



Week 3: Household

Fact Sheet Challenge A: Replace one product in your household cabinet with a more sustainable alternative.

[do it yourself or buy ecologically and fairly produced products]

Toxins sneak into our household through various cleaning products and articles of daily use. Toxins that are on the one hand harmful to health and on the other hand enormously pollute the environment. They get into the groundwater, cannot be filtered or decomposed in some cases, and become solidified in our household cycle. Long lists of ingredients and chemical formulas are usually complex and it is not obvious to everyone what function is behind them.

Laundry detergent substances in detail

- Surfactants are the washing-active main component of detergents and separate grease from water to dissolve the dirt. Synthetic surfactants are usually used in conventional cleaning agents and detergents. These are produced on the basis of the resource crude oil. According to an EU regulation, surfactants must be biodegradable. However, a surfactant is already considered "completely biodegradable" when it has broken down to 60 percent after 4 weeks.
- Water softeners produce soft water. This allows surfactants to unfold their effectiveness more effectively, since fewer lime deposits are formed.
- Washing alkalis increase the pH value of the washing lye. This causes the fibers to swell and the dirt can be removed more easily.
- Enzymes for the removal of protein and starch-containing stains. They have different effects at low and/or medium washing temperatures and are destroyed at high temperatures.
- Dirt carriers hold the detached dirt in suspension or prevent it from settling back on the laundry.
- Curd soaps and silicones regulate foam development as defoamers.
- Fragrances cover up the inherent odor. They are toxic for water organisms and are very difficult to break down in the environment. However, this applies not only to synthetically produced fragrances, but also to some natural fragrances such as lime.
- Agents, such as sodium sulfate, keep powdered detergents in powder form during storage and serve as a cost-effective diluent to increase profits.

Certifications such as the NCP seal, Ecocert, Eco Garantie and Blue Angel, for example distinguish products that contain little or no chemical or environmentally harmful substances, are packaged sustainably and are produced without animal testing.





What you can do:

- Use up your household products first and save spray bottles and other containers for the next DIY campaign if necessary.
- Use aids such as the app "Code Scanner" to understand and evaluate ingredients.
- Orient yourself towards eco-certifications.
- Make your own cleaning products, the recipes (see DIYs)

Sources:

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Ein Projekt des Beyond Borders e.V.
Weißburger Str. 10, 22049 Hamburg
info@beyond-borders-ev.de
<https://beyond-borders-ev.de/de/>

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