

# EXPLORING GREEN ALTERNATIVES FOR A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT



# ABSTRACT

The term “eco-friendly” gets thrown around a lot — you see it on labels for everything from sandwich bags to sheets. Because it’s used so often, it can be hard to understand the true importance of eco-friendly products. And if you aren't sure what the word actually means, there's a greater risk of being misled by companies claiming to be conscious of the environment.

## INTRODUCTION

When it comes to products, that means everything from production to packaging needs to be considered safe for the environment. But the FTC has strict guidelines on eco-friendly claims, and here's where it gets tricky: The FTC Green Guides say that in order for a product to be properly labeled as "eco-friendly," the packaging must explain why it is environmentally responsible. Otherwise, based on how consumers actually use the product, it could, in fact, be harmful to the environment.

### I. What Does "Eco-Friendly" Actually Mean?



#### What is the definition of eco-friendly?

According to Merriam-Webster, the official definition of eco-friendly is: “not environmentally harmful.”

Truth be told, our environmental experts prefer to use the term "sustainable" rather than "eco-friendly." Why? When it comes to product production, everything has some sort of negative impact on the environment (think: water usage, energy and product

waste, etc.), and that means there really aren't any products that fit the dictionary definition of eco-friendly.

## How to spot (and avoid) greenwashing

Greenwashing is a term used for when a company deceptively puts eco-friendly claims (think: "environmentally friendly," "sustainable" or "green") on its product packaging. In most cases, they are broad claims without any support to back them up. Here are a few examples of deceptive claims to watch out for, according to our environmental experts:

**A bottle of laundry detergent is labeled “free of phosphates.”** Since phosphates were removed from this type of product decades ago, any reputable detergent manufacturer has already phased out the ingredient. This is considered greenwashing because phosphate-free laundry detergents are already the norm.

**A comforter or sheet set is labeled “all natural.”** While the product may be made with plant-based materials like bamboo, the raw materials go through a series of manufacturing processes that synthetically alters them. This claim is deceptive because “all-natural” suggests that the bedding came straight from nature. "There actually is no such thing as 'bamboo' fiber since it's really rayon," says Lexie Sachs, Executive Director of the GH Institute's Textiles Lab. "Plus, the process involves toxic chemicals that are dangerous to the workers, wildlife and environment where it's produced."

**A yoga mat is labeled "biodegradable" or "recyclable."** Because of the conditions at landfills, these materials won't break down quickly, and you can't recycle a yoga mat with curbside pickup or even bring them to a U.S. recycling center. These claims are considered greenwashing since they state an environmental benefit, but no meaningful benefit exists.

**A company displays an environmentally-friendly symbol that doesn't exist.** Watch out for fake eco-friendly symbols created by brands. Even if a product has a green logo that says "earth friendly," it means nothing if the company designed it themselves.

## How to find products that are truly eco-friendly

When it comes to products, there are ways to "make smart and educated decisions before you purchase something new," says Sabina Wizemann, a senior chemist at the GH Institute's Health, Beauty and Sustainability Lab. That's where our experts' rigorous testing comes in — they can help you find the products that actually work *and* are less harmful to the planet. "An effective product is less likely to be thrown away or replaced," which cuts down on waste, says Wizemann.

Beyond browsing our product reviews, look for products with established, third-party emblems like EcoCert Cosmos for organic cosmetics or Fair Trade Certified ingredients. Don't get greenwashed by products with false emblems and bold claims: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Below are the logos you can actually trust. They signify a certain aspect of the product is environmentally friendly:

## A guide to shopping smartly *and* sustainably

### 1. Think circular.

A circular economy intends to stop waste from being created in the first place — a complete 180 from our current “take-make-waste” economy, which means we take materials from the Earth, create products from them and eventually trash them. Take a chip bag, for example. It's designed to be disposable: The packages typically cannot be reused, recycled or composted, so they end up as waste.

That's where brands with more sustainable product designs are stepping in, like Izzy Beauty with its zero-waste mascara, so you can use, refill and repeat by mailing your empty mascara tubes back to the company in reusable envelopes. We Are Uni's body care line also follows this closed-loop cycle by using 100% recyclable and reusable aluminum bottles that can be emptied, then shipped back to the brand in their original boxes.

