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Volume 97 • Number 4
July/August 2013

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In this issue
Vol. 97 No. 4, July/August 2013

What's happening this month on your Countryside homestead...

Departments:

Country conversation	8
Coming events.....	20

Feature articles:

The Lightning Bug.....	22
Grace and Ashes.....	28

The woodlot:

The Multi-Purpose All American Tree	30
Demise of the Hemlock	32

Meteorologist or Fortune Teller?	34
Preparing for Emergencies.....	36
Using Traps to Protect Your Investments	38

The garden:

It Ain't Just Dirt	40
Soil Test Comparisons.....	42
Growing Colored Popcorn	46

The homestead kitchen:

Don't Sweat: Eat Safe This Summer.....	47
Beat the Heat With These Super Cool Foods	48
Yes, I Can.....	49
Fenugreek: An Ancient Spice That's Under-utilized	53
Freezing Peppers and Other Produce	56

Homestead livestock:

The Joys of a Donkey.....	61
---------------------------	----

The cow barn:

Hairy Udders Sometimes Cause Problems.....	64
Pushing Cattle into the Chute and Tail Twisting Tip	70

The poultry yard:

2 Hours of Freedom!	72
Skinning a Chicken.....	73

Our Philosophy

It's not a single idea, but many ideas and attitudes, including a reverence for nature and a preference for country life; a desire for maximum personal self-reliance and creative leisure; a concern for family nurture and community cohesion; a belief that the primary reward of work should be well-being rather than money; a certain nostalgia for the supposed simplicities of the past and an anxiety about the technological and bureaucratic complexities of the present and the future; and a taste for the plain and functional.

COUNTRYSIDE reflects and supports the simple life, and calls its practitioners homesteaders.

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On the cover:

Finally, it's time to enjoy the fruits of our garden labor. This month you'll find hints for preserving your produce, along with some tasty recipes and hot weather tips for keeping food safe.

Pharma to Farmer: My Journey Toward Food Enlightenment..... 75
 CAFO Threat Close to Home 79
 A Rare Breeds Yarn Collection..... 81

Country neighbors:

Tuned Out: Television Watching is Anti-Social..... 82
 Tossing TV Enhances Life 84
 Our Downsizing Experience 86
 Post Pounder vs. Husband 88
 Where Do They *Come* From?! 90
 Returning to the Country... Things I Forgot 92
 Re-Storying..... 94

Poor Will's COUNTRYSIDE Almanack 96



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Country conversation & feedback

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Thanks for the Reassurance

Getting older ain't easy

COUNTRYSIDE: We have subscribed to your magazine for many years. The articles have always been a blessing for us. We've gained a lot of information that has helped us through homeschooling and homesteading. I have thought many times to write, but never took the time to do so. Your article in the March/April 2013 edition titled, "Growing Old in the New Normal" really hit home for us.

My husband and I are in our mid-40s and are already trying to

implement ways to either scale down or make chores easier for us. Within the previous year each of us have been diagnosed with different health issues. These diagnoses have forced us to re-evaluate how we are doing things around the home, with the care of our animals, and gardening.

We were married young and had our children shortly after. We felt, for our growing family, homesteading and homeschooling was for us. Embarking on this way of life was a challenge, but very exciting. It truly has become our way of living. With both our children grown, married, and starting their families, we knew we needed to rethink a lot of things. It is encouraging to see them carry on the homesteading and homeschooling values and way of life.

Homesteading and homeschooling have given us so many stories to tell and remind one another about around the Sunday dinner table. We have raised chickens, goats, dairy, beef, ducks, bees and angora rabbits. Our garden has always been an intricate part of our lives. Since the children are no longer here to help us we have gone to square foot gardening. This was my husband's idea to change the way we garden. It took me a few years to get used to the concept. I believe I am still finding areas to improve on. But now I look forward to going out to the garden myself. I am not dreading those long rows to hoe by myself anymore. We still have goats. The girls that are left in the barn will live out the rest of their lives peacefully. Their 4-H days and shows are over. We have been

able to learn the skills of soap and cheese making. We had five hives of bees at one point, along with non-multiplying rabbits.

This way of life is a great blessing, one that does come with difficulties. Those difficulties lead to a stronger character and fortitude in life. Your article has helped reassure us to continue the quest of homesteading into our old age together.

We look forward to the days of sitting on the porch with our grandchildren and telling them the stories of their parents. We also are looking toward the day they are old enough to learn the skills of homesteading and be excited about learning. I believe this will only happen if we continue on the path of homesteading with enjoyment, at a slightly slower pace.

Now that we are scaling down and lightening our work load, we look forward to perfecting wine and beer making, along with finding new homestead things to tinker with, like solar and wind energy.

Thank you again for all the articles wrapped up in the COUNTRYSIDE magazine. We look forward to it every time. — *Kimberly Ream*

Work Smarter, Not Harder

COUNTRYSIDE: After reading J.D. Belanger's article on aging and "normal," I was reminded of some management training — work simplification — that I received many years ago. Having a few years on J.D., I have had to change a lot of things. What

From the editor:

Variety is the Spice of Life

If you think things look a little different in this issue, you're right. We haven't changed the magazine's format in many years (around 1987!), and decided it was time to jazz things up a bit. Now, color photographs throughout will help you discern between a black and brown cow, and you'll get a better view of the photos readers share. And as always, we all enjoy looking at pictures of other homesteads, so send your photos to the address above. Now sit back in a cool, shady spot, grab a cold beverage, and enjoy this issue! — *Anne-marie*

MAGAZINE RENEWAL ALERT!



Hiding behind several different made-up names including CBS, United Publishers Services, Publishers Billing Exchange and National Magazine Services, they mail notices similar to the one left, trying to sell subscriptions to COUNTRYSIDE & SMALL STOCK JOURNAL—as well as dozens of other magazines—for exorbitant

prices far above the going rate. In the case of COUNTRYSIDE they offer a two-year renewal for \$65.95, while the real price is only \$30. • The name and address may change—in March it was White City, OR. • This company is not connected with Countryside Publications, Ltd., in any way, and has an “F” rating with the Better Business Bureau. • If you receive a notice like this one please ignore it or ask them to remove your name from their mailing list. If you have renewed through them, call 1-775-345-3664 and ask for a complete refund. (They have been charging some people \$20 for the “privilege.”) • Genuine renewal notices come from us here at the home office at 145 Industrial Dr., Medford, Wisconsin 54451. If you ever have a question regarding your COUNTRYSIDE subscription, call us at 1-800-551-5691 or email csymag@tds.net.

I used to do in one day now takes three. In my 40s and 50s, I thought the Gravely tractor was the greatest. In my 70s, I realized that sit-upon was easier than walk-behind and bought an elderly Farmall CUB and attachments. In my 80s, I switched to a younger, 18 HP, four-wheel drive with a bucket loader. One bucket load equals six wheelbarrow loads.

As you age, it becomes much more important to plan ahead before doing something, and I really need to question what I plan to do. Is it really necessary? What happens if I don't do it? Often I respond like Congress and kick the can down the road. And if I don't write it down, I may forget. My new “normal” is much different. But if you are really smart, you ask these questions *before* you age. I wasted 10 years before getting the benefits of a tractor and loader.

The main thing I gained from the week of management training was 20 simple questions to ask yourself about everything you do. I have taught them, written about them, used them in running a wood products plant, my daughter has used them in hospital administration, and a friend used them in state government. It is always better to ask the questions before you tackle anything than to do something in haste and then have regrets. They are the basic what, where, when, who and how, with some variations. And after you answer them, maybe you better ask “Why?”

What is being done?

Is it necessary?

What else could be done?

What should be done?

These questions help you determine if something should be done; or, if it is being done, is it nice or necessary — can it be eliminated.

Where is it done?

Why is it done there?

Where else could it be done?

Where should it be done?

When is it done?

Why is it done then?

When could it be done?

When should it be done?

Who does it?

Why does he/she/it do it?

Who else could do it?

Who should do it?

These 12 questions seek to find the best time, place and person to perform a task.

How is it done?

Why is it done that way?

How else could it be done?

How should it be done?

The point of these four questions is to find a better way to do something.

These simple questions can reveal a lot about any type of work, whether it be filing in an office or manufacturing a product. I used them for years in analyzing logging operations. It



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gets you to thinking about alternatives and finding a better way to do something.

For example, let's consider plowing the garden.

What is being done? We're plowing the garden, stupid!

Is it necessary? *Yeah, we gotta prepare a seedbed.*

What else could be done? *Well, we might roto-till it, or even just disc it.*

What should be done? *Good question. I'll need to think about that.*

Where is it done? In the garden plot.

Why is it done there? *Because that is where the garden has always been.*

Where else could it be done? *A lot of places.*

Where should it be done? *There, because it is handy to water and has been fertilized and composted heavily.*

When is it done? In the spring.

Why is it done then? *Because we've always tilled the garden in the spring.*

When could it be done? *Well, we could do it in the fall, it's a lot drier then.*

When should it be done? *Good question. Fall and spring both have merits and drawbacks. We'll need to think about that.*

Who does it? Dad.

Why does he do it? *He just always does it.*

Who else could do it? *Well, Junior could, even Mom could — she knows how to drive the tractor.*

Who should do it? *Probably Junior. Dad has too many other things to do.*

How is it done? With the tractor and plow, then we disc it.

Why is it done that way? *Because we've always done it that way.*

How else could it be done? *Well, we could borrow the neighbor's roto-tiller, that does a nice job of preparing a seedbed.*

How should it be done? *It would probably be best to borrow Ellie's chisel plow, then roto-till, then disc a couple of times to knock the weeds out.*

Any time you see the word "always" in a response, it shows a lack of change, a status quo—it's time to look at other options carefully. There is "always" a better, maybe even easier, way to do something if you look hard enough, and that's what it's all about—to do things the smart way, not the hard way. (Actually, you have to work smart and hard.)

The homestead is a busy place and there's always too much to do. I make lists, by season, and start listing those jobs that can be done in winter, the slow season. Then I try to rank jobs by importance. And the least important are always put off. Maybe I should ask that first question: Is it necessary? Long lists of unnecessary work can be depressing. Nice and necessary have different meanings.

So always ask yourself first, "Is this necessary?" If it is, then ask the other questions. — Ben, Maine

Drumming Up Business Through COUNTRYSIDE

It's a small world

COUNTRYSIDE: It's been quite a while since I wrote an article for COUNTRYSIDE, before J.D. retired. My last article was about running a home business, which I do, being a certified income tax preparer and e-filer. Recently I prepared taxes for a long-time customer and we were discussing how life and things have changed so much, and he mentioned that he had read my article in COUNTRYSIDE and that's how he became my client. We talked about COUNTRYSIDE and how you can't put it down and just want to read it over and over. So many good ideas are written and exchanged—things and ways that have been forgotten over the years.

My income tax business gets better every year. I won't get rich on it, as I don't charge a lot of money like H&R Block, so the people keep coming back. I am also a notary and generally don't charge for that service, as it brings in clients. My biggest expense is advertisings. I have a large

“Quick! Call 911!” I shouted to my wife as the fire headed toward our barn.

I had been an idiot.

It was early spring, but there was still snow on the ground so I thought it was safe to burn some paper and brush. What I didn't realize was that the top of the tall grass was dry. The fire decided to travel across the top of the grass and head...straight towards my barn!

Never again would I burn without a barrel, I swore, as my neighbors gathered to watch the fire department bail me out (and save most of my barn).

That was years ago, and true to my word, I got a 55-gallon drum and used it to dispose of my household burnables and other yard trash and debris. But I hated how hard it was to get a fire started in a barrel and, once started, how burning material would fly out the top. Plus, a rusty barrel is a real eyesore.

Recently, I had a small mountain of sensitive financial material to get rid of, and I didn't want to stuff it in trash bags and haul it to the dump. There were credit card numbers, social security numbers—lots of stuff that an identity thief could have a field day with.

So I stuffed it into my rusty burn barrel, set a match to it, and...nada. The thing just sat there and smoldered. And when I tried to dump it out and start again, I had a real mess on my hands. The wind was carrying away small bits of paper with sensitive numbers on it. Boy, was I teed off at myself for being so stupid.”

I was complaining to a friend about my combustible problems when he asked me if I knew about The Burn Cage™. Well, within a week I had one delivered to my driveway, and you should see this thing! It's made of industrial stainless steel—the kind they use to build furnaces—and looks like it could hold a small gorilla.

I quickly stuffed it with paper, branches, leaves, boxes of old receipts, sawdust ... you name it. I put the lid on and then lit some of the paper.

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— Josh M., Norwich, VT



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I'm getting older and can't do everything I used to do. We don't raise chickens, ducks or rabbits any more, and the garden isn't so large, either. But I still raise and sell comfrey and have been advertising it in COUNTRYSIDE for many years. I also have it on a friend's website (Garden Time Online), Bruce's Organic Comfrey. I have been growing and selling it ever since I read J.D.'s book *Raising the Homestead Hog*. It's a great book, which is hard to find nowadays.

We also grow horseradish, cantaloupe, a few watermelon, pump-

kins, elephant garlic, peppermint, Bergamot mint, Concord grapes, a few apple trees, tomatoes and peppers. This year I am trying frying peppers, as I can't seem to find them in Virginia (not enough Italians living here).

For anyone raising chickens, if you have trouble with snakes eating the eggs, try this. I used this after we had a problem with a black snake. Punch small holes on each end of an egg, empty it as well as you can and fill it with salt. Put a small piece of masking tape over the holes and put the egg back in the nest box. The snake will O.D. on the salt. I got this from COUNTRYSIDE years ago. It works and I don't have any more snake problems. We have an outside stove, which heats the domestic hot water and heats the house. We've had it for about 10 years now. The biggest thing is getting my two sons to saw and split wood for me, as I can't do it anymore. We have plenty of trees on our eight acres, and my son Brian took down about 30 two years ago, so there is plenty to saw.

I did away with our passive solar hot water heater last year, as the tank was getting too old. But I am probably going to put in a new one, since we don't use the outdoor Taylor stove in the summer. This was really a preheater, as it ran to our electric hot water heater, so on a hot day in the summer, the water running to the electric water heater might already be 75°F or so. I used to sell plans for this solar heater years ago, and advertised it in COUNTRYSIDE for a while. They are pretty easy to build and can save you some money. My next project is to build a trellis for our roses, and then I'm going to make five gallons of India Pale Ale.

— Bruce Burdge, Virginia

Griswold Cast Iron is History

COUNTRYSIDE: Regarding OpenHearth Cooking by Wayne Tucker (May/June 2013): You have a picture (#4) of a Dutch oven with a Lodge on the lid. If Griswold is so great, why cook with Lodge? Is Griswold still made and sold anywhere? I'm not talking about flea and antique markets. I have never seen an ad for Griswold products. I own a small collection (40 to 50 pieces) of ironware, which isn't much when you consider how much is really out there. — Sidney N. Love

Wayne replies:

I said I prefer Griswold, and I do. Sadly, Griswold closed its doors for good in 1957 (go to: www.griswoldcookware.com).

Most of my collection of cast iron cookware is made by Griswold. I am still searching for a Griswold flat top Dutch oven with legs in flea markets and antique shops. In the meantime, Lodge was an okay substitute for that type of cookware. It just takes a long time to season (please refer to previous COUNTRYSIDE articles for information on how to do this) because, as most recently made cast iron cookware, the finish is not in the same league as Griswold. Either way, you will have to invest time searching for Griswold or reworking the finish on a new piece in order to get the best results from cast iron.

Good luck.

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Sears Pressure Cooker Needs a Manual

COUNTRYSIDE: I just purchased a used six-quart stainless steel pressure cooker and it did not come with an instruction manual. I have scoured the Internet and have not been able to locate one. It is a Sears, stainless steel, model 620.46281 probably made around 1987. Sears (Kenmore made it for Sears) cannot get me an instruction manual. Do you have any ideas for me or sites I might be able to write to asking if anyone has one and would be willing to send me a copy? It has a jiggle on top and a rubber plug with a small piece of stainless in the middle. I do have a Mirro, older model, but that is weighted to 5, 10, and 15 lbs.

Thanks. – *Christine Check*

Will There Ever Be Answers?

Population question has been around "forever"

COUNTRYSIDE: I recently received the March/April 2013 issue of COUNTRYSIDE AND SMALL STOCK JOURNAL and have thoroughly enjoyed it; my thanks to the editors, writers, and staff for providing readers with another fine issue.

Reading the Conversation & Feedback section, it seems that the issues of appropriate population and resulting quantity or quality of life, like death or taxes, will always be with us. I agree with Mr. Cocchiarella: in nature there are always limits to growth. As Wendell Berry notes in his writings, the only form of unlimited growth in nature is cancer, which grows until it kills its host and itself. The idea that we can continue to exponentially "grow" ourselves out of the problems we created in trying to "solve" other problems, which we previously created, is hubris – particularly when there was no problem other than a failure to live in

a reasonable and right relationship with Creation, our neighbors, and the Creator. Perhaps choosing *not* to make Creation conform more to our insatiable demands for growth, while self-limiting, is also self-healing?

The next writer seems to believe that limits are nothing more than inconveniences to be overcome: there is nothing unconquerable for the human mind and spirit. I note that this attitude is prevalent in our society – we need not limit our way of living because we can always overcome any unforeseen issues we create. That this is foolish, wasteful, and unnatural: does more need to be said? The unnamed contributor goes on to extol technological progress that allows us to continue down our current path at lower costs with greater efficiency, thanks to technological improvements. What our friend fails to recognize is the ever more complex and expensive web of interaction such technological indebtedness requires. He should also worry that we have allowed our capacity to produce, maintain, and repair its components to be offshored for the short-term benefits of a few folks. We no longer produce our own food and clothes here! Foolishness on foolishness it seems to me.

The essay then goes on to praise human competition as a driver of this uncontrolled and untended growth. This alone should suggest that competition is not an unalloyed blessing. In matters of food, water, clothing, shelter, health...do not understand why competition for essentials is a good thing in and of itself. If one lives their life as a matter of accumulating things then perhaps it make a sort of sense – I have more than you so I am superior to you. I hold your life in my hands because you need what I have and you must pay to use a portion of it, although I did not make it, it came to me through no particular effort of my own inasmuch as it is a gift of Creation and preceded me and will continue upon my death, nor do I care whether you live or die so long as I am paid. How much misery do we bring on ourselves and others with this attitude with which we poison

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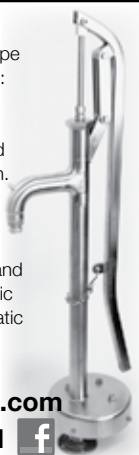
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14 Imadenoadvancedtoher,but she accepted them.—LouisScutenaire

the minds of our children? How much debt and worry do we bring on ourselves trying to meet needs that are no needs and wants which are seeded in us by ads and marketing as a bit of sand in a cultured pearl? How sad we feel obliged to be more than another rather than fully be ourselves and appreciate the same in others.

