

Problems & Solutions

Find them around your abode

REAL SIMPLE solutions

Here are items you can find new uses for around your house:

GARLIC PRESS

ORIGINAL PURPOSE: Crushing cloves.

AHA! USE: Cracking coriander seeds, cumin seeds and peppercorns. Don't have a mortar and pestle? When a recipe calls for "freshly cracked" or "coarsely ground" seeds, fill the chamber of a garlic press and squeeze to crush.

REAL SIMPLE REWARD: Fresh spices, hot off the press.

SMALL JAR

ORIGINAL PURPOSE: Containing PB or J.

AHA! USE: Cleaning a food processor. The hole in the center makes it nearly impossible to let a crusty bowl soak. Pop a small jar on top of the hole, then fill the bowl to the rim with sudsy water.

REAL SIMPLE REWARD: A thorough soaking means less scrubbing.

BOBBY PINS

ORIGINAL PURPOSE: Holding up your updo.

AHA! USE: Prepping a pleated skirt for ironing. Slide a bobby pin onto each pleat at the hem to hold them all in place while you press. (Be sure to remove them afterward!)

REAL SIMPLE REWARD: Pleats that are as neat as a pin.

CAR WAX

ORIGINAL PURPOSE: Shining the family sedan.

AHA! USE: Making stove-top cleaning easier. Before you cook, apply a layer of wax to the enamel surface with a soft rag, then wipe off. The thin layer that remains will prevent greasy splatters and spills from sticking.

REAL SIMPLE REWARD: Cleaning up after a stir-fry is a cinch.

BATHROOM MIRROR

ORIGINAL PURPOSE: Reflecting the fairest of them all.

AHA! USE: Reminding you to pay that bill or get milk. Use a dry-erase marker to write a "must not forget" errand or event on the mirror. After your final hair check, the erasable message will be at the top of your mind as you walk out the door.

REAL SIMPLE REWARD: A paperless to-do list.

THE PRIMER: COMPUTER SHORTHAND

If it's been a while since you last spoke a secret language, then chances are, the ever-multiplying acronyms popping up in e-mails, instant messages and text messages seem like dispatches from Mars. Navigating Nct-speak or texting with a teenager can make the average person feel UCWAP (up a creek without a paddle). To translate a specific phrase, go to www.netlingo.com, which has a dictionary of more than 5,000 terms, updated daily. Meanwhile, start improving your cybervocabulary with this list of common abbreviations. CWYL!

BRB: Be right back

CWYL: Chat with you later

CYT or SYT: See you tomorrow

GR8: Great

ILU: I love you

IMHO: In my humble opinion

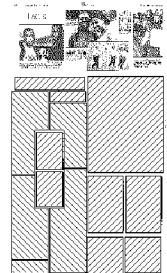
J/c: Just checking

jtou: Just thinking of you

LMK: Let me know

N-A-Y-L: In a while

NM: Never mind



NOYB: None of your business
 ROFL: Rolling on the floor laughing
 WTH: What the heck

**PRODUCTS OF THE MONTH: FOUR
 PROBLEM-SOLVERS FROM \$4**

NYLON BAG, \$5

PROBLEM: Plastic or paper? They both create trash.

SOLUTION: Use the sturdy, lightweight ChicoBag as a grab-and-go tote for groceries, takeout or other small items. Each bag holds up to 20 pounds and folds easily into an attached pouch. Stash one in the glove compartment and another in your purse.

TO BUY: www.chicobag.com for locations

CANTALOUPE, \$4

PROBLEM: You sliced too soon and got a mouthful of unripe melon.

SOLUTION: Choose Dulcinea Extra Sweet Tuscan Style cantaloupes, which are bred so the rind's grooves change from dark green to gold when they are ripe. Tasty melon, any way you slice it.

TO BUY: www.dulcinea.com for locations.

SCREWDRIVER, \$25

PROBLEM: Every DIY project calls for a different screwdriver.

SOLUTION: Reach for the Loggerhead Tools Bit Dr. screwdriver. The tool has 21 driver heads that store in the handle, while the shaft can bend into six different angled positions.

TO BUY: www.loggerheadtools.com.

WALLET ORGANIZER, \$45

PROBLEM: Carrying around a wallet and a date book weighs you down.

