

Homemade air fresheners

Fun, easy, natural, homemade ways to freshen the air indoors!

Indoor air quality is becoming more of an issue as people are spending more and more time indoors. Most of us have seen reports on common dangerous household pollutants such as deadly molds, lead from paints, asbestos, and many others. What many people are not aware of are the dangerous chemicals we are willingly bringing into our homes and using in the form of air fresheners! Many commercial air fresheners use chemicals that have detrimental side effects such as agents that deaden your sense of smell, oils that coat your nasal passages, chemicals that can be damaging to skin and eyes, and ingredients that can be very poisonous if accidentally ingested. In addition to being potentially dangerous, many commercial air fresheners don't actually freshen the air, they just mask one odor with another! So, what are we to do if we want a pleasant smelling indoor environment? Try a more natural approach!

The very best way to make indoor air smell good is to maintain a clean environment. Remove the source of any offensive odors instead of just trying to cover up a bad smell with a good one. Cleanliness goes a long way in maintaining a pleasant and healthy environment. Plain white vinegar can be purchased for very little and is an excellent stain and odor fighter, as well as an air freshener. White vinegar can be diluted in a bucket of water and used to mop floors that are moldy, mildewy, have a pet odor, or any other offensive odor. The same solution of vinegar and water can also be used on carpets. Be sure to do a small "test spot" on any surface you are going to clean to make sure it will not be damaged by the vinegar.

The absolute easiest and cheapest way to truly freshen indoor air is to open up windows and doors and allow outside air into your home. Not only will the fresh air smell good, it will help remove any toxic air that might have been building up in your home.

A wide assortment of air fresheners can be found hiding in your kitchen cabinets. Many of the herbs and spices we cook with also make wonderful

air fresheners (such as cinnamon, clove, ginger, rosemary, basil, etc.). Try boiling your favorites alone or combined. Scented extracts (such as vanilla, almond, etc.) can also be used. Try dabbing some onto cotton balls and then placing the cotton balls throughout your home. Another kitchen staple renowned for removing odors is baking soda. An open box of baking soda placed in a room will help eliminate odors, especially musty mildew odors. A cup of vinegar can also be used in the same fashion to help remove smells. Simply fill several small bowls with vinegar and place in the area of the offensive smell.

Potpourri is a fun and versatile home air freshener. It can be homemade using dried flowers, herbs, and scented oil or purchased pre-made. Potpourri can be placed in pretty containers throughout the home, in sachets and tucked into closets and drawers. Or even boiled in simmer pots* for an extra strong scent.

Scented oils alone also make wonderful air fresheners. They come in a wide variety of scents and potencies. Oils can be dabbed onto cotton balls, or placed into special porous containers made to hold oils and dissipate their scent. Oils can also be added to boiling water to enhance their scent, or used in simmer pots*.

Be creative when looking for ways to pleasantly scent the air in you home. Even something as simple as a loaf of baking bread could be considered an air freshener if you like the smell. Cut flowers, opening the windows to the smell of a freshly mowed lawn, cutting lemons and placing them out in the open for a fresh blast of citrus scent are all fun, natural, simple ways to make your home smell good!

* A simmer pot is a small kettle shaped pot with an enclosed heating element on the bottom of the pot. It plugs into a standard wall outlet and heats the contents in the pot to enhance their aromas.