Finally, I take issue with the idea that capitalism and freedom are idols to which we must all give service and honor. No one is free who does not recognize they are dependent upon others. And no one is rich who believes that hoarding and accumulating things is their right and entitlement...all is a gift and should be valued and shared accordingly. Perhaps we need worry less about appropriate population size and more about what people believe about our world and their place in it? — *Marc Kivel*

Readers Ask... Readers Answer

COUNTRYSIDE: This is in reply to “Questions, questions” in the May/June 2013 COUNTRYSIDE magazine. I can’t answer all of her questions, just a few. As for the compost, she mentioned she had roosters (“How do I trim my rooster’s spurs?”), so you let your chickens make compost for you. This works great if you have a static coop/run set-up. Just throw all of your yard, garden and kitchen waste into the run and let the chickens dig through it. It will turn into compost before you know it. The only thing I don’t put in my compost yard is leaves. I use them as litter in my coop, at least 12-inches deep. I clean out the coop once a year and put the composted leaves/manure in my garden. If the coop starts to smell before clean-out time, I just add more leaves.

To trim your rooster’s spurs you’ll need two people. One person will hold the rooster and the other will cut the spurs about half-way down with a good pair of pruning shears. It will bleed a little, but not for long. Some people put a hot potato on the spur to soften it and then just pull the spur off. I haven’t tried

this so I don’t know if it works.

You can use some tulle fabric from a fabric store to make a row cover for your squash. Use five-foot long pieces of PVC pipe to make hoops over your plants and then cover it with the fabric. You can use squeeze clamps from the hardware store to hold the fabric to the pipe. Once your plants are big enough to fight off the bugs themselves, you can remove the cover.

Comfrey is a good herb for external use in humans on wounds, sore muscles, pulled ligaments and broken bones. It can be used internally but only for three weeks, take a three week break and use it three weeks, etc. Comfrey tea tastes pretty good. I also use my comfrey to feed my livestock. It has 22-23% protein in it so the chickens get it, but it must be wilted a bit before they will eat it. I usually mix it with mashed potatoes. It is also purported to help cows give more milk. I bought my roots from www.nantahala-farm.com/comfrey-order-s.shtml. They are reasonably priced.

As for limited success starting seeds for the garden, I suggest you “chit” them—sprout them before you plant them. Put the amount of seeds you want to plant in a pint canning jar, cover the jar with screen fabric (not aluminum screen), and hold the fabric on with the canning rim. Fill the jar with enough water to cover the seeds and let sit over night. In the morning strain out the water through the screen and set the jar on its side over the sink with the back propped up so the jar is tilted. This will allow excess water to flow out of the jar. Keep the seeds moist by rinsing them throughout the day until you see small sprouts coming from them. Plant them as soon as possible once they sprout and *don’t* water them until they have their first true leaves. Watering them before that will kill your seeds. Try to make sure there isn’t rain in the forecast for at least 10 days after planting. Every seed I’ve done this with has germinated and produced exceptionally.

I hope some of my ideas are helpful to you. — *Kelly Hayes, Mississippi*

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The Bad Guys Are Getting Desperate...So... As A Patriot You Must Know...

“How To Hide Your Guns”

Former Special Forces Officer Shares His Guerrilla Secrets For Hiding Your Guns From Criminals And Other Predators!

In the days after Katrina had devastated southern Louisiana, many homes were abandoned and the few homeowners who remained were rendered defenseless when state law enforcement descended upon our neighborhoods removing as many firearms as possible. Here's my story...

“First the cops arrived and took all their weapons, then the gangs arrived and stole everything else that wasn't chained down.”

They said that they were confiscating every privately owned firearm so there wouldn't be criminals taking advantage of the crisis. Of course, like all government policies, this one was ass-backwards. They should have recruited all the military vets like myself and a few of my neighbors, armed us to the teeth, and said, “Shoot any rioters on sight.”

But they didn't. First the cops arrived and took all our weapons, and then the gangs arrived and stole everything else that wasn't chained down. I did my best to fight off three punks, but in the end they walked off with my stereo, a flat screen TV and a laptop. I was pissed...but I had a reason to be thankful. It was a little secret and no one else knew...

My Real Cache Of Guns Remained Untouched!

As those punks left my house that day they must have been feeling that they had cleaned me out completely. But I got the last laugh. Here's why: I had a secret cache of weapons hidden deep inside my house, where no thugs or even a sophisticated criminal would ever think to look.

My *real* gun collection, the one worth thousands of dollars and including muzzle loaders from the War Between the States and a few guns my grandfather gave me when I was young. The truth is, even if they had known where to look, they wouldn't have gotten them.

I Decided Right Then And There To Tell Everyone I Could The True Story Of How I Kept My Guns Safe During A Very Uncertain Time

As a result of my military training, that day after Katrina and the stories I've heard from hundreds of others who've had their guns stolen, I've written a powerful new book: **Hide Your Guns**. In it I share the secrets of hard core gun caching I learned in my Special Forces days including:

- **Where to hide your guns so the bad guys will never find them.**
- How to create a hiding place, right in plain sight!
- **The places you should never hide your guns (under any circumstance)**
- When a safe isn't the solution.
- **How to harden a target (just like we did in Vietnam).**
- The sticker you can put on your front door that criminals fear more than a German Shepherd baring his fangs.
- **The most important room in your house for protecting your guns (and your family).**
- How to use common furniture to create the most secret hiding places that even highly skilled thieves will never suspect.
- **The common household appliances you should never use as hiding places.**
- **Where to put your money and credit cards so they'll never be found...but you can access them in an instant.**

And also...

- **The best material for building a simple weapons cache that will withstand the elements.**
- How to bury your cache so even the most sophisticated metal detectors can't find it (this is really cool.)
- **The two items most people forget to put in their cache.**
- The secret component in your cache to protect the contents from humidity and corrosion.

And how to discover the very best place to store your cache, and I'll let you in on a secret...the absolutely worst place is in your backyard!

I also discuss how to stay below the radar. It does you no good to have the most secure cache of weapons in the world if everyone knows about them, so I broke a few rules and share some secrets I learned in Special Forces, including:

- **How to write reminders to yourself that look like nonsense to anyone else.**
- The people you must avoid at all costs.
- **How to prepare if you live in an urban environment.**

I simply don't have the space to list everything here, and what I've already told you is just a taste of what you'll find in **Hide Your Guns**.

I have to warn you...this information is likely to send shockwaves through the liberal media, so be discreet about how you use it and who you tell about it.

These tactical secrets would take you a full career in the military or law enforcement to acquire, but I “tell all” in **Hide Your Guns**. Some of this information has been briefly touched on by privacy experts and so-called survivalists, but no one as ever covered these topics in the depth I do and in the context that has been brewing since the economic meltdown and elections of 2008.

One More Thing. I Almost Forgot...

My publisher tells me many of you don't have time to sit down and read a book from cover to cover, so I've recorded every word of this book as an audio book. With these CDs you can listen any time in your car or even load to an iPod. And as a special bonus, you'll receive the ebook version (PDF file) to share with your family and friends.

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PLUS...you get a very special **FREE bonus**...that I insist you **KEEP** as a gift. It's an amazing 2-part CD set with intense “hard-core” techniques for debating with liberals about guns. It's called “The Great Gun Debate: How To Argue With Liberals About Guns And Win Every Time!” Next time you “get into it” with your obstinate brother-in-law or the green-freaks down at the office, you'll win the argument hands down.

Second Gift: I'm also going to rush you a bonus DVD: “The Real Story Behind The Second Amendment.” This DVD lays out the real reason the founders demanded the Second Amendment be included as the highest law of the land. It's not well known or understood by most Americans, especially public school teachers and liberal college professors. Frankly, the real truth may shock you. This is a must have video for anyone interested in preserving the right to keep and bear arms.

Third Gift: “No B.S. Home Defense With Firearms” eBook

Many gun owners have no idea how to use their weapons safely if they are backed into a corner and reading this important eBook could save your life. *Disclaimer:* Using

guns for self-defense carries with it certain risks. Some of these risks are obviously life-threatening. Always find out local, state and federal laws that govern the use of deadly and non-deadly force.

The **Hide Your Guns** book and the bonuses are available to the public until we run out. That's it! We decided to limit the printing to only a few thousand, because if we sell too many copies these techniques will not work, and secondly, I really don't want to be targeted as a terrorist for simply helping folks keep their guns out of the hands of criminals and looters. Seriously, that means this offer (and the order page on the web) may disappear at any time and without warning. (I guess it also means that I could disappear at any time without warning if the wrong people don't like the information I'm providing.) Our plan is to turn the website off once our initial copies are sold just to play it safe.

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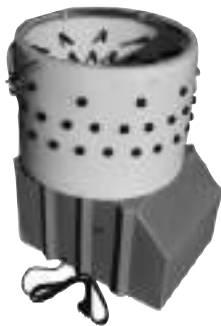
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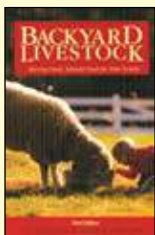
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"Goat Rope" Has Various Meanings

COUNTRYSIDE: Jerri Cook's research on the term "Goat Roper" in the May/June 2013 edition prompted me to write about a similar sounding term used here in the Southeast that has a much different meaning. The term is "goat rope" and it means something that has not gone as expected or has gone vastly awry. As in, "This has sure turned into a goat rope, hasn't it." If you have ever been on one end of a rope with a half wild goat turning cartwheels on the other end, you will quickly grasp its meaning. And all you wanted to do was to lead the goat onto the truck. — *Billy Carter, Alabama*

Black Walnut Wine

COUNTRYSIDE: Does anyone have a recipe for oak leaf wine or pine needle wine, as there are for nettles? I've searched the Internet, but can't find anything. Your help is appreciated. — *Dawn Paschke*

Any Ideas for Pumping a 600-Foot Deep Well?

COUNTRYSIDE: I love the idea of hand pumping from an electric well, but my well is 600-feet deep. Does anyone have any recommendations or ideas for getting water from a well that deep? — *Mistie Osbourn, norcalkitten78@gmail.com*

She Doesn't Appreciate "City Slickers"

COUNTRYSIDE: I just got done reading the article, "Life is full of uncertainty," and could not agree more with what Kathy from South Dakota wrote. About the private information that

is so scary, and she wrote about overpopulation, which I think about all the time, with illegal immigrants pouring into this country who are not paying into our system, but draining it drives me crazy. When she wrote how her heart breaks about people just wanting a few acres of land, I had to write in.

We have about two acres in Dutchess County, New York, about two hours north of New York City. They come by the thousands (we call them "city slickers") and the thing that gets me is that they all had these well-paying jobs, like working for Crate and Barrel, or Martha Stewart, and come up here and buy up these beautiful farms that farmers can no longer afford to run and operate because of extremely high school and property taxes. Our mortgage has gone up \$400 in 10 years because of this. People who can afford this are not the average middle class, but the city people can. I saw an ad that read "Hudson Valley — the New Hamptons," *great just what we need!* After 9/11 people could not get off of Long Island and they panicked, now, here they are.

You see Ferrari's, Range Rovers, Land Rovers... really? Just because you are in the country doesn't mean you need a \$100,000 4-wheel drive vehicle. And you always know they are from the city just from how they dress — orange sneakers with a pink scarf and tan crop jacket? Yup, they are from the city.

It seems that lately, every one of my country magazines, which I will not name, have had an article about some place up this way, whether it is about gardening or going to antique stores, or just great country farms where you can apple-pick in the fall. My family and I work so hard for what we have, and it seems that the silver spoon they bring up here just increases *my* taxes, so I can no longer afford to live where I love. This is their second and/or third home, but this is where we live year-round.

They come to the country and send their kids to camp. How does that make sense? You have a house in the country and you send your

kids to camp in the summer? I just do not get it. They love paying \$6 for a dozen eggs, and think the CSAs are here just for them. I know they bring in revenue, but not to the majority of people who live up here. I find them to be pushy and snobby.

Thanks for letting me rant. One of the big country magazines had a huge write-up that listed 33 reasons to visit New York's Hudson Valley, with train schedules included! Just thought I would voice another opinion and maybe shed a different light on the economy – not always for the better.

Thank you and love your magazine. Keep up the great work. – *Doreen Knapp, New York*

Wanted: Desert Gardening Tips

COUNTRYSIDE: Thank you so much for providing a forum for like-minded folks to share their wisdom and tips. I have learned and applied many of the techniques suggested by readers.

Living in such an arid climate, I am inclined to focus my attention on climates similar to my own. In a broad sense this would be anything west of the 100th longitude and south of the 35th latitude in the U.S. (excluding the Pacific Coast and elevations above 5,000 feet). I am tickled pink when I read snippets from readers in the Rio Grande Valley and west Texas. I have adapted to the desert well, but I am frankly amazed that anyone can tolerate sub-zero temperatures (+20°F and I've had enough). Then again, I find that I can still do a lot of outdoor work in 110°F heat whilst others are hibernating in air-conditioning. It is this disparity in human beings and their environment that keeps me coming back for more knowledge.

Each reader has a story, each has life very different from the next, and each has knowledge gleaned over a lifetime. I am so happy that they are willing to share their skills with others. Muchas gracias. – *Dave Stanton, Arizona*

Uses for Assorted Items Around the Homestead

COUNTRYSIDE: At 65 years of age, with lymphedema in my arm from chemotherapy and double mastectomies, I am unable to garden conventionally. Thinking outside the box is the way of life now.

Needing produce that I can grow to augment my grocery budget, I started looking around the five acres I rent and started coming up with wonders for container gardening on the deck.

- Used kitty litter buckets are perfect for growing tomatoes and peppers, and an old 42 liter tote is holding lettuces, beets and carrots. A kitty litter tray is growing an herb garden and another has strawberries. I plan on using another litter bucket for cantaloupe and green beans.

- Used PVC pipe is used to water and fertilize the plants and to support tomatoes, and will support the green beans.

- Coffee containers are growing mints, to minimize their spreading. So much good stuff was going to waste around here!

- The tote has holes cut in the bottom from my box cutter and then pond rocks were put in and a local dirt yard filled it for me.

As of the day I write this (April), even with the late freezes and frosts we had, I have a dozen tomatoes from one-to-four inches in diameter on my plants. The beets are the last up, but are about an inch tall. The lettuces are identifiable as lettuce now. The carrots were put in a week ago, and will probably sprout in the next few days. The rosemary is over six inches tall and the other herbs are chasing it.

I can do my gardening from a lawn chair on the deck now, and since I am unable to lift over 10 pounds, even the garden hose for watering is a contrivance.

I still need to acquire another container for onions, but the dump will probably have something I can use.

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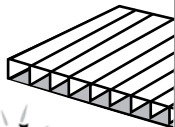
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18 Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future. — Niels Bohr

At this point I am slowly making progress. Since I am alone, it takes more time and creativity to do things.

Thank you for all your ingenious ideas and suggestions. They have been wonderfully helpful in “thinking outside the box.” — *Lynda C. Rowan, Texas*

She Prefers Modern Electricity

*Off-grid:
Been there, done that*

COUNTRYSIDE: I read with interest the article in the September/October 2012 issue of COUNTRYSIDE. I found the article very good, and it brought back memories of my life “off the grid.” Let me explain, that I am not that old (mid-50s). Most of my generation grew up with indoor plumbing, electric lights, central heat, city water, a telephone, and television (think Bonanza, Man From U.N.C.L.E., American Bandstand, Gunsmoke, Batman, and Green Acres for series). I only saw these when I went to my cousin’s house after school, but it was not a part of my daily life. We didn’t have a television, because we did not have electricity.

The 1960s were the time of the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show (I missed that), the Vietnam War (ditto), and Saturday Night Live (1975, missed that too).

When I grew up, in rural Wyoming, I, and many of my neighbors lived “off-grid” because we could not afford the price for REA (rural electric association), started in 1941 in Wyoming to help rural residents afford power.

Many of my neighbors had gas lights — one family had gas lights in the house until the mid-70s, I believe they were the last ones in our area to finally get electricity.

In my family, we didn’t have REA, but we were modern compared to some folks, we had a propane-fueled power plant, or generator. (We called it a “light plant.”)

Living with a light plant, you learn a lot of things.

1. If the lights go out, *you* have to go and see if you can figure out what is wrong with the dumb thing. (Well, my dad did. He cussed more at that light plant that he did at a stubborn cow.)

2. Always have candles and/or a lantern handy. (One evening, my father, my uncle, and myself were working cows, long after dark. We rode home to find that, although Mom and my aunts had supper ready, we had to eat by candlelight. No, it was not romance, it was because the power plant quit. Mom was more than a little upset.)

3. You learn to do a lot at night, because there is no sense starting the light plant for just a load of laundry, or to play a record.

4. Have a battery-powered radio. That was the only way we got news and weather. (I can remember there used to be a station out of Denver, Colorado, that had a story hour for kids on Saturday evenings. Imagine, when the snow is blowing outside, huddled by the radio, listening to The Snow Queen. You can’t make memories like that with a television.)

5. Learn to live without television, the power plant, at the time, caused a lot of static on the television, and it was hard to watch. Of course, two channels on an antenna might have been a problem as well.

6. Make sure you have a clothesline. Dryers take up a lot of juice, and it doesn’t make sense to run them to dry clothes. Can we say solar?

7. Be prepared to replace them periodically. They wear out with constant use.

8. Due to having no television, stock up on books. What a way to raise a reader. You read in self-defense.

That’s enough about light plants. Also, living off-grid, which we still do to some extent, I currently moved back in with my mom on the family ranch, and we still depend a great deal on coal and wood heat. We do have propane and some electric heaters, but we keep our coal stove going all winter in the kitchen, and it

heats the kitchen and helps to keep the propane costs down throughout the house. We also keep the wood fireplace going in the living room. One thing about living, even partially off-grid, is that you tend to get a lot more exercise.

Unloading a half-ton of coal at a time is a great upper body workout, as is bringing in full coal buckets each morning. I found a wood fireplace keeps you warm in two ways, chopping the wood and then burning the wood. Keeping the home fires burning is not just a cute phase, it is a necessity and it means *work*.

I can understand why people want to tell the power company to take a hike, I don't like paying electric bills either, but I'm not sure I want to go back to the hassles of light plants and outdoor plumbing. (We didn't have an indoor toilet until I was about 10, and an outhouse is something I *do not* want to go back to.)

I now have a cell phone, and would be happy to do without my landline, if I got cell phone service here, which I don't. I lived without a telephone until I was 12, and it is probably the one thing I could do without, sometimes when I get too many solicitation calls I could easily do without it. However, I don't want to go back to doing without, just because it is more convenient to do with.

I do enjoy my television, a few channels anyway, and I love my laptop, which needs a periodic battery change. I am not sure if a power plant would work, maybe there would be too much "surge" to be safe for the computer, I don't know.

My cousin, who lived the same way as a child, would *never* go back to the off-grid lifestyle. He's more than happy in a city.

All it all, living off-grid is good, if you are willing to take the inconvenience. Maybe I'm just lazy. But, having been there, I feel I rather deserve

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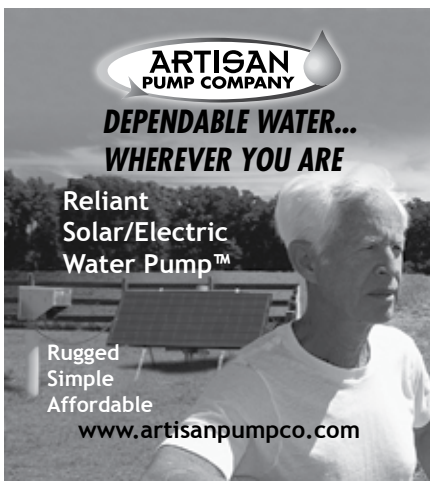
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Coming events:

National Alpaca Show
May 17–19, 2013

Colorado: Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association (AOBA) National Alpaca Show, National Western Complex, in Denver. Admission is free and open to the public. Dozens of vendors and farm displays will sell the latest alpaca fashions and hand-crafted items, along with artisan displays. For more information about alpacas or the AOBA National Alpaca Show, visit www.alpacainfo.com.

