

Products

Earth-friendly items easier to find

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tains no phosphates, or chlorine and is free of dyes and perfumes.

■ For outside your home, there are plenty of lawn and garden products that are eco-friendly.

McGough's best-selling fertilizer is a 100 percent natural and biodegradable compost called Nature Supreme. Made from poultry-waste compost, it outsells the chemically engineered national brands.

"All of our customers just love it," said Lampton.

What about destructive outdoor pests? Is it possible to remove them from yards, fences and outbuildings without harming everything around them? Lampton said that one of McGough's best-selling insecticides is called BT spray. BT stands for Bacillus Thuringen, also commonly called Dipel or Thuricide, and it comes in an incredible number of varieties, each one tailored to target a specific pest. BT spray will rid your yard of particular pests without destroying any of the beneficial plants, insects and other living things around them.

So, the next time you're ready to replenish your household supplies, compare the option of eco-friendly alternatives.

Erin Anderson is a local freelance writer and author.

BY ERIN ANDERSON

Special to the Record-Eagle

So, you want to get even more locally-minded when it comes to toxic-free products? How about an ecologically progressive product made right in our neighborhood? MoonWorks laundry soap is 100 percent natural and biodegradable, manufactured in an earth-sensitive way, and it's made right in Leelanau County.

Gail Robinson and her friend Jay Gierkey had been making hand soaps as a hobby when they came across an old-fashioned laundry soap recipe and decided to give it a try.

After modifying the mixture a bit to meet their needs, as well as adding essential oils to provide a subtle fragrance, they gave samples to various friends and family, some who owned natural food stores and farm markets in the area. Everyone who tried the soap deemed the effort a huge success and, from

there, MoonWorks laundry powder was born.

"The product really carried us," Gail explained. "The more positive feedback we got, the more confident we became and we started to expand. It really had a life of its own."

The make-up of MoonWorks is simple. A mixture of baking soda, borax, castile soap and essential oils, the ingredients are minimal, while the results are anything but. The baking soda softens the water and allows the soap to better loosen the dirt while the borax provides the extra cleaning punch necessary to power out tough stains and grime. Being a soap, rather than a detergent, MoonWorks laundry powder creates no suds, therefore leaving no residue and helping to keep septic systems clear.

"It's a myth that suds mean clean clothes," said Gail. "Suds really have nothing to do with it."

MoonWorks is also easy on

your wallet. With its super-concentrated formula, each load requires only 1/8 of a cup of soap. How do you measure 1/8 of a cup? Well, it happens that is the exact size of the average plastic film canister, which is exactly what Gail and Jay put in every package for use as a measuring device. By using a recycled plastic film container, the need for an additional plastic scoop is eliminated.

MoonWorks comes in unscented, lavender and balsam fir varieties. And because the fragrance comes from pure essential oils, there are no petrochemicals involved as there are with traditional perfumes. MoonWorks is now available at over 25 retailers in northwest Michigan, including Oryana, Edson Farms and Oleson's markets, and has recently expanded to Boulder County, Colorado, where Gail's son, Brad Pauly, and his girlfriend, Liz Swanson, have opened the western



branch of MoonWorks, LLC.

Manufactured in Gail's garage with the least environmental impact possible—even the castile soap is grated by hand, using an antique grater from an Amish hardware store — MoonWorks is proof that household products really can be an eco-friendly, effective and economical choice for consumers.

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Record-Eagle/Jim Bovin

Top, Gail Robinson, left and Jay Gierkey make MoonWorks, a toxic-free soap. Above, the finished product.

Home cleaning remedies head here

Using homemade cleaning products is one way to live a greener life. Here are some recipes for home remedies:

■ All-purpose cleaner: 1 quart warm water plus 4 tablespoons baking soda plus 1 teaspoon vinegar.

■ Carpet refresher: 2 parts cornmeal plus 1 part baking soda. Let sit 1 hour and vacuum.

■ Carpet stains: Baking soda plus water or club soda.

■ Glass and window cleaner: Club soda or half-part vinegar plus half-part water or rubbing alcohol plus water.

■ Wood polish: Two parts vegetable or olive oil plus 1 part lemon juice. If you use juice, this must be refrigerated. You can substitute lemon oil.

■ Toilet bowl cleaner: 1/2 cup liquid soap plus 2 cups baking soda. Mix well. Add 1/4 cup water plus 2 tablespoons vinegar to make foam. Also try: A can of cola; let it sit 10 minutes in bowl and flush.

■ Oven cleaner: Cover spills with baking soda or salt (for grease) and soapy water (while oven is still warm). Let sit 10 minutes and wipe off. A pumice stone can be used on tough stains.

■ Rust and stain removal: Use a mixture of equal parts salt and lemon juice.

■ Jewelry cleaner: 1 teaspoon salt plus 1 teaspoon baking soda. Fill jar halfway with quarter-size bits of aluminum foil. Add warm water. Drop jewelry in for 15 minutes to 1 hour. Polish with a soft cloth.

■ Stainless steel: Use baking soda and soft-sided sponge. Toothpaste works, too.

■ Copper and brass polish: 1/2 cup vinegar plus 1 tablespoon salt.

■ Insecticides for plants: 2 teaspoons Tabasco sauce plus 2 teaspoons liquid soap and water. Spray on plants, but don't use too much.

■ Grout cleaner: Rub lightly with sandpaper or use toothpaste and a toothbrush.

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