

2011 Annual Green Report

By Lisa Kopochinski, *Services Editor*



BY NOW, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO FIND someone within the North American cleaning industry who doesn't think green cleaning is a good thing. Everyone may not be fully 100 percent on the green bandwagon just yet (old habits die hard), but I think it is safe to say that green cleaning is no longer just a trend or buzzword. In fact, many consider it to be standard operating procedure.

The shift towards green will only continue to intensify in the years to come largely due to three main benefits—environmental; staff and building occupant health; and the impact on a facility's budget.

The first benefit is pretty much a no-brainer. Environmental benefits are easily seen by the use of less harsh chemicals, minimizing the use of both water and light, and reducing waste and recycling on a much greater level. How can you not feel good when making a conscious decision to not pollute our air and water sources?

As for the second benefit, green cleaning has also shown to be of great benefit to cleaning staff and building occupants. Though statistics can be difficult to confirm, the U.S. Green Building Council has reported that implementing green products can help reduce employee absenteeism and health care costs. If employees are healthier, often this will be evident in employee productivity and morale.

Green cleaning can also positively affect a company's bottom line, which can generally be measured in terms of lower operating

costs—both short term and long term—particularly during the lifespan of a building and its equipment.

As for where green cleaning is headed in the next number of years, Stephen Ashkin, president of the Ashkin Group and founder of Green Cleaning University, believes we are seeing an expansion of chemical-free cleaning, a trend that is expected to continue. This essentially pertains to the use of systems, equipment and cleaning processes that are proving effective at removing soils from surfaces without the use of chemicals—green or otherwise.

“Without question, as equipment costs decline and performance levels continue to improve, chemical-free cleaning will play a key role in the professional cleaning industry,” says Ashkin. “We can also expect more testing of cleaning performance. Some refer to this as bringing more science

into cleaning. The bottom line is that the methods used for cleaning will be analyzed and must prove their effectiveness.”

While there have been tremendous strides made in green cleaning products over the past five to ten years—with many now outperforming conventional cleaners—what we may also start to see is a greater emphasis on the training of cleaning professionals.

“However, this is not necessarily teaching procedures, as we normally think of training,” emphasizes Ashkin. “Instead, this training will focus on how cleaning professionals can help building owners/managers reduce waste, energy use and water consumption. In other words, clients will call upon cleaning professionals to help them become more sustainable and reduce their building operating costs.”

For instance, Ashkin is currently working with two major real estate organizations that now not only view green cleaning products and services as comparable to traditional cleaning ones, but as “best practice.”

The U.S. EPA DfE Criteria for Safer Chemical Ingredients

Each ingredient in a formulation has a function in making a product work—whether it is to aid in cleaning by reducing surface tension (surfactants), dissolve or suspend materials (solvents), reduce water hardness (chelating agents), or provide a scent (fragrances). Within these “functional classes” many ingredients share similar toxicological and environmental fate characteristics. As a result, DfE focuses its review of formulation ingredients on the key (environmental and human health) characteristics of concern within a functional class. This approach allows formulators to use those ingredients with the lowest hazard in their functional class, while still formulating high-performing products. The DfE Safer Product Labeling Program evaluates each ingredient in a formulation against the following master and functional-class criteria documents, as appropriate. These documents define the characteristics and toxicity thresholds for ingredients that are acceptable in DfE-labeled products. The criteria are based on EPA expertise in evaluating the physical and toxicological properties of chemicals, and while they incorporate authoritative lists of chemicals of concern, they go far beyond these lists. DfE applies the criteria using EPA research and analytical methods to ensure that DfE-labeled products contain only the safest possible ingredients. All criteria documents are part of DfE’s Standard for Safer Cleaning Products (SSCP).

Source: www.epa.gov

“This means they believe that dollar for dollar, measure for measure, it is the best way to operate a facility,” he says. “This is making green cleaning the norm, especially in this country’s largest facilities.”

While the main reasons and key concerns for green cleaning have

always been to protect health and the environment, further driving forces have emerged. That is, the desire of many facilities to be LEED certified as well as the fact that major labor unions and children’s health groups are now actively behind the green cleaning movement.

This could mean that more states will pass regulations requiring green cleaning in schools and in public facilities. As well, many organizations and facilities will soon require chemical manufacturers to fully disclose the ingredients in their products.

In this issue of *Services*, we engaged a number of cleaning industry professionals and asked for their comments on green cleaning techniques and products and what we can expect over the next several years. A special thank you to the following individuals: Henry Babol, technical business manager, Colgate-Palmolive; Jill Frey, president, Cummins Building Maintenance; Robert Kahn, president, Reliable Corporation; Mark Malerba, CBSE, vice president, Metropolitan Maintenance; Jim Martorano, marketing service manager, Colgate-Palmolive; Kerry Nevatte, past president, Canadian Sanitation Supply Association; Frank Trevisani, manager of building services, Spartan Chemical Company; and James Young, National Account Director—BSC/Retail, Kärcher North America, Inc., of which Windsor is a member.