Annual COUNTRYSIDE Reunion
July 4–7, 2013

Indiana: There is no charge to attend this event and you are welcome to camp here, also without charge. This is an opportunity to meet like-minded people and to learn from each other. There are many talks and demonstrations given each day on a wide variety of topics. If you have a topic you would like to talk about, you are welcome to do so. You will also have a “tour” of our homestead where we have over 5,000-square-foot of organic (not certified) gardens, fruit trees, berry bushes, chickens, and a greenhouse with an aquaponics set-up. We raise grass-fed, chemical-free beef cows. Robert is self-employed and runs a sawmill. We filter used cooking oil for use in diesel equipment. The greenhouse is heated with a waste-oil burner, and the tilapia tank is heated with slabs from the sawmill. The summer kitchen is a building used not only for canning, freezing, and dehydrating, but also butchering, and making soap, wine, and cheese, etc. It is also a “hang-out” location, where you will probably spend some of your time here. Those attending are guaranteed to learn something, and to meet some great new friends.

Note: Camping is primitive with a limited number of spots where electric hook-up is possible. Please reserve these if you need one. If all are not reserved, they will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. We have gas stoves, a wood-burning stove, a camp fire, a gas grill, and a charcoal grill (and homemade charcoal) available for cooking, and hot and cold running water available for all. We also have wood-fired hot showers available. If you need motel info, we will help with that also.

For information, call Robert at 812-393-0160 or Yvonne at 812-686-3805. You may

also contact by email: yvonne.0104@gmail.com. Our mailing address is: Robert and Yvonne Hardy; 13738 N CR 10W; Gentryville, IN 47537.

Wool Pool
September 6-7, 2013

New York: Southern Tier Sheep & Wool Growers wool pool will be held on Friday (6th) and Saturday (7th) at the Otsego County Fairgrounds in Morris. Wool has many uses both traditional and nontraditional. You can save it for the wool pool, a local spinner, or use it for insulation around your farm. Please contact Sue Smith at 607-293-8810 for more information.

Midwest Wild Harvest Festival
September 13-15, 2013

Wisconsin: Ever wonder what plants in the local fields and forests might be edible? This is the event for you! The weekend, at Badger Camp, just outside Prairie du Chien, is suitable for people of all ages and experience levels and combines recreation and education into an unforgettable experience. Just being able to sit around a table or under a tree with seasoned foragers and listen to the stories being swapped is well worth the registration fee. This year’s featured speaker is Ellen Zachos, author of five books on foraging and an instructor at the New York Botanical Garden. Don’t miss the wild food potluck Friday night, complete with cooking contest. For more information or to register, go to www.wildharvestfestival.org/ or contact Melissa Price, N8759 Breakneck Rd., Birchwood, WI 54817; 715-354-9936.

Ohio Goat School
September 21–22, 2013

Ohio: We are sponsoring the Ohio Goat School put on by Ken and Janice Spaulding of Maine. Participants will learn about choosing a new goat, management, breeding, kidding, medical problems, nutrition, hoof trimming, milking, tattooing, necessary paperwork, record keeping, and a special segment on emergencies! We will cover numerous aspects of raising goats for meat, fiber and dairy and much, much more. The location is Hillsboro, Ohio. Sponsored by Highland Quality Living. In addition a Soap and Cheese Making Workshop will follow on September 23 put on by Janice Spaulding. More info at www.servicescene.org. See their information at www.mainegoats.com, or call Marilyn at 937-205-7046.

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THE LIGHTNING BUG

BY SKIP ESHELMAN
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Note: This is a continuation of articles covering what to do after the water well had been drilled and cased, installing a septic system, and building a raised garden on the high plains east of Cheyenne, Wyoming in previous issues of COUNTRYSIDE AND SMALL STOCK JOURNAL. The modern day Thoreaus continue to be self-reliant; tackling the subject of lightning management to protect Arrowmaker Ranch.

“Kenny, can I interrupt you?” I asked. We were putting on a hunter safety class at Wilder Creek Conservation Club, and Mr. Diver got involved because of his grandson. “I just received a call from Mrs. Diver. She says your place had a lightning strike this afternoon. The fire department is on the way, and it sounds real bad. The boy will be fine here if you want to leave him in class and check it out,” I told the

shaken instructor. Their place sat on a southern Michigan lake, not far from Marshall, with big trees on three sides.

The lightning bolt had bounced from a tree and came through the window of his den, hitting the leisure chair he most likely would have taken a nap in that afternoon, killing the family dog and scorching the contents. The fire department thought they had put out any embers left over from the strike, but later that night, the house burned down.

I still remember Mr. Diver’s face with the news, even though the strike happened almost 35 years ago. Defense against lightning strikes had already fallen out of favor by then. It seems as though places built prior to World War II had lightning rods, but with the war effort went things such as lightning rods, because of the copper.

“You know why we’re here don’t you?” he asked as we watched the professor circle the arena on one of

the ranch’s Tennessee Walkers. “To see Wyoming!” I replied. “Well that’s true, but there’s more to the trip,” he said. “My sister and her boyfriend were killed by lightning on Medicine Bow Peak a couple years ago. Dad and I thought we’d visit the site, and stop by the Forest Service office in Laramie,” he told me. “I remember that incident, but the paper said the couple came from Idaho.”

“They were students in Idaho, checking out the west during summer break,” he said. The professor had actually given the subject some thought since his little girl was killed, and discussed lightning at length, but still the lesson did not register with me until later.

We were putting finishing touches on a chicken coop near the main barn, when a storm came up out of the west. Lightning could be seen, but counting the seconds between sight and sound indicated some distance, and work continued. Then a bolt hit on the other side of the big

pole barn, where the horses napped in the corral. My son ran around the building to find the horses dazed but on their feet. We couldn't locate any obvious strike area, so it may have landed further out. Thing is, the electronics in the kitchen stove had been cooked that very afternoon. Other appliances could be damaged, but the problems may not show up immediately.

It seems like lightning is relegated to boogieman status, yet the natural phenomena is as prevalent and deadly today as when Ben Franklin considered the danger. Maybe, the "safety in numbers" logic has kicked in, but for the price of the usual insurance deductible; your family, livestock, home, barns, business, and trees can be protected. Here's something else to consider. As I cruised around the Internet reading about this subject, one of the sites pointed out that the State Farm Insurance corporate headquarters, along with most government buildings – and even the Statue of Liberty – are protected by lightning rods.

To quote a retired lightning rod salesman, "Lightning rods are a true insurance policy through prevention, rather than dealing with the damage after the fact!" He also pointed out that loss from lightning damage is second only to auto accidents. "If you throw in forest fires from lightning strikes, the costs really spike!" he told me.

Let's assume you are finally convinced that putting up some lightning rods and installing a surge protection device is in your future. Of course, there is the standard disclaimer, well maybe not standard, but mine:

Disclaimer: Read the instructions that come with the hardware. That's pertinent for everything mentioned in this article. Do not do anything without adult supervision, or if you're my age, without your child's consent. No animals were hurt during the creation of this piece, and no diseases can be contracted by reading and considering its content. I have not received anything from companies mentioned, but



One hundred feet of copper wire, clips, and nails.



The lightning rods. One is screwed into the plate, and one is unassembled for clarification.



Clamps that will be used in installation.



The surge protector

am willing to accept materials if they wish to donate them to me, because I didn't get squat for this effort. I am not an electrician, plumber, lawyer, or left wing radical (guess that's redundant for a lawyer), but I can ride, shoot, and fix fence. If you work with live electrical wires, think Miss Dig is a stripper, and worry that ungulate flatulence contributes to global warming; you probably watch ABC, CBS, CNN, MSNBC, NBC, believe the New York Times, and deserve more governmental regulation to protect you from yourself, and should not proceed with this tutorial.

I didn't dream up this information, but accumulated it from Internet sites that offer hardware to deal with lightning. Lightning rods work by two simple laws of physics:

1. They provide the shortest path to ground; and
2. They provide the path of least resistance.

Thus lightning rods provide a direct path to ground for the charges to follow, and prevent bad things from happening, if they were not otherwise available.

The lightning rod is designed to transfer lightning away from buildings during an electrical storm. They don't attract lightning, and do not repel strikes. The negative leader strike leaves the clouds starting downward toward the ground, while the equal and opposite ground charge is seeking a path upwards to meet and neutralize the cloud's charge, dissipating the positive ground charge during the collision in roughly 1/5000th of a second. One more thing about lightning rods; they are real pointed for a reason, to reduce the area of contact.

If the cloud charge is over a building with lightning protection, the earth charge uses the system, and dissipates out the top of the air terminals, and the two charges meet at a location called striking distance, usually 150 feet more or less, above the ground. A properly installed system intercepts the lightning bolt between cloud and earth, and conduits it to ground without damage. In reality, a lightning rod raises

the ground from grade up to the tips of the points, or air terminals. The rod offers security for an area approximately 20 feet in diameter. That's why you need multiple rods to protect the entire roof area.

U.S. lightning protection standards were first published by the National Fire Protection Association as NFPA 780 in 1904. It has been revised since then. The standards codify lightning rod installations in which sharpened metal "air terminals" (also known as Franklin Rods) are connected to an earth ground. The standards call for a minimum of two down leads and grounding rods.

Lightning rods are made of either copper or aluminum. Copper is more expensive. It is advised not to mix copper and aluminum components. If you go with copper rods, use copper ground wire, connectors, etc. If you are dealing with aluminum siding and/or roofs, then aluminum would be appropriate.



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The following are 10 considerations to help keep you out of trouble, and should give you a pretty good idea of what the cost will be, minus labor if you don't plan on doing the work yourself. There is an instruction book from Lightning Rod Parts for \$12 post paid and shipped first class, to help understand and assist in planning.

Determining Groundings

1. A minimum of two grounds are required. If the house perimeter is between 250 and less than 350 feet, then three grounds are called for; 350 and less than 450 feet, then four grounds are needed. Etc. etc.

2. Groundings are located at opposite corners of a structure. See three examples of rooflines. When pounding in a grounding rod, have someone pour water along the rod as it's driven into the surface to lessen resistance. I cover the rod with a fence post driver, which provides a greater area for striking the rod. This also protects the sledge hammer handle if you have a tendency to miss the target, and prevents the end of the rod from mushrooming.

3. Locate grounding rods near electrical ground for the house system. Tie everything together. Tying into the grounding rods of nearby trees with a lightning rod system is also recommended.

Spacing of Rods

4. Lightning rods are installed at regular intervals, less than 20 feet apart, and a minimum of 10 inches higher than the object or building to be protected. End rods are installed within one foot of the roof end, although a two-foot maximum from the roof end is acceptable.

Cabling

5. Make sure the cable runs horizontally, or downwards to the ground. They can run along the roof's ridgeline, or underneath through the rafters, which would probably be cleaner, appearance-wise, especially if you have an attic

to work with. If re-roofing is required because of hail or some other problem, the external system would have to be removed and reinstalled. Just a thought.

6. Don't let cables be bent sharply into "U" or "V" formation at any point.

7. Cable clamps or fasteners every three feet are recommended. Conductor cables run along and down moldings, gutters, and other structural parts in order to have a neater looking installation. "Tees" are used to connect various runs to additions or extensions from the main building.

Other Roof Area Considerations

8. Chimneys need their own lightning rod tied into the system. TV antennas are out of date, but satellite dishes and metal exhausts should be attached. If vents are within six feet of the cable, they should be connected as well.

Aluminum vs. Copper

9. Aluminum is cheaper than copper systems. Do not use copper with aluminum sided houses. Components made of these different metals cannot be mixed, as noted above.

Surge Protection

10. Install a whole house surge arrester at the circuit box/electrical panel. They are reasonable, and greatly expand protection from surges originating on the power grid.

Regarding Whole House Surge Protection

I found a whole house surge protector for the main electric panel at Fence Supply Inc. (888-201-2564) for under \$60 at this writing. It's made in the good old U.S.A., which I like now-a-days. Lightning can enter the building through power lines that have been struck some distance off, or from an accident at a power pole. For instance, a vehicle could damage a power pole causing lines to touch, or ice, tree limbs, and wind could cause surges when power lines snap



under pressure. The surge protector detects the spike, and creates a path of least resistance to ground. This unit protects in-line grounds and line-line modes. Regardless of the path a surge uses to get into the home, it will be diverted to ground, therefore the unit is 100% ground dependent.

One testimonial here: We hadn't installed the lightning rods, but did hang a surge protector off of the electrical panel, and wired it into a 220 breaker. The cabin took a lightning hit while we were drywalling, and I credit the device with avoiding any damage.

Specifics of the House Surge Protector

- Syscoms SYC 120/240 T-2 Commercial and Residential Surge Protector Designed for Whole House Protection—Single Phase
- UL Listed 1449 3rd Edition SPD Type 2
- Tested to ANSI/IEEE C62.1, C62.11

- 100,000 AMP Total Surge Protection

- Installation: Hardware in Parallel and Passive

This unit does not create power, draw power, or reference ground.

The unit sits in parallel until there is an over voltage present, which is diverted to ground.

Thermal Fusing: This means an over voltage could cause the unit to self-sacrifice and prevent fires.

Diagnostic Light: Three way: 1) functioning; 2) ground present; 3) phase and neutral not reversed.

It attaches to the side of the electrical panel for convenience, or it can be mounted next to the panel. If your electrical inspector has a problem with the unit, the NEC codebook has an exemption for parallel surge devices: NEC 230-82 Exemption 4. If you're squeamish about sticking your hands into the electrical panel for installing the unit, now would be a good time to find an electrician. Most panels have a main breaker, but if you have not worked with the

panel before, let this effort turn into a learning experience. That would probably depend on the amiability of that electrician I suppose, but if you're going to pay some serious dollars, put those expectations out there for consideration.

This particular unit comes with a lifetime warranty, and \$25K electro-mechanical connected equipment guarantee covering all appliances in the home. I'd like to point out, there are surge protectors for cable and telephone lines available as well. Lightning or electric surges can still come into the building via telephone lines (cell phones have reduced this exposure) and cable connections.

It doesn't hurt to have computers and other expensive electronics plugged into surge protectors and uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), even if there is a whole house surge prevention system in place. The extra protection depends on how much you value your hardware, software, and files.

A wireless network would avoid

the inherent problems of hard hook-ups, but then security issues surface, so that could be a consideration commensurate with your level of paranoia. There are cable surge suppressors available that are tuned so as not to impede performance of the connection.

To demonstrate the difference in prices between copper and aluminum, the following are charges for two major components of the protec-

tion system from one company:

Smooth twist copper cable is \$2.35/ft., were as a smooth twist aluminum cable is \$1.45/ft., a 90¢/foot difference, which could add up pretty quick for a big place.

One copper roof lightning rod with mount and clamp garners \$27.08, compared to \$17.08 for the aluminum version. Personally, I like copper, mostly because it is preferred over aluminum when working with electrical systems in homes and farm situations.

What to expect for a small project: A shop/stalls building had been constructed at the ranch. There will be a little kitchenette, bathroom, and studio/library on one side, and two horse stalls in the other. The building is 36' x 24' for a total perimeter of 120 feet, so it still needs the minimum of two ground rods.

The roof is around 40-feet long with the overhangs, dictating three lightning rods be put into service; one at each end, and one in the center. In this case, a copper horse weathervane is centered on the roof, which will serve as the center lightning rod, and tied to the system.

(Sadly, the Wyoming wind has since changed my mind about weathervanes in our part of the country).

The length of the roof is 40 feet, plus down the roofline (14' x 2) to the corners, and down to the ground rods (12' x 2) for a total of 92 feet, but we ordered 100 feet to allow for some leeway in installation, and connection with the electrical ground of the building.

Basic Components for a small structure:

- 100' of braided UL Listed Bare Copper 7/16" diameter in smooth basket weave configuration: \$235.
- 2-9-foot grounding rods and clamps \$23.90
- Copper-clad steel ground rods and clamps could be acquired at the local building supply to save on handling and shipping.
- 2-18" copper lightning rods and mounts \$66.

- 30 cable keepers/fasteners 30 pieces at .30/each \$9.

- 30 standard 1-1/2" long copper nails 30 pieces at .12/each \$3.60

- 1 Syscom SYC TC whole house surge protector \$58.99

Total: \$396.49

Shipping charges would be additional of course.

Decorative Rods

Some beautiful variations of the lightning rod were used in the old days, and are still available. The engineering is the same, but glass balls and fancy air terminals can be purchased to really dress up an otherwise utilitarian function and look. Check out Lightningrodparts.net for variations and personalize those ugly old rods sticking up in the air, just waiting for some action. This company also has a great FAQ sheet on questions entertained during 40 years in the business.

I won't go through all the different offerings this company displayed on their webpage, but suffice it to say there are plenty of configurations to appeal to the most discerning of tastes. Their phone number is 877-866-3189, before I forget.

The Moose and Rooster Weather Vanes actually appealed to the westerner in me, and I really liked the Whale #F-BW1137PT for \$159, but that could look out of place on the high plains of Wyoming. Lightning rods are not only a useful common-sense addition to the homestead, but could become an art form in and of itself once again. The fancy versions of lightning rods and weather vanes certainly appealed to this wannabe artist's eye.

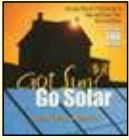
Conclusion

Lightning protection should be considered. The reasons are obvious around the home site. I wouldn't be surprised if it was not addressed in the health care bill, but hasn't been unearthed yet (of course that's my opinion and not the publisher of this fine magazine). This primer hopefully will get you thinking about the subject, if nothing else. ☘

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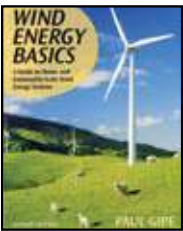
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Grace and Ashes

Fire prevention is crucial in the country

BY LISA OLIVIA JANSEN
3PIGGAL@GMAIL.COM

In my favorite movie, *Out of Africa*, Meryl Streep's opening line is, "I had a farm in Africa at the foot of the Ngong Hills." Her coffee farm, in the movie, was destroyed by fire. When I walk my property my mind says, "I had a farm in the Tahoe National Forest, a mile and a half from the South Yuba River. My farmhouse, car, guest cabin, and well house were destroyed by fire." Meryl Streep returned to her home in Denmark. But for me, this is my only home.

When I moved to this area in 1999, I joined the local volunteer fire department. There was a saying among the firefighters, "We don't say *if* your home burns, we say *when* your home burns." This area is known for wildfires and remote homes with limited access to fire suppression water. In the mid-2000s after a number of major wildfires, most of the top name homeowners insurance companies pulled out of the area. Our insurance was one of them. It took months of searching to find a company to replace them.

