

**GREEN BOATING GUIDE****Joe Werkmeister**

These pages were published last year, but I felt it was worth repeating them. They are an excellent guide for boaters who want to do what they can to help improve the ecosystem. (It could also save you some money!)



## NON-TOXIC CLEANING PRODUCTS

Many cleaning products are harmful to aquatic life, water quality and the overall ecosystem. Some chemicals damage fish tissues, while others create nutrient imbalances leading to algal blooms. Whether you clean your boat on land or in the water, the choice of product that you use is important.



### Tips for cleaning:

- Regularly rinse your boat with freshwater to reduce the need for harsh chemicals.
- Research your cleaners. Manufacturers of chemical products are not required to list ingredients on containers or make them public.
- Use cleaning products sparingly and try to prevent graywater from directly draining into your waterways. Try utilizing designated washdown areas at your marina, or wash items on a grassy area, which can help absorb runoff.

### Which products to buy?

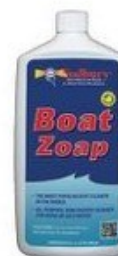
BoatU.S. Foundation recently updated their [2009 study](#) and [tested 9 new "green" boat soaps](#) to see if the products lived up to their environmental claims while still cleaning a vessel effectively. Interestingly, they found that the "greenness" of a cleaner did not impact its ability to clean.

Based on their research and weighing all the factors (cleaning, performance, toxicity and biodegradability), here are some of the top product recommendations:

#### 1. [303 Multi-Surface Cleaner](#)



#### 2. [Boat Zoap](#)



#### 3. [MaryKate Super Suds Boat Soap](#)



Additionally, [Ecoworks Marine](#) has a variety of products to clean every part of your boat. All of their products are compliant and surpass the MARPOL Annex 5 1.7.5 criteria and declared not harmful to the marine or river environment.



## ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

## Make your own homemade cleaners

With the following seven products that you may already have in your kitchen cabinets, you can clean most of your boat and boating accessories in an eco-smart and cost-effective way.



### White vinegar

- acidic
- dissolves dirt and debris
- antibacterial



### Baking soda

- mildly alkaline
- slightly abrasive
- dissolves dirt and grease



### Borax

- alkaline
- dissolves stains, mold and mildew



### Hydrogen peroxide

- disinfectant that is anti-bacterial and viral



### Lemon juice

- acidic
- dissolves dirt and debris
- antibacterial



### Cream of Tartar

- mildly acidic
- slightly abrasive
- dissolves dirt and grease



### Salt

- gently scours
- boosts cleaning and deodorizing action of mixture

## Recipes for cleaning your boat and gear



### All-purpose

- White vinegar
- Water
- Bucket
- Brush or cloth

This simple mixture can be used for general cleaning purposes on your boat. In a bucket, add 1 cup of vinegar to a gallon of water. Use a brush or cloth to clean surfaces of dirt. Rinse with water.



### Mildew remover

- Lemon juice
- Salt
- Bowl and spoon
- Brush or cloth

For mildew stains on canvas or cloth surfaces, mix one part lemon juice and one part salt in a bowl. Apply the mixture to the mildew stain and scrub. Rinse with water and let items dry fully in the sun.



### Stainless steel

- Baking soda
- Water
- White vinegar
- Bowl and spoon
- Cloth

In a bowl, add baking soda and water. Mix until you make a thick paste. Rub the paste on the surface with cloth. Rinse with water. To remove water spots, wipe area with cloth that has been dipped in vinegar.



### Life jackets

- White vinegar
- Water
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Bucket

In a bucket, add 1 cup of white vinegar to a gallon of water. Soak for 30 mins and rinse with water. To sanitize, add 1 cup of hydrogen peroxide to a gallon of water in a bucket. Repeat process and then dry.



### Aluminum

- Cream of tartar
- Water
- Bucket
- Tablespoon
- Cloth

In a small bucket, add 2 tablespoons of cream of tartar to 1 quart of hot water, and mix. Use a cloth dipped in the mixture to clean aluminum. Rinse with water. Cream of tartar is used instead of baking soda because it can cause the metal to oxidize.



### Sails

- Borax
- Water
- Bucket
- Sponge
- Soft brush

Add 1 to 2 cups of borax to a gallon of hot water. Use sponge to apply mixture to a damp sail. Use a soft scrub brush for stains. Let the mixture soak on for 2 hours. Rinse with water. Dry the sail fully by hoisting it or drape the sail in a dry place in the sun.



## Which eco-friendly cleaners are best for below deck?

You can use the same environmentally friendly products that you use in your household. Here are some companies that produce eco-friendly cleaning products:

- [BioKleen](#)
- [Bon Ami](#)
- [Ecover](#)
- [PureGreen24](#)
- [Seventh Generation](#)
- [Simple Green](#)



To ensure that your cleaner is safe and eco-friendly, look to see if your cleaner is a part of these programs:

- The [Environment Protection Agency's Design for Environment \(DfE\)](#) created the Safer Choice label, which means every ingredient in the product has been evaluated to ensure it meets the EPA's stringent criteria. Additionally, the EPA creates partnerships with manufacturers to create products, whose ingredients are less toxic, less persistent (i.e., they biodegrade faster), less bioaccumulative (i.e., they do not build up in living tissue of humans or animals) and whose ingredient byproducts have similar characteristics.



- The Environmental Working Group (EWG) is a nonprofit dedicated to protecting human health and the environment. EWG's staff scientists compare the product ingredients, websites and worker safety documents with the information available in government, industry and academic toxicity databases and the scientific literature on health and environmental problems tied to cleaning products. They use that information to create [EWG's Guide to Healthy Cleaning](#), which provides you with easy-to-navigate safety ratings for a wide range of cleaners and ingredients.

## Plan ahead:

Whether you are buying cleaning products or making your own from items in your kitchen, it's important to try to limit what ends up going into your waterways. Think ahead when planning your cleaning routine.



Try to keep wash liquids away from your waterways (See Graywater).

Also, use rags and old clothes to clean, rather than disposable items like paper towels.

## Did you know?

- There is no regulation on the use of "natural", "non-toxic", "organic" or "biodegradable" for cleaners. These labels can be misleading, so make sure to research your cleaning products before you buy them.