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How best to clean brick surface?

Q. I have red brick around the outside of my home. After heavy rains, algae builds up on it. I have used chlorine bleach to clean it, but I would rather use a product more environmentally friendly. Can Action Line offer advice?

-- **Richard Cahlin, Coconut Grove**

A. The most effective method we could find is with a pressure hose, which can be rented inexpensively and won't use too much water.

You might try this all-purpose recipe from www.womenandenvironment.org for cleaning hard surfaces:

- 2 cups white distilled vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 20-30 or more drops of essential oil such as lavender, tea tree or rosemary, which have antiseptic properties and a pleasant smell (optional)

Warming the mixture in a microwave until barely hot will boost its power for tough jobs.

The website lists several environmentally friendly recipes for different cleaning purposes and suggests that you experiment with your own variations.

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