WHAT’S NEW IN GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS AND TECHNIQUES FOR 2011 AND INTO 2012?

Frank Trevisani: Green cleaning products are evolving and being accepted more every day as the cleaners of choice. They are price neutral and, when utilized through dilution systems are very cost effective. More products are being produced with sustainable biorenewable materials such as corn, soy and sunflowers rather than petroleum-based products. In addition to supporting sustainability, use of these products supports U.S. agriculture instead of foreign oil.

Henry Babol: EPA’s Design-for-the-Environment Program now mandates restrictions on the ingredients that can be used in fragrances. More stringent criteria must be met that will reduce harmful and toxic ingredients used in some fragrances. Many large retailers are mandating that manufacturers use naturally derived ingredients in their products that are sustainable and sourced from plants instead of oil. They also mandate higher use of recyclable packaging, and there is a definite movement to refillable containers and the use of concentrates to reduce transportation carbon emissions.

Jill Frey: The trend seems to be focused on microfiber technology versus chemicals as in years past. Rubbermaid is taking the lead in this area. An example of this is microfiber wipers. There are studies that show that bacteria count is reduced when using microfiber versus standard cleaning rags; therefore the chance of the building occupants getting sick is reduced. There are many imitations of a cloth that says it is microfiber, but in reality it may contain just a small amount of microfiber. These wipers are less expensive, but they are not as efficient, so you may not see the labor savings. Rubbermaid is coming out with a new microfiber compatible bucket

that recirculates the water through a filter to keep the solution water clean for greater productivity out of the employee. Also, we are finding that some companies are having a lot of success with charged water. It is amazing to consider that positive charged water can clean and disinfect.

Kerry Nevatte: As green products become the norm in cleaning procedures, water and products using “just water” as cleaning solutions like the ec-H2O Electronically Converted Water Technology Systems from Tennant Co. or the many ecological vapor cleaning systems are becoming a force in the marketplace.

based products for cleaning tasks. Glass cleaners, degreasers and neutral cleaners can all be purchased with the chemical makeup of renewable resources.

Henry Babol: Colgate’s DFE-approved products (design for the environment) all meet strict EPA guidelines and, where possible, are pH neutral, thus adding a degree of safety to users that other more aggressive products do not provide. Our concentrates provide performance with economy and come in a number of sizes and packaging dispensers for ease of use and utility. The EPA’s Design-for-the-Environment Green Program has grown

Jill Frey: Cummins Building Maintenance uses products in a dispensing system from Diversey. When using the dispensing system, you can control the amount of the chemical being used in the facility, thereby reducing the chance of misuse. Diversey manufactures the same product in a variety of delivery systems. We also use a product called Hydrox that can be purchased in ready-to-dispense quarts or concentrates that are made to dispense out of wall-mounted units. This way we can move people around to different jobs and they can still use the same product even though it might be packaged differently.

Environmental Attributes to Look For in Green Cleaning Products

- Minimizes exposure to concentrates
- No ozone-depleting substances
- Recyclable packaging
- Recycled content in packaging
- Reduced bioconcentration factor
- Reduced flammability
- Reduced or no added dyes, except when added for safety purposes
- Reduced or no added fragrances
- Reduced or no skin irritants
- Reduced or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Reduced packaging

Source: www.epa.gov

Robert Kahn: Steam cleaning has begun to garner even more interest in the commercial cleaning sector now that it has become a more popular choice for consumers. Commercial steam cleaners are becoming more available and advanced in terms of performance in a multitude of commercial settings.

WHAT GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS ARE ON THE MARKET THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND TO OTHERS?

Frank Trevisani: The sustainable products that are made from renewable resources are my choice. Biorenewable cleaning products allow us to break away from petroleum-

spectacularly over the past three to four years. They now have several thousand products certified from several hundred companies in the cleaning and jan-san arena.

James Young: I would highly recommend Prochem’s Axiom green carpet cleaning products. Green carpet cleaning products have been the one chemical segment that has lagged behind on producing highly effective and quality products. Most companies simply take their green products and recommend lower dilution rates for carpet applications. This is usually a bad idea since carpet cleaning relies on proper chemistry more than hard surface cleaning.

WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS AND TECHNIQUES OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS?

James Young: The biggest change is how effective most green cleaning products are. In many cases, the green versions are better and more effective than their more aggressive predecessors. The cost of these products has fallen into line with most chemicals and are, in some instances, less expensive. Packaging has also seen a dramatic change. In the past, everything was sold mostly in gallons; now you see one liter containers or smaller, and cases that traditionally had six bottles now have four. And more traditional cleaning techniques have been replaced or altered in some ways to reduce chemical and water usage.