SOLUTION: Lighten your load with Filofax's Mini Finsbury, which combines an organizer with a wallet and includes space for credit cards, bills and change. Downsizing never looked so good.

TO BUY: www.filofaxusa.com.

SHOE REFRESHERS, \$6

PROBLEM: Your shoes stink.

SOLUTION: Click open Dr. Scholl's Odor Destroyers and say goodbye to smelly shoes. Place an odor-neutralizing sphere inside each shoe every evening and wake up to

a freshly scented pair.

TO BUY: At drugstores

**REFRESHER COURSE: WHEN TO
 REPLACE CLEANING PRODUCTS**

There aren't skeletons in your closet, but it's a safe bet there are a lot of cleaning products collecting dust under the kitchen sink. Read these tips to know when it's time to clean out your cleaners. (Contact your local environmental-service department about how to dispose of them correctly.)

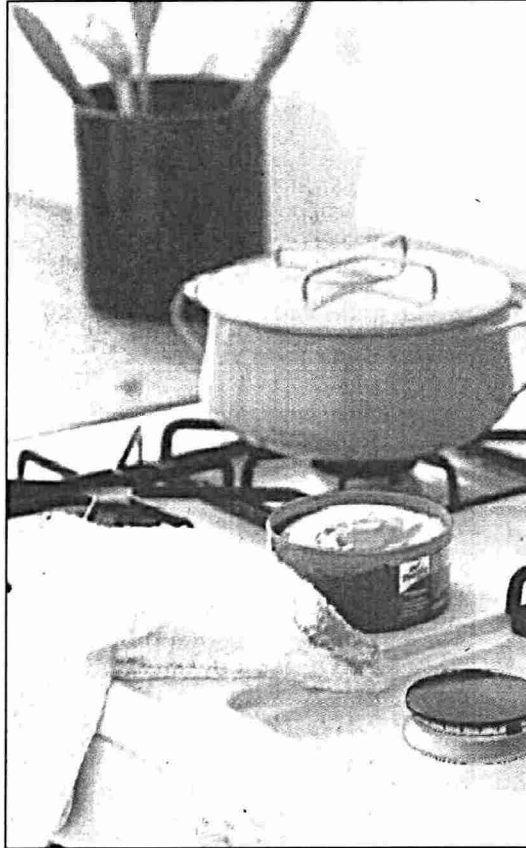
— Powder and liquid cleaners that change color or consistency should be replaced. "They've probably been contaminated and will be less effective or even dangerous," says Neal Langerman, Ph.D., an officer in the division of chemical health and safety at the American Chemical Society.

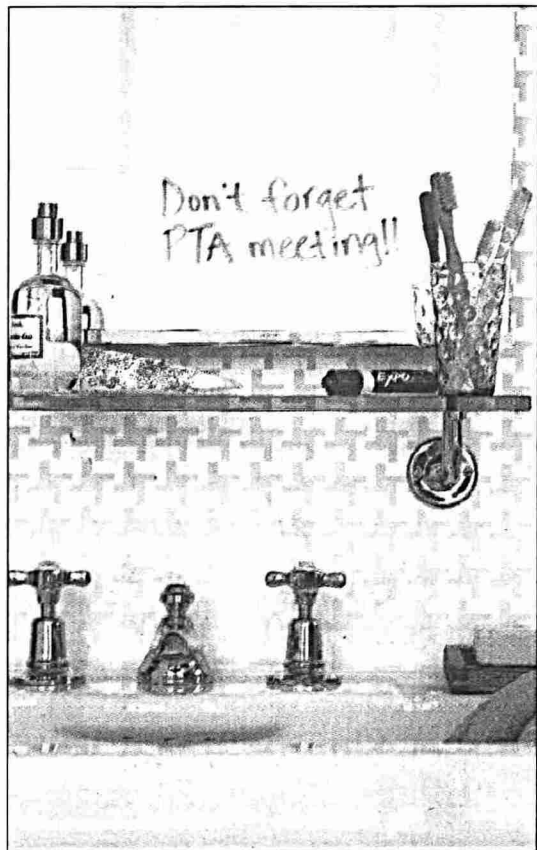
— Household bleach that's left over after cleaning should be tossed. Once it has been diluted with water, it loses its disinfecting ability after a day.

