Simple ingredients for eco-cleaning are water-friendly!

Baking soda (bicarbonate of soda) is a mild alkali powder used for numerous cleaning purposes. Cleans most surfaces; absorbs odors; removes baked-on food from pans; and removes stains from tile, glass, china, and oven. Great for washing harmful residues off fruits & vegetables.

Casas soap is a mild soap available in liquid or bar form that can be used for general-purpose cleaning. It was once made from olive oil, but now may include other vegetable oils as well.

Hydrogen peroxide is a non-toxic alternative to chlorine bleach that can be used for stain removal, mild bleaching, and killing germs. Cream of tartar (potassium bitartrate) is a mild acid that can be used as a sink and bathtub stain remover. It also removes spots from aluminum cookware.

White vinegar is natural, non-toxic, and edible. It can kill germs, deodorize, remove stains, unclog drains, clean cookware, countertops, and chrome, and kill weeds. Gentle enough to be an excellent hair rinse, skin softener, and facial toner. Odorless when dry.

Lemon juice can be used to cut grease, and remove tarnish on brass, copper, bronze, and aluminum (but not on silver).

Sodium carbonate (carbonate of soda) is stronger than baking soda and can be used as a water softener when combined with laundry detergent. (not to be used with silks, woolens or vinyl)

Borax is a powder or crystalline salt sold in most grocery stores, borax is a water softener and sanitizer. It makes an excellent fresher when added to laundry and is an all-around deodorizer.

For non-toxic cleaning recipes, visit: valleywomensclub.org/eco-clean

For more info, visit: valleywomensclub.org   For County regulations: www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us

...and won’t harm your septic system

- Regular inspections
- How it works
- Water use & savings
- Drainfield care
- When to pump
- Local services

Keep it Protected–Get it Inspected!
Have your septic tank inspected and pumped out by a licensed septic tank contractor as needed (on average every three to five years).

Don’t Strain your Drain:
Use water efficiently to avoid overtaxing your system. Fix household leaks, run the dishwasher and clothes washer only on full loads, and install high-efficiency fixtures.

Think at the Sink:
Don’t pour grease, fats, or harmful chemicals like paints and solvents down your sink. They can clog or harm your system.

Don’t Overload the Compost:
Do not flush non-degradable items such as wipes, diapers, dental floss, cat litter, condoms, or feminine hygiene items.

Shield your Field:
Care for your drainfield by landscaping with woodchips or shallow root plants. Divert roof and surface water away from the drainfield, and never drive or park on it.

PROTECT IT:

- Regular inspections
- How it works
- Water use & savings
- Drainfield care
- When to pump
- Local services

Biodegrade only

Please Dispose Non-Biodegradable in Trash

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Produced by the San Lorenzo Valley Women’s Club Environmental Committee. Copy edits: Tai Stills

For more info, visit: valleywomensclub.org

Keep it Protected–Get it Inspected!

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San Lorenzo Valley Residents live in the highest density of septic systems in the State. There are about 15,000 systems in the valley and some drainfields go right up to the banks of our creeks and the San Lorenzo River. These creeks and river supply drinking water for SLV and City of Santa Cruz residents.

Your Septic System is Your Responsibility! Protecting and Maintaining your septic system is easy to do, and will save you money while protecting the health of our environment, rivers, and drinking water. Many older tanks made of redwood are subject to root intrusion which hastens disintegration. A failing system leaches wastewater into our environment, rivers, and drinking water. Many older tanks made of redwood are subject to root intrusion which hastens disintegration. A failing system leaches wastewater into our environment, rivers, and drinking water.

How a Septic System Works

A typical septic system has four components: a pipe from the house, a septic tank, leachlines with perforated pipes, the drainfield, and the surrounding soil. It is the microbes in the tank and soil that digest the waste, removing most contaminants from wastewater before it seeps into our groundwater.

- Wastewater from the sink, shower, bath, laundry, and toilet exits the house through one pipe into a concrete or fiberglass tank.
- The septic tank holds wastewater long enough for sludge to settle and begin to decompose, while oil and grease float to the surface as scum. Sludge and scum that don’t break down remain in the tank until it is pumped.
- Compartments in the tank and a T-shaped outlet prevent the scum and sludge from leaving the tank and going to the drainfield.
- Wastewater trickles from perforated leach line pipes into the drainfield where soil microorganisms and gravel act as biological filters.
- The wastewater spreads throughout the drainfield where natural bacteria consume the organic material accumulated in the underlying soil. The leach field continually delivers effluent to the soil for purification.

How to Maintain Your Septic System

- Inspect your system every 3 to 5 years. Locate the tank and leach fields if lost. Make sure all components are working properly.
- Landscaping: Avoid pipes in the landscape with wood chips, gravel, and shrub roots. Avoid trees or non-biodegradable waste in sinks or toilets.
- Water efficiency: Use water efficiently; don’t park, drive, or build over septic system area. Tree roots can damage pipes and tank.
- Septic system protection checklist

- Inspect your system every 1 to 3 years, and pump your tank every 3 to 5 years.
- Don’t park, drive, or build on any part of your septic system. Compacting the soil can damage pipes and tank.
- Use water efficiently.

Wastewater facts

- The average indoor wastewater use for a single-family home is 70 gallons per person per day.
- The more water you conserve, the less water that will enter your septic system.
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- Water saving tips: Check all components. Pump the tank if needed.

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