



Desert Knowledge Australia COOLmob is a joint initiative of Arid Lands Environment Centre and Desert Knowledge Australia focused on reducing energy and water usage in Alice Springs.

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## Laundry detergent for greywater reuse

Plants are sensitive. All laundry detergents contain ingredients which will affect your soil in one way or another. If you reuse greywater, you need to be careful about what goes into it!

Here's a couple of general rules:

- Minimise the amount of product you use
- Maximise the area of gerywater distribution
- Have a mechanism that allows you to divert your greywater back to sewer when required
- Check your product is as "green" as it claims to be, look for
  - Low electrical conductivity ;
  - pH close to neutral;
  - low sodium load; generally liquids have less sodium than powders;
  - and low phosphorus (less than 1 g per wash). A little phosphorus is good for plants, but many natives won't tolerate high levels.

This information sheet is based on the Choice magazine article on the study by Lanfax Labs ([www.lanfaxlabs.com.au](http://www.lanfaxlabs.com.au) [www.choice.com.au](http://www.choice.com.au) ) Lanfaxlabs created the following criteria for laundry products which will be used for greywater: *pH < 8.0; Sodium load less than 10.0 grams per wash; phosphorus load less than 1.0 gram per wash; and electrical conductivity less than 1.0 dS/m.* They tested a lot of products, but not everything on the market. ALL the following laundry liquids below met the above criteria:

Liquid detergents mixed for front loader	Liquid detergents mixed for top loader
Alpha Plus Organic	Am-O-lin Sensitive Laundry Liquid
Am-O-lin Sensitive Laundry Liquid	Aquarius Laundry Liquid
Aquarius Laundry Liquid	Back to Basics Laundry Liquid
Earth Choice Laundry Liquid	Bright & Fresh
Earth Choice Wool & Delicates	Earth Choice Laundry Liquid
Ecologic lavender laundry liquid	Earth Choice Wool & Delicates
Enviroclean Liquid Laundry	Ecologic lavender laundry liquid
Green Care Laundry Liquid	Enviroclean Liquid Laundry
Herbon Laundry Liquid	Green Care Laundry Liquid
Hurricane Active Boosted lemon	Herbon Laundry Liquid
Love 'n Care Laundry Liquid	Home Brand Liquid Laundry Detergent
So Gentle Laundry Liquid - floral	Hurricane Active Boosted lemon
	Love 'n Care Laundry Liquid
	Pine O'Clean Laundry Rinse
	Rambilldene Farm liquid soybean
	Savings Laundry Liquid
	So Gentle Laundry Liquid - floral
	Spree Lavender Fresh
	Triple 7 Safewash

Lanfaxlabs applied these criteria to laundry powders, but **none** of the powders tested could meet it. So they applied less stringent criteria (*pH < 10.6; Sodium load less than 20.0 grams per wash; phosphorus load less than 1.0 gram per wash; and electrical conductivity less than 1.0 dS/m*). The results from this test appeared in Choice magazine. Choice recommends:

Front loaders: Amway Sa8, Aware garden safe, Biozet advance, Eco store front loaders, Laundrite\* and Trimat\* (\*High in phosphorus, recommended for clay soils only).

Top Loaders: Alpha plus herbal, Amway Sa8, Beauty engineered gutsy, Biozet advance, Eco store super, Swipe white hld

Of these powders, the only one on Choice's list of effective washing powders is Trimat. I could not find information on how well the liquids wash.

**REMEMBER, NO PRODUCT IS COMPLETELY HARMLESS, BUT SOME ARE LESS LIKELY TO CAUSE HARM THAN OTHERS.**