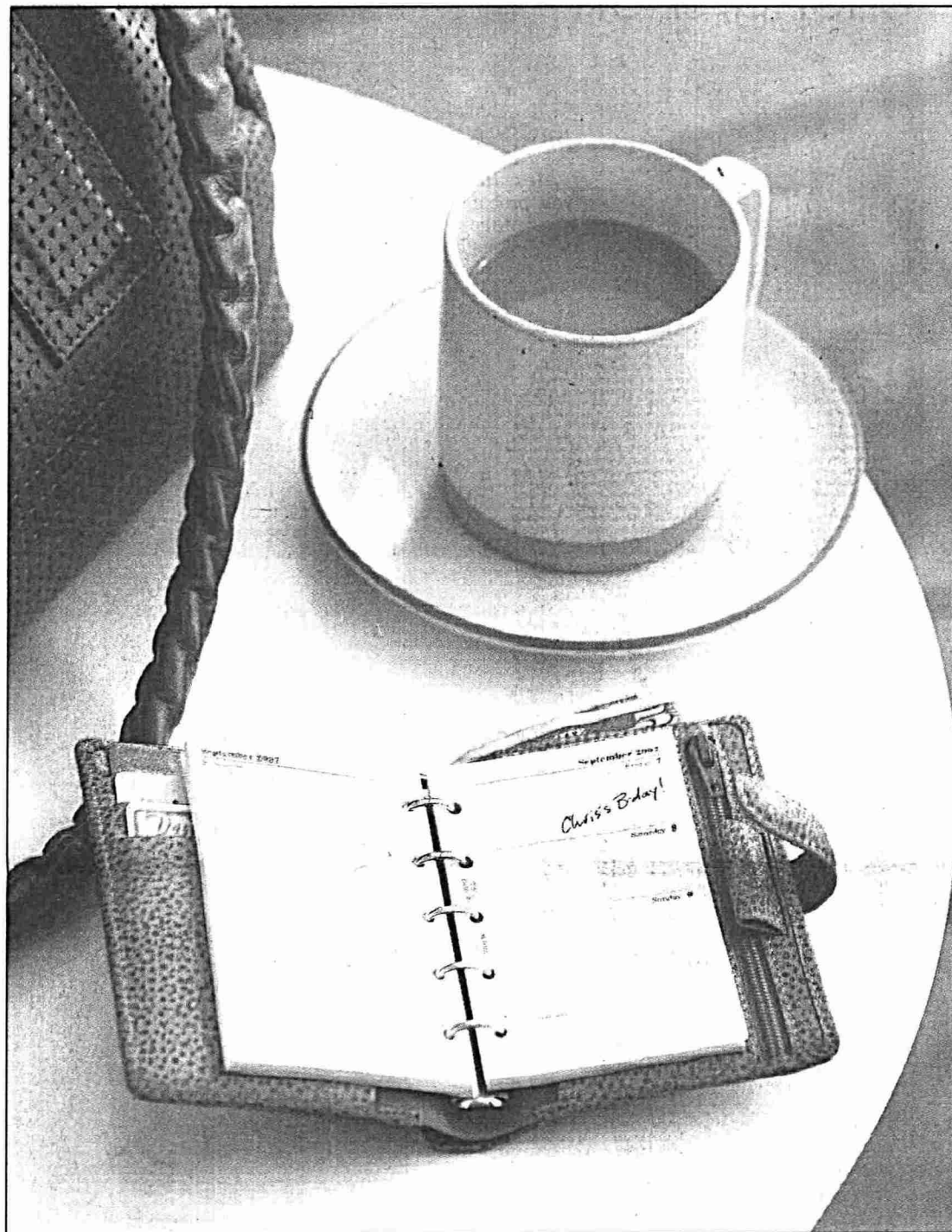
— Drain cleaner that has hardened or formed clumps shouldn't be used. You could injure yourself if a piece reacts violently with water inside a pipe and blows out.

— Cleaners in plastic containers that have become brittle, discolored or cracked or that have a disintegrating label should be thrown away. These are signs the product might be deteriorating.

For more Real Simple solutions, read Real Simple magazine or watch "Real Simple" on PBS (check local listings for day and time).







Printing imperfections present during scanning