### 2. Be mindful about how much you're buying.

Above all, only buy what you need. A product requires a lot of energy and resources before it even gets into your home. If you buy fewer products, you'll lessen the impact on the environment via a lower demand for its production process. If you find that you're stocking up on barely used products, it's time to reevaluate.

### 3. Buy second-hand textiles.

For clothing and bedding products, the best way to live sustainably is by reusing products. “Whether you're sharing clothes with friends or buying from a site like eBay or ThredUp, giving a garment new life is more eco-friendly than creating something new,” says Sachs. “That's still true even if an item has recycled or natural fibers, because of the amount of energy and water that's required in the textile production process.”

### 4. Opt for reusable items.

Remember to bring reusable bags for produce and pantry items when you go shopping to cut down on plastic waste. Switching to reusable sandwich bags (our

favorites are made by Stasher) and beeswax food wraps will help replace hundreds of single-use plastic baggies that would eventually end up in landfills and oceans. These days, you can even be conscious of your effect on the environment when using single-serve espresso and coffee pods: Nespresso recently took a step in the right direction by making fully recyclable capsules.

#### 5. If you must buy new, buy recycled.

When shopping, look for sustainable fibers like Tencel and organic cotton. Tencel uses chemicals that are less toxic and less wasteful than those in similar fibers (like rayon), while organic cotton uses less water than conventional growing methods, explains Sachs. And avoid 'bamboo' fiber at all costs.

#### 6. Use plant-based cleaners.

"Look for products that contain safer ingredients, like plant-based cleaners and those with EPA Safer Choice certifications," says Carolyn Forte, director of the GH Institute's Home Appliances and Cleaning Products Lab. Even though ingredient transparency isn't required by law yet, more and more companies (like Seventh Generation) are choosing to list all ingredients in a product. This encourages companies to use more renewable resources that are better for the environment. Plus, people simply like to know what ingredients are in their products and where they come from.

#### 7. Opt for concentrated cleaning and health products.

The best option for the environment is cleaning concentrates that you can dilute with water in reusable containers, like Brandless Cleaning Concentrates. Forte says this helps eliminate excess packaging and waste.

#### 8. Seek minimal packaging.

Avoid products with secondary packaging and films. Instead, look for items with minimal packaging made of recycled materials (like cardboard and aluminum instead of plastic). For example, bar soaps are usually a great option because they often have little packaging and can be completely used up. There are even toys (like the Green Toys Fire Truck) that are packaged with sustainable materials.

## **II. How to master a vegan and eco-friendly home**

You may be vegan and eco-friendly most of the time, but are you sure that your home is too? Here's how to create an eco-friendly home, that's 100% vegan, beyond January!



When you're vegan, you tend to be hot on cruelty-free beauty products and vegan food, but when it comes to household products, even furniture, it's not always clear what's vegan and what's not. Don't feel bad, though: the fact that products contain animal bi-products is not something that brands tend to rave about, so you have to be conscious of what household items could need double checking.

## How to have a vegan and eco-friendly home

From a few 'no no' ingredients to other key elements/manufacturing notes to look out for, we've done our homework so that you don't have to when ensuring that you live in a vegan and eco-friendly home.

What's ideal about leading a vegan lifestyle is that it goes hand in hand with being earth friendly, too. So in essence, even if you're not vegan, whether you make a few tiny changes or if you choose to completely veganise your home, you'll be opting in to way more conscious and eco-friendly surroundings, which is something to be proud of.

We've made a conscious (see what we did there?) effort to ensure that these changes are all achievable and pocket-friendly too. We're not talking about solar



panels, and no planning permission will be needed, but, here are some items to reconsider:

- Leather furniture – darned beautiful but very much not vegan;
- Wool/silk or any animal-derived bedding/cushion covers and more – as above;
- Fur throws or blankets – you can work this one out;
- Mattresses – some may be treated with fire retardants that aren't vegan like wool or silk;
- Furniture polishes – many of which may contain beeswax;
- Wall paints - may contain Casein and/or beeswax;
- Household bleach & cleaning products – it is really hard to come by vegan bleach that has not been tested on animals at some point in the supply chain;
- Loo roll – paper, yes fine. But, binders including gelatin can be used, and a few companies may still test on animals.

