Waste Prevention Tips

Before you buy a product, read the label and make sure it will do what you want.

Once you buy something, you are also responsible for disposing of it properly.

Buy only what you need, and use it all up.

Be conservative in selecting the product container size. A large container is not a bargain if you don't use it all.

Give away unwanted leftover products.

Ask friends, neighbors or non-profit groups if they can use the products.

Look for nonhazardous alternatives.

Safer substitutes, like vinegar, lemon juice, baking soda, salt, borax, olive oil and cedar chips, used alone or in various combinations can get the job done as well as their more hazardous counterparts. Consider the following suggestions for nonhazardous alternatives:

- To keep drains clear and fresh smelling, mix and apply 1/4-cup baking soda and 1/2-cup vinegar. Let stand in drain for 5-10 minutes. Flush with hot water.

- Windows can be cleaned with a mixture of 2 cups each of vinegar and water and 2 tablespoons of lemon juice. Use newspaper for a lint-free finish.

- An ice cube can be used to harden chewing gum before scraping it from carpet.

- For a rug deodorizer, mix 2 parts cornmeal to l part borax. Sprinkle over rug and leave for l hour, then vacuum.

- To polish furniture, combine 2 parts olive oil to 1 part lemon juice.

- Processed manure or fish emulsion is a good substitute for chemical fertilizers.

- Mulch and compost are great soil enrichment products. You can purchase them locally, or you can make it yourself from your yard trimmings.

- Select water-based latex and non toxic paint products over oil-based paints and varnishes.

- Instead of mothballs, use cedar chips or dried lavender.

- Instead of bug sprays, use baited traps.

- Use glue or spring traps instead of rodent poison.

- Clean copper pots and stainless steel with salt and vinegar.

- Clean stains from coffee cups and dishes with baking soda and vinegar.

- To clean, disinfect and deodorize, use a mixture of 1/2-cup borax and 1 gallon hot water.