

Have you ever used a copper bottom pot for pasta sauce and it boiled over? Did you notice that the copper was a little cleaner where the tomato sauce touched it? Tomato sauces and ketchup can be used as a natural cleaner.

The Daily Green, the Consumers' Guide to the Green Revolution, has a list of non-food uses for Ketchup. These include cleaning copper and auto parts, fighting skunk odors, restoring swimmer's hair, and, of course, fake blood. Check out www.thedailygreen.com for more green ideas.

Green cleaning is slowly making headway. Women's Voices for the Earth (www.womenandenvironment.org) has launched a campaign for hosting Green Cleaning Parties. Similar to a Tupperware party, friends get together and learn how to use simple ingredients such as vinegar, baking soda, salt, water, and toothpaste to make healthier cleaners.

Their recipe for an all-purpose cleaner is equal amounts of white distilled vinegar and water. One can add a few drops of essential oil as a scent. This can be safely used on hard surfaces such as countertops, kitchen floors, windows and mirrors. They suggest warming it in the microwave until barely hot to boost the cleaning power for tough jobs. Only microwave in a glass container.

On their website you can learn how to host a green cleaning party and get printable recipes for your guest. You can surf the internet for additional cleaning green recipes.

I have cleaned green for years. Toothpaste is my favorite brass cleaner and I'm hooked on the microfiber cloths that require only water and elbow grease to clean. Lemons, baking soda, salt and vinegar are in my cleaning basket along with old toothbrushes, t-shirts and other rags.

There are now green cleaners available at most grocery stores. Ed Begley Jr. has a line called Begley's Best that is 100 percent plant-based, derived from pine, citrus fruits, maize, fermented sugar cane, and olive seeds.

books at our local library.

Green your work or school lunch.

An interesting replacement for zip-lock sandwich bags is a Wrap-n-Mat (www.wrap-n-map.com). It is a reusable cloth sandwich wrapper lined with food-grade plastic and held together with a velcro tab. It folds out to make a place mat for a pretty lunch.

But I ask the question, what is the carbon footprint of this product? At the end of its life, will it end up in the landfill? Would using a piece or recyclable aluminum foil, compostable waxed paper, or Tupperware be a better choice? I'll have to try this product out to see how long it lasts.

Whatever you choose for a lunch container, remember to buy local food from a Farmers' Market or log onto www.suisunvalley.com to see what is fresh at Solano County farm stands and support our farmers.

New San Francisco food waste ordinance.

Did you know that, on average, Americans waste 100 billion pounds of food every year? This food gets thrown into landfills, producing methane that pollutes the earth 20 times more than carbon dioxide.

San Francisco is taking this seriously and is asking all residents and businesses to put all food wastes and soiled food paper into their green compost cart. This organic waste is sent to Vacaville and composted at the Jepson Prairie Organics composting facility.

In the meantime, our vegetable and fruit waste will have to go into our backyard composting bins. I hope that someday soon we will have organic recycling here.

VALCORE Recycling Board Secretary Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.

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A Don't forget to check out green cleaning