## Find the perfect vegan couch + accessories

To ensure that your sofa, armchairs, headboard and all the rest is vegan, you want to ensure that it's made from cotton or synthetic materials. If you still love the look of leather, then you can go for a faux leather piece as they're looking more and more stylish and if you're a complete sucker for a deep buttoned sofa (you know the ones we're talking about) you can now even find vegan Chesterfields.

The changes you make really depend on whether you're looking to buy something new, or there are heaps of vegan and more sustainable fabrics to choose from.

Those are your options when you're buying something new for your home, but if you've only recently invested in an expensive leather three-piece suite for example, what are your options?

- You could donate it to charity or sell it on eBay for a good price and use the cash to invest in a new or pre-loved vegan number (where eBay is the perfect place to look too!)
- You can use it until the bitter end, and this should be enough to keep your conscience in place.

Then when it comes to choosing soft furnishings, bedding and the likes, opt for natural materials such as organic cotton, sustainable banana fibre, bamboo, Tencel or another recycled natural/synthetic fibre. What they can do with natural fibres now is pretty unbelievable and when the texture is on point too, you just will not miss any of your old soft furnishings! Remember to recycle what you have of course.

## Try a homemade furniture polish

If you've bought a beautiful wooden piece of furniture like a coffee table, bookcase or side table to upcycle, it's vegan and eco-friendly up to the point when you sand it down and give it a few coats of furniture polish... Yep, not that obvious, but many furniture polishes contain animal derivatives such as beeswax. You can get around this by either choosing a vegan furniture polish, or by making your own!

There are so many uses for coconut oil, but did you know that furniture polish is one of them? It moisturises wood, highlighting its natural colours, and its high saturated fat content means that it is slow to oxidise as well. In addition to coconut oil, you can also use soy wax, olive oil, walnut oil, jojoba or almond oil, and this is how to use coconut or another oil of your choice on furniture:

- Sand and prep the wood as needed, let it dry;
- Use an old rag to apply the oil over the entire surface using long, even strokes;
- Let it dry for 10–15 minutes before buffing it with a dry cloth in a circular motion for extra shine.

You can use most of the oils pure, but you can also add white or cider apple vinegar to any of these and this will actively clean off any grubby marks as you go. Plus, the anti-bacterial properties will prevent it going rancid. Try it on your bed frame, dining room table and whatever you choose to spruce up to see how stunning it turns out.

## The best homemade furniture polish recipe

- 1 cup of the oil of your choice
- ¼ cup white or cider apple vinegar
- A few drops of an essential oil of choice (lemon works for us)

### Application:

- Mix all of the above in a bottle and agitate;
- For a light polish you can spray it on to an old rag and apply it, following the wood's grain;
- For a deeper treatment you can spray it directly to the furniture and give it a couple of coats.

## **III. These Eco-Friendly Home Brands Don't Compromise Style**





April is Earth Month and there's no better time to think about how we can be more conscious consumers. One place to start is at home. Opting for eco-friendly items that are less impactful on the planet can also be better for our health, such as organic and toxin-free bedding, towels, and even mattresses.

## Fernish



## Rent for the environment

According to the EPA, in 2017 Americans wasted 12.2 million tons of furniture, and 80.2 percent of that went to landfills. One solution that's particularly wise for people who move frequently is to rent furniture from Fernish. This startup currently serves Southern California (Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego), Seattle, the New York City Metro Area, and the Washington DC Metro area. From beds to dressers, sofas, side tables, and everything in between, Fernish offers popular brands including Crate and Barrel, Floyd, and CB2 in addition to an in-house brand.

## ZZ Driggs



With sustainability at the forefront of its business model, ZZ Driggs is a B-corp certified furniture platform offering contemporary and antique furnishings to rent or buy, as well as rent-to-buy. ZZ Driggs even offsets 100 percent of the carbon emissions produced from operations including shipping, pickup, delivery, and transportation.