My home was not destroyed by a wildfire. It didn't really burn, it

exploded. I live off the utility grid. Therefore, many of my appliances were propane. It appears to have begun with a malfunction in a small radiant wall heater in the bathroom. The pilot light must have gone out and propane continued to fill the bathroom and kitchen. The kitchen had a propane refrigerator and cook store with oven. All of which had pilot lights. A fire requires fuel, oxygen and heat. The wall heater must have malfunctioned during the night providing the fuel for the fire equation. Oxygen is always present. And, I got up that morning and rekindled the fire in the woodstove and turned on the cook stove for a cup of tea. There was no propane odor. But I happened to look up and noticed gray swirling gases at the ceiling. I assumed this was some kind of thermal reaction and grabbed my pets and exited the house. The bathroom had already ignited. I ran across the road in my wet stocking feet to call 911 and heard the refrigerator and cook stove blow.

At the time of the fire I was long retired from firefighting. The North San Juan Fire Department responded. They worked quickly, skillfully and efficiently. My car was parked next to

the house and contained a half tank of gas, it exploded. The well house and guest cabin were on the other side of the car and burned to the ground too. The remaining outbuildings and two acres did not burn. North San Juan Fire Department contained the fire to the foot print of the house, car, well house and guest cabin. They saved all of the trees but one small cedar. They saved the tack room, chicken coop, the barn, a shed and the outbuilding with all the solar equipment in it.

Since the fire I have asked myself, how can I have better fire prevention and how can I better defend my home if a fire does start? I had several fire extinguishers at the time of the fire, but had let all of them become expired. While in the fire department we installed a hydrant on our property, but my husband never completed its hook in to the water system. Life kept moving at warp speed. Especially so living rurally and off grid. When one lives in a remote rural area you become your own electric company, water company, waste management company, and more. I once researched new residents to this area for another article and found that most people only last two years living off grid and remote. The



Far left: In a matter of minutes, this is what was left of Lisa's house. This page: You can't have too many extinguishers. The ABC type is for any type of fire. Check them for recharging needs when you set your clocks at the time change twice a year. This is the recommended time to change batteries in your smoke alarms, too. Left: Lisa's new well house.

vacation-like scenery woos them into believing living here will be leisurely. A couple years of back-breaking and endless work, trying to keep up with the afore mentioned responsibilities, and Mother Nature destroyed their dreams and the "for sale" sign goes up.

My house and the other structures that burned were made of site-milled cedar. Cedar is very flammable. I didn't know anything about the flammability of wood when I purchased the place. The buildings were built by stoned hippies in the 1970s. It was a home with a great deal of character. I had properly installed smoke alarms, but no carbon dioxide sensors. I had followed the fire department's recommendations on fire safety on the property. I limbed up all my trees. I removed ground growth in-between trees. For years I used goats to do most of the brushing. I had movable electric fencing to move them around the property wherever brushing was needed. I cleared trees too close to the house. I removed scotch broom, a highly flammable invasive plant. I picked up downed branches and pine cones.

One thing I did not do was insist on professional installation of flame-producing appliances. Most of my years here at the farm, I was married. My husband was very independent and skilled. He would not allow me to hire anyone to do anything. He felt he had to do it all. Looking back I think a professional opinion on installation of heaters, stoves and

refrigerators may have been valuable given the house was cedar and unprofessionally built. I guess I've just moved fully into the "better safe than sorry" camp.

My homeowner's insurance sent checks to replace the house and contents. My car insurance replaced the car. But nothing can replace those sentimental items we all have. It took a very short time to lose 55 years of memories. At the time of the fire I had an angry estranged husband. He tied up the insurance checks for a year. I had no family to go to and lived camping-style in an old RV with no water, septic, or lights for many months. I am a new homesteader all over again at 56 years old. So, I'd like to address a sensitive subject. I had not seen my estranged husband for three years. When you are sure someone is out of your family, take legal steps to provide for yourself. I believe that says it all.


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For more information on fire safety, go to www.nsjfire.org.

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The woodlot:

THE MULTI-PURPOSE ALL AMERICAN TREE

BY GLENN G. DAHLEM, PH.D.

When the first European colonists settled the east coast of what would later become the United States, they discovered something vaguely familiar. Here was a hardwood tree that resembled something they'd seen in the Old World, yet was a little different. It was the native North American black walnut, a cousin of the Persian walnut, which was widely cultivated in Europe.

The Persian, often called English walnut, had been brought to Europe during Medieval times by traders from south central Asia. Its value as a nut and furniture wood crop was well known throughout the Old World by colonial times. Early Americans soon realized that the Native American black walnut was just a bit different from its Eurasian relative. First of all, the New World tree grew bigger than its cousin. Secondly, its nutmeat, while equally edible and nutritious, was stronger tasting. Thirdly, unlike the relatively easy to crack shell of the Persian walnut, the American's shell was extremely hard, difficult to smash.

The American black walnut tree exists in two species. The more common one grows wild from the east coast as far west as Kansas. It ranges as far north as southern New England and central Wisconsin and Michigan. Its southern range includes Florida and the gulf coast. A second, less common species inhabits Texas, southern Oklahoma, and a few well-watered locations in New Mexico. That version of the black walnut reaches a much smaller adult size, although the two species, when they overlap, will readily interbreed.

As early as 1629, the east coast American colonists realized they had something special, and exported black walnut seedlings to Europe, where the tree soon became widely prized as a decorative tree. It's found there today in city parks in many countries. A tree in Sered, Slovakia claims a world record for its black walnut tree, reputedly 25 meters (82 feet) tall and over 300 years old. An American tree on Sauvic Island, Oregon is 34 meters (111.5 feet) tall,

but considerably younger. Both trees are around 6.3 meters (20.5 feet) in circumference near their base.

Today, the Persian walnut enjoys greater popularity in America as a food crop than its native American relative. This no doubt is due to two reasons, the milder taste makes for greater eating enjoyment when the meats are consumed alone, and the shells are much easier to crack. However, as an agricultural asset, the black walnut, while inferior as a snack food, has several advantages over its Old World rival. Those assets go far beyond the decorative, aesthetic value, which Europeans discovered long ago.

The American black walnut has five potential commercially exploitable assets, and four demonstrable benefits for improving the ecological environment.

First, the tree yields two food sources; the nutmeat, the major one, and the sap, occasionally tapped sugar maple style. High in unsaturated fat and protein, both are valued in candy making. Their stronger flavor than that of the Persian variety allows a given volume of nuts to flavor more candy than an equally sized portion of Persian walnut meats.

A second product is the husk. Used historically by pioneers to dye clothing, today these are a source of industrial dye valuable to the handicraft industry for fabric dyeing, making wood stain and ink manufacturing. A third commercial application is found in the ground nutshells. They may be pulverized to use for automotive valve grinding, in oil field drilling, and when finely ground, exfoliation in the skin care industry. The ground shells also find a market in sealing compound for oil field casings, to filter both water and crude oil, as a filler in plywood manufacture, and as an additive in making dynamite.

The fourth asset is the tree's lumber. Black walnut is highly prized for cabinet making, flooring and veneer. Depending upon its location in a given log, black walnut wood varies in appearance despite being part of a same tree. This can make a given

log very valuable to an experienced furniture manufacturer. Obviously, raising American black walnut for its lumber is a long-term proposition, easily lasting more than one lifetime for a farm family, perhaps even more than two lifetimes in some cases.

A black walnut tree starts producing at age five and reaches adulthood production at age 20.

The fifth potential revenue source lies in selling seedlings to landscapers, municipal parks, school districts, cemeteries and other beautification-minded buyers. Due to a natural partnership with squirrels, farmers with a producing tree will, in two or three years, find there is no shortage of seedlings. A black walnut tree starts producing at age five and reaches adulthood production at age 20. Few tree species fit in better with the modern environmentalist movement than the black walnut. Two squirrel species, the grey and the red, frequent it throughout its range, and a third, the "flying" squirrel, lives in roughly the southern half of its range. In fact, most farmers have discovered little need to plant the tree from seed; the ever-present squirrels do it for them. Nesting birds favor its close to right angle, strong hardwood branch attachments as good nesting sites. Persons interested in Native American natural history are attracted to its status as a bonafide indigenous American species. Few agricultural commodities with good commercial possibilities also have as many environmentally beneficial positives as the American black walnut.

Of course there are constraints encountered when raising black walnut trees, as with any farm crop. Interestingly, birch and black walnut trees are incompatible, and should not be raised in proximity to one another. While no major insect pests are known to attack the nutmeat by penetrating the shell, several forms



Black walnuts are majestic and useful.

of maggot do seek to burrow inside the husk. Several university agricultural researchers have over the years developed graftable strains of the tree, most notable being those at Purdue University in Indiana. This work has led to some strains more valuable for large nut yields, others better suited to enhanced timber production. It also has resulted in some varieties being more seasonally early in producing pollen than others; these shouldn't be planted near late flowering strains so as to avoid infertile nuts. The Missouri Agricultural Extension Service maintains a list of compatible strains.

A major problem in harvesting a black walnut crop is how to most efficiently separate the husk, shell and meat. Since all three are commercially valuable, none may simply be discarded, as compared with, for example, shucking ears of corn. After husks are stripped, the shells are cracked using one of three methods.

One procedure involves rolling the nuts on a hard surface, another employs an apparatus made from a car tire and metal mesh screen, a third uses a large plywood board with rows of holes slightly smaller than the nuts through which they are pounded. Whichever method is used, cracking the shells is hard work. The nice thing about the American black walnut is its multi-dimensional na-

ture. All in the same crop, it offers five commercial possibilities, a source of shade and beauty, an environmental bonanza for squirrels and birds, and perhaps most importantly, a living testimonial to America's heritage. ♣

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BY JANE COOPER



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Two North American species of hemlocks — *Tsuga canadensis* and *T. caroliniana* — have been devastated by hemlock woolly adelgid, an invader from Asia, particularly east of the Appalachian Mountains. The aphid-like pests feed on the sap of tender hemlock shoots. Hemlocks in eleven states from Georgia to Massachusetts have suffered widespread mortality. Trees further west and north, like this one in Wisconsin, remain healthy — for now.

DEMISE of the HEMLOCK

BY ART HOOTEN
WEST VIRGINIA

There they lay—the broken, shattered limbs of hemlocks, the fallen trunks of hemlocks, the upturned roots of hemlocks—all the scattered remains of what once was climax forest descendants and their progeny, stranded in cool, north-facing Appalachian mountain coves at the close of the last Pleistocene ice age. The warming climate reduced their range, but did not do them in. When Maggie and I purchased our West Virginia mountain farm in 1973, we were thrilled to find a large stand of hemlocks on our property. Our favorite nature areas in our native Connecticut were hemlock woods, and now we had our very own.

A hemlock stand appeals in all seasons. On a hot summer day one can find cool relief upon entering the preferred habitat of hemlocks—the sides of deep, shady hollows, flanking spring-fed, mossy runs.

In winter the hemlock tree, with its wide spreading, drooping branches, weighted with snow that settles easily on the flat, horizontally aligned needles, provides shelter from both wind and falling snow. By virtue of not having the lesser capacity of the short, round needles of spruce and fir or the long, bendy needles of pine to hold snow, it is beneath the freighted hemlock branches where we would look to find the barred owl, the chickadee, and the nuthatch taking refuge. (Photo 1)

In the early 1990s we noticed a changed look to some of the hemlocks. The tops seemed ragged and patchy and the color had a faded, pale look. Lower branches were still a healthy dark green. We had no idea that our beloved hemlocks were under attack as the sole food source for a tiny bug about the size in 8 pt. type of the “o” in hemlock, but oval rather than round. The name of this bug is the hemlock woolly adelgid. Hailing from southeast Asia, it has made sev-

eral entries into North America. The adelgids responsible for the destruction of our hemlocks are descendants of adelgids that likely came to the U.S. in the 1950s on plant material from southern Japan and first identified in the Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia areas. By the mid 1980s, virtually all hemlocks in the Shenandoah National Park were dead or dying.

The hemlock woolly adelgid lives on the sap of hemlocks. With no co-evolved predators tagging along on the imported plant material, the hemlock woolly adelgid thrived. It had the further advantage of being counter cyclical to pressure from native predators. The adelgids are inactive from June to October. They only feed and crawl in the spring and fall, when native predators are not that plentiful. (Photo 2.)

It didn't take long for the adelgids to make their presence known on the lower branches of our hemlocks. We found the tell-tale egg masses on the



undersides of the branches, identified by the white, woolly protective covering, arranged in orderly rows along both sides of the stem at the base of each individual needle attached to

the stem. When the larvae emerged and began feeding by puncturing the basal stems of the needles, the sugars being photosynthesized within the needles no longer fed the tree. Game over. Death by starvation takes a while, and we helplessly watched as the trees produced tiny green replacements that were soon sucked dry. Eventually, with no more reserves left to sustain new growth, the standing skeletons of hemlocks were ready for the final phase.

That began when borers, beetles, ants and termites chewed their way inside while the woodpeckers carved out holes to get at the larvae hiding within. Rain seeped into the boreholes of insects and the gaps from broken limbs. Spores of fungi added the forces of rot and decay into the soaked, porous wood. The skeletons' solid bones gave way to crumbling wood. The roots could no longer hold

to the ground. It was over. (Photos 3 and 4.)

I take no satisfaction in the thought that the hemlock woolly adelgid, having devoured and destroyed its sole food source, now faces the same fate as the hemlock—death by starvation. ❁

Not All Hemlocks are Poisonous

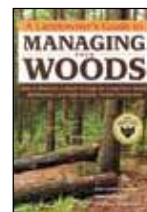
The common name of *Tsuga*, a genus of conifers in the pine family, is "hemlock," supposedly because the crushed foliage smells like that of an unrelated plant, poison hemlock (*Conium*). Due to an artist's error in a certain well-known goat book (since corrected), hemlock (*Tsuga*) was included with a list of poisonous plants. Hemlocks of the *Tsuga* species are not poisonous. — J.D. Belanger, conifer enthusiast

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Meteorologist or Fortune Teller?



By JERRI COOK
COUNTRYSIDE STAFF

If you're reading this, presumably you've survived the winter that some feared would never end. Like others, I expended a fair share of energy grumbling about the never-ending gray skies and snow storms. But after a few bungled forecasts, I turned my attention to the national and local meteorologists who dropped the ball. Why didn't they see this prolonged cold snap coming? How is it that practitioners of this profession can be so erroneous so often, yet still be given great deference when it comes to the weather? I posed the questions to a couple local television meteorologists. Both echoed the same sentiment. Meteorology is essentially a predictive science. So is astrology, but horoscopes are usually marked "for entertainment only." Just sayin'.

Armed with the knowledge that the weekly weather forecast was as least as reliable as my weekly horoscope forecast, I decided to find a way to accurately predict the weather myself. It didn't take long for me to figure out that I can predict the weather just as well as the television meteorologist. I just don't look as good doing it. As it turns out,

people were accurately forecasting the weather long before there was such a thing as a television, let alone a television meteorologist.

Aristotle is widely considered to be the originator of the field we know as meteorology, but long before he wrote the book that launched a science, *Meteorology*, people were studying cloud formations and atmospheric changes. Others were observing the natural responses of the living world around them. All were trying to understand the changes taking place in order to work with the rhythms of nature. In thousands of years of human history, nothing has changed. If you want to know what the weather is going to do, you have to go outside. Going from your home to your car, and from your car to your office where you stare at a computer model of nature isn't enough to give anyone an accurate picture of the weather. Just ask William Felker, Poor Will himself.

Will's fascination with the weather and the patterns of nature began when his wife gave him a barometer. He began keeping notes about the rise and fall of the liquid within the glass tubing. It wasn't long before he noticed patterns. Soon after that, he began predicting the patterns based on his own observations. He's been

doing it some 25 years now. The good news is that anyone can observe and predict any number of natural occurrences.

"Just pick a day and begin," says Will. "It helps if you use a notebook so you can have the same day on the same page every year. That way you can compare without having to flip through a lot of pages."

According to Will, it won't take long before you'll realize that some of the oldest methods of predicting the weather are the most accurate. You don't need a meteorologist to know if there's a good chance of rain, and according to Will, that's what we're dealing with when we're attempting to predict the weather — chances. "They deal in probabilities." The difference is that Will and those like him assess the probability based on their own observations. Television meteorologists assess the chance of precipitation or sunshine based on what they observe on their computer screen.

The good news is you don't have to wait for the seasons to pass in order to start understanding and forecasting natural events. Here are a few observations that have been around a long time, and are proven indicators of current and future weather patterns.

Red sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky in morning, sailor's warning.

This is one of the oldest and most accurate indicators of approaching storms. Travelers and farmers have been using this method for thousands of years. It's even mentioned in the Bible. "When in evening, ye say, it will be fair weather: For the sky is red. And in the morning, it will be foul weather today; for the sky is red and lowering" (Matthew 16:2-3). If the evening sun is red, it's because there's a high concentration of dust particles. This usually indicates high pressure and stable air coming in from the west. If the sky is red in the morning, there's a good chance of rain in the next 12 hours. It doesn't mean it absolutely will rain, but there's a better than average probability that it will. If the sunrise is pale red, it's because a low pressure system is moving to the east. The chances of rain are increasing. If the sunrise is a fiery red, it's because there is a high concentration of moisture in the atmosphere. Rain is on the way.

What's the outside temperature? Ask a cricket.

Go outside and listen for the chirping of crickets. Count the number of chirps in 15 seconds and then add 37. You've got a fairly accurate temperature reading for your area.

Put your head in the clouds.

If you notice different layers of clouds moving in different directions, the weather is going to change, and probably for the worse. If you notice tall columns of clouds, storms are possible. If you see bubble-shaped, low hanging clouds, severe weather is likely.

Watch the birds fly.

When the barometer starts falling, birds feel discomfort in their auditory canals, so they fly lower. A large number of birds perched on power lines is also a sign that it may rain or snow soon.

Check to see if it's raining cats, dogs...or rats.

If you see animals falling from the sky, run for cover. A violent thunderstorm, or worse is imminent. In 1680, an artist captured the moments just before a dangerous thunderstorm ripped through northern Europe. The painting depicts rats falling from the sky.



It rained frogs in Kansas City in 1873 and in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1882. It rained fish in Louisiana in 1947. Every time this happened, the ensuing storm was violent and damaging. It's not surprising when you consider that the updrafts of a developing storm lifts objects into the clouds. Usually it's leaves, litter, and other inanimate debris. If however, you notice larger objects or living things falling from the sky,

you've got a dangerous situation on your hands. Respond with the appropriate level of concern.

You don't have to wait to start your own day book of observations. The next time you think a storm is coming, look around and write down your observations. It's really just that simple. And if you want to get an idea of what your day book might look like, just turn to "Poor Will's Almanack" in the back of this issue of COUNTRYSIDE. Compare what happens when one of the fronts Will talks about moves through your area. You can also catch Will's live radio program and podcasts at www.wyso.org/programs/poor-wills-almanack. 🌩️

Raining rats during a particularly violent storm. In: "Der Wunder-reiche Uberzug unserer Nider-Welt...." by Erasmus Francisci, 1680. Library Call Number QC859 .F72 1680, from the Library of Congress.

