



by Sue Wilson

KEEPING THE FAMILY CAR LOOKING GREAT IN A GREEN WORLD

A fairly common image during the spring and summer months is the family car parked on a sloping driveway by the house, a rubber bucket on the grass, with the hose lying in wait. Unfortunately, this long-time practice can harm the environment. The residue that's rinsed off the car runs down the driveway and ends up in our rivers, lakes and streams, polluting the local water supply.

If you choose to wash your car at home, use biodegradable car wash products that reduce the amount of chemicals released into the environment. Make sure that the products you use are phosphate-free.

Homemade car wash can be made by combining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of powdered, chemical-free laundry detergent and a cup of liquid dishwashing detergent. Even though you're washing with biodegradable cleaners, it's still best to stick to washing the car on your lawn to keep thirsty critters from drinking the soapy water. Avoid using paper towels to reduce waste. Microfiber towels hold a lot of cleaner and rinse easily with very little water.

The Carwash

Although more expensive, commercial carwashes are actually a great way of keeping your car clean in an eco-friendly way. Most are required to treat the dirty water before releasing it into the environment and their mechanical washing systems monitor the usage and pressure of water to reduce water waste. Most commercial carwashes also re-use the rinse water over and over again. That saves them money while being environmentally friendly. The International Carwash Association helps commercial stations maintain regulated standards.