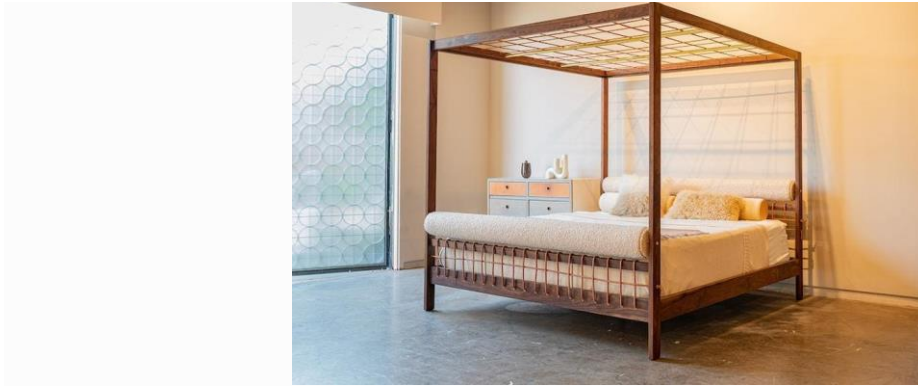
Style is everything at ZZ Driggs. Take the Madda Sofa for example. Available in Aegean, Koi and Cornflower hues, this living room staple is the epitome of chic.

### Neighbor



Neighbor is a sustainable-led outdoor furniture brand, that manufacturers high-quality products that are built to last and stay out of landfills. One example of the brand's sustainability practices is using Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified teak wood and lumber from recycled milk jugs. One of Neighbor's best pieces is the Modern Teak Outdoor Loveseat. With a minimalist yet on-trend look, it is customizable with six different Sunbrella fabrics that won't fade even in the harshest sunlight.

### Thomas Hayes Studio



Thomas Hayes Studio is a made-to-order furniture brand that manufacturers in Los Angeles. This assures the highest craftsmanship, avoiding waste and pollution. The furniture is built for a lifetime without a factory or carbon footprint. One of the Hayes' best offerings is the TK Bed. Made of solid wood with a custom upholstered bolster, it's the epitome of warm modern and high design.

## Pottery Barn Teen



Pottery Barn inclusive of Pottery Barn Teen and Pottery Barn Kids is one of the most eco-friendly mass furniture retailers. It is the only home retailer that has remained on the Barron's 100 Most Sustainable Companies on this list for the past five years. There's a good reason for this. The brand's 100 percent wood furniture is Greenguard Gold and 100 percent of Pottery Barn's cotton is responsibly sourced. With thousands of items, it's fair to say the Chunky Boucle Ivory Hug Swivel Chair from Pottery Barn Teen quite simply stands out. Hardly for teenagers, adults will covet this accent chair for their living rooms.

## Cassarokids



Kids play pieces are often made of plastic, add nothing to the aesthetic of the space (they often detract from it), and aren't created for multiple generations to enjoy. Cassarokids makes beautifully-designed playroom pieces with rockers, climbers, ramps, and towers sustainably sourced from New Zealand forests. The paints and lacquers are also toxin-free. As if that wasn't enough, the brand's recycled packaging produces no residual waste.

## The Citizenry



The Citizenry is a sustainable home decor brand that partners with local artisans worldwide. It is also fair-trade certified by the World Fair Trade Organization. The Aegean Cotton Bath Towels are quite a find. Made from a blend of organic cotton and linens, these luxe towels feature a lightweight waffle weave exterior and a terrycloth interior. Made in Turkey, they are also Oeko-Tex and Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certified.

## Social Studies





Social Studies offers chic tablescape kits for sale and rent. The brand was built on sustainability principles to reduce the amount of waste produced during events from plasticware. Each kit minimizes the amount of disposable packaging used including the reusable hardshell exterior used for shipping and the reusable inserts to protect and hold items in place. None of the kits contain single-use plastics.

For Earth Month, the brand teamed up with non-alcoholic spirit purveyor Seedlip to create The Mother Earth. This kit includes a dinner plate, salad plate, flatware, glassware, napkins, runners, salt and pepper shakers, a slate gauze runner, candleholders, candles, and votives along with the Mother Earth Bundle.

## Essentia Mattresses



Mattresses can be filled with chemicals and manufactured in a way that is damaging to the environment, but not Essentia. Made in a GOLS and GOTS certified organic factory, the brand manufactures memory foam mattresses using natural materials such as Hevea milk and plant extracts for the healthiest sleeping experiences. Essentia devotees sleep better at night knowing their bed didn't negatively impact the environment. It is the world's only natural memory foam mattress.

