

Oxalic Acid

"Wood Bleach"

Just hearing the word "acid" sounds ominous. But oxalic acid is easy to use and the safest for the home. In fact it is found in many vegetables including spinach, and rhubarb. Perhaps, its best known use is that as a wood bleaching agent. Exterior wood tends to turn a dark gray after being exposed. Oxalic acid solutions are used to lighten and brighten these dingy colors. In the refinishing of wood furniture, oxalic acid can be used after stripping to lighten and soften darker stained areas before refinishing.

A few other uses for oxalic acid are:

- Bleaching agent in the textile activities, wood pulp bleaching;
- Rust remover for metal treatment;
- Used in commercial rust removers to remove rust stains from tubs and sinks.
- Grinding agent, such as marble polishing
- Waste water treatment, removing calcium from water.
- Use in cleaning and sterilizing home brewing equipment.
- Useful as a reducing agent for photography and ink removal
- Used as purifying agent in pharmaceutical industry
- Rock collectors, clean mineral specimens
- Remove food and rust stains from kitchen countertops and plumbing fixtures
- Mild solutions will remove rust, ink, and food stains from fabric
- Hard water stains are easily removed from exterior surfaces such as driveways, garage floors, stucco and painted surfaces. Can also remove hard water stains on plumbing fixtures, ceramic tile, and shower enclosures
- Makes lawn and patio furniture look like new
- After scrubbing with Oxygen bleach and TSP (trisodium phosphate), use oxalic acid on your wood deck to lighten the wood prior to sealing or staining

Warning: Oxalic Acid is still an acid and should be treated with respect; do not be lulled into complacency. In its purified form, oxalic acid is a highly corrosive and toxic substance. Latex gloves should be worn at all times when using it and it should always be mixed and used in a well-ventilated area. The gasses given off are dangerous and have been suspected by some in causing health problems. Always protect your skin, wear a dust mask when mixing ANY powder, eye protection is a must always have a supply of fresh water available for flushing off spills. If swallowed, give plenty of milk or water, preferably water. Do not induce vomiting. Contact CHEMTREC (800) 424-9300. If inhaled, get some fresh air. If the nausea or headache persists, contact the poison control hotline. Used Oxalic Acid should be considered hazardous waste and should be disposed of properly.