



thewisemom

wise: (adj) informed, aware

healthy home  
healthy planet

gardening  
with children

what does nature  
teach us?

# tips for creating a healthy home AND A HEALTHIER PLANET!



by Caroline Blazovsky

Simply cleaning up your home environment and creating a healthy living space for you and your family can help the planet. These four easy steps will get you on your way to living a healthier life and also make a contribution to the Earth.

**Tip #1 -Remove Clutter** (This means recycle, reuse, and remove.) Start looking around the house for ways to de-clutter your home. Community programs like Free-cycle allow you to share unused things in your home

by giving them to other members of the community who can use them. This helps to keep unwanted items from ending up in landfills and allows us to recycle items so they can be used more than once. A win for Earth!

Having clutter around the house prevents you from being able to clean properly. Remember, dust likes to hide in, around and under objects, leading to an increase in allergens in the home. Keeping items off the floor allows you to properly vacuum and wash floors which helps reduce dust mites. A win for you!

**Tip #2 -Pick a HEPA vacuum and an energy efficient, less toxic vacuum for the earth.**

When searching for a vacuum you can also make a contribution to the earth. Make sure to pick a unit that is more energy efficient as well as a brand made by a

company that is reducing environmental impacts. Many companies have reduced or phased out their use of PVC (polyvinylchloride), check to see if you are purchasing a brand that is helping the planet. Also placing a call to a company requesting PVC free products can also be helpful for your family. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, long-term exposure has been associated with liver damage and increased risk for a rare liver cancer. This product is on my list to remove in homes, especially those with very young children.

A vacuum can be your wisest investment. One of the main culprits in homes is dander. Dander or skin cells can be produced by humans as well as pets. When buying a vacuum, select a unit with a HEPA filter. This will allow you to clean your home more thoroughly, and pick up microscopic dander that can accumulate in your home and cause allergies.

**Tip #3 -Clean with Vinegar and purchase/create products that are healthier for the Earth.** Some of my favorite cleaning products are ones that we can create ourselves. Keep some products on hand such as lemon juice, vinegar, hydrogen peroxide, baking soda, milk, water and salt. You can make all sorts of concoctions that will be effective at cleaning all sorts of problems. Find resources that will help you make your own products or consult an expert to help you. Products that make a healthier home also work simultaneously to make a healthier planet. Seeking natural ways to do things, helps you to be more eco-friendly to the planet. By using Biomimicry (looking at the earth's way of doing things and trying to mimic that in our own homes), you create a healthier planet and a healthier you.

Selecting a natural cleaning product is always a great option. Using white distilled vinegar and water as a cleaning agent can help reduce bacteria, mold and pests in your home. Vinegar has been shown to eliminate bacteria on

a cutting board, reduce mold in a bathroom shower, and deter ants from invading your kitchen. It is also great for cleaning windows, flooring and countertops with its natural antibacterial properties.

### Tip #4 -Reduce Volatile Organic Compounds

and help improve your home's air quality and make an impact on global warming. Ever notice that intense odor when you open paint, nail polish, automobile products? The odor comes from VOC (volatile organic compounds) and they are found in our homes in abundance. They are also major culprits in global warming. We do not want them in your house, or our planet. You can also test your home to see if you are being exposed to these toxins without your knowledge.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) can be emitted from personal care products, carpet, furniture, paint, building products and fragrances. When these VOC levels become elevated in a home, individuals may suffer from numerous symptoms such as headaches, malaise, asthma and respiratory irritation. Try to ventilate the house during any construction projects, reduce using fragrances in the home and store harsh chemicals (paints, solvents, cleaners and pesticides) away from occupied spaces, ideally outside in a shed or storage area.



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