

CLEVER CLEANING

The right product can help safeguard your family's health

Safer dishes Washing-up brushes can be breeding grounds for bacteria. Charles Bentley's new Hour Glass household brushes all have built-in antibacterial properties. Priced from £3 for a dish brush, Wilkinson

Remove mould Indoor mould can make asthma symptoms worse according to research. Destroy it with HG Mould Spray, £4.99, Lakeland

Beat the bugs Vetroxx Surface Spray, £6, is 99.9 per cent efficient in killing flu viruses. Call 0845 226 0660 or visit molarltd.co.uk



GO FOR GRAINS...



Wholegrains – cereals such as wheat, oats and barley, which include all three edible parts of the grain and contain key vitamins and minerals – are good for our health. But 95 per cent of adults still aren't eating enough.

Consultant nutritionist Therese Coleman explains: 'Wholegrain foods are full of goodness because they contain a wide variety of nutrients, including fibre, protein, B vitamins and vitamin E, minerals and phytochemicals, which may have antioxidant properties. Studies have shown that eating just three servings a day, as part of a low-fat diet, can help maintain a healthy heart.' Porridge, wholemeal bread and rolls, wholegrain pasta, oatcakes, popcorn and brown rice are all examples of wholegrain foods. Start with a few simple changes such as oatcakes with low-fat soft cheese instead of high-fat, high-salt snacks. Visit wholegraingoodness.com for more information.

HOW HOUSEPLANTS CAN IMPROVE YOUR *health*

What can help reduce stress and make your home a healthier place? The surprising answer is the humble houseplant

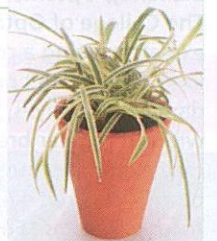
Most of us use houseplants to brighten up a dull corner, but they've got a more important role than that in our homes. According to Ian Drummond, creative director of landscaping company Indoor Garden Design, 'They can actually make your home a healthier place to be, as they clean the air of toxins and release oxygen.'

Everyday household items, such as computers, TVs, paint and even carpets, can release toxins into the air. Plants act as a natural air purifier, removing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. And, according to the Plants4Life campaign (plants4life.org), having them around can reduce fatigue, coughs, sore throats and other cold-related illnesses by more than 30 per cent, as well as lifting our mood and reducing blood pressure.

'Plants with lots of leaf surface area work well, and the beauty of them is that they're relatively inexpensive,' says Ian. 'You only need to dot a few plants around the house to improve the air quality. Even in the bedroom, the right plants can purify air at night while you're fast asleep.' See the panel (right) for what to use where.



Which plant where



For the living room Spider plants (above), ferns (left) and palms are all good for clearing the air of chemicals from paint, varnish and tobacco smoke.



For the bedroom Orchids, bromeliads (both above) as well as succulents conserve their energy during the day and refresh the air in your room at night.