

WD-40

The product began from a search for a rust preventative solvent and de-greaser to protect missile parts. WD-40 was created in 1953 by three technicians at the San Diego Rocket Chemical Company. Its name comes from the project that was to find a "water displacement" compound. They were successful with the fortieth formulation, thus WD-40.

The Corvair Company bought it in bulk to protect their Atlas missile parts. The workers were so pleased with the product, they began smuggling (also known as "shrinkage" or "stealing") it out to use at home. The executives decided there might be a consumer market for it and put it in aerosol cans. The rest, as they say, is history.

It is a carefully guarded recipe known only to four people. Only one of them is the "brewmaster." There are about 2.5 million gallons of the stuff manufactured each year. It gets its distinctive smell from a fragrance that is added to the brew. Ken East says there is nothing in WD-40 that would hurt you.

Here are some of the uses:

Protects silver from tarnishing

Cleans and lubricates guitar strings

Gets oil spots off concrete driveways

Gives floors that 'just-waxed' sheen without making it slippery

Keeps flies off cows

Restores and cleans chalkboards

Removes lipstick stains

Looses stubborn zippers

Untangles jewelry chains

Removes stains from stainless steel sinks

Removes dirt and grime from the barbecue grill

Keeps ceramic/terra cotta garden pots from oxidizing

Removes tomato stains from clothing

Keeps glass shower doors free of water spots

Camouflages scratches in ceramic and marble floors

Keeps scissors working smoothly

Lubricates noisy door hinges on vehicles and doors in homes

Gives a children's play gym slide a shine for a super fast slide

Lubricates gear shift and mower deck lever for ease of handling on riding mowers

Rids rocking chairs and swings of squeaky noises

Lubricates tracks in sticking home windows and makes them easier to open

Spraying an umbrella stem makes it easier to open and close

Restores and cleans padded leather dashboards in vehicles, as well as vinyl bumpers

Restores and cleans roof racks on vehicles

Lubricates and stops squeaks in electric fans

Lubricates wheel sprockets on tricycles, wagons and bicycles for easy handling

Lubricates fan belts on washers and dryers and keeps them running smoothly

Keeps rust from forming on saws and saw blades, and other tools

We're not through. Here's more;

Removes splattered grease on stove

Keeps bathroom mirror from fogging

Lubricates prosthetic limbs

Keeps pigeons off the balcony (they hate the smell)

Removes all traces of duct tape

I have even heard of folks spraying it on their arms, hands, knees, etc., to relieve arthritis pain. One guy claims spraying it on fishing lures attracts fish.

WD-40 has been designated the "official multi-purpose problem-solver of NASCAR," a ringing endorsement if there ever was one. In celebration of their 50th year, the company conducted a contest to learn the favorite uses of its customers and fan club members, (Yes, there is a WD-40 Fan Club).

They compiled the information to identify the favorite use in each of the 50 states. Naturally I was curious about Georgia and Alabama and found the favorite use in both states was that is "penetrates stuck bolts, lug nuts, and hose ends." Florida's favorite use was, cleans and removes bugs from grills and bumpers. California's favorite use was penetrating the bolts on the Golden Gate Bridge.

Let me close with one final, wonderful use - the favorite use in the State of New York - WD-40 protects the Statue of Liberty from the elements.

No wonder they have had 50 successful years.