

# The Big Cleaning

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Translated from [www.tornedalians.com](http://www.tornedalians.com)

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Before midsummer, the major house cleaning for the year was done. Then winter's staleness would be cleared away and everything would be washed and aired.

The first sign that the lovely summer was approaching was that the the outest windows would be taken down. My father had a huge amount of work with it, because the house had an unusually large number of windows. The remaining windows were washed both inside and out .

On clothes lines hung carpets, bedding and all the winter clothes to ventilate. Sofas, beds, chairs -- all the loose furniture was set out in the yard. There, the girls wiped everything with a wet cloth and whipped the bedclothes.

Inside the house, the adults began to wash the ceiling and walls of the cabin, and the floors were not forgotten either. All drawers were cleaned and dehydrated. The larder, sink, stove and all the cabinets were cleaned thoroughly. In the other rooms where there was wallpaper, the walls and ceiling were wiped with a cloth on a long brush. Hoover did not exist at that time.

It was hilarious with the joint efforts and speed of the work. It was also fun for a little girl, as I was then, to be entrusted with tasks .

I remember that I was allowed to clean a sofa bed in the yard. I had been told that if I saw any creatures on the couch, I should immediately tell someone. All were mortally afraid of bedbugs. I saw something small crawling and started screaming bloody murder to high heaven. Everyone came rushing. Had we for the first time had bed bugs? It was not a bedbug. Maybe I just wanted get some attention. I was probably only 6-7 years old .

Work on the great cleaning took all day, but then we had to lug in all the furniture and everything else that has been out for airing. The adults were very tired after a hard day, but very happy with what they had done. The mattresses had been filled with new hay, and it was a little difficult to stay on them the first night. But it was wonderful to sleep in the aired and clean house. In the summer we used the "winter house " mostly just to sleep in.

All cooking was done in the summer kitchen (bakery) a few meters from the winter house. We had not to be careful to come in with muddy shoes. In summer, the cows also moved to a summer barn. In my childhood the cows were still freely grazing in the forest. They were taken to the forest after morning milking, and when the udders were distended by milk in the evening they stood at the fence on the forest edge and bellowed. Sometimes cows did not go obediently into the woods, so we children had to herd them. Occasionally it happened that one cow did not cooperate and got lost. Then they went and looked for the stray. For the most part, all went well .

While the cows were in the summer barn, the winter barn also washed very carefully. They used caustic soda and water, and it was made pure in every corner. After whitewashing, the whole barn was white and nice. One

could hardly believe it was a barn .