## IV. Defining Green Cleaning And Why It's Important

Green cleaning has become the need of an hour due to the environmental impact of harsh chemicals present in store-bought cleaners. Ammonia, phosphates, bleach, sulphates, triclosan, etc are the most common chemicals used in conventional cleaning products, like floor cleaners, toilet cleaners, disinfectants, etc.

Regular use of these products or exposure to these harmful chemicals can lead to respiratory problems, adverse skin conditions, allergies, and even asthma. That's one of the major reasons people are adopting sustainable options, and green cleaning is one of them.



**It is the practice of using non-toxic or eco-friendly cleaning products that are safe for the human as well as the environment. They reduce allergies, indoor air pollution and create a healthy and hygienic indoor environment.**

So, here is a complete guide on green cleaning and its importance to help you promote sustainability and protect the well-being of your family and the planet.

### What Is The Definition Of Green Cleaning?

Green cleaning refers to the constant practice of using environmentally-friendly cleaning methods or organic products that reduce the impact on human health and the planet.

Under this, you can use safe or eco-friendly alternatives to conventional cleaning products as they contain harmful chemicals. You can prepare homemade carpet shampoos, wood cleaner, disinfectant and deodoriser using eco-friendly products.

By adopting biodegradable cleaning techniques, you can conserve water and reduce waste and carbon footprint in the environment. The best part is that you can protect your family and maintain a healthy environment with green cleaning practices.

## Five Major Green Cleaning Practices

### Choose Green Cleaning Products Over Conventional Ones

It is good to choose cleaning products that are labelled as “green”, “organic” or “natural”. Make sure you read the label or the list of ingredients properly before buying any product. Do not buy cleaners that contain chemicals like chlorine, ammonia, parabens, phthalates and synthetic fragrances.

Make sure you pay attention to eco-labels or green certifications displayed on the packaging of products. This will help you choose the right products.

### Prepare Natural Cleaners at Home



This is one of the best ways to go green while saving money. Instead of buying expensive green cleaning products, you can prepare safe and sound at home using the following ingredients or products:

- **White vinegar:** It can help you remove stubborn stains from almost all surfaces, except natural stone surfaces.
- **Baking Soda:** It is one of the most versatile natural cleaners that can help you clean, disinfect and deodorise all surfaces
- **Lemon:** To cut off grease and oil stains
- **Hydrogen Peroxide:** To tackle mould and mildew
- **Castile Soap:** To remove stubborn stains, oil or grease marks
- **Essential Oils:** To banish bad odours.



If you are preparing a rented property for the final inspection, hire a company that can offer safe and sound vacate cleaning Perth at the most reasonable price.

### Conserve Water

Try to be mindful when using water to clean your home. Do not waste water unnecessarily. You can use a spray bottle, use microfiber mops and spot clean the surface instead of rinsing the entire area.

### Use energy-efficient Cleaning Tools

Use energy-efficient vacuum cleaners with HEPA filters to fetch 99.9 per cent of air pollutants, pollens, and allergens and improve indoor air quality.

Read on the tips to buy the best vacuum cleaner for pet hair and choose the energy-saving equipment for your plush floor coverings.

### Practice Recycling or Proper Waste Management

Make sure you dispose of cleaning product bottles properly by recycling them. Reduce waste by opting for products with minimal packaging or using refillable bottles. Also, use microfiber cloths, and mops instead of feather dusters.



Seasoned vacate cleaners Perth also dispose of empty bottles of cleaning products after sprucing up your rented property and help you pass the inspection.

### Why Is Green Cleaning Important?

Here are some of the key reasons to help you know why green cleaning is crucial for you and the environment:

## Natural Cleaners are Safe To Use Around Kids & Pets

There is no denying that young kids and pets are curious and often explore their surroundings and items by touching or putting objects into their mouths.

Traditional cleaning products containing harmful chemicals can be dangerous and even fatal. Pets, especially dogs, tend to lick the floor or surfaces, and that's why it is important to use eco-friendly cleaning products.

Most of these products are plant-based or contain natural ingredients that lower the health risk of your kids and pets if ingested. These products help you create a safe and sound environment for your family.

