



KIM KURIAN

Green products are now widely available.

Innkeeper Lee purchases most of her green cleaning products locally. "We buy Trader Joe's biodegradable laundry soap, and we use this great German all-purpose concentrated cleaner we buy at Emerald Earth, a natural-living store. You just put a capful in a bucket of water. It's very economical."

Longtime Santa Fe residents James McMath and Sabina Steinhardt, co-founders and co-owners of Emerald Earth, The Natural Living Shop, saw an opportunity to introduce a different green cleaning product to Santa Fe and the United States as the first retailer of Effective Microorganisms (EM), or "nature's little recyclers."

According to the Emerald Earth Web site, this technology was developed in Japan and has been available there since 1982. The site explains that antibacterial cleaners aren't all they're cracked up to be.

"The widespread use of antiseptic cleaners and health products has come under closer scrutiny in recent years," according to the site. "These antibiotic products are designed to destroy all bacteria, whether they are beneficial or harmful. The healthy and beneficial microflora are what sustain biodiversity in our environments. This antiseptic approach of destroying all bacterial life often makes a bad situation worse by attempting to treat the symptoms rather than alleviating the cause."

McMath added, "What makes these products different from other natural cleaning products on the market is other natural cleaners used mostly citrus oils for naturally disinfecting. Our EM cleaners add probiotic microbes that naturally disinfect. They are nontoxic and contain no artificial or synthetic ingredients."

Before you decide that EM cleaners may be a little too green for your household, you may be interested to know that "the International Red Cross recommended that every country use EM for disaster cleanup to minimize the spread of pathogen disease after the tsunami," McMath said.

The store's biggest EM seller is the

eMC Power Cleaner imported from Germany. "We have several business owners, including Carolyn Lee, who use them for commercial purposes," McMath said.

Lee suggests that the more consumers ask retailers to carry green products, the more market demand will drive prices down and increase choices. With products such as Seventh Generation, Ecover, Simple Green and Method available at national chains including Target, Home Depot, Linens 'N Things and Albertsons, it's really just a matter of trying something new.

"Every time it's time to purchase a new product, we ask, 'What can we buy or move to in order to make it more green, eco-friendly, without sacrificing effectiveness or our guests' comfort?'" Lee said.

The increasing demand for nontoxic cleaners led Rudolf Reitz and his company, BioShield, to carry more natural-living products over the past decade. Since 1982, BioShield has been selling its Healthy Living Paints and Stains in Santa Fe and beyond. The company began offering green cleaners in the early '90s, including wood and stone floor cleaners, lavender laundry booster and dish soap.

"We've been doing this so many years, ... we're a trend maker more than a follower of an idea," Reitz said. "Our cleaners are different than other 'green' products that use a surfactant base. ... They're almost 100 percent plant materials. We use sunflower-oil-based soaps, and our essential oils are pure, whether conventional or organic."

Many of the products available at the BioShield Healthy Living Store are made from ingredients familiar to the average consumer, including lavender essential oil, citrus oils and tea tree oil. Most are nontoxic and 100 percent biodegradable.

According to [www.thedailygreen.com](http://www.thedailygreen.com), a consumer Web site focusing on ecologically safe products and services, some of the greenest cleaners are tried-and-true remedies your great-grandmother might have

## Green Clean Resources

**BioShield  
Healthy Living Store**  
3005 S. St. Francis Drive, Suite 2A  
Plaza Entrada, behind Albertsons  
505-438-3448

[www.bioshieldpaint.com](http://www.bioshieldpaint.com)

A well-known local manufacturer of ecologically sensitive paints and stains, BioShield makes a nontoxic, food-safe Cutting Board and Salad Bowl Finish (8 fluid ounces, \$8.50) that's perfect for shining wooden utensils, cutting boards, etc. A comprehensive line of green-cleaning products is available online and at the company's new Healthy Living Store off Zia Road in Plaza Entrada.

**Emerald Earth - The Natural  
Living Shop**  
328 Guadalupe St., Suite K  
Next to Zia Diner  
505-983-4014

[www.emearth.com](http://www.emearth.com)

Emerald Earth is a pioneer in bringing Effective Microorganism cleaning supplies to Santa Fe and the United States. These probiotic household products help establish a healthy balance of naturally occurring, hardworking "good bacteria" to the home. An alternative approach to "antibacterial" cleaning supplies, the popular Power Cleaner, imported from Germany, is gently scented with pine and citrus essential oils. Perfect for tough cleaning jobs whether household or commercial, a little goes a long way. With a 1:10 dilution ratio for tough jobs, a half-liter bottle (16.9 ounces) is available in the store and on the Emerald Earth Web site for \$14.29.

[www.ecover.com](http://www.ecover.com)

"Phosphate-free since 1980," Ecover was founded in Belgium and sells worldwide. A comprehensive range of products, from dishwasher rinse aids to laundry softeners, are available at retailers including La Montañita Co-op and through affiliate Web sites. The Whole Foods store in Santa Fe carries the 16-ounce Limescale Remover for \$4.49 and 25 dishwasher tablets for \$5.29.

[www.mrsmeyers.com](http://www.mrsmeyers.com)

Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day products are phosphate-free, biodegradable and scented with natural essential oils — basil, geranium and lemon

verbena. A unique offering is its dermatologist-tested "Baby Blossom" line, made with organic essential oils. A 24-pack of Baby Blossom Surface Wipes is available for \$4.99 on the Web site. Mrs. Meyer's products are locally available at Linens 'N Things, Pharmaca, Cost Plus and Whole Foods.

[www.seventhgeneration.com](http://www.seventhgeneration.com)

Long touted as the leader in producing environmentally sensitive household products, including recycled paper towels, Seventh Generation makes products that are found at natural-food stores such as Whole Foods Markets and online. Subscribe to the company newsletter, The Non-Toxic Times, online. Products are available at national and local groceries and natural-foods and -products stores. The Albertsons on Guadalupe Street sells the 150-ounce, 50-load Free & Clear High Efficiency liquid laundry soap for \$13.99.

[www.simplegreen.com](http://www.simplegreen.com)

Created more than 30 years ago for industrial and household use, nontoxic, biodegradable Simple Green multipurpose cleaner now comes in a variety of formulas and scents, including a special stainless steel and chrome cleaner. Simple Green's comprehensive product line is carried in a variety of local and national grocery and hardware chains, searchable on the "Where To Buy" page on the Simple Green Web site. Rio Grande Ace Hardware de Santa Fe offers the 24-ounce original concentrated formula for \$7.49. Great for light cleaning to heavy-duty degreasing, Simple Green also makes a great laundry booster.

[www.methodhome.com](http://www.methodhome.com)

Made popular by discount-retailing giant Target, Method cleaners are nontoxic, never tested on animals, stylishly packaged, and come in a variety of scents including cucumber and grapefruit. The product line of biodegradable cleaners includes a 24-count Stainless Steel Clean & Polish Wipes for \$3.99 at Santa Fe's Target store. The Method Web site also offers a shopping cart or call 1-866-9-METHOD.

used to maintain her home. Simple household staples such as baking soda and vinegar can be used to clean safely and effectively.

If you don't feel like mixing up your own bathroom cleaner, remember that there are readily available lower toxicity and nontoxic options in the marketplace. As green-clean pioneer Seventh Generation suggests on its

Web site, [www.seventhgeneration.com](http://www.seventhgeneration.com): "If every household in the U.S. replaced just one 32-ounce bottle of shower cleaner containing chlorine bleach with our hydrogen-peroxide-based shower cleaner, we could prevent 1 million pounds of chlorine from entering our environment."

How's that for green-clean motivation?