

Cleaning Up the Cleaner

By Marilyn Reeves

Often two trips up and down the stairs hauling groceries is about all I'm game for, so I will leave non-food items sitting out in the trunk until the next time I use my car.

In this case, I had left a package of dinner napkins, a large box of kitchen trash bags and a 56-oz. bottle of Softsoap liquid hand cleaner. But when I went to retrieve them the following evening, I noticed that the box of trash bags felt a bit slimy. On closer inspection, I observed a rather large puddle of the Softsoap covering pretty much everything in the trunk! In addition to those recent purchases, I also had things that had been sitting out there for who knows how many years, that I stopped paying attention to, but merely shoved aside when trying to make room for my groceries. Well, I couldn't deal with it that night, and decided to wait until the next day to tackle what I knew was going to be a somewhat major project.

So around 9:00 the following morning, I took my cart back down, filled with a bunch of old towels, a bottle of water (thinking the stuff might come up better if diluted a bit), and some plastic trash bags.

The first thing I did was pull out my newly purchased items – including what remained of the offending bottle of liquid hand soap – and placed the gummy things into plastic bags. Then I pulled out the rest of the junk I had stored in there – the most interesting of which was an old, round, metal Christmas cookie container, which may at one time have actually held Christmas cookies. The thing was so rusted I couldn't get it open – the rust simply crumbled off in my hands.

Once I got everything out of the trunk, I tried sopping up the soap with the towels. That was a joke! If I'd had a hundred towels, they wouldn't have begun to soak up that mess.

So, I managed to wriggle free the rather cumbersome rubber mat – an odd-shaped thing, roughly a yard in diameter, and covered with some sort of fuzzy upholstery – and hauled it over to the grass on the back lawn of our building, where there's a hose attached to a spigot on the outside wall.

Would you believe that I squirted water over that mat for a good twenty minutes before I finally got all the soap out? I rinsed and rinsed and rinsed, and thought it would NEVER stop foaming up! But finally it got to the point where I called it good, so I took it back into the garage and set it on end, leaned against the wall in front of my car to dry before placing it back in the trunk where it belongs.

Then I hauled the rest of my purchases back upstairs and cleaned them off and put them away, and all I had left to do was rinse out those towels. So I rinsed and rinsed and rinsed ...

But I believe I can safely say that I now have the cleanest trunk mat in the entire neighborhood. If you want to get yours really, really clean, I recommend Softsoap.