

GREEN CLEANING WORKSHOP

SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared March 2017

This workshop is part of Hamilton Sustainability Professionals Network (SPN)'s Community-based Leadership in Sustainability educational series, which is supported in collaboration with McMaster University through the Academic Sustainability Programs Office.



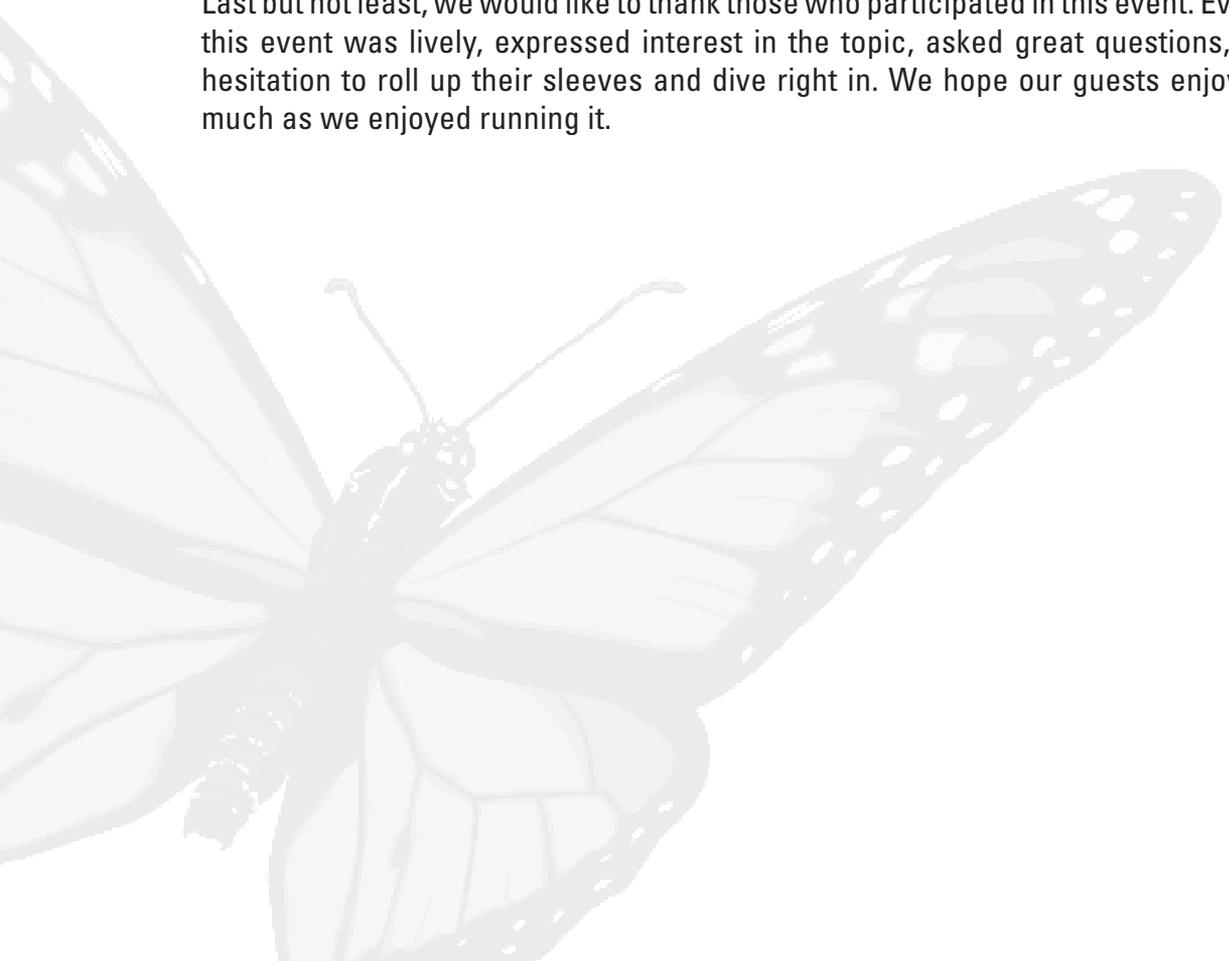
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Jay Carter, Allison Maxted, and Evergreen Hamilton for providing us with use of the [Collaboration Station](#) at 294 James St. N. The Collaboration Station is an incredible community space available at no cost, and comes equipped with tables, chairs, craft paper, a microwave, and everything else we needed to run this event. Did we mention the space was awesome and free?!

