



# THE NEXT STEP Toward a Healthier Future

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEBASTOPOL TOXICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

## The Sweet Smell of Clean

Did you know that cleaning can actually be fun? Just add the beautiful scent of **essential oils** to your natural cleaning products and I'm certain you'll enjoy cleaning more!

In the spring I like to blend **lavender** and **peppermint** to bring the outside in. Summer is freshened up with a **lemon** and **mint** scent. Winter's a wonderland with fragrances of **cinnamon**, **clove**, and **cedar**. If you want antiseptic herbs, consider **peppermint** or other **mints**, **eucalyptus**, **lavender**, **thyme**, **myrrh**, **heather**, or **clove**. There are many wonderful essential oils at your local herb store or health food store, so find ones that you enjoy and create cleaners that are your very own personal aromatherapy.

Creating natural cleaners with essential oils is very simple, and, considering the toxics you can eliminate from under your sink, very worthwhile. In a few minutes you can create a fabulous **glass cleaner** – just mix 2 tablespoons **cornstarch** with 16 ounces pure water and 3-5 drops of a scent in a spray bottle. To create an **all-purpose cleaner**, great for counters and floors, replace the cornstarch with 2 tablespoons **white vin-**

**egar** and a teaspoon of **glycerin**. For a **pleasant scrub** to clean your sinks and toilets, mix 1 cup **baking soda**, 1/2 cup **borax**, and 1/4 cup **salt**, plus your essential oil.

When adding scents, start with a small amount, then add more if you want a stronger aroma. For other recipes that you can enhance with scents, see previous issues of TNS. The TNS index is at <[www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html](http://www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html)>.

Adding pretty scents to your cleaners is such a simple way to add beauty to your daily life, as your cleaning – and your home – become filled with their delightful aromas.

~ Julie Sage

*Julie Sage teaches Herbal House Keeping Classes; upcoming classes are in March and April. She is also owner of Green Goddess cleaning products, which sells herbal cleaning products, for those who prefer them ready-made. For more info, contact Julie at 829-3972 or <[juliesage3x3@aol.com](mailto:juliesage3x3@aol.com)>.*

## Mold Banishers

In our previous issue, we discussed less-toxic ways to avoid and handle mold problems in buildings. Now let's explore less-toxic cleaners for visible mold.

Luckily, it's easy to clean mold effectively – and reduce its recurrence

*See Cleaners, over ...*



## It's Our Birthday!!

With this issue, we're celebrating *three years* publishing *The Next STEP (TNS)!!* The goal of this innovative City project is to nurture a healthier Sebastopol for everyone. To reduce exposure to toxics, we encourage voluntary reductions in their use in all areas of our lives – including our homes, schools, businesses, parks, food, and water.

TNS is produced by a small team of local citizens, working on a volunteer basis (which keeps costs very low) because we support this goal! We're grateful to the City Council and staff for acting in the community's best interest with this project.

**Please fill out the enclosed survey card to give us your feedback about our efforts. Also let us know how we can best support your toxics reduction in the upcoming year, including any questions, tips, story ideas, or success stories. Your support is what makes this project possible. Thank you!**



"We have not used pesticides in our home for 30 years!

Your helpful hints are great alternatives to 'spray' solutions. Thank you for making this info available on a large scale. Keep up the good work!!!"

• • •

"[TNS is] Informative and helpful. Thanks!"

• • •

"[Your] Great info on Roundup keeps me from using it!"

• • •

"[TNS] is a constant reminder to do the right thing!"

• • •

"[TNS is] awesome!" ... "I love it!" ... "Keep it coming!"

## New Locally-Refilled Ink and Toner Cartridges

Good news! You can now drop off your used printer and copier cartridges at Sebastopol's Whole Foods and get refilled cartridges in return.

According to Rapid Refill Ink of Santa Rosa – the company offering this service – 78,000 tons of cartridges go to U.S. landfills each year. By refilling cartridges, we help keep them from adding to our landfills. Cartridges are just one component of e-waste (waste from electronics), but one we can easily alleviate.

I've been trying the refilled cartridges (in my case, a black ink HP 56) and so far they work great. My cartridge is only \$11, less than half the cost of a new one.