Jill Frey: In the past when the green program came out, the products were not very efficient and the end user was complaining that the surfaces were not coming clean. Now that green products work as well or better than “conventional” products and, more importantly, we can reduce the amount of product being used. Also, machine equipment and chemical manufacturers are starting to work together so that products compliment each other. Facilities are putting less waste and definitely less toxic substances into their systems.

Robert Kahn: There are a lot more choices! It can be confusing at times, but well worth investigating the options. The desire to mini-

mize waste and chemical usage is widespread in the commercial cleaning sector.

Kerry Nevatte: There is so much education and information available. Companies are continually trying to develop products that clean for health as well as for the environment. Research and development are pushing the green cleaning envelope to find new ways of identifying more sustainable options.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS YOUR COMPANY INVOLVED IN GREEN CLEANING?

Frank Trevisani: Spartan Chemical Company, Inc. is committed to sustainability and our new product development reflects this philosophy. In April we introduced laundry products that are designed for the environment, with more on the way. Throughout 2010, we made significant investments and improvements to our manufacturing operations that reduce our carbon footprint.

James Martorano: Colgate-Palmolive Company currently offers a product line of 17 cleaning products that have been granted the EPA "Design for the Environment" seal. This seal is given to products that offer more positive environmental characteristics than conventional cleaning formulations. Our current line includes floor cleaners, degreasers, all-purpose cleaners, dishwashing liquids and foaming hand soap under the Ajax®, Fabuloso®, Palmolive® Softsoap® brand, and Murphy® Oil Soap brand names.

Jill Frey: We are seeing that "thinking green" has taken over the market and it is a given that all companies are on board. Green has expanded into the sustainability issue and Cummins Building Maintenance has increased its services to include sorting and recycling. Our customers now have the ability to reclaim more recyclable material and dump less into landfills.

James Young: At Windsor/Karcher North America Inc. we focus on the complete process of cleaning and not just the reduction of water and chemical use. We have created a program that addresses all aspects

"GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS ARE EVOLVING AND BEING ACCEPTED MORE EVERY DAY AS THE CLEANERS OF CHOICE."



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of cleaning that we call our program PDIR, (Preventative, Daily, Interim and Restorative). We insert our equipment into each process that it pertains to and promote the idea of moving cleaning dollars from the harshest processes of restorative cleaning to the greener process of Preventative cleaning. To that end, we produce thorough building evaluation forms, and our entire sales force are CIMS-GB experts in order to assist our customer implement a complete green cleaning program.

ECOLOGO™ Release Biologically-Base Cleaners Standard

The EcoLogo Program, one of North America's most recognizable eco-labels announced in April that it has released its newly revised standard for biologically-based cleaning and degreasing compounds. Household cleaners are among the new additions to this standard, making biologically-based cleaning products more accessible to the public.

"EcoLogo is proud to expand its Biologically-based Cleaning and Degreasing Compounds Standard to include household cleaners. This revised standard demonstrates the Program's continued effort to improve and/or maintain environmental and human health and to minimize harmful impacts from the production, use and disposal of products we use every day," says Dr. Angela Griffiths, executive director of the EcoLogo Program.

Unlike conventional cleaners, biologically-based cleaning and degreasing compounds contain microbial cultures that promote digestion of hydrocarbons, organic contaminants and other undesirable substances. EcoLogo's Biologically-based Cleaning and Degreasing Compounds Standard was developed using a multi-parameter approach that identifies the most important environmental indicators from all stages of the product's life cycle. This standard will also help identify the top overall environmental performers on the market. The bio-based cleaners standard addresses toxicity to aquatic and mammalian life, biodegradation, performance in the presence of soil, low risk for promoting microbial resistance, product labeling and packaging, restricted ingredients, human health issues, and more. For more information about EcoLogo's newly revised standard, visit www.ecologo.org.

About EcoLogo™

EcoLogo is a third-party, multi-attribute eco-labeling program approved by the Global EcoLabelling Network, an international association of eco-labeling programs, as meeting the ISO 14024 standard.

HAVE YOU NOTICED AN INCREASE IN CLIENT DEMAND FOR GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS OR SERVICES?

James Young: Without question we have seen an increase, so much so that we now include on virtually all of our equipment "green" features at no extra expense to our customers. We believe that green cleaning should be fundamental to all cleaning and that equipment should address these issues as standard operating features and not require the customer to pay more for these features.