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Preparing for Emergencies

You never know when you may have to move — and fast

BY TOM SCIACCA

When you first started getting into prepping, what items did you start with and how? Some comments we received on our blog:

#1: Common survival items I acquired this year — backpack, knife, firestarters, stove, gun, lantern, flashlights, books, etc. — too many to list! I'm getting there!

#2: Water, try to keep my gas tank at least half full, bought an extra bag of dog food in reserve and rotate it out. Already had bunches of camping and backpacking gear for recreation.

#3: Started with stocking up wa-

ter, specifically those larger gallon jugs at the grocery store. Everything else is secondary, without water you die within a couple days. Also picked up items to purify and collect water when the stock runs out.

#4: To each his own. I'm not really into "prepping", but working on primitive skills. You can collect and carry tons of food and modern convenience which will eventually run out/break/spoil...or you can learn to live off the land and hone old skills that only need natural materials. I do have a small BOB (bug out bag) with modern tools that will give me an edge in a survival situation (knives, 550 cord, matches, etc.) But once those wear out/disappear, I'll have

the knowledge base and experience to fill those needs with materials off the landscape. Or so I hope.

#5: First Aid! I spoke to my brother (a doctor), my aunt (a registered nurse), and my cousin (an EMT), and asked what would they want available during and after an event? They all agreed that one of the biggest problems is that they have skills but very few actual medical supplies on hand at an event.

What are the highest priority steps a family should take for general emergency preparedness?

#1: Having a set plan of action. Every house hold needs one.

#2: Learn what types of disasters are most common/likely to strike your area. No sense in prepping for a blizzard in Florida.

#3: It's all well and good setting up what you need but if you don't allocate certain jobs, then two people might go to get the same thing and waste time looking for things because they forgot because it is already packed.

#4: Have a supply of clean water on hand. Food would also be a good idea, but without water things could get real bad, real fast.

"How much is enough?"

Do you have enough water stored? How about when that runs out?

#1: In a world with endless time and money — no, it's never enough. But given that time and money are scarce, yes, there is a point of diminishing return. It will be different for all of us.

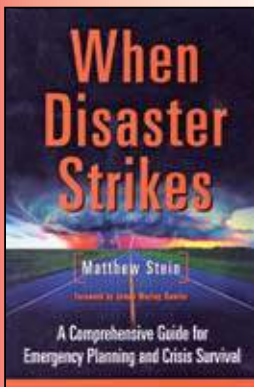
#2: The water question is big for any prepper. At two gallons per day, and a family of five, you need 10 gallons every day just for consumption. Hot areas require even more.

#3: In a prepper mind set, you will never have enough. Depending on the catastrophe, like the EOT-WAWKI, I'm not sure I want to live in it or through it. If one must live

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in misery, life has no value. I keep enough supplies for natural disasters. Nothing more.

#4: If you're in a house, you have more water than you think. Your hot water tank holds 40 to 50 gallons, and the water lines hold about 15 to 20 gallons as well. But what will you do when that runs out? You can live without food, but not water. Remember most forest preserves have hand water pumps that you can use, as well.

#5: For my prepping I focus on wilderness survival and not stocking up on an outrageous number of supplies. I have what I need to survive in the forest. Knowledge doesn't weigh anything.

Basic Urban Survival Tips

Here are some basic urban survival tips to make sure you are ready for any type of emergency that may come your way. Now, if you're an experienced prepper who frequently reads about disaster preparedness, stick with me: Some of the tips may seem obvious to you, but they are a good reminder. Plus, I'd like you to share this with friends and loved ones who may think that urban survival preparedness is just a lot of hysteria.

First and foremost, decide what you should prepare for. It's pretty difficult to make a good preparedness plan of action and determine which supplies to purchase if you haven't given thought to the types of emergencies that could occur. Here are a few sample questions to ask yourself:

- What types of weather emergencies or natural disasters is my area susceptible to?
- What are some areas of risk that are close to my house? This may include chemical plants, oil storage facilities, railroad tracks (trains can carry hazardous chemicals), highways and other infrastructure.
- Do I work or live in an area that could be targeted for attack or riot?
- Where are the evacuation routes if I have to leave and where would I

relocate to?

Second, start making your plan. Don't knock yourself out trying to think of everything all at once, but just start making categories and getting your thoughts down on paper so you don't procrastinate. It's actually a good idea to revisit the plan periodically to see if there are items you missed the first time around. Here are some key points:

- Who are you responsible for? Just yourself or a family of five? Do you have elderly parents or in-laws that you may have to assist?
- If you have to leave the house and get separated (such as during a fire), where will you meet?
- Whose emergency phone numbers should you have in the phone?
- Where will you store emergency items in the house for quick retrieval, as well as important papers, such as insurance cards, social security cards, bank information and other personal information?

Third, gather input from your family and if you have a friend who is a prepper, get their thoughts as well. Of course, depending on the age of your kids (assuming you have kids), you don't want to overwhelm them with information and have them unable to sleep at night. To me, it's like instructing children on what to do during a fire drill: There are serious points to be made, but you don't want it to be downright scary. Let them know that preparedness is all about feeling secure in the knowledge that you've already planned on how to take care of everyone.

If you're fairly new to the concept of urban survival, disaster preparedness and making a family emergency plan, I hope you found this helpful. And if you're an experienced prepper, I hope you found some good reminders. Don't forget to share this with someone you know whom would benefit from knowing how to keep their family safe during a natural disaster. 🌿

For more preparedness ideas, go to <http://campingsurvivalblog.com>.

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Using Traps to Protect Your Investments

BY RONNIE ASHMORE
WEST VIRGINIA

A family farm, homestead, or just your little backyard herd are all susceptible to predation. There are many four-legged animals just sneaking through the brush looking for an easy meal, they don't care if it's another wild animal or an animal that belongs to you. It is impossible to keep watch over your herd 100% of the time, but employing traps will give you an upper hand on the situation. In recent years traps have gotten a bad reputation by different animal rights groups. They only publish what the general public sees as cruelty, and most people seem to believe it. I want to cover how to properly use traps, and do so humanely. Above all else, I recommend you read up on the trapping regulations of your state and abide by them. Do not assume what I tell you is legal until you verify it is where you live. You will also need to verify seasons of use and if they can be used for problem animals out of season.

I do agree that some people do not use traps properly and doing such is cruel, but when used correctly they are a humane tool. The most common things I hear is that traps are designed to hurt the animal and that they immediately try chewing their way out of them, which is not the case. I can set any foothold trap I have and trigger it with my hand without causing any damage to myself, they are designed to hold the animal not hurt it. After the traps are set you have to religiously check it. Here in West Virginia, the law requires you to

check the trap at minimum once every 24 hours. Since most predators are nocturnal and caught at night I check my traps at dawn to minimize the time the animal is caught in the trap. I have never had an animal attempt to chew out of the trap, but I could see it happening if you were to let it remain in the trap all day or days on end. It would be fine to check at dawn then again right before dark, just in case you have a hungry critter wander



into one during daylight hours. If you plan on setting traps be sure you will have time to tend to them.

I would like to cover several traps and their usefulness, starting with the standard foothold trap. I like using them because they are relatively inexpensive, durable, and last a very long time. I would recommend getting half a dozen #1 1/2 coilspring traps for starters. #1 1/2 coilsprings will handle most of the animals that plague farmers including: fox, raccoon, skunk, weasel, and opossums. If coyotes or bobcats are a problem species for you I would get two or three #3 coilsprings as well. I like to add about six inches of chain to my traps as well as a double stake swivel, so that I can be assured they will not be pulled out of the ground. The first

thing you want to do when your traps arrive is simply throw them out in the yard for about a month. You want those nice shiny new traps to get completely covered in rust. The rust will help hold dye to camouflage the traps better and the dye also gets rid of any odors on the traps. You can order a commercially made dye, or just use what I use, walnut hulls. When dyeing the traps I use an old pot on an outdoor fire. You simply fill up the pot with water and add a few handfuls of walnut hulls and when it begins to boil drop the traps in. It should take about 45 minutes for the traps to accept the dye, I use a stiff piece of bent wire to reach in and pull the traps up to check them. When they are ready all the rust will have turned a very dark brown, almost black. I usually dye traps next to my outbuilding where I have nails drove about halfway into the wall. As I pull the traps with the wire I hang them on the nails to dry. Be careful, the traps will be very hot as they come out of the pot. From this point on do not handle the traps without wearing gloves because you will contaminate them with your scent otherwise. You will also need stakes to keep your trap in place, which can be purchased. Personally I use 18-inch pieces of 1/2-inch rebar with a 1/2-inch washer welded to the top. These are rusted and dyed just like the traps.

Now for the technical part—putting a trap in the ground in such a way that it convinces an animal to step on the small trigger pan. I personally like using a dirt hole set with a log backer for just about every animal, the only difference being the bait used. A dirt hole is pretty simple

and very effective. You start by finding a log on the ground in the area you want to trap, then using one of your stakes punch a hole beside the log about six to eight inches deep and place your bait in this hole. You then dig out a shallow wide hole big enough to set your trap in about two inches deep just in front of the bait hole. You stake your trap in the center of the hole, then place your trap on top of the stakes. You want the trigger pan to be about eight inches from the bait hole and slightly to one side. You then place a sheet of wax paper over the trap to keep debris out of it. Then cover with dry dirt, or my favorite, a nice piece of log moss. You can then scatter a little ground litter (leaves, grass, etc.) on top of the set to make it blend in. You want the bait hole to be visible and everything else to look natural.

Box traps or live traps is what I would like to cover next. There are many models available for purchase and plans to build them yourself are out there as well. Because they generally are painted or galvanized they do not need to be dyed, but I always store mine outside to be sure they don't pick up any odors to deter an animal from entering. They all work the same way. Bait is set inside the trap and when the animal enters the door closes and locks behind them. Although it is the pet owners responsibility to keep their animals tied up, I tend to use these traps in areas where a pet may be wandering around, mainly because of the ease of releasing them. The biggest mistake I see when using these traps is that people tend to simply put bait in them and set them out. Yes, you may catch one or two animals this way, but if you blend in the trap you will often double your catch rate. Once the trap is set and baited, I like to pile debris everywhere, except for the entrance, to put the animal at ease and entice it to enter. There is no specific way to camouflage them, so just use what is in the area, whether it be pine boughs or leaf litter.

The part that no one wants to talk about or hear but very important is

Trapping baits for raccoon, fox, and opossum:

- 1 cup dry dog food
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons anise

Bait for most carnivores and scavengers:

- Tainted meat scraps,
- Rotted eggs, or chicken skin

the dispatching of the animals once they are caught. I have always used a .22LR hollow point to the head, it is a quick kill. I know that a lot of

people are tempted to use live traps and simply relocate the animal, but when you get right down to it you are just giving someone else your problem. Think of it as do unto others as you would have them do unto you, how would you feel about finding half your chickens dead and then hearing someone say they released their chicken killer near your house? Trapping helps to keep these animals in check before overpopulation, starvation, and rabies outbreaks do. Trapping is a very valuable tool that many don't use anymore but it surely has a place in rural areas. 🦁

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The garden:

It Ain't Just Dirt

BY LISA JANSEN
CALIFORNIA

At age 16, my great-grandfather and his two younger brothers emigrated from Germany to the United States. The year was 1872. They didn't come in through Ellis Island. They came directly to California. The gold rush was still in process, but they came for a different kind of gold. They came for Yolo County loam. In Germany they had been share croppers. They worked a land they could never own. The nobility owned land; they were common working folks, farmers. But the soil was part of their souls.

Steven Reiff was the eldest boy. Upon his arrival in Yolo County he purchased 40 acres of prime farm land with natural irrigation for \$20. It was all the money he had. Steven's

youngest brother, whose first name I do not know, had a dime. During their short stay in San Francisco, compelled by a desire to have someone work for him for a change, he had his shoes shined. That cost all he had! These three were not just immigrants, they were true farmers. At their young ages they knew farming. They knew the value of good soil.

I didn't dream of becoming a farmer. It was in me. There must be a farming gene! As a girl I

wanted to be a nun or a dancer. But, due to my mother's illness, I spent countless hours on my grandparent's farm. Which, by the way, included that initial 40 acres purchased by my great-grandfather. Most of the girls were in the house baking and sewing, while I was out in the fields, orchards and livestock pens. Grandma was always reminding me to stay clean and come in the house. I think she finally gave up on me. Some of my fondest memories are of picking up almonds or walnuts and talking to the pigs. I loved to play in the dirt, picking up dirt clods and crushing them until the texture was soft.



Lisa favors the stacked tire compost because the black rubber heats up the composting material. It recycles tires. She unstacks the tires to empty the compost when finished.



This garden bed is a compost producing zone. Layers of mulching materials: hay and garden clippings and peat moss compost in place and produce soil high in organic matter.

I am a fourth generation farmer. I am retired, but farming is still in my blood. I live by the seasons. I respect the soil. I am attached to my farm. When I look down I don't see dirt. I see life. I had the good fortune of an education, so now I know what that life is composed of. Soil is sand, silt, and clay in varying proportions, organic matter, minerals, and a whole world of microscopic life and hopefully water. Soil is miraculous. It supports, produces and builds.

I still enjoy doing the rough soil analysis I learned in junior college. Take a mason jar and fill it half full

with soil. Make sure you are getting just soil and not leaves or duff. If your water is hard add a tablespoon of fabric softener or water softener. Then fill the rest of the way with water. Leave just enough room in the jar to shake the mixture well. Let the jar sit for 24 hours or until you can see the sand, silt and clay clearly separate. The strata you see will be sand, silt and the bottom layer will be clay. I now live in a national forest in the foothills of California. I no longer live on the ideal soil of Yolo County. My rough soil analysis is about 50 percent sand and 50 percent clay. The silt is almost undetectable.

All soils need some amending. The ideal for farming, clay loam of Yolo County needed lime and organic matter. Here, at Far Out Farms in the foothills, it needs phosphorus, calcium and organic matter. If you are new to an area look up the local agricultural department or college agriculture extension and they can advise you on how to amend your soil. I have never met a soil that did not need more organic matter. Organic matter is another name for compost. You can purchase compost at landscaping companies or garden stores. Or, you can make your own. The simple way is to make a ring out of chicken wire or other wire fencing or just stacked old tires and place some septic pipe in the center. Fill the ring with kitchen scraps, lawn clippings and leaves. As you fill the ring the septic pipe, which is just pipe with holes in it, can be adjusted to the center and will stand up. This pipe helps aerate the rotting mix. The rule of thumb for what to add is half green matter and half brown matter. Kitchen scraps and lawn clippings are green and brown leaves and dead twigs would be brown. Keep your compost pile moist, not dripping wet. It is best covered during rain.



After the soil settles the clay will fall to the bottom, the next strata will be silt and the final strata is sand. Clay is the smallest particle and falls out of solution first.

Turn the content occasionally with a pitchfork. When you add homemade compost you are not only adding organic matter, but a host of that microscopic world I mentioned earlier. I believe that you not only need to add compost but you need to make your field or garden a compost producing zone. How do you accomplish that? You do it by mulching.

Mulch is a material such as hay, leaves or dead weeds spread over the soil. I prefer hay. In a newly cultivated area I use alfalfa hay first, then oat or rice hay in successive years. This hay will rot or compost over time where it contacts the soil. Mulching does more for the soil than just adding organic material. It can suppress weed growth and conserve soil moisture too. I am no spring chicken. I look at everything from a different perspective than in my younger years. I don't want to drive to the landscaping company and load compost and then drive home and unload it. At my age I don't even want to wheelbarrow it over from the pile to the garden. I prefer to let some of those microbes compost for me and mulching does just that.

I can't imagine getting too old to use the soil. If you put a little into it, it gives you so much back. It gives you dinner. It gives you flowers to brighten your day. It gives you a place to put your home, and as I learned after my home burned down last year, it can even give you building material. Cob, rammed earth and earth bag construction use the dirt beneath your feet. But that's another article. It ain't just dirt, it's a part of my soul. ✨



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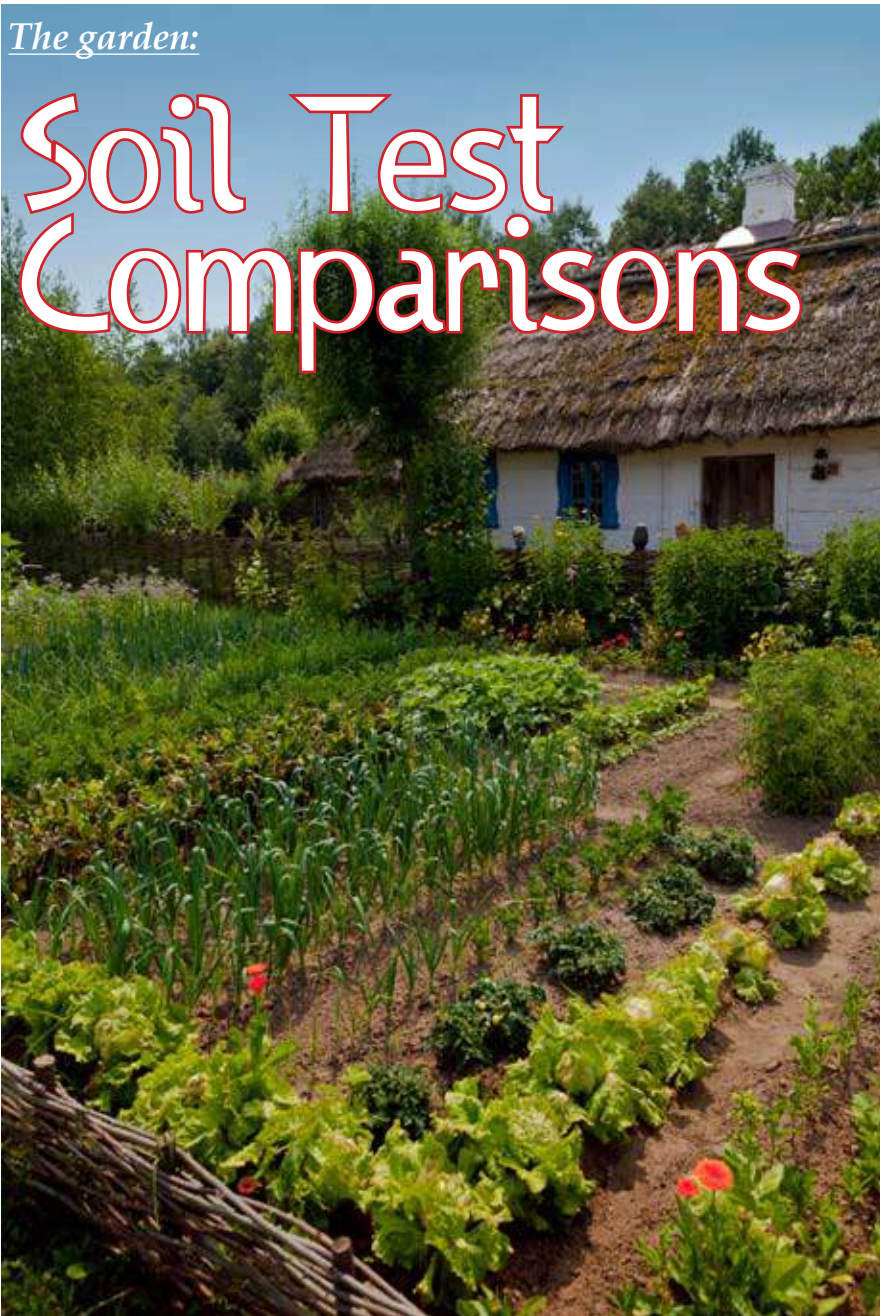
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The garden:

Soil Test Comparisons



BY CHRIS WOODCOCK
MASSACHUSETTS

Since moving to our present house in Western Massachusetts in 1974, I have grown vegetables on the same 30 x 30-foot plot. The topsoil here is quite thin, with a sandy subsoil containing rocks small and large. Over the years, the persistent removal of rocks, applications of mulch hay, and additions of composted chicken and sheep manure in the fall have resulted in a much thicker and darker topsoil. I've also made an application of wood ash on the snow each winter. During the growing season, I've occasionally side dressed rows with 5-5-5 fertilizer, and more recently, used Vegetables Alive and similar products from Gardens Alive. Despite this attention, the soil seems to be losing fertility, making me wonder if there was a nutritional imbalance. With this in mind I was intrigued by the "Perfect Balance" service offered by Gardens Alive. Their catalog and website (www.gardensalive.com) states:

"Perfect Balance™ Custom Fertilizer for Vegetables Gardens uses the results of an analysis of your soil to develop a complete, nutrient-balanced fertilizer tailored exactly to the needs of your vegetable garden. With it, you can expect higher yields, better flavor, greater nutritional content and fewer pest problems."

