

Fairy on top of the tree

Fairy is once again our top washing-up liquid, but the own brands are certainly giving it a run for its money

While we can't prove the old adage that it will make your hands as soft as your face, Fairy is still the most effective washing-up liquid we've tested. However, own brands from Marks & Spencer and Tesco are hot on its heels.

Not all big brands make it as a Best Buy. Persil Aloe Vera (6) performed poorly in our tests last year, but the company told us it was reformulating the liquid to enhance its performance. We've tested the new formulation and it performed significantly better than the old one, but it still isn't a Best Buy because it isn't that effective at cleaning greasy dishes.

Most of the products we tested offer good value for money. For example, it costs less than 10p to clean

1,000 plates with Marks & Spencer Citrus (2). Last year, we also tested some very cheap liquids from supermarket budget ranges. We haven't tested them again as we found that they offer value for money only if you are prepared to use an awful lot of liquid every time you wash up.

If you're looking for a liquid that is kind to your skin, Marks & Spencer Classic (3) and Surcare Sensitive (5) are milder and also perform well.

Unfortunately, we also found that the green brands do not work as effectively as their chemically enhanced counterparts, although they still get the job done (for more on eco-friendly alternatives, see 'How green is your liquid?', below).



87% Fairy Liquid Original 98p

The original Fairy has excellent cleaning power across the board. Its foam, which lasts longer than that of virtually any other liquid



we tested, cleans more dirty plates per bottle than any other Best Buy (around 11,000) and is also the best on test at cleaning fatty dishes – perfect for those who enjoy fry-ups or traditional Sunday roasts. Widely available on the high street.

Cheapest stores Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose **Bottle size** 500ml

How we test



Machine washed

We scrubbed our way through more than 2,900 plates using a machine which mimics the action of washing plates by hand at 45°C.

Fat and food removal

To test how efficient the liquids were at removing a mixture of everyday foods, we smeared plates with a range of food residues such as pasta, meat and eggs. We then counted the number of plates cleaned before the foam disappeared. This gave us our 'foam duration' rating. To get our fat removal score, we poured on an exact amount of coloured animal fat and counted the number of plates cleaned until the fat started to settle back on to them.

How green is your liquid?

They are more pricey and less effective than the chemical brands, but green liquids are kinder to the environment

The surfactants (the materials that break through grease) in many washing-up liquids are made from oil-based petrochemical ingredients, some of which may not be easily biodegradable. As a result, residues can build up in the environment causing damage, such as pollution to aquatic life.

We tested five 'green' washing-up liquids: Bio-D, Clear Spring, Ecover, Sonett and Ultra Dishmate, which are designed to have low environmental impact. All



claim to be biodegradable and use plant-based ingredients.

Overall, these liquids didn't perform as well as the standard liquids. Some are pricey, too, but they will get the job done and are certainly worth considering for their environmental benefits. Clear Spring (16), Ecover (17) and Bio D (18) all do a

satisfactory job.

Tesco Naturally (12) also uses plant extracts to form surfactants but makes no claims about biodegradability, so we haven't included it in the green section of the table.

Contacts

Asda 0500 100055
www.asda.co.uk
Bio D 01482 229950
www.biodegradable.biz
Clear Spring 0161 764 2555
www.faithinnature.co.uk
Ecover 0845 130 2230
www.ecover.com
Fairy 0800 085 0367
www.fairy-dish.co.uk
Marks & Spencer
0845 302 1234
www.marksandspencer.com
Morning Fresh
0800 581001
www.morning-fresh.com
Morrisons 0845 611 6111
www.morrisons.co.uk
Persil 0800 776644
www.persil.co.uk
Sainsbury's 0800 636262
www.sainsburys.co.uk
Somerfield 0117 935 6669
www.somerfield.co.uk
Sonett 01803 868001
www.sonett.co.uk
Surcare 0800 096 1641
www.surcare.co.uk
Tesco 0800 505555
www.tesco.com
Ultra Dishmate
01892 616871
www.greenbrands.co.uk



82% Marks & Spencer Citrus 79p

This Marks & Spencer washing-up liquid isn't quite as efficient as Fairy, but it still cleaned 39 dirty plates per squirt and is excellent at degreasing fatty

plates. You should be able to clean a very commendable 9,750 dirty plates with a single bottle. It also manages to beat its more expensive stablemate, the Marks & Spencer Classic (see right).