However, keeping all types of cleaners away from the reach of your little ones and furry friends is important. Also, try to use cleaning products that are safe for newborns and toddlers.

## Keeps You Away From Health Hazards

Health is a major concern for people choosing green cleaning over conventional cleaning. Store-bought cleaners can lead to various health problems, such as sneezing, coughing, headaches, skin rashes and chronic diseases like asthma and cancer.

Fortunately, green cleaning products are safe and eco-friendly and can help remove stains and grime without releasing harmful toxins or fumes into the air. You can prepare homemade cleaners that are safe for the well-being of your family.

## It Promotes Healthy Indoor Air

Ammonia-based cleaners or bleach solvents can contribute to higher indoor pollution. The consistent use of volatile organic compounds in the form of floor cleaners or stain removers can cause various health issues, like liver dysfunction, kidney problems, nervous system breakdown, etc.

On the other hand, eco-friendly cleaning products reduce allergens, toxic fumes and dust mites- promoting a healthy and fresh indoor air quality.

## Protects the Environment

When you opt for eco-friendly cleaning products, you contribute towards the planet's safety. Most of these products are derived from plants and biodegradable ingredients that don't affect the environment.



On the other side, store-bought cleaning products contain hazardous ingredients made from petroleum and other non-renewable resources- these can directly affect the environment.

So, start using safe, sound and organic cleaning products or green cleaning practices for a sustainable future. You can even hire professionals who use tried and tested products for a thorough vacate cleaning Perth and help you retrieve full bond back.

Green cleaning is one of the most sustainable practices that encourage you to use eco-friendly cleaning products that are safe for your kids, pets, home and the environment. These promote a healthy indoor environment, improve indoor air quality and protect the planet for the next generations.

## **V. The Best Green Cleaning Products of 2023**

If you've decided to start green cleaning but don't know which eco-friendly products to use, we're here to help. Green cleaning is the process of tidying up using methods, products, and solutions that reduce the introduction of harmful chemicals into the environment and your home. Greener cleaning products are made from chemical ingredients that don't typically irritate your skin, damage clothing, or pollute the air and waterways.



Selecting a quality green cleaner can be challenging due to "greenwashing," a form of misleading marketing that insinuates a product is 100 percent eco-friendly when it's not.<sup>2</sup> For example, a product's label may say it's made from recycled materials or have energy-saving benefits, but these claims may be exaggerated.

"Look for products by companies that fully disclose all of their [product's] ingredients on the label, not just on their website," advises Sydney Swanson, a healthy living science analyst for the Environmental Working Group. The EWG is an independent, non-profit organization that rates and shares data about green cleaning products in a searchable database. The United States Environmental Protection Agency also has a search option for Safer Choice-certified products that includes options the government agency has tested.

In addition to carefully reviewing a green cleaning product's ingredient list, you can consider factors like the amount and type of packaging used and its potential impacts on the environment. If all of this sounds like a lot of work, don't worry. We've tested and researched the best green cleaning products in a range of categories to help you find the perfect item for all of your household cleaning needs.

## Best All-Purpose Cleaner - Dr. Bronner's Pure Castile Soap

### What We Like

- Versatile cleaning power
- Concentrated formula
- Organic and fair-trade ingredients

### What We Don't Like

- May not be as effective in cold water
- Can leave cloudy residue when used with hard water

An all-purpose cleaner is a must-have for the home, and pure castile soap is a safe, eco-friendly solution that can clean just about anything. Use it as laundry detergent, floor cleaner, bug repellent, dishwashing soap, and even as a vegetable wash. Dr. Bronner's Pure Castile Soap is three times more concentrated than most liquid soaps so it's an affordable, long-lasting option. Some reviewers, however, note that it can cloud and be less effective when used in cold water. It can also leave a residue on shiny or hard surfaces when used in hard water.

Made from 90 percent organic ingredients and 70 percent fair trade ingredients, Dr. Bronner's Pure Castile Soap is great for people and the planet. It comes in fragrance-free and scented options. It's biodegradable and also makes an excellent choice for taking along on camping trips to wash up trailside.

## Best Laundry Detergent - Puracy Natural Laundry Detergent



### What We Like

- Dermatologist-tested
- Concentrated formula
- Less packaging than other liquid laundry detergents

### What We Don't Like

- Not as effective in hard water
- Limited retailer availability

Puracy Natural Laundry Detergent is our top pick for a laundry detergent because it's safe for sensitive skin, free from harmful chemicals, and has minimal packaging.