We would also like to express our gratitude to the following volunteers for helping run this event: Edwin Wong, Hayya Usmani, Janelle Trant, Jasmine Wong, Jay Carter, Midhat Malik, Mohamed Mahfouz, Peter Topalovic, Sandra Hernandez Fuentes, and Tyler Marr. Facilitating such an interactive and potentially messy workshop with 25-35 participants is a large undertaking. Volunteers set up the room and prepared packages for each participant that included their empty spray bottles, jars, and labels; ensured that all participants signed-in, filled out the liability waiver, agreed to the photo release form, received their package, and created a name tag. During the event, volunteers helped prepare the table with the ingredients needed for the current recipe and, before moving to the next recipe, helped to clear the workspace of empty containers and ingredients that were no longer needed. This helped keep the workshop on schedule, minimize confusion, and eliminate spills and messes. Two volunteers, Jasmine Wong and Midhat Malik, photographed the event to ensure we were able to capture the fun and energy of the workshop. This event would have been mayhem and not nearly as much fun without these amazing volunteers.

Thanks to Zeinab Rahal for her design skills and for putting the results of this workshop into a presentable form that we can proudly share with the broader community.

Last but not least, we would like to thank those who participated in this event. Everyone who attended this event was lively, expressed interest in the topic, asked great questions, and didn't have any hesitation to roll up their sleeves and dive right in. We hope our guests enjoyed the workshop as much as we enjoyed running it.



WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The Green Cleaning Workshop was held on Thursday February 16, 2017 from 7:30-9:00 p.m. at Evergreen's [Collaboration Station](#), located at 294 James St. North.

Workshops attendees learned how to make sustainable cleaning products using recipes that are environmentally conscious, safe enough to use around children, and less expensive than the store-bought alternatives. More specifically, the workshop participants learned:

- The harmful effects of traditional cleaning products
- How to read labels and identify which ingredients to avoid
- Natural alternatives that achieve the same if not better results
- The process of making and using homemade cleaning products

As a group, participants learned about and made the following products:

- All-purpose cleaner
- Laundry detergent
- Tub, sink, and tile scrub
- Goo remover
- Glass cleaner

See Appendix A for ingredient lists and recipes.

WORKSHOP HOST

The Green Cleaning Workshop host was [Kate Whalen](#). Kate is the Education Coordinator for the Hamilton SPN. Kate has an Honors B.A. and M.A. from McMaster and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Geography & Earth Sciences. Kate is a formal youth mentor and takes great joy in connecting with those who share her passion for sustainability, community, and life-long learning.

SAVINGS

As a group, if every participant substituted their traditional store-bought cleaning product with their new homemade green cleaning product, the economic and environmental savings would be as follows:

- All-purpose cleaner – a group savings of \$99 and 23 L of traditional glass cleaner
- Laundry detergent – a group savings of \$37 and 9 L of traditional liquid laundry detergent
- Tub, sink, and tile scrub – a group savings of \$0.7 and 3.5 kg of traditional scrub
- Goo remover – a group savings of \$73 and 3.2 L of traditional goo remover
- Glass Cleaner – a group savings of \$116 and 28 L of traditional glass cleaner

Group savings were based on 35 workshop attendees and using the actual quantities of each green product made. Comparisons were made and costs calculated using Walmart.ca for consistency. However, ingredient costs and traditional cleaning alternative costs may vary if sourced elsewhere.

ATTENDANCE

As with many free events, we anticipate that between 50-70% of registered attendees will show up on the day of the event. In line with our expectations, total of 37 individuals registered on Eventbrite and 25 (67.6%) showed up to the workshop. Of the 25 participants, most attendees self-identified as students (14) and community members (11). In addition, we had 10 volunteers register to help with and participate in the workshop, of which 6 volunteers were students and 4 were community members. All volunteers showed up early and stayed until everything was cleaned up. In total, there were 35 individuals who participated in this workshop.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

Through an online survey, when asked about which of four aspects attendees found most appealing when hearing about the event, respondents listed Speaker/Content highest, followed closely by Community Engagement, and then by Networking/Professional Development.