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Cheapest store Marks & Spencer Bottle size 500ml



76% Marks & Spencer Classic 89p

The Marks & Spencer Classic variety is slightly more expensive than its sister liquid, M&S Citrus (see left), but still offers good value for money and

it should be able to clean around 9,180 plates. It's particularly good at cleaning greasy dishes. We found that one squirt cleans eight more fatty plates than the same amount of Persil's Aloe Vera liquid, which costs only a penny less.

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Cheapest store Marks & Spencer Bottle size 500ml



76% Tesco Lemon Fragrance 59p

At just 59p for a 500ml bottle, Tesco's Lemon Fragrance is by far the cheapest of our Best Buys and offers excellent value for

money. It costs just 7p to clean 1,000 plates with this liquid. And while it doesn't quite match the best of our Best Buys, it offers good all-round cleaning and tackles greasy plates effectively – we estimate one bottle could clean 8,875 plates.

EXCEPTIONAL
VALUE WHICH?

Cheapest store Tesco Bottle size 500ml

Fairy's long-lasting foam cleans around 11,000 dirty plates per bottle

USING THE TABLE

We tested widely available leading brands and supermarket own labels as well as a selection of eco-friendly brands. The more stars the better.

Test performance

Foam duration Rating is based on the number of plates smeared with non-fatty food we cleaned using a set amount of liquid before the foam disappeared. A brand rated ★★★★★ was able to clean 55 per cent or more plates than a ★★-rated brand.

Fat removal How well the liquid removes grease and keeps it dispersed and suspended in the water.

Value for money This takes into account the price quoted in the table and foam duration and fat removal ratings.

Score

Based on:
Performance **70%**
Value for money **25%**
Consistency of liquid **5%**

BRAND	SPECIFICATION		WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE			SCORE %
	PRICE (£)	SIZE (ml)	FOAM DURATION	FAT REMOVAL	VALUE FOR MONEY	
NORMAL						
1 FAIRY Liquid Original	0.98	500	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	87
2 MARKS & SPENCER Citrus	0.79	500	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	82
3 MARKS & SPENCER Classic	0.89	500	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	76
4 TESCO Lemon Fragrance	0.59	500	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	76
5 SURCARE Sensitive	0.77	500	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	74
6 PERSIL Aloe Vera	0.88	500	★★★★★	★★	★★★	73
7 ASDA Original	0.62	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	71
8 MORRISONS Ultra Lemon	0.62	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	70
9 SAINSBURY'S Lemon Grove	0.64	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	67
10 SOMERFIELD Original	0.69	500	★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	67
11 SAINSBURY'S Original	0.53	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	65
12 TESCO Naturally	1.38	1,000	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	65
13 MORNING FRESH Original ^a	0.74	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	60
14 TESCO Standard Lemon	0.48	500	★★	★★★★	★★★★	42
15 ASDA Lemon Fresh	0.48	500	★★	★★	★★★★	31
ECO-FRIENDLY						
16 CLEAR SPRING Luxury	1.95	1,000	★★★	★★★	★★★	59
17 ECOVER Lemon and Aloe Vera	0.99	500	★★★	★★★	★★★	51
18 BIO D Concentrated	1.85	1,000	★★	★★	★★★	41
19 ULTRA DISHIMATE Natural Grapefruit	3.40	738	★★★	★★★	★	40
20 SONETT Washing Up Liquid	3.40	1,000	★★	★★	★	30

^a Product is changing in autumn 2007