To drop off your cartridge, go to the front café area of Whole Foods. There's a cardboard display where you fill out an envelope and drop in the cartridge – like dropping off a roll of film for developing. There's a price list there for the most common cartridges. Put your cartridge in its original wrappings or a plastic bag to protect it and prevent ink leakage. With ink cartridges, it's ideal to put the

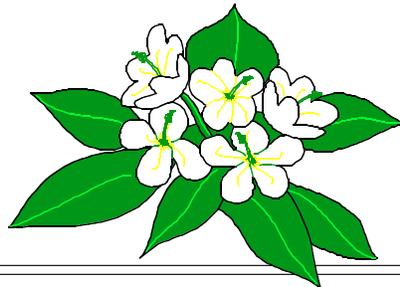
protective clip or tape back on, to keep the print head from drying out and getting clogged. Then check back with the store in 1 to 2 days to pick up your refilled cartridge.

Rapid Refill Ink refills nearly all the cartridges locally, and they test and clean them before refilling. When cartridges reach the end of their life cycle, they're saved for recycling. Rapid Refill has many dropoff locations throughout the county. For more info, contact them at 571-1965.

~ Rebecca Dwan

## Summerfield's Organic Celebration

On March 13, Summerfield Waldorf School and Farm in Santa Rosa will host "Santé: A Toast to Organic and Biodynamic Food and Wine." Held at the Vineyard Creek Hotel, near Santa Rosa's Railroad



Square, the event will offer community members an opportunity to enjoy a variety of local biodynamic and organic wines, artisan cheeses, olive oils, appetizers, and a three-course meal featuring local organic produce. Music and silent and live auctions will add to the evening's festivities.

Summerfield's goal with Santé is to join with the community in celebrating healthier local agriculture, and "to bring attention to the fact that biodynamic and organic food and wine support our health, our soil, and our future."

Summerfield is one of the few Waldorf schools in the country with a full biodynamic farm integrated into its curriculum. Food from the farm goes into their on-site meals and is donated to local social welfare programs. Through this, students directly experience the benefits of healthy food and a sustainable life. Proceeds from Santé will benefit the school's tuition assistance fund.

For information about the event – including how you can support it through volunteering or donations – contact Carol O'Hara, 544-3530, <carolsohara@hotmail.com>. More about the school is at 575-7194, <www.summerfieldwaldorf.org>.

### Cleaners, continued

– without using toxics. Here are some easy less-toxic (and often cheaper) mold cleaners:

■ **Vinegar or baking soda.** Just place directly on a sponge and clean.

■ **Borax.** Annie Berthold-Bond, in *Clean & Green*, advises putting 1/4 teaspoon to 1/4 cup of borax in a container and dissolving it completely in 2 cups hot tap water. Wash the moldy area and rinse. Or leave it on to help inhibit mold growth.

■ **Tea Tree Oil.** Dilute about 2 teaspoons tea tree oil in 2 cups water. For more about using tea tree in bathrooms, see "Got Mold?" (TNS II/3).

■ **Pine Oil.** Berthold-Bond advises using only pure pine oil, and testing before using, as it is strong.

■ **Herbs.** You can make a cleaner using antiseptic herbs (see list in "The

Sweet Smell of Clean," page 1). Just add herbal essential oils to water, or brew a tea from the herbs and strain out any plant material. Then sponge or spray it on the problem area. Or you can put it in a diffuser, to give the air a clean scent! And you can add a few drops of an essential oil like lavender to the borax mix above.

It's best to test all new cleaners in a hidden area first to be sure they work on the material. Explore books like *Clean & Green* for many more ideas for creating and using natural cleaners. And, for more options, including citrus-based cleaners, look in your local health food store.

By taking a little time to use less-toxic cleaners, you're helping to keep you and your loved ones safe in a healthy and happy home!

~ Patricia Dines

## ABOUT STEP

**The Next STEP** (TNS) is published six times a year by the **Sebastopol Toxics Education Program** (STEP). **STEP is a project of the City of Sebastopol**, implemented by local citizen volunteers. **STEP's mission** is to support city residents in reducing their toxic use and exposure, creating a healthier and safer Sebastopol for everyone.

**Past issues of TNS** are at <www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us>; look under Programs. **An ongoing index by topic** is at <www.healthyworld.org/STEPIndex.html>.

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