



As a company who offer more environmentally sympathetic cleaning solutions we are frequently asked for help when selecting greener cleaning agents for various cleaning and maintenance tasks.

So; what constitutes 'environmentally friendly'?

Something that doesn't adversely impact on the environment is the simple answer. The problem is – that just about everything we do impacts on the environment, from breathing to driving, from eating to cleaning. So using less environmentally damaging chemicals, which can degrade without putting too much demand on the ecosystem will be a small but significant start.

Bio-Productions endeavour to use less harmful, less aggressive raw-materials in the cleaning and maintenance products we produce, but we accept that occasionally only something aggressive will be required. Our answer to this is that the raw materials used should degrade quickly & easily, which is done in the drainage system, so it is also important that cleaning waste is never disposed of through a storm drain, only a sewer.

Rule one for us in developing any cleaning products is that it should perform (work). There is no point in producing more waste, so we need to satisfy our customers that because it is 'green' it isn't necessarily wishy-washy and that they will need twice as much and that it will take twice as long.

The next consideration is that it should be simple. We don't believe our customers will want to stand on their heads or perform cartwheels so that the "special ingredients" can work. They invariably want to continue with their lives, but they'd also like to impact less on their environment, & it is simply the impact on the environment that our actions have, which is the 'enviro' consideration. Therefore we believe that thought should be given to the selection of 'chemicals' when undertaking a task. It is also worth noting that, invariably, an aggressive chemical (which is quite likely to be harmful to the environment) could also damage the surface (or finish) of the item being cleaned. This ultimately enables soiling to enter the substrate, making it more difficult to clean next time. Obviously

there are occasions when an aggressive chemical will be the only way of resolving a problem, such as killing germs, etc. Here, as with using any toxic substance thought must be given to the amount used, the dilution and the ultimate disposal.

So it's simple. Something that works and is environmentally less harmful than the alternatives – otherwise why not use the alternative?

As examples, we have included the more frequently asked questions.

In the Kitchen.

Everything needs to be clean, and be cleaned regularly otherwise the risks of contamination are increased because where there is dirt there are germs. However, it is not necessary to disinfect everything, for example the floor. If food is dropped onto the floor it should be binned, and a few seconds after disinfecting the floor someone will walk on it with footwear they wore in the street!

The floor should be cleaned thoroughly, with all traces of grease etc, where germs can breed removed. An ideal "green" cleaning agent is a dilution of Citra Clean Concentrate as it cuts through grease & fat leaving a clean, non-slip surface.

Work-surfaces.

These need to be cleaned AND sanitised, and a three-stage process should be adopted.

Sweep any detritus into the bin.

Wash with a solution of Citra Clean Concentrate or Orange Squirt to remove all traces of soiling – and dry with a paper towel.

Disinfect (or sanitise) and wipe dry with a fresh paper towel.

An ideal and effective 'green' sanitising agent is one or two chlor' tab's in a dedicated, clean trigger-spray bottle, filled each day with fresh water.

Chlorine kills all germs dead and far too-many cleaner-sanitizers can leave soiling and support bacterial growth, resulting in pockets of living bacteria that may cause contamination of food during preparation.

A dilution of Citra Clean Concentrate can also be used for cleaning griddles, ovens hobs etc, as well as the exterior surfaces of white-goods. It is also very effective at removing grease and fat from extraction hoods, filters and ducting, and ideal for general cleaning of walls and all greasy surfaces.

Washrooms.

The most common problem with most washrooms (or toilets) is the smell, and despite copious applications of disinfectant or bleach this invariably returns. Because of this problem some aggressive cleaning chemicals including bleach have been used, damaging the surfaces and exacerbating the absorption problem. The removal of calcium deposits can only be done with acid or high alkaline products, & choosing a less damaging acid than sulphuric (which also damages chrome & stainless-steel) is a move in the right direction. Again though, allowing the build-up of calcium is unsightly & will harbour germs, so the responsible use of an acid product, used properly will resolve the problem, and providing it is used sparingly residues can quickly degrade in the sewage system. However, we can also solve a problem like this with 'green' cleaning methods.

Bio-Productions introduced 'urine eating bacteria' with calcium degraders into our liquid cleaner Blu-Away & the Toss Blocks some years ago to address urine contamination problems, and to keep calcium from building-up. By including these specially selected bacterial strains, the urine which has been absorbed into the contaminated surfaces is digested, and the soiling & calcium in the urinal traps is rapidly converted into CO² and H²O. – so no smell!

Anyone can 'hard' surface, because the soiling is 'on' the surface, but only micro-organisms can clean within it, where urine & body fluids are absorbed.

The few areas in a washroom which need disinfecting include, 'cross contamination points' such as toilet seats, tap-handles and door levers. Again the floors and walls don't require washing with bleach or disinfectant, - unless a 'Deep-Clean' is required, so maintaining surfaces with an environmentally sympathetic, biological cleaner will prevent odours and remove general soiling.

Using a biological block in the urinals will keep everything working and smelling sweet in the drains – as well as enabling you to reduce the frequency of flushing – to save around 90,000 litres of water per urinal per year!

And stopping germs can be done by spray-wiping with a solution of fresh water in a trigger-spray bottle containing one or two chlorine tablets (renewed each day).

General Cleaning & Front-of-House

Household cleaning creates one of the largest sources of pollution there is. Every bucket of used cleaning solution (a mixture of soiled water and chemical cleaner) is discharged down the drain, and these cleaning agents invariably contain aggressive chemicals. These chemicals may be more or less biodegradable and when they mix with other chemicals in the drain they create other, unknown chemical solutions.

By reducing the number of different products needed to maintain the client's building to (say) 5 or 6, it is far easier to select and monitor their use than if there were 20 or more different products.

It should be possible to source one multi-purpose cleaner (such as Citra Clean Concentrate) , for hard-surface cleaning, upholstery & carpet cleaning, etc. A good quality glass, mirror & stainless cleaner/polish for all bright-work and plastic. A disinfectant, for cross-contamination points & food preparation areas. Perhaps a spray & wipe polish for the finger-marks on desks, tables & cabinets.

Occasionally a toilet acid may be required to reduce the problem of calcium build-up in urinals & toilet bowls, but this can also be achieved with regular use of Blu-Away, our biological non-acid toilet maintainer, and used together with Toss Blocks, our biological urinal blocks, washrooms can be completely odour free.

Obviously there are requirements for specific solutions to specific tasks; Dishwashing, for example. There are a number of quality hand and machine products available which have been formulated to achieve the required results. A general-purpose cleaner just isn't going to be suitable and using the wrong formula for a task is just as wasteful as using a poor quality product. Invariably you have to use more of the product and the results are not necessarily quite as good as they might be.

All cleaning processes require 'energy.' This can either be attained from the power of the machine (electricity) the heat in the water (more electricity), elbow grease or the chemical. Selecting the correct chemical is an important first step in reducing waste (energy or chemical), saving money, and reducing the environmental impact of the task.

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