Participants were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the event. Of those who responded, 56% were Very Satisfied and 44% were Satisfied, with no one being Neutral, Dissatisfied, or Very Dissatisfied.

When asked to rate the following elements of the event on a five point scale of Poor to Excellent, the weighted average response is as follows: Fun and Enjoyment (4.8), Value of Activity (4.8), Relevance of Discussion (4.6), Quality of Speaker (4.6), Promotion/Communication of Event (4.3), and Accessibility of Location (4.1).

Participants were provided with the opportunity to tell us what they liked most about the event, from the 10 comments provided, most comments (6) mentioned learning and/or sharing knowledge, followed by the active learning portion of the “Do It Yourself” model (4) and the ability to take their products home (4), and meeting new people (2).

When asked how we could improve, of the 6 comments provided, most of the constructive feedback was in response to participant’s difficulty to hear and see from the back of the room. In addition, one respondent mentioned that they don’t use one of the products and thought it would be a good idea to survey participants beforehand so they can select what they want to make. Another suggestion was to start the event with an ice breaker activity. Finally, someone else recommended providing an information pamphlet for participants to take home. Regarding the last comment, we have decided to include more information about the products and recipes in this report, which can be found in Appendix A.

When asked if they used any of the products, most said that they had used all of them (56%), some said they had used some of the products (33%), and a few had used none (11%). One respondent commented that “the goo remover has come in really handy and the all-purpose cleaner has a million uses”. Another respondent commented that they haven’t used their products yet because they still live in a campus residence building.

When asked if they were interested in attending another related event in the future, 100% of respondents answered “Yes”.

LESSONS LEARNED AND NEXT STEPS

If we run this event in future, we will make the following revisions:

- Rather than set-up in one long table with the speaker at the front, set-up in small groups of 4 participants and one volunteer to help each group to hear and easily participate.
- Before sitting at a table, run an ice-breaker activity and facilitate discussion about personal interest in green cleaning. Encourage participants to sit with someone they don't know to help build community.
- Provide pens and a fill-in-the-blank handout to each participant. Before wrapping up the event, review each recipe and encourage participants to make their own notes to take home for future reference. This will prompt any final questions as well as help participants to retain the information.
- Rather than purchasing empty jars and spray bottles, work with Evergreen to help us collect empty vessels for re-use. Members of the community could drop off empty spray bottles and glass jars to be reused at our next event. Not only will this promote reduce and reuse, but will also lower the costs to host the event.
- Focus our promotion and communication efforts to more communities throughout the city to engage a greater diversity of participation.

RESOURCES

Environmental Working Group's Guide to Healthy Cleaning

- <http://www.ewg.org/guides/cleaners>
- Find safety rating for products and ingredients

Mommypotamus

- <https://www.mommypotamus.com/>
- One of my favourite bloggers with some of the best recipes

Queen of Green

- <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/queen-of-green/>
- Another fantastic blogger

APPENDIX A

Caution: ingredients, recipes, instructions, and directions should be used at your own discretion.

All-purpose cleaner – About 3c water, 2T Castile Soap, 5-10 drops of essential oil. Add, in order, to spray bottle.

Laundry detergent – 12 soap berries and 12c water. Let simmer in a pot for 1 or more hours. Use within 1-2 weeks or freeze in ice cube trays. Use in place of liquid laundry detergent.

Tub, sink, and tile scrub – Just baking soda. Make paste with a bit of vinegar and scrub with scouring cloth to clean immediately.

Goo remover – 4T coconut oil, 2T baking soda, and 10 drops of orange essential oil (optional). Melt oil in microwave until just melted and mix ingredients in shallow jar. To use, leave on surface for at least 30 minutes, scrub off, and buff with hot water and cloth.

Glass cleaner – Just white vinegar. Add to spray bottle and use to polish glass (well before company arrives).



WORKSHOP IMAGES



Photo Credits:
[1] Jasmine Wong
[2] [3] [4] Midhat Malik
[5] [6] Peter Topalovic