Frank Trevisani: I see a steady growth in the demand for environmentally preferable products, services and certifications. However, there is still a lot of work to be done to make it an industry standard. This can be a tough industry in which to break old habits. I think

"MORE PRODUCTS ARE BEING PRODUCED WITH SUSTAINABLE BIORENEWABLE MATERIALS SUCH AS CORN, SOY, SUNFLOWERS, ETC. RATHER THAN PETROLEUM-BASED PRODUCTS."

as the marketplace matures, so will the mindset towards green and sustainable cleaning practices. I was brought up in the old school that stronger is better and there are still a lot of people that need to be educated on new, green technology that allows for effective products without a negative impact.

Kerry Nevatte: Education and environmental awareness has helped drive the marketplace to where it is today. More companies, building owners and property management groups are insisting that green cleaning and green chemistry are forefront of their cleaning programs. It is our responsibility as distributors to work together with our customers to provide the education and trends that are happening within our respective industries.

Mark Malerba: Many RFPs/RFQs specify that green cleaning products are required. Society is becoming more and more educated about the benefits of "going green." Building owners and managers are listening to their staff and being responsible by

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A big thank you to the following individuals who contributed their knowledge and comments for our annual Green Cleaning Report:

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sourcing cleaning contractors that use these products and techniques.

ARE THERE ANY NEW GREEN CLEANING REGULATIONS THAT BUILDING SERVICE CONTRACTORS SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

James Young: Certainly it depends on the state you are operating in, but most regulations deal with safety issues and water ordinances of a specific city or state. Some states are recognizing the importance of indoor air quality (IAQ) and are setting requirements that buildings must meet; however these usually affect HVAC systems more than cleaning. Many hospital chains are being cleaned by BSCs these days and most have internal policies for surface disinfection and IAQ that must be met. I suspect that as more school districts turn to the outsourcing of cleaning more regulations will begin to be put into place. Anytime, children are in the mix, state, local and federal regulations usually tend to follow.

Frank Trevisani: Outside of the state and federal mandates for green and sustainable cleaning products, I don't see a lot of changes. Federal and state mandates have been around for awhile, but whether they are being enforced is another question. It depends on local administration officials. People are talking a good game, but are they walking the walk? I see it as spotty at best.

Kerry Nevatte: It is up to the manufacturing, distribution and end-user segments of the marketplace to watch for current developments in green cleaning. Look to your contacts and associations to provide information and changes in regulatory and legislative environments.

HOW IMPORTANT WILL THE GREEN CLEANING INDUSTRY CONTINUE TO BE? WHERE DO YOU SEE GREEN CLEANING GOING IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS?

Jim Martorano: Based on past trends and future projections, it seems that green

Green Resources

The Ashkin Group
www.ashkingroup.com

EcoLogo
www.ecologo.org

Environmental Choice Program
www.environmentalchoice.com

Green Cleaning Association
www.greencleaningassociation.com

Green Hotels Association
www.greenhotels.com

Green Seal
www.greenseal.org

Greener Buildings
www.greenerbuildings.com

GreenStar
www.greenstarinc.org

Healthy Schools Campaign
www.healthyschoolscampaign.org

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov

U.S. Green Building Council
www.usgbc.org

cleaning and green cleaning products will continue to be important issues in the cleaning industry, especially as the government and environmentalists seek new ways to protect our air, water and other environmental resources.

Frank Trevisani: I see the green cleaning industry as ever-evolving and being a bigger part of our everyday life. Cleaning is finally being seen as more health related and less of a commodity. How we clean is directly related to how we feel, perform our jobs and many other things that affect our daily life. As more super viruses occur, cleaning will have a bigger part in reducing their effects.

James Young: It is our opinion that green cleaning will become (and is becoming) standard operating procedure. As more buildings seek LEED, or in-house providers seek third-party certifications such as CIMS, green cleaning will continue to grow. We have invested in this trend becoming reality and will continue to do so. Over the course of the next three years I see green cleaning expanding its reach from chemicals and techniques to productivity and purchasing practices. I see more emphasis being placed on full lifecycle costs of equipment and products from cradle to grave. I also see many opportunities for new business ventures to spring up that address the growing numbers of used and dead cleaning equipment that can be recycled for other uses.

Mark Malerba: Green cleaning will continue to be important. What was once a trend is now becoming a standard. This is a clear message that society is concerned about the environment and it is our responsibility as janitorial contractors to help keep our world a cleaner and greener place to live.

Robert Kahn: Green cleaning products will continue to gain in popularity among building service contractors in large part because that is what their customers are asking for. Consumers continue to demand products that are healthier and more effective for the home and now demand has taken hold among decision makers for cleaning services in commercial settings.

“GREEN CARPET CLEANING PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN THE ONE CHEMICAL SEGMENT THAT HAS LAGGED BEHIND ON PRODUCING HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AND QUALITY PRODUCTS.”

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