

# Green Clean



Claudia Froome of Enviroponsible Claudia's Choices

AS GREEN HOME BUILDING GAINS GROUND, CALGARY HOMEOWNERS CONSIDER THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINTS. WHAT ABOUT GREEN HOME CLEANING?

“‘GREEN HOME CLEANING’ IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE ABSENCE of toxic, non-biodegradable ingredients in the cleaning products being used, but is also about the package the products come in,” explains expert Renee Stehouwer. “Do you throw the container to the landfill, (in your garbage), when you are finished with it? If yes, that is not ‘green home cleaning’ even if the product’s ingredients are environmentally-friendly.”

Stehouwer manages Clean Calgary Association’s EcoStore. The Clean Calgary Association’s mission is to empower Calgarians to create healthy homes and communities through environmental education, products and services.

“Also ask yourself how far the product has travelled to get to you?” asks Stehouwer. “If it has travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometres, than it is not a ‘green home cleaning’ product regardless of the ingredients. ‘Green Home Cleaning’ also means you are buying locally made products that decrease pollution by travelling very short distances.”

In Calgary, green cleaning product lines like Seventh Generation are available at the EcoStore and most health stores. Stehouwer recommends locally-made Small Planet Cleaning Products such as Germs Be Gone for everything, See Thru Cleaner for windows and mirrors, Squeaky Clean for scrubbing bathtubs, sinks, counters and stove tops and Fairy Dust to deodorize waste baskets, diaper pails and carpets. Their empty containers can be brought back to the EcoStore for refilling or recycling.

Statistics show Albertans seem to be warming up to environmentally-friendly products. A recent Direct Energy survey shows four in ten residents surveyed in Alberta would

A recent Direct Energy survey shows four in ten residents surveyed in Alberta would pay a premium of 10 per cent or more for products that are environmentally-friendly.

pay a premium of ten per cent or more for products that are environmentally-friendly. “What these results tell us is that consumers see the connection between their actions and climate change,” says Bob Huggard, president, Canadian Operations, Direct Energy.

Take the case of Calgary mother Claudia Froome who launched her company Claudia’s Choices On-line Eco Store and Cloth Diaper Boutique after the birth of her daughter. Her company specializes in “enviroponsible” or eco-friendly household products and cloth diaper accessories.

Says Froome: “Our products are safe and effective alternatives to commercially available laundry and cleaning products, and diapering and baby care products.”

Froome also sells her “enviroponsible” products at Calgary retailers including Jane Doe Marketplace & Café and Community Natural Foods. “We’ve noticed that more and more Calgarians are becoming educated about hazardous home cleaning products and green cleaning,” she says.

“Our goal is to help minimize our impact on the environment and support sustainable living. We believe that every small step is a step in the right direction.”

## Getting Started

Froome suggests these first steps in green cleaning: **Give your cleaning cabinet a green makeover.** “Start by removing those hazardous chemicals from your house. Chlorine bleach, conventional drain, oven and toilet, and carpet cleaning products contain some of the most toxic chemicals.”

## Check with your local fire station about drop-offs.

For more information, call The City of Calgary at 3-1-1 or 268-2489 or The Fire Department Hazardous Materials at 287-4248.

Use this simple rule-of-thumb: “If a product makes your eyes tear, your nose or skin itch, or cautions against breathing in the fumes, get rid of it! Keeping these products in your house is a potential hazard for children or pets and will continue to “off-gas” right through the bottle.”

## Restock your cleaning cabinet with green products.

“There are many green products available at your local green grocery store. It’s well worth the trip. Or order green products from reputable retailers on the Web.”

**Make basic cleaners.** “If you’re so inclined, you can make basic cleaners from simple ingredients such as baking soda and vinegar. Mix a quarter-cup of baking soda with a few cups of warm water for wiping appliances. A simple solution of one part water and part vinegar in a spray bottle can be used to clean counters. Or spray it on a microfibre mop to mop floors. If you don’t like the smell of vinegar, just add a few drops of your favourite essential oil to the recipe.”

**Search the web for recipes.** For example, The City of Calgary website offers an excellent page of recipes — “Environmentally Friendly Substitutes for Common Household Products.”

**Invest in microfibre cloths.** “Essential to green cleaning are quality microfibre cloths and a washable microfibre mop. They can be laundered hundreds of times and can be used with just water.” CL

To more information visit [www.cleancalgary.org](http://www.cleancalgary.org) [www.claudiaschoices.ca](http://www.claudiaschoices.ca)



Stats show Albertans are warming up to green products.