**Something for the weekend....Action #16: Reduce harmful waste in our indoor air**

Air pollution. Mostly talked about in the context of the air we breath outside. For example, traffic emissions. Defra state 'Petrol and diesel-engined motor vehicles emit a wide variety of pollutants, principally carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulate matter (PM10), which have an increasing impact on urban air quality.'

But what is going on inside your home? Particularly when you reach for some 'ocean breeze', 'fresh cotton' or 'citrus fizz' to 'cleanse' the air of less pleasant odours - via a spritz of air freshener or scented candle? Well typically, most commercially produced, synthetic scented products contain VOCs too - some benzene, formaldehyde, propellants, solvents, benzenes, and synthetic musks, among others. These chemicals can be easily inhaled; land on the skin and be absorbed; or even accidentally ingested.

Not so appealing, eh? The waste products released into our homes are harmful to our physical health; and the often excessive, non recyclable packaging becomes another contributor to household waste, which is harmful to our environment.

So what are the alternatives? Firstly, simply open the window.

If preferred, perhaps also consider:

- the humble deodourising power of bicarbonate of soda.

Just pour some in a small dish and place discreetly to absorb odours - in the loo, even in the fridge! Add the ashes of incense (waste not!) or some scented oil for a delicate aroma. You could even use bits of old tights to contain measures of bicarb and hang in wardrobes, cupboards, drawers, shoes etc; sprinkle on carpets, leave overnight, then vacuum, to freshen them up. Large, cardboard boxes of it are sold in Southbourne General Store.

🍋 the natural fresh and zesty scent of a real lemon infused in vinegar or water.

Chop lemons, place in jar, pour over boiled or distilled water with/ without white vinegar; stew, strain and decant into spray bottle. Net free lemons from [TD Fruits](https://www.facebook.com/tdfruits/?ref=gs&__tn__=%2CdK-R-R&eid=ARC1wKn1fRj_bPLDDjv5_m-x33LymWJQvDus4rqizR1jKiqscpIaMcPZwmnj5dmgbq8p0L9dMTq4e_CI&fref=gs&dti=308664193075982&hc_location=group).

🌿 the refreshing powers of rosemary.

Fill spray bottle with cooled, boiled or distilled water and add drops of rosemary essential oil. Or infuse some fresh rosemary in boiled water, strain and decant into a bottle. Essential oils can be found in [Earth Foods](https://www.facebook.com/earthfoodsbournemouth/?ref=gs&__tn__=%2CdK-R-R&eid=ARCU2wsIP5FtJd_1pjew4RIPDOp_xnVd2jQAD7hcUFcbXAib4XQuzpjSBTlpta790F4Drww8PioXnTp5&fref=gs&dti=308664193075982&hc_location=group).

🕯'clean' burning of a natural beeswax or soy wax candle made with essential oils. Southbourne's very own Nellie Mimosa still lives on - find them online!

🌿 bunches of dried herbs such as lavender and rosemary dotted around the home. Place in an upcycled container. Anyone have any cuttings going spare from their garden?

🌱 houseplants including Aloe Vera, Snake plant (Mother in Laws Tongue), spider plants and English Ivy, play a part in absorbing toxins and purifying the air inside our homes. Pop along to [Stewarts Garden Centres](https://www.facebook.com/Stewarts-Garden-Centres-1108015235983138/?ref=gs&__tn__=%2CdK-R-R&eid=ARCLRd9LlXNvDiX6ECOXbt2V88tldRV4tjTB3UETEeY408OajmQXMTUNh66k-6Kq3OIdd3dOw25MaLsS&fref=gs&dti=308664193075982&hc_location=group) (who also provide a plastic pot recycling scheme).

There are plenty of simple, non toxic recipes online. But why not share some tried and tested air cleansing solutions in the comments below - and inspire someone to reach for a less wasteful alternative, for their health, your health and our planet. 🌎