As instructed, I collected a sample of vegetable garden soil representative "core" taken from different depths from one to nine inches and mailed it off for analysis. I thought it would be informative to get other opinions, and sent samples of the same soil mix to three local state extension programs that offer soil analysis. Finally, I purchased a home soil test kit from a local garden center to see how that compared.

In due course, analysis sheets arrived with data on the amount of each nutrient, and recommendations on what I should do to improve things. While there was good agreement on some soil components, on others there were huge differences. The most important values for soil properties are the pH, and amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, the familiar N-P-K values printed on bags of fertilizer. Here, the results were fairly consistent.

pH—there was good agreement that the pH was slightly alkaline values ranging from 7.2 to 7.4 (pH 7.0 is neutral). The home kit indicated pH 7. These values were surprising given the generally acid soils here, and perhaps attributable to too generous applications of wood ash and lime. The ideal pH range for veggies is 6.6 – 6.8. The uniform recommendation was to avoid liming this year—and I will cease adding wood ash until the pH is closer to the ideal. Potatoes are more susceptible to scab at higher pH values and it was recommended that I select scab-resistant varieties.

Nitrogen—only UMass gave a ppm value for nitrogen, UVM and UNH commenting that nitrogen values were not useful, presumably because nitrogen quickly leaches from the soil. Gardens Alive gave a value of 1 lb./500 ft. for ENR (nitrogen release) without comment. The home test kit indicated low-medium

Table 1

Category	UVM	UNH	UMass	UConn	GardensAlive	Comments and Notes
pH	7.4	7.1	7.1	7.0	7.4	Using my pH meter, I obtained 7.2
Organic matter	7.5%	6.35%	9.6%	“High”	5.2%	GA measured % “humus”
CEC/TEC	-	-	35.6 (CEC)	Not done	22.78 (TEC)	Units are Meq/lb.
Phosphorus (P)	178 ppm	1103 ppm	266ppm	>100 lb./acre	15 lb./500’	3 different units
Potassium (K)	587 ppm	543 ppm	761 ppm	>600 lb./acre	14 lb./500’	3 different units
Nitrogen (N)	Not done	Not done	37 ppm	Not done	1 (est. N release)	N values considered unreliable
Calcium (Ca)	6680 ppm	6183 ppm	6295 ppm	>4000 lb./acre	70 lb./500’	3 different units
Magnesium (Mg)	625 ppm	591 ppm	542 ppm	>500 lb./acre	14 lb./500’	3 different units
Copper (Cu)	0.3 ppm	Not done	0	0.5 ppm	0.4 ppm	Consistent values
Boron (B)	2.2 ppm	Not done	1.6 ppm	2.5 ppm	1.03 ppm	Consistent values
Lead (Pb)	Not done	31 ppm	49 ppm	“Low”	Not done	UMass reported 2 ppm “extractable” Pb
Iron (Fe)	3.0 ppm	Not done	1.5 ppm	2.8 ppm	28 ppm	GA by far highest
Sulfur (S)	19.0 ppm	Not done	82.7 ppm	Not done	19 ppm	UMass by far highest
Manganese (Mn)	14.0 ppm	Not done	4.7 ppm	13.2 ppm	159 ppm	GA by far highest
Zinc (Zn)	11.9 ppm	Not done	7.9 ppm	14.8 ppm	84.4 ppm	GA by far highest
Aluminum (Al)	Not done	Not done	6 ppm	9 ppm	Not done	

nitrogen, though color matching with the chart was tough.

All the Extension Services recommended making two applications of nitrogen during the growing season, with the total/sq. ft. roughly comparable, after taking into account the different concentrations (see the Table). U** suggested dried blood as an alternate to chemical fertilizers. Gardens Alive provided two packages of supplement, each designed for 500 sq. ft. The first, with a composition of

0-0-3 contained 38 lbs., to be applied before planting, and worked into the soil. The second, with a composition of 7-1-3, contains 4.8 lbs. and is to be applied as a side dressing mid-way through the growing season.

Phosphorus (P)—There is general agreement that my phosphorus levels are excessive, and no extra is needed this year. The odd one out here is the home test kit that indicated low to medium phosphorus. Again, there is a problem with matching

a color on glossy cardboard with a somewhat murky solution. My wife thought “low” was better, I was more inclined to “medium,” but maybe I was biased by the numbers from the professionals.

Potassium (K)—Results were almost a carbon copy of P—general agreement that the level is excessive—except for the home test kit that indicated “low” K. It is surprising that the second Gardens Alive package contains K.

Table 2: Recommendations from GA analysis sheet

Element	Units	Value found	Amendment	Comments
Nitrogen	ENR lb./500'	1	Protein Meal	
Sulfate -S	ppm	19	Sulfur 90-92%	Low
Phosphates as P ₂ O ₅	lb./500'	15		Extremely excessive (desired value 9)
Calcium	lb./sq. ft.	70	Gypsum	Very Good (desired value 71)
Magnesium	lb./sq. ft.	14		Very High (desired value 8)
Sodium	lb./sq. ft.	1		Ok (desired value 1)
Boron	ppm	1.03	Borax 11%	Good
Iron	ppm	28	Fe Sulfate 21%	Extremely deficient
Manganese	ppm	159		Excellent
Copper	ppm	0.4	Cu Sulfate 23%	Extremely deficient
Zinc	ppm	84.4		Excessive

Other major elements— Besides the N-P-K trio, all gave values for calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg). The Gardens Alive analysis includes a discussion of the importance of both Ca and Mg levels, and the Ca:Mg ratio, as well as the relationship of the ratio to "Total Exchange Capacity." There is agreement that my soil is okay for Ca, Mg, and TEC.

Trace elements— Trace element data were provided by UMass, UVM and Gardens Alive. Most focused on essential trace elements, but UMass also included lead.

- University of Massachusetts Amherst Extension Service

- University of New Hampshire Extension Service

- University of Vermont Extension Service

- The "Perfect Balance" service offered by the Gardens Alive company.

All four provided a printed detailed analysis and recommendation for soil amendment for 2011. In addition, the "Perfect Balance" service included a custom package (or two packages) of amendments designed to correct any deficiencies.

In addition to elemental analysis, all services measured soil pH and percent organic matter, and in some cases, additional data were provided, such as "Cation Exchange Capacity" (CEC) and "Total Exchange Capacity" (TEC). Table 1 shows the results.

General Recommendations and Comments:

1. pH

There is excellent agreement in absolute value and the comment that this is high for vegetables and that no lime should be used. The high value may be due to broadcasting wood ash during the burning season. I would have expected that the composted animal (chicken, sheep, llama) manure that is applied to the soil in the fall would tend to reduce the pH.

2. Nitrogen

Only UMass gave a ppm value for nitrogen. Nitrogen is evidently

easily leached from the soil and single measurements unhelpful. All services recommended two applications of N during the 2011 growing season (see details below).

3. Phosphorus

All services agreed that the phosphorus level was excessive and that none should be added in 2011. The range of values from 178 ppm (UVM) to 1,103 ppm (UNH) is surprising to say the least. The GA value was given in lbs./500 ft. units, whatever that means (I have lodged an e-mail query with GA to explain the units and provide a conversion to ppm).

4. Calcium

Agreement was excellent for Ca and all recommended no amendment was needed.

5. Magnesium

Agreement was good for Mg, and the Mg:Ca ratio considered good.

6. Trace elements

Some major discrepancies between services stand out. GA values for Fe, Mn and Zn were about 10-fold greater than the values from the Extension Services.

Nitrogen application recommendations:

UVM

Broadcast 2-3 lbs./100 sq. ft. of 6-2-1, 7-3-4, or whatever is locally available in 2 applications during the growing season.

UNH

Broadcast 1.5 lbs./100 sq. ft. of 15-0-0 at start of growing season, then

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Table 3: Optimum/desired levels of soil nutrients (in ppm except for GA)

	Univ New Hampshire	Univ Vermont	Univ Mass Amherst	Gardens Alive
P	30-50	68-134	133-266	9 lbs./500'
K	170-280	245-480	233-466	15 lbs./500'
Ca	800-1200	Not given	1980-3670	71 lbs./500'
Mg	60-120	261-511	163-326	8 lbs./500'

side dress three to four weeks after planting with 1 lb./100 sq. ft.

UMass

Broadcast ¼ lb./100 sq. ft. of 30-3-3 or, for organic culture, 4 lbs./100 sq. ft. of dried blood.

GA

GA provided two packages of soil amendment. The first contained 35 lbs. of 0-0-3 to be applied to 500 sq. ft. (7 lbs./100 sq. ft.) at the start of the season, the second, 4.8 lbs. of 7-1-2 to be applied midway through the season as a side dressing. The packages from GA carried a warning that the amendment was for vegetables only, specifically noting that the application of Boron could be deleterious to some plants. This suggests that the GA amendments, although not explicitly stated, contained trace elements as needed. The Recommendations columns on the analysis data sheet are reproduced in Table 2.

Also unexplained was the use of “%” to (presumably) describe the amount of trace element included in the amendment.

Optimum levels

UVM provided a horizontal bar chart with measured values represented by bar length, and optimum ranges shown in green. Low and high ranges were shown in red. The chart clearly indicated the excessive levels of P, K, and Mg in my soil, and, from the start and end of the green region, allowed the optimum range for each to be determined. UMass provided a very similar chart, and UNH gave explicit values for optimum ranges. These values (in ppm) are shown in Table 3.

Although there are some agree-

ments, the overall impression is that there are some dramatically differing opinions among the three state services as to the optimum levels of major soil nutrients.

GA gives target values in lb./500 ft., and there seems to be no simple conversion from ppm to lb./500 ft. GA also provides a detailed and helpful account of the relationships between Total Exchange Capacity (TEC), Ca, and Mg levels:

“Added together, Ca% and Mg% should occupy 80% of the soil’s nutrient holding capacity. Most soils tend to have a TEC between 8.68 and 19.34 which needs a Ca:Mg ratio of 68:12. Any soil with a TEC greater than 19.34 (22.78 for this soil) will benefit from a 69:11 ratio (ratio for this soil is 66:22).”

Also discussed in the GA Analysis Explanation Sheet are targets for potassium and sodium. These targets are given in % in this section, and it is not clear what the % refers to. Total Base Saturation Percent seems most likely, and is explained by GA as follows:

“The base saturation percent tells us what the soil is composed of in terms of positively charged cations – Ca, Mg, K, Na. The base saturation percent measures the percent of each cation that is attached to the clay and humus colloids that hold the nutrients in the soil. Generally, the higher the base saturation percent, the more available the nutrient is to the plant.”

However, the use of three different units (lb./500 ft., ppm and percent) is unnecessarily confusing, and the failure to specify the composition of the amendments provided is annoying. ❁

Gardening with Guineas

By JEANNETTE S. FERGUSON



This book is a delightful and informative guide to raising guinea fowl on a small scale. It covers the life of a guinea from egg to adult, including incubation, feeding, housing, training and common

problems. Jeannette includes information on reasons for raising guinea fowl (they eat garden pests, ticks and hate snakes), what you need to know before you buy guineas, working with newborns and young keets, and much more. **131 pages, \$14.95 + \$4 S&H + WI Residents add 5.5% tax.**

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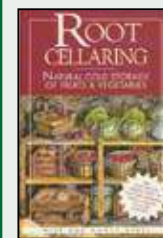
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The garden:


Growing Colored POPCORN

BY RYAN BATALDEN
MINNESOTA

My wife, Tiffany, and I have farmed organically for 10 years, and gardened for even longer. We have grown popcorn in our garden before, with mixed success, but decided we would try it in one of our crop fields. If it worked, we would have a lot of popcorn, and could try to sell some for extra income.

I spent some time in the early winter of 2012 talking to popcorn growers, sellers, and University experts about the ins and outs of popcorn. It turns out that with a few basic bits of knowledge anyone can grow popcorn—in their garden or larger field—and it isn't very difficult! And, as we know, anything you raise yourself tastes so much better than store-bought food.

So, first we can talk about seeds and seed sources. Many seed companies sell popcorn seed. I wouldn't recommend saving your own seed, unless you know what you are do-

ing and are sure it won't be cross-pollinated with other corn varieties. In our area of Southwest Minnesota, there is corn grown everywhere, so I wouldn't be confident that there wouldn't be at least a little cross-pollination.

One big issue when selecting your popcorn seed is the maturity length. In our area, we had a little difficulty, at first, finding seed that had a short enough growing season. However, we eventually did find some, and it did quite well. This is important, because if the popcorn isn't fully ripened on the stalk you may not be able to dry it enough to get it to pop, which is the whole point!

We chose three varieties. One is red, one is white, and one is blue. We mixed them together and call them Patriot Pops! Of course, they are all white after they pop, but they look beautiful! There are many, many varieties and colors of popcorn. Some are hull less (we prefer the varieties with hulls—we feel they are tastier and more nutritious), and some are bred to pop into a “mushroom” shape, versus a “butterfly” shape. It is a lot of fun just to look at all of the varieties available in different seed catalogs.

Next we can talk about planting. Plant (and fertilize) it the same way you would plant any corn in your area. It can take a few days longer to germinate than other types of corn, although ours was up as fast as the rest of our corn this last year. The planting rate we used in our field was 29,000 seeds per acre. That sounds like a lot, but in your garden you wouldn't need very many. The

seed packet will be the best place to get your information on seed spacing and planting depth.

Make sure you plant at least two rows of popcorn, no matter the length of the row. This helps pollination. Also, many popcorn varieties don't stand up to strong wind as well as other types of corn do. We planted ours in the middle of a field of dent corn to protect the popcorn plants from the strong winds in our area, and we still had some stalks blown over.

Harvest when the kernels are 18% moisture or drier. We use our handheld electric moisture tester. You might be able to borrow one from a local farmer. And, your local farmer's cooperative probably has one you can use. If you don't have access to a tester, and only have popcorn in your garden (not a large field), there is an easy and delicious way to test moisture. Shell some popcorn off of a few different ears. Then, try to pop it in whatever way you normally pop your popcorn. If most of the kernels pop, it is ready! Keep in mind that different varieties can dry down at drastically different rates and times.

For storage, keep the popcorn in any type of container you would use for storing other grains like corn, wheat, etc. It can be stored on or off of the ear—that is up to you. Properly stored popcorn should be good for at least two years. And if the popcorn gets too dry, you can add moisture back into it, just be sure to do it slowly and conservatively.

Popcorn is a delicious, healthy whole grain, available in lots of different colors and varieties. Even kids like to eat it! I recommend you try some in your garden this spring. I think you will be hooked the first year you grow it! 🌽

Ryan and Tiffany Batalden, along with their three young children, raise numerous organic grains and livestock on their farm, on the scenic prairies of SW Minnesota. They also sell their red, white and blue popcorn at www.patriotpopspopcorn.com, over the phone at 507-227-5314 or by mail at Patriot Pops, 39474 Co. Rd. 11, Lamberton, MN 56152.



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The homestead kitchen:

**DON'T SWEAT:
EAT SAFE
THIS SUMMER**



COURTESY OF COMMONGROUND

Eating food out of a warm picnic basket may have worked well for childhood cartoon character Yogi Bear, but for families eating perishable foods from a picnic cooler, there is a safer approach. Registered dietician and Maryland CommonGround volunteer-farmer Jennifer Schmidt, says there is one way to pack a cooler safely. It starts with ice.

“Heat rises, so be sure to put ice on the bottom of the cooler and pack it tightly around food so perishable items can stay cool,” Schmidt says. “Most foods need to be kept below 40°F to avoid spoiling, so ice is necessary.”

For caterer and Ohio CommonGround volunteer-farmer Kristin Reese, summer food safety continues at the grill, making sure food is cooked to the right temperature.

“It is so important for burgers and other grilled meat to be cooked internally when it’s hot outside,” she says. “The proper internal grilling temperatures range from 145°F for beef and pork, to 165°F for poultry.”

Reese also suggests placing leftover or unused meat back into the cooler right after you have finished.

CommonGround offers mothers and other consumers a connection to farming and facts about food. In honor of summer, CommonGround is serving up some facts that will make you ‘smarter than the average bear’ while enjoying summertime eats.

**FROZEN AND REFRIGERATED FOODS
LAST LONGER**

Pack perishable foods, like meat and chicken, directly from the refrigerator or freezer. Schmidt says that frozen food acts as another cooling block, helping to keep the cooler temperature lower for longer. Frozen foods also reduce bacterial growth on the food and unnecessary dripping inside the cooler.

PACK SEPARATE COOLERS

When traveling long distances, be sure to pack two

separate coolers. Fill one with food and the other with drinks. Reese says this allows a consistent temperature to remain in the food cooler and perishable foods will still be fresh when it’s time to eat. Sometimes she freezes bottled drinks for the drink cooler. To maintain cool temperature, open and close the cooler lids quickly and store them under a shady spot.

THE SAFE ZONE

Discard any food that is left out for more than two hours. If food is left out any longer it is at risk of increased bacterial growth. If temperatures are above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, one hour is the maximum time a product should sit out.

**CORRECT WRAPPING AND
PLACEMENT DOES THE TRICK**

When transporting food in a cooler with meat or vegetables, wrap food in plastic sealable bags to catch any spills or drips of juice. Schmidt says when raw meat is not covered, it can leak to the bottom of the cooler or potentially drip on other foods and cause contamination. She adds that if you have to pack meat and vegetables in the same cooler, pack meat products on the bottom.

DON'T FORGET CLEAN UTENSILS

Cooking utensil safety is just as important as your food. To avoid cross contamination, use different utensils for cooking and cutting meats and vegetables. Schmidt suggests keeping utensils clean by storing them outside of the cooler in a bag or wrapped in a clean kitchen towel. Use moist towelettes to clean hands between handling different foods or playing outside. 🍴

All food safety facts are provided by the United States Department of Agriculture.

