

Environmentalists offer tips for natural cleaning

By LANA MINI
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Gloria Boyajian is on a mission to fill homes with calming scents of lavender and energizing scents of citrus. If everyone did so, we might all feel happier mentally and physically.

The Birmingham woman is trying to help people reduce the amount of chemicals that she says assaults our senses and can aggravate allergies.

And what better time to cleanse our homes of bad energy than summer?

Boyajian is the owner of Aetheria on Woodward Avenue in Ferndale. The small shop's air is subtly filled with natural flower and fruit scents and mixed with items that can actually make cleaning fun.

Boyajian sells books and ingredients so homeowners can create their own cleaning supplies and get rid of the bleach and ammonia.

"There's so many asthma factors today and we're also assaulted with chemicals even in our homes. Why add to it?"

Boyajian said. "It's so easy to get back to basics and use clean ingredients like vinegar, baking soda and Borax."

What makes Aetheria interesting is that the light-hearted Boyajian blends natural cleaning concepts with long shui philosophy. The right scents, she says, improves moods.

Then Boyajian adds a dash of fun into her store with brightly colored packaged products with silly names like Dirty Girl. Plus, she carries boldly colored jewelry crafted in Paris, natural skin products with masculine packaging for men, exotic soaps from around the world and bath and skin products with ingredients that sound tempting enough to eat.

But her main focus right now is cleaning.

For example: Mix 15 drops of essential oil of lemongrass with six drops of lavender and five drops of the Italian herb Bergamot with liquid castile soap for a nice detergent. Aetheria's oils are all naturally derived, not chemically manufactured. Boyajian emphasizes.



STAFF PHOTOS BY JERRY ZOLINSKY

Fresh: Gloria Boyajian of Aetheria - a boutique that carries jewelry, exotic soaps and fragrances and natural cleaning products - uses vinegar and essential oils to clean mirrors.

"Chemicals do have a place in the world, but not in the house, on skin or on pets," she said.

To kill germs, use Borax and citrus oil. For mold, white vinegar mixed with 12 drops of essential oil and water. To freshen carpet and kill germs,

mix baking soda with a few drops of sweet orange, peppermint or lime and vacuum after 15 minutes. Or use cornstarch.

Keep windows clean with white vinegar, which is highly antiseptic; infuse it with 15 drops of lavender oil and 1 cup of water.

"To keep the flow positive mix lavender petals with cedar chips," Boyajian said. "It's a good mothball concoction and adds a nice scent in the air."

Ammonia may cut grease, but it can also strip wax from floors. Instead, use baking soda. Bleach may whiten practically anything but it's a toxin; Borax is a bleach alternative and boosts the cleaning ability of soap. Ketchup cleans copper, salt is a gentle abrasive for cleaning pans; and olive oil is a decent furniture polish (test it in a safe area of the wood first).

As important as natural cleaning products are in the home, so is the idea of natural scents. Boyajian said that citrus oils can energize and uplift; so can peppermint and ginger. The Good Home Co.



Natural: Gloria Boyajian advises others on how to clean their homes naturally at her Ferndale store, Aetheria. Pictured here is a cedar/herbal moth chaser in a plastic bag; peppermint baking soda carpet freshener; essential oils of lavender and Mandarin orange; and the book The Naturally Clean Home - a big seller at the store.

brand has created a luxury item of laundry fragrance that is scented with grass or lavender.

Feng shui is the ancient Chinese practice of creating harmony in an environment in order to enhance well-being. It's based upon the ancient theory of design and placement of objects. At Aetheria, private sessions are also available to teach customers about feng shui and scents that might be best for individual homes and lifestyles.

FIND 'EM HERE

Natural cleaning products can be made with baking soda, lavender oil, white vinegar, lemon grass oil, and other natural ingredients. Look for natural cleaning products and ingredients at:

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- Whole Foods Market in Ann Arbor
- The Good Food Co. in Canton
- Vitamin Outlet in Livonia
- People's Food Co-Op in Ann Arbor

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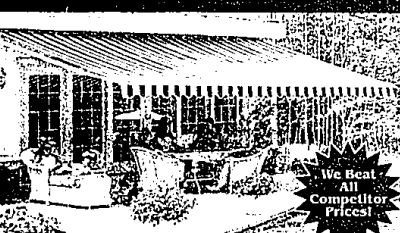
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