Plus, it's dermatologist-tested. Since the personal care product industry isn't regulated, expert testing on products is essential.

This detergent's cleaning power comes from naturally occurring stain- and odor-removing enzymes rather than petrochemicals, sulfates, caustics, phosphates, dyes, or chlorine. Unlike chemical-based acidic and alkaline cleaners, enzyme-based cleaners target specific biological stains such as pet urine, food residue, and stained fabrics. They also tend to have fewer health and environmental side effects.<sup>4</sup>

Puracy wins when it comes to packaging, too. The 48-ounce refill means there is less plastic packaging finding its way to landfills and waterways. Some reviewers note that the detergent didn't work well in homes with hard water. It's also not readily available in stores, so it can be somewhat hard to find in brick and mortars. Fortunately, you can snag it online.

## Best Dish Scrubber - AIRNEX Biodegradable Natural Kitchen Sponge

### What We Like

- Made from plant fibers
- Plastic-free
- Great for scrubbing dishes and counters
- Biodegradable and compostable

### What We Don't Like

- Slightly pricier than other sponges

We've found that these AIRNEX Biodegradable Natural Kitchen Sponges make washing dishes more bearable. They're great for cleaning dishes and other surfaces around the house, and they're made with biodegradable cellulose and coconut husk, rather than plastic which can end up in water supplies and become ingested by humans and other animals.

Each sponge has a rough side composed of coconut fiber for scrubbing—not scratching—and the soft side is made of a softer cellulose. They're designed to last a while, but no need to send a sponge to a landfill once it's time to retire it. When it's time to replace your AIRNEX sponge, you can compost it or bury it in your garden where it will decompose over time.

## Best for Bathrooms - Meliora Cleaning Products Gentle Home Cleaning Scrub



### What We Like

- Multi-surface cleaner
- Ingredient transparency
- Plastic-free packaging
- Septic safe

### What We Don't Like

- May clump and leave a residue

Meliora's cleaning scrub is plastic-free, dye-free, preservative-free, palm-oil-free, and cruelty-free. The powder also comes in an adorable recyclable can, which is a nice touch. It's septic-safe and biodegradable, making it an excellent choice to use in the bathroom. Use it to clean tubs, ceramic tile, stainless steel, and more. Always do a spot test to make sure it doesn't scratch the surface you're planning to clean. Some customers noted that the powder can clump, making it hard to rinse off.

## Best Toilet Cleaner - ECOS Toilet Cleaner

### What We Like

- Safe for septic and graywater systems
- Biodegradable
- Concentrated

### What We Don't Like

- Plastic packaging



- Cedar smell may be strong for those with allergies

Powered by naturally anti-fungal cedar oil and citric acid, ECOS is tough on toilets, eliminates hard water stains, and fights germs and bacteria. Meanwhile, it's easy on graywater and septic systems. The biodegradable formula is also a more sustainable choice for you and the environment.

While the cedar smell may be irritating to those with aroma sensitivities, there are no parabens, phosphates, chlorine bleach, fillers, or stabilizers in the ingredient list and it was awarded an A rating from the EWG. ECOS toilet cleaner also earned a SaferChoice certification.

## **Best Stain Remover - Meliora Laundry Stain Removal Soap Stick**

### **What We Like**

- Simple ingredients
- Minimal packaging
- Portable
- Multiple certifications

### **What We Don't Like**

- Most effective when used immediately
- Some users found it difficult to use

Sometimes life is messy. When it is, it's helpful to have a stain remover on hand, like Meliora's simple soap stick. It's made from an organic coconut-sunflower oil blend. Plus, it's portable, so you can easily keep it in a diaper bag or backpack to quickly treat stains before they set in. To use, wet the affected fabric, rub the stain with Meliora Soap Stick, and toss the item in the wash. It works best when used immediately.

## **CONCLUSION**

Whether you've been vegan for years, or you've just successfully completed Veganuary and are thinking about going vegan for the long-haul, or you're simply looking to live a little more eco-consciously this year, then you may have to re-think a few of the things that you have around your house.

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