CommonGround is a grassroots movement to foster conversation among women – on farms and in cities – about where our food comes from. www.FindOurCommonGround.com.

Beat the Heat with These Super Cool Foods



Nutritionist Offers Insight on Summer Heat Waves

By SAM AYERS

It may be hot outside, but it doesn't mean you have to lose your cool! Stocking your kitchen with the right foods will keep you chilled out all summer long. In addition to eating these fresh picks, be sure to drink plenty of water and eat lightly! Nutritional expert Amanda Skrip shares her five foods to eat to stay cool below:

1. Eat Your Water

Water rich produce like watermelon, cucumbers, radishes, and even leafy greens, will quench your thirst and keep you hydrated. They are low in calories, easy to digest, and rich in anti-oxidants. Add cucumber or melon to a pitcher of water for extra flavor. Use fresh cut crudité to dip into spreads and salsas rather than

salty, fatty, and dehydrating chips. Spend extra time in the produce section and at green markets this summer, and you'll be fresh and glowing through the fall.

2. Get Zesty

Lemons, limes, oranges, and grapefruits are some of the most cooling fruits around. They are also great at aiding in digestion and breaking down fatty foods. Keep citrus on hand to make salad dressings or to squeeze onto plain veggies. Adding lemon or lime to plain water is a great way to liven up the flavor—and to get a giant dose of vitamin C. Your strengthened immunity will keep summertime colds at bay.

3. Stay Fresh

Herbs like mint, basil, cilantro, and parsley have naturally

cooling and soothing properties. Their fresh flavor will liven your spirit as well as your plate! Get in the habit of adding fresh herbs to your cooking. They are also great tossed into salads and blended into smoothies.

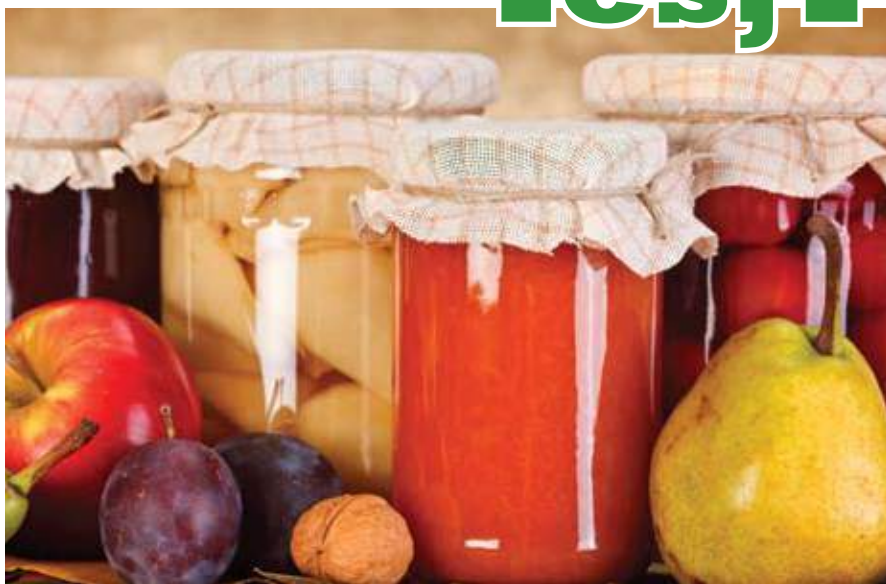
4. Spice it Up

Spicing it up will cool you down! Adding heat to your plate with ginger, chilies, cayenne pepper, and black pepper might make your mouth a little fiery, but will help cool your body's internal flame. Grate fresh ginger into marinades or sprinkle chili flakes on bland chicken or vegetables.

Avoid: Oily, fatty, and salty foods, soda and sugary beverages, they make it difficult to digest (wheat, dairy, fried foods, etc.) 🌱

The homestead kitchen:

Yes, I Can...



BY MRS. BRITTAN BURTON
GEORGIA

When I was a child, my parents often told me I could do anything I set my mind to. As I've become an adult, I've realized they were pretty smart. Several years ago when my husband and I started talking about adopting a "self-sufficient lifestyle," my instinctual response was a resounding negative. We couldn't possibly do that; it would be too difficult; too time consuming, and too much financially for us; not to mention the storage and space issues we were already dealing with. And then my parent's old mantra came back to mind, "You can do anything you set your mind to." And so it began.

My husband enjoys vegetable gardening, and before we began living a more self-sufficient lifestyle we wasted a ton of our own fruits and veggies, because I didn't have a clue as to how to store or preserve our fresh harvest. As we began learning more about self-sufficiency and homesteading, it became clear to us that food preservation would need to be an integral part of our life now, which meant I was going to have to learn some new skills.

The first thing I did in order to prepare myself for food preservation was an Internet search. There are

thousands of websites on the subject. You can find information on everything you'd ever want to know about canning and freezing to dehydrating and curing. I read dozens of websites and bookmarked tons of blogs on the subject. I then bought a few canning cookbooks and started stocking up on jars, lids, rings, and preservatives. We bought a water bath canning kit at our local big box farm supply store, and I tried out a few easy recipes, like fig preserves and strawberry jam. So far the process was pretty simple and easy to learn, but the next step seemed daunting to me. The pressure cooker.

As a child I can remember my mom canning green beans and salsa in the summer. Our job was to weed the garden, help with harvests, and snap beans. From there our responsibility ended and I was a virtual pressure cooker virgin. I'd heard the horror stories of people who were seriously injured by pressure cookers when the pressure got too strong and it blew up on them. That thought alone terrified me. But worse than that was the fact that my mom was anxious to unload her old pressure cooker onto me since she had as many storage issues as I did. This cooker was at least 30 years old, having belonged to someone in her family before it came to her. It was huge, and heavy, and seemed very scary

for a virgin like me who'd never even put one together, much less tried to actually cook anything in it. But once again, my parent's words from long ago broke through my inner monologue. So I strapped on my big girl panties and got to work.

My husband's garden was having a bumper crop of tomatoes that year and I had them running out my ears. It was obvious to me that there was no way I was going to be able to use them all before they went bad, and since tomato-based products are a huge part of our diet, I decided that diced tomatoes would be my first pressure canner experience.

I pulled out my new *Ball Blue Book* and found a basic recipe. I prepped my equipment. I filled my jars with the hot tomatoes and measured the headspace. I meticulously cleaned the rims and screwed on the lids. I loaded my first batch of quarts into the pressure canner and carefully lowered the heavy jars into the simmering water. I cautiously slid the heavy lid onto the base and twisted it in place, making sure there was an even seal around the entire lid. I turned up the heat on my stove and prayed I had the petcock on just right – not too loose and not too tight. I moved back across the length of my kitchen and waited as the gauge on top of the ancient canner began to climb. Slowly, steam began

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escaping from the petcock and little droplets of water bubbled out of it. As the gauge reached the proper setting, I pulled on my oven mitts, grabbed a large dishtowel, and slowly walked toward the stove. I quickly adjusted the flame to maintain the pressure on the gauge, set the timer, and then stepped away from the stove and back behind the safety of my kitchen island.

My pulse was racing and my palms were sweaty; I was as nervous as a turkey on Thanksgiving Day. When my kitchen timer beeped I nearly jumped out of my skin, but I pulled on my oven mitts again and stepped over to the now hot and hissing canner. I turned off the flame and slowly, at an arm's-length with the kitchen towel over it, began to unscrew the petcock to release the pressure. I was certain I was going to mess this part up and it was going to blow off completely and either put my eye out or blast a hole in my kitchen ceiling. Fortunately, neither happened. As the steam began escaping in a viscous hiss, I once again stepped around my kitchen island and waited. Once the steam had completely escaped and the gauge read zero, I waited an additional 10 minutes before cracking the lid. At this point I was nearly in a panic attack from the fear. I could see it all play out in my mind. The gauge was going to be wrong and there was still going to be tons of pressure in the pot. I was going to crack the lid and it was going to blow off in my face, burning the flesh from my body in one giant *kaboom*; not to mention ruining my kitchen in a spray of glass shards and tomato.

I said a prayer, grabbed a bath towel and decided to face my fate. I tossed the bath towel over the canner, once again donned my mitts, and gave the dog-eared handles on the lid a little push. Nothing. No steam. No hiss. No explosion. Just the easy

click of the lid snapping apart and the familiar heat of a hot pot of water. Not only did I breathe an enormous sigh of relief, but I think my blood pressure dropped about 15 points in that exact moment. I set the lid aside and to my utter surprise, all the jars inside the canner were intact and bubbling away. Taking great care, I lifted each jar from the canner and placed them on the cooling racks. I was amazed that I'd done it, and without incident. I loaded the second load of tomatoes into the canner, and with a little more confidence I snapped the lid in place, turned on the flame and started the process over. As my second and third



batches were cooking I took great pleasure in the familiar "ping" of lids being sealed in place as my maiden batch cooled.

I've since learned that pressure canning is really not as dangerous as the old stories want you to believe. And while you need to take care when using a pressure canner, the likelihood of it blowing up on you is really remote. Home-canned produce is a great way to incorporate fresh, homegrown fruits and veggies into your winter diet. And while the initial equipment investment seems a bit steep, with proper care your canner and jars will last years. So I encour-

age you to give it a try if you haven't before. And remember, "you can do anything you set your mind to."

To find a State extension Food Safety office in your area, search nchfp.uga.edu/links/links_home.html

Pressure canners for use in the home were extensively redesigned beginning in the 1970s. Models made before the 1970s were heavy-walled kettles with clamp-on or turn-on lids. They were fitted with a dial gauge, a vent pipe in the form of a petcock or covered with a counterweight, and a safety fuse. Most modern pressure canners are lightweight, thin-walled kettles; most have turn-on lids fitted with gaskets. At least one style is still made with heavy cast aluminum, has screw-down knobs around the canner and does not have a gasket, however.

Modern pressure canners have removable racks, an automatic vent/cover lock, a vent pipe (steam vent), and a safety fuse. Use only canners that have the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) approval to ensure their safety.

Today's pressure canner may have a *dial gauge* for indicating the pressure or a *weighted gauge*, for indicating and regulating the pressure. *Weighted gauges* are usually designed to "jiggle" several times a minute or to keep rocking gently when they are maintaining the correct pressure. Read your manufacturer's directions to know how a particular weighted gauge should rock or jiggle to indicate that the proper pressure is reached and then maintained during processing. *Dial gauge* canners will usually have a counterweight or pressure regulator for sealing off the open vent pipe to pressurize the canner. This weight should not be confused with a weighted gauge and will not jiggle or rock as described for a weighted gauge canner. Pressure readings on a dial gauge canner are only registered on the dial and only the dial should be used as an indication of the pres-

sure in the canner. One manufacturer now makes a dual-gauge canner; read the manufacturer's user manual for information on when and how to use either the weighted gauge or the dial.

Pressure canners come deep enough for one layer of quart or smaller size jars, or deep enough for two layers of pint or smaller size jars. The USDA recommends that a canner be large enough to hold at least four quart jars to be considered a pressure canner for the USDA published processes.

Serious errors in processing in pressure canners can occur if any of the following conditions exist:

- The altitude at which the canner is operated is above sea level and adjustments in pressure are not made. Internal canner pressures (and therefore temperatures) are lower at higher altitudes. Canners must be operated at increased pressures as the altitude increases. Check reliable canning instructions for altitude adjustments.
- Air is trapped in the closed canner during the process. Air trapped in a pressure canner lowers the temperature obtained for a given pressure (for example, 10 or 15 pounds pressure) and results in underprocessing. To be safe, USDA recommends that all pressure canners must be vented 10 minutes before they are pressurized.
- To vent a canner, leave the vent pipe (steam vent) uncovered (or manually open the petcock on some older models) after you fill the canner and lock the canner lid in place. Heat the canner on high until the water boils and generates steam that can be seen escaping through the open vent pipe or petcock. When a visible funnel-shape of steam is continuously escaping the canner, set a timer for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes of continuous steam, you can close the petcock or place the counterweight or weighted gauge over the vent pipe to begin pressurizing the canner.
- An inaccurate dial gauge is used. Dial gauges should be checked for accuracy each year before use. If

the gauge reads high or low by more than two pounds at 5, 10 or 15 pounds pressure, replace it. If it is less than two pounds off in accuracy, you can make adjustments needed to be sure you have the required pressure in your canner.

Follow these steps for successful pressure canning:

(Read through all the instructions before beginning.)

Make sure the pressure canner is working properly before preparing food. Clean lid gaskets and other parts according to the manufacturer's directions; make sure all vent pipes are clear and contain no trapped material or mineral deposits. Center the canner over the burner. The burner and range must be level. Your pressure canner can be damaged if the burner puts out too much heat. In general, do not use on an outdoor LP gas burner or gas range burner over 12,000 BTUs. Check your manufacturer's directions for more information about appropriate burners.

Put the rack and hot water into the canner. If the amount of water is not specified with a given food, use enough water so it is two to three inches deep in the canner. Longer processes required more water. Some specific products (for example, smoked fish) require that you start with even more water in the canner. Always follow the directions with USDA processes for specific foods if they require more water be added to the canner.

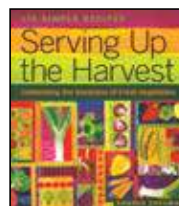
For hot packed foods, you can bring the water to 180°F. ahead of time, but be careful not to boil the water or heat it long enough for the depth to decrease. For raw packed foods, the water should only be brought to 140°F.

Place filled jars, fitted with lids and ring bands, on the jar rack in the canner, using a jar lifter. When moving jars with a jar lifter, make sure the jar lifter is securely positioned below the neck of the jar (below the ring band of the lid). Keep the jar upright at all times. Tilting the jar could cause food to spill into the sealing area of the lid.

Celebrating the Goodness of Fresh Vegetables!

Serving Up The Harvest

By Andrea Chesman



Andrea Chesman is a cook and gardener who knows what it's like to be staring down pounds of vegetables and panicking about how to use them all before

it's too late. Simple. Delicious. Planned to fit the season. That's the approach Chesman brings to the 175 recipes packed into this creative volume.

The vegetables are organized seasonally by crop-readiness, so you can move through the book, trying new recipes, as the growing season progresses. There are many vegetarian options, but even when combined with meat, vegetables get top billing.

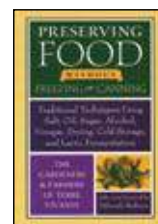
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FORWARD BY DEBORAH MADISON



Typical books about preserving garden produce nearly always assume that modern "kitchen gardeners" will boil or freeze their vegetables and fruits. Here is a book that goes back to the future—celebrating

traditional but little-known French techniques for storing and preserving edibles in ways that maximize flavor and nutrition. This book deliberately ignores freezing and high-temperature canning in favor of methods that are superior because they are less costly and more energy-efficient using salt, oil, sugar, alcohol, vinegar, cold storage, fermentation, and more. *Preserving Food Without Freezing or Canning* offers more than 250 easy and enjoyable recipes featuring locally grown and minimally refined ingredients. It is an essential guide for those who seek healthy food for a healthy world. **197 pages, \$25.00 + \$4 s&h. WI res. add 5.5%.**

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Fasten the canner lid securely. Leave the weight off the vent pipe or open the petcock.

Turn the heat setting to its highest position. Heat until the water boils and steam flows freely in a funnel-shape from the open vent pipe or petcock. While maintaining the high heat setting, let the steam flow (exhaust) continuously for 10 minutes.

After this venting, or exhausting, of the canner, place the counterweight or weighted gauge on the vent pipe, or close the petcock. The canner will pressurize during the next 3 to 10 minutes.

Start timing the process when the pressure reading on the dial gauge indicates that the recommended pressure has been reached, or, for canners without dial gauges, when the weighted gauge begins to

jiggle or rock as the manufacturer describes.

Regulate the heat under the canner to maintain a steady pressure at, or slightly above, the correct gauge pressure. One type of weighted gauge should jiggle a certain number of times per minute, while another type should rock slowly throughout the process – check the manufacturer's directions.

Loss of pressure at any time can result in underprocessing, or unsafe food.

Quick and large pressure variations during processing may cause unnecessary liquid losses from jars.

Important: If at any time pressure goes below the recommended amount, bring the canner back to pressure and begin the timing of the process over, from the beginning (using the total original process time). This is important for the safety of the food.

When the timed process is completed, turn off the heat, remove the canner from the heat (electric burner) if possible, and let the canner cool down naturally. (Lift the canner to move it; do not slide the canner. It is also okay to leave the canner in place after you have turned off the burner. It is better to do so than to let jars inside the canner tilt or tip over if the canner is too heavy to move easily.)

While the canner is cooling, it is also de-pressurizing. *Do not force cool the canner. Forced cooling may result in food spoilage.* Cooling the canner with cold running water or opening the vent pipe before the canner is fully depressurized are types of forced cooling. They will also cause loss of liquid from jars and seal failures. Forced cooling may also warp the canner lid.

Even after a dial gauge canner has cooled until the dial reads zero pounds pressure, be cautious in removing the weight from the vent pipe. Tilt the weight slightly to make sure no steam escapes before pulling it all the way off. Newer canners will also have a cover lock in the lid or handle that must release after

cooling before the lids are twisted off. Do not force the lid open if the cover locks are not released. Manufacturers will provide more detailed instructions for particular models.

Depressurization of older canner models without dial gauges should be timed. Standard size heavy-walled canners require about 30 minutes when loaded with pints and 45 minutes when loaded with quarts. Newer thin-walled canners cool more rapidly and are equipped with vent locks that are designed to open when the pressure is gone. These canners are depressurized when the piston in the vent lock drops to a normal position. Some of these locks are hidden in handles and cannot be seen; however, the lid will not turn open until the lock is released.

After the canner is completely depressurized, remove the weight from the vent pipe or open the petcock. Wait 10 minutes; then unfasten the lid and remove it carefully. Lift the lid with the underside away from you so that the steam coming out of the canner does not burn your face.

Using a jar lifter, remove the jars one at a time, being careful not to tilt the jars. Carefully place them directly onto a towel or cake cooling rack, leaving at least one inch of space between the jars during cooling. Avoid placing the jars on a cold surface or in a cold draft.

Let the jars sit undisturbed while they cool, from 12 to 24 hours. Do not tighten ring bands on the lids or push down on the center of the flat metal lid until the jar is completely cooled.

Remove ring bands from sealed jars. Ring bands can be washed and dried and put away for using another time. Put any unsealed jars in the refrigerator and use first.

Wash jars and lids to remove all residues.

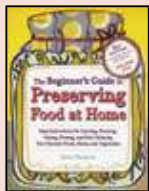
Label jars and store in a cool, dry place out of direct light.

Dry the canner, lid and gasket. Take off removable petcocks and safety valves; wash and dry thoroughly. Follow maintenance and storage instructions that come from your canner manufacturer. ❁

Enjoy Local Produce Year-Round!

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By Janet Chadwick



People are rediscovering the joys of locally produced foods and reducing the amount of money that's spent on packaged items, out-of-season produce and heavily processed foods.

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Fenugreek

An Ancient Spice That's Under-utilized

By HABEEB SALLOUM
CANADA

Popular in oriental cooking since time immemorial, fenugreek, a pulse, utilized as a spice, is yet to make its debut in the European and North American kitchen. However, for centuries, in the Far East, India, Egypt and the other Middle Eastern lands it has been a different story. Besides using it in their cooking, the peoples in these lands employed it, through the ages, as a restorative and aphrodisiac.

