

**Isn't it incredible how we have so many environmentally harsh cleaning chemicals in our homes when nature already offers most of what we need! Have some helpful hints for using lemons in and around the home?**

### **Lemons - the versatile fruit**

Lemons - a fruit with a wonderful fragrance, great in food and beverages, but also very handy for multiple purposes around the home!

Lemons have been cultivated by humans for over a thousand years. The fruit is mentioned in tenth century Arabic literature, but was probably first grown in Assam, India.

Lemons are high in vitamin C, have an anti-bacterial effect and are thought to possess antioxidant and anti-carcinogenic properties. The juice consists of about 5% acid, which also makes them useful for a variety of household purposes.

### **Selecting and storing lemons**

The best lemons are those that have smooth, oily skins and are heavy for their size. They should be bright yellow with no green tinges. Lemons will keep for up to a week at room temperature, two to three weeks refrigerated. Lemon zest (peel) can be frozen for months.

### **Juicing lemons**

To get the most juice from a lemon, it should be allowed to reach room temperature, or microwaved for a few seconds prior to juicing. Using your palm to roll the lemon on a hard surface can also help improve juice yields. If you only need a little juice, some people pierce the end with a fork, squeeze the amount needed, cover the holes with tape and then store in the fridge.

There's so much more to lemons than just using them in cooking and making lemonade! Here's a selection of handy tips. Remember to test in inconspicuous areas first.

### **Ant deterrent**

Pouring lemon juice around areas those ants frequent is said to repel them.

### **Air freshener**

An equal amount of lemon juice and water added to an atomizer will create a wonderful synthetic chemical-free green air freshener for your home.

### **All purpose cleaner**

Again, an equal amount of lemon juice and water added to a spray bottle is an effective kitchen and bathroom cleaner and can also be used on walls (spot test first).

A small amount of lemon juice can also be added to vinegar based cleaning solutions to help neutralize the smell of the vinegar.

## **Microwave**

Heat a bowl of water and lemon slices in your microwave for 30 seconds to a minute; then wipe out the oven. Stains will be easier to remove and old food odors neutralized.

## **Fridge**

Half a lemon stored in your fridge will help control and eliminate unpleasant smells.

## **Chrome/copper/brass**

Rub a lemon juice and baking soda paste onto chrome or copper, rinse and then wipe/buff with a soft cloth or paper towel.

## **Toilet**

Mix 1/2 cup borax and a cup of lemon juice for a powerful toilet cleaner that will leave it smelling extra clean!

## **Lime scale**

Use a half lemon to clean the lime scale off a sink or taps/faucets; rinse well.

## **Laundry**

For bleaching purposes, add 1/2 cup of lemon juice to the rinse cycle and hang clothes outside to dry.

A teaspoon of lemon juice thrown into your wash can also help your clothes to smell fresher.

## **Dishes**

A teaspoon of lemon juice added to your dishwashing detergent can help boost grease cutting power

## **Drains**

Hot lemon juice and baking soda is a good drain cleaner that is safe to use in septic systems.

If you have a garbage disposal unit, throw in some lemon peel from time to time while it's working in order to keep it smelling fresh.

## **Chopping boards**

Rub lemon juice into your wooden chopping board, leave overnight and then rinse. Wood chopping boards appear to have anti-bacterial properties anyway, but the lemon will help kill off any remaining nasties and neutralize odors.

## **Glass and mirrors**

4 tablespoons of lemon juice mixed with half a gallon of water makes an effective window cleaner

## **Degreaser**

Straight lemon juice can be used as a general degreaser

## **Furniture**

2 parts olive oil or cooking oil mixed with 1 part lemon juice makes for an excellent furniture polish!

## **Hair**

To lighten hair, dampen it with lemon juice and sit out in the sun for an hour. This does work, I tried it myself. Hey, it was the 80's!

I've read that the juice of a lemon mixed with one cup warm water makes for a great hair conditioner. It should be allowed to stay in your hair for a few minutes then washed off. Exercise caution if you have a sensitive scalp.

## **Cuts, stings and itches**

A small amount of lemon juice pour onto minor wounds can help stop bleeding and disinfect the injury (it will sting a bit). Lemon juice applied to itches, poison ivy rashes and wasp stings is said to relieve discomfort.

## **Mouthwash**

A 50/50 mixture of lemon juice and water makes for an effective mouthwash.

## **Hands**

The smell of fish can linger on your hands, even after scrubbing with soap - rubbing your hands with lemon juice will neutralize the smell and leave your hands smelling wonderful.