



## Spring Cleaning Guide – Going Green

By Michael Burton

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Canadian author Adria Vasil gave Oakville.com a crash course on keeping green while spring-cleaning. Vasil is the author of the *Ecoholic*, and a columnist for Toronto's *Now Magazine*. She's been writing about social justice issues for the last ten years, and has appeared CTV, CBC, MTV, and Global television to promote green living. Here are a few tips for your spring cleaning.

### **Make Your Own Green Cleaners**

The best way to save some money and help the environment is to skip buying cleaners entirely, and make your own. "I know people complain that straight vinegar on a bathtub doesn't really work well," Vasil said. "A homemade green cleaner will require a whole lot of elbow grease. But even a couple tweeks can really boost their power."

"Heat straight vinegar over the stove top before you spray it onto your shower. It's a natural Tilex that melts away the soap scum."

### **Wash Your Windows, But Don't Wash Out Your Wallet**

You really don't need to spend money on specific window washing products. Make your own solution with products you have laying around the house. "If you're looking at buying green cleaners, I'm pretty straight

up with all my readers," she said. "Not all green cleaners actually get the job done. Some of them I equate to spit on a rag."

"For your outdoor jobs I would just take hot water a quarter cup of vinegar and natural dish soap. It really works just as well compared to whatever you would spend \$5 on at the store. It'll only cost you a nickel."

### **Don't Be Fooled By Green Labels. Know What You Buy**

"There are a lot of companies out there that claim to be greener than they are to make a couple bucks," Vasil said. "There are definitely genuine green cleaners on the market."

Vasil specifically suggests products like Bio-Vert, BioSource, and even Nature Clean.

"I like transparency. When I'm looking at a product and they don't tell me what the ingredients are, clearly labeled somewhere on the package, I put that bottle right back down. If there is a reason to hide your ingredients, then there's no reason for you to support them."

### **Know What The Labels Mean, and Be Aware of Terms Like "Non-Toxic"**

"The terms non-toxic, eco-safe and eco-friendly aren't regulated terms and anyone

can use them. You do have to have your wits about you, and you can't judge a book by its cover," Vasil said.

She suggests looking for the eco logo products, as those products are greener than 80 per cent of the products on the market.

"Buying green just for the sake of green doesn't help anyone. You want to look for a seal. It needs to be biodegradable, and has to have passed some tests. You want to look for specifics, and if you don't see them put it back on the shelf."

"Also don't judge a book by its cover. A lot of Aerosol products will say CFC free, but everything has been CFC free for the last 20 years. It actually doesn't mean anything. You have to make sure that if you recognize terms like CFC free and biodegradable, they should only be trusted if they give you specifics."