Florida and north to Calgary, have pledged to host green cleaning parties in their communities.

"I know cleaning companies won't take action to remove harmful ingredients unless we as consumers speak out about our concerns," says Vicky Bohlig who is hosting a party in her home in Hamilton. "That's why I'm hosting a party and spreading the word about using safe, non-toxic cleaners."

No protection against chemicals

In July 2007 WVE published their 32-page [Household Hazards](#) report, which can be downloaded off their website. The results of that report inspired the organization to start the green cleaning parties.

The report echoed the growing concern among consumers about the lack of regulations and disclosure of chemicals in cleaning products. Currently, household cleaning companies are not required by law to list ingredients on product labels.

Yet, the chemicals used in these products have not been tested for adverse effects on humans. It's estimated that only a small percentage of the almost 95,000 chemicals registered have been adequately tested for safety. Less than half have been tested for any form of chronic toxicity.

In the 2004, the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), an EPA program which tallies the inventories of toxic releases, showed that industries released 4.2 billion pounds of toxic chemicals to the environment.

No reason for chemicals

Alexandra Gorman Scranton, director of science and research at WVE says that a growing body of research shows that even minute traces of certain chemicals found in everyday products, like household cleaners, can potentially disrupt hormones, interfere with development and lead to disease.

"There's no reason to include toxic ingredients, even in trace amounts, in products that consumers use on a daily basis when safe and equally effective alternatives exist," said Gorman Scranton.

Kits ready and waiting

WVE hopes to help women become more pro-active and have created their [green cleaning party kit](#) with everything a party host needs to have a successful event, including recipe cards, environmentally friendly cleaning tips, an informational DVD and advocacy information on how to contact local policy makers and cleaning product

manufacturers. All homemade recipes have been tested by both consumers and professional cleaners and were found to be economical and just as effective as their branded counterparts.

It's fun and it's green!

Recipes to get you started

- **Creamy Soft Scrub**

Suggested uses: Use this creamy soft scrub on kitchen counters, stoves, bathroom sinks, etc.

2 cups baking soda

½ cup liquid castile soap

4 teaspoons vegetable glycerine (acts as a preservative)

5 drops antibacterial essential oil such as lavender, tea tree, rosemary or any scent you prefer (optional)

Mix together and store in a sealed glass jar, shelf life of two years.

Tips: For exceptionally tough jobs spray with vinegar first-full strength or diluted, scented-let sit and follow with scrub.

Dry soft scrubs can be made with baking soda or salt (or combination of both) with 10-15 drops essential oil to scent.

- **Window Cleaner Martini**

6 parts vodka

1 part blue curacao

1 dash Angostura bitters

Cocktail olive

Combine liquid ingredients in a cocktail shaker with cracked ice and shake well. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass and garnish with olive.

Shelagh McNally is the editor of Green Living Online. Her first recipe will be the Window Cleaner Martini. This article was written with files from WVE.

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