Fenugreek was introduced by the Arabs into Europe a short time before the 9th century and almost immediately met with the approval of the aristocracy. It is said that Charlemagne, in the early 9th century, favored this spice and encouraged its cultivation on the imperial farms in Germany. Nonetheless, in the subsequent years its use never became widespread in western lands.

Indigenous to the Near East, this aromatic spice was introduced by the Arabs to China where it still carries its Arabic name. Also known as “bird’s

foot,” “goat’s horn” and “Greek Hayes,” it is cultivated extensively on the periphery of the Mediterranean, Africa, the Indian sub-continent and, to some extent, in the temperate zones of North America. Fenugreek is grown for human food, for its medicinal qualities, or as a forage crop.

In India, where fenugreek is known as *hepoundét*, in addition to the seeds being used as a spice, they are employed to overcome evil. The leaves of a special variety, called *ka-soori methi*, are brewed into a healthy tea or employed to flavor all types of gravies and sauces. In the Arab countries, the seeds are also widely utilized, especially in Yemen and Morocco—the latter country being the origin of much of this spice imported by North Americans.

Fenugreek, derived from the Latin *foenun graecum*, is an annual herb belonging to the *Leguminosae* (pea family). To thrive, it needs a rich well-drained loamy soil and sunny climate. The seeds are planted in early spring when the danger of frost is past. In the initial stage, the plants resemble clover. They reach

the height of around two feet and produce bright green leaves and tiny off-white very fragrant flowers.

In about four months, they bear fruit in crescent shaped pods, up to six inches long, resembling string peas. They contain from five to 20 brownish-yellow oblong, bumpy and deeply furrowed seeds. The pods are picked when ripe, but before they begin to shatter, then dried in the sun and their seeds are stored until sold.

An unusual condiment with a very tenacious flavor, fenugreek has an agreeable aroma and a slightly bitter but somewhat sweet tang, reminiscent of sugar. It has a nutty taste that combines the flavor of celery and maple. If used in large amounts, its strong aromatic punch will make food bitter, but if used in small quantities, it adds a unique taste to foods.

One of the oldest plants known to man, fenugreek is rich in protein and contains volatile, fixed oils, cellulose, resin, starch, sugar, mucilage and mineral elements. In the past, besides its use in cooking, it was often employed in medicine.

Pliny extols the curative powers of its seeds in the treatment of female illnesses such as difficult labor and diseases of the uterus. The ancient Egyptians utilized them to cure baldness and herbalists have, through the centuries, recommended them as an demulcent, expectorant, febrifuge, restorative; and in the treatment of anemia, diabetes and rickets. A curious belief in the oriental lands is that when fenugreek is consumed by females it tends to make them pleasantly plump.

In our modern age, even though pharmacologists and others question the effectiveness which was attributed to this spice by the ancients, it has been proven, to some extent, that fenugreek alleviates asthma, bronchitis, coughs, heartburns and eases stomach ailments; and their digestive properties help in counteracting flatulence. The crushed seeds contain 30% mucilage and it has been established that when poultices are made from the crushed seeds, mixed with powdered charcoal, they are effective in the treatment of boils, ulcers and wounds. In addition, a tea made from one tablespoon fenugreek seeds, steeped for five minutes in two cups of boiling water has been found to be a nutritious drink, easing sore throats, fevers, and soothing intestinal pains.

The seeds are retailed usually whole, but can be found ground in Indian and specialty stores. They are a great food enhancer, giving an added succulence to all types of meats and a rich mouth-watering taste to some desserts, beans, eggplants, lentils, peas and root vegetables, especially potatoes. Also, the seeds can be sprouted and used as a vegetable in salads.

In India, the dried ground seeds are utilized in, and dominate, many condiments like curry products and chutneys, and the leaves, in the same manner as coriander leaves, are used in salads. Some Arabs flavor their much beloved halvah with fenugreek and, at times, employ the germinated seeds in their cuisine. In Egypt and other parts of North Africa, the crushed seeds are mixed with wheat flour in bread. The Greeks add a little

to honey, and in North America an aromatic oil is extracted and used as a substitute for maple essence in flavoring candies, cookies, ice cream and syrups.

There is only one drawback to the use of this scented spice. It must be employed in moderation. Dishes can easily be over-saturated if large amounts are added. However, when cooks become familiar with this relatively unknown condiment in the western world, gourmet dishes will be their reward.

Fenugreek-Meat Soup

Serves from 8 to 10

4 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound beef or lamb, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
2 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 small hot pepper, finely chopped
2 teaspoons ground fenugreek seeds
8 cups water
2 medium potatoes, diced into 1 inch cubes
2 medium carrots, chopped into small pieces
1 cup fresh or frozen green peas
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon cumin
4 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves

Heat oil in a saucepan and sauté meat, onions, garlic, hot pepper and fenugreek over medium/low heat for 12 minutes. Add water and bring to boil. Cover and cook over medium heat for 30 minutes. Add remaining ingredients, except coriander, and bring to boil. Cook for another 50 minutes or until both vegetables and meat are well-cooked. Stir in coriander and serve.

Fenugreek Flavored Lentil Soup

Serves about 8

4 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed
4 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander leaves
1 small hot pepper, finely chopped
2 teaspoons ground fenugreek
8 cups water

3/4 cup dried lentils
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon cumin
2 medium potatoes, diced into 1/2 inch cubes
4 tablespoons lemon juice

Heat oil in a saucepan; then sauté over medium/low heat onions, garlic, coriander leaves, fenugreek and hot pepper for 10 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients except potatoes and lemon juice. Bring to boil and cover, cook over medium heat for 20 minutes. Add potatoes and re-cover then cook for another 30 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and serve.

Fenugreek Flavored Vegetable Casserole

Serves about 6

4 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon ground fenugreek
2 medium onions, chopped
3 large sweet bell peppers, seeded and finely chopped
1/2 small hot pepper, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
4 medium firm tomatoes, chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon cumin
4 eggs

Heat oil in a frying pan until sizzling, then stir in fenugreek and stir-fry for 10 seconds. Add onions, both peppers and garlic, then cover and cook for 10 minutes over medium/low heat. Transfer to a casserole and stir in remaining ingredients except eggs. Cover and bake for 40 minutes in a 350°F preheated oven. Break eggs over top, then bake uncovered for 10 minutes. Serve hot.

Fenugreek Flavored Beans

Serves from 8 to 10

4 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound beef or lamb, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
2 medium onions, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 hot pepper, finely chopped
2 teaspoons ground fenugreek
1/2 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves

2 cups dried navy beans (or similar type), soaked overnight in water mixed with 1 teaspoon baking soda and drained

- 8 cups water
- 2 cups stewed tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon pepper

Heat the oil in a saucepan; then sauté meat over medium/low heat for 10 minutes. Add onions, garlic, hot pepper, fenugreek and coriander, then stir-fry for another 5 minutes. Add beans and water then bring to boil. Cover and cook over medium/low heat for 1-1/2 hours or until beans are soft, adding more water if needed. Stir in remaining ingredients and re-cover. Cook for another 40 minutes and serve with cooked rice.

Fenugreek-Eggplant Stew

- Serves about 6*
- 1 large eggplant, about 1 pound
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 5 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 teaspoon ground fenugreek seeds
 - 2 medium onions, chopped
 - 3 medium potatoes, peeled and diced into 1/2-inch cubes
 - 4 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander seeds
 - 1/2 teaspoon cumin
 - 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
 - 2 cups stewed tomatoes
 - 2 cups water

Peel eggplant then dice into 3/4-inch cubes. Place in a strainer and sprinkle with salt, then stir. Place heavy weight on top and allow to drain in a sink for 1 hour.

Heat oil in a saucepan over high heat until sizzling. Add fenugreek seeds and stir-fry for about 10 seconds. Turn heat to medium then stir in eggplants and the remaining ingredients, except tomatoes and water. Stir-fry for about 3 minutes then stir in tomatoes and water. Cover and simmer for about 40 minutes over low heat or until the eggplants and potatoes are well cooked, adding more water if necessary. Serve hot or cold.

Fenugreek Flavored Carrot and Potato Stew

- Serves about 8*
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 pound beef or lamb, cut into 1 inch cubes
 - 2 medium onions, chopped
 - 4 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 small hot pepper, finely chopped
 - 4 cups stewed tomatoes
 - 3 cups water
 - 2 teaspoons ground fenugreek
 - 2 teaspoons salt
 - 1 teaspoon cumin
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 - 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh coriander leaves.
 - 2 medium carrots, thinly chopped
 - 4 medium potatoes, diced into 1 inch cubes

Heat oil in a saucepan and sauté meat over medium/low heat for 10 minutes. Add onions, garlic and hot pepper, then fry for a further 10 minutes, stirring often. Stir in tomatoes, water, fenugreek, salt, cumin and pepper then bring to boil. Cover and cook over medium/low heat for 30 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and cook for a further 40 minutes or until carrots are well cooked. Serve hot.

Fenugreek Flavored Ground Meat Stew

- Serves about 8*
- 4 tablespoons cooking oil
 - 1 large onion, finely chopped
 - 6 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 hot pepper, finely chopped
 - 2 pounds ground beef
 - 1 teaspoon ground fenugreek
 - 2 cups water
 - 4 tablespoons tomato sauce
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon oregano
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 - 1/4 cup water

Heat the oil in a frying pan, then sauté over medium heat onion, garlic and hot pepper for 5 minutes. Add meat and fenugreek, then fry for a further 10 minutes, stirring often. Stir in remaining ingredients, then cover and simmer over low heat for 40 minutes, adding more water if necessary. Serve with cooked rice.

Fenugreek-Fish Pilaff

- Serves 4 to 6*
- 3 tablespoons butter
 - 1 large onion, finely chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 pound fish fillet, cut into 1-inch cubes
 - 1 teaspoon ground fenugreek
 - 1 cup rice, rinsed
 - 2-1/2 cups boiling water
 - 2 tablespoons tomato paste
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper
 - 1/8 teaspoon cayenne

Heat the oil in a frying pan, then sauté onion and garlic over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add fish and fenugreek then gently stir-fry another 4 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients and bring to boil. Cover and turn heat to medium/low, then cook for 15 minutes, stirring a number of times and re-covering to ensure that rice does not stick to the bottom of pan. Turn off heat and allow to cook in own steam for a further 30 minutes before serving. *fa*

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RAW FOOD A Complete Guide for Every Meal of the Day

By Erica Palmcrantz and Irmela Lilja



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people are turned off by the difficulty and unpleasantness of eating only (or even primarily) foods cooked below 104 degrees Fahrenheit. With dozens of recipes accompanied with beautiful, full-color photographs, Erica Palmcrantz and Irmela Lilja prove that eating raw foods can be simple, inexpensive, and delicious. From creative salads to spicy burritos to chocolate mousse, every recipe will broaden your raw-food horizons. Complete with recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, desserts, and side dishes, *Raw Food* is an innovative approach to a wholesome way of eating. **174 pages, \$14.95**

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Freezing Peppers and Other Produce

Yummy eggplant recipes

BY JEAN SMITH
THE GARDEN GATE CSA FARM™
SNOVER, MICHIGAN

Locally sourced, homegrown, all natural, organic... These are a just a few of the key words that we as foodies and locavores look for when we are trying to source “real” food. We make every effort to know the farmer/producer and build that relationship with them. I am all about that part of it—the getting to know part. It’s important to me and I know it’s important to you. It’s a full circle—seed to dirt, seedling to plant, blossom to fruit, harvest to market, producer to consumer, and so goes the cycle of the production of food.

We are preserving and storing for the cold doldrum of winter. We still must eat and we want to eat good—and we can. We have been busy in the kitchen with all the preserving we do here. This past week we were busy with making all the barbecue sauces and ketchup for both our family and our farm’s Winter CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Pantry Share, along with pizza sauce and grape juice. We put up beautiful jars of raspberry and grape jam that are lining the shelves now. I was able to use all the leftover grapes from the steamer after I got the juice out. I put the “pulp” into a stainless steel colander over a large kettle and left it to drip. We did five bushels of grapes and got almost 100 quarts of grape juice and then from all the “waste” I was able to get another eight quarts of

juice that I made our grape jelly with. I had some cranberries in the freezer, so I cooked some of those down, used the juice and substituted that for some of the grape juice. I added the cranberries and got some super yummy Cran-Grape Jelly. (See the recipe below.) My CSA Work Share ladies got all the basil harvested so Taylor and I got the beautiful pesto made for both our family and our Winter CSA Pantry Shares.



What To Eat And When?

While reading *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, the author does a superb job in giving us the details on what’s in season and when. If you are a regular at the farmers markets, you probably have a fair amount of knowledge in this area, but for those of you who are just getting your feet wet in this wonderful world of “real food,” I say, “Welcome!”

A really great site to go to can be found on my blogspot, [\[onfliesandme.blogspot.com\]\(http://onfliesandme.blogspot.com\). If you scroll all the way to the bottom of the page, you will see a site where you can get what is in season all across the world.](http://www.fordrag-</p>
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Freezing Peppers is Easy

Wash your peppers in cold water and remove any debris and bad spots along with stems. Cut your peppers in half and remove stem end and all seeds; either dice or cut into strips. I do some of both—diced are great for putting into chilies, gumbos and on pizza, and the strips are perfect for stir fry or fajitas.

Place on a cookie sheet and place in your freezer until close to frozen; use a metal turner to pop the peppers loose and place them in freezer containers. I like to use one-gallon ice cream buckets. I also place a piece of wax paper or foil wrap over the top before I put the lid on, this helps prevent freezer burn. Downsize your container as you use your peppers.

You can use this same method with raspberries, strawberries, rhubarb, blueberries and any other item that doesn’t need blanching or steaming.

Here is my homemade Cran-Grape Jelly I created by chance!

Cran-Grape Jelly

Prepare lids and jars
Measure out exactly 7 cups of sugar
in separate bowl; set aside

Prepare liquid as follows:
You will need exactly 5 cups of

liquid—at least 4 cups of grape and the remaining from the liquid used to cook down the cranberries. You can add more grape juice to make the five cups if you don't get enough from the cranberries.

Place 1-1/2 cups frozen whole cranberries in a 2-quart sauce pan with about 2 cups of water. Add frozen cranberries; bring to a boil then turn down heat and simmer for five minutes. Drain liquid and reserve. Place cranberries in a bowl and mash. Add cranberry juice to grape juice until you have exactly 5 cups of liquid.

Measure exact amount of prepared fruit juice into a 6-8 quart saucepot. Stir in 1 package of fruit pectin powder (I use Sure-Jel). Add 1/2 teaspoon butter to prevent foaming.

Bring mixture to full rolling boil (a boil that doesn't stop bubbling when stirred) on high heat, stirring constantly.

Stir in sugar quickly. Return to full rolling boil and boil exactly 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Skim off any foam.

Ladle quickly into prepared jars, filling to within 1/4-inch of tops. Wipe jar rims and threads. Place lid and ring on tightly. Place jars on elevated rack of water bath canner and cover with hot water, covering jars by at least 2 inches. Process jelly for 5 minutes—adjust processing time according to your altitude. Remove jars and place upright on a towel or cooling rack to cool completely.

Let stand on counter for 24 hours and put on your shelves. If any jars didn't seal, place in refrigerator and use first.

Roasted Eggplant Dip

- 1 head garlic
- 1 large eggplant, cut half lengthwise
- 1 small onion, sliced thinly
- 1 large tomato, cored, sliced in half
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper

Preheat oven to 450°F. Cut top off the head of garlic to expose a bit of

the cloves. Wrap loosely in foil, bake until soft, about 30 minutes. Let cool slightly.

Meanwhile, coat a baking sheet with cooking spray. Place eggplant halves on the prepared baking sheet, cut side down. Roast for 10 minutes. Add onion slices and tomato halves to the sheet and roast until all the veggies are soft, 10-15 minutes. Let cool slightly.

Squeeze the head of garlic, releasing the soft pulp, into a medium bowl. Mash with the back of a spoon. Slip skins from the eggplant and tomatoes; coarsely chop. Finely chop the onion. Add chopped veggies to the garlic pulp and stir in the lemon juice, mint, oil, salt and pepper. Serve with sliced raw veggies, crackers or pita bread/chips.

Veggie Stuffed Eggplant

- 1 medium eggplant
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup each; mushrooms, chopped zucchini and sweet pepper—red, green and yellow mixed
- 3/4 cup chopped tomatoes
- 1/4 cup toasted wheat germ, optional
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper
- Dash crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese

Cut eggplant in half lengthwise; remove pulp, leaving a 1/4-inch thick shell. Cube pulp; set shells & pulp aside.

In a large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray, sauté onion and garlic until onion is tender. Add the veggies and eggplant pulp; sauté for 4-6 minutes or until veggies are crisp-tender. Stir in the tomatoes, wheat germ, parsley, thyme, and seasonings. Cook for 1 minute.

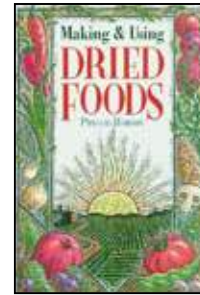
Divide mixture evenly between the eggplant shells; sprinkle with the cheese. Place on a baking sheet. Bake at 400°F for 20-25 minutes or until shells are tender.

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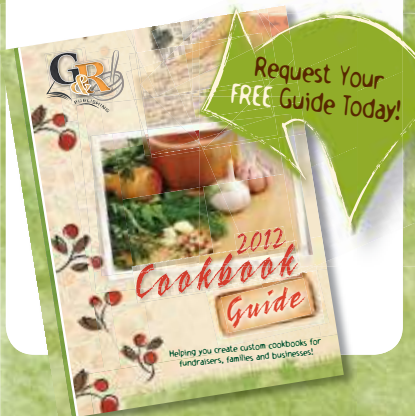
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First Place:

Homegrown Busy Day Casserole

FROM MOLLY DYLAN, KINCAID, WISCONSIN

SERVES 8-10

1-1/2 cups wild rice or 4 medium potatoes, cubed
1 cup each carrots, celery, green pepper, cubed
1 medium onion, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 lbs. venison or beef (tender or stew meat), cubed
2-1/2 teaspoons seasoned salt
4 cups beef broth

Layer all ingredients in order listed above into a large slow cooker. Do not stir!

Cook on low setting. 6-8 hours.

This is a family favorite recipe for those days we know are going to be busy. Most of the ingredients are harvested on our own little piece of land and are staples to our pantry. It's also a great dish for beginning cooks as there is room for creativity and it is an easy recipe for children to follow. One basic meal, so many ways to fix it!

Runner-up:

Cheese-Summer Squash Casserole

FROM DEBBIE BERTS, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

SERVES 4

3 cups summer squash
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 cup cracker crumbs
2 tablespoons onion, chopped fine
1 cup cheese, shredded
2 eggs, beaten

1. Combine all ingredients and mix well.
2. Put in a greased baking dish, cover and bake at 350°F for 1 hour.

RAISING CANE

Sorghum cultivation and pressing in the Ozarks

By JEFFERY GOSS
