

Nest Building

A NICE CUPPA TEA

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September 8, 2010

Have you ever set a mug of tea or coffee down on a table or shelf, it spilled a bit and you were left with the very visible evidence of your indiscretion? We've all done it and quickly covered it up with a strategically placed vase. Instead, however, you could 'stain' the entire piece of furniture since tea or coffee makes a wonderful, rich, non-toxic furniture stain that doesn't obscure the character of the wood.

Tea is also excellent as a cleaning agent. Dip a soft cloth into some freshly steeped tea—one litre of water to two teabags—and use it to remove accumulated grunge from wood surfaces. Follow up with a brisk rub with a soft, dry polishing cloth.

A strong cup of tea makes glass and mirrors shine. Let the tea cool, dampen a cloth in it and rub it over the glass surface. Finish off with a fresh, dry cloth to bring out the shine.

If you don't want to wait around for fifty years while your pristine white linens and lace accessories 'age', soak them in tea—three tea bags to two cups of slightly cooled boiled water will result in an instant 'antiqued' look. The longer you leave the items to soak, the darker they become.

Many acid-loving houseplants, especially ferns, benefit from a cup of tea once in a while, or you can work a few used tealeaves into the soil.

There are also plenty of outdoor uses for tea. Add used tealeaves to rose mulch, place a few used teabags in the bottom of plant pots and pour tea over your compost heap to speed up decomposition.

Next time you sit down to enjoy a nice cup of tea, remember you're not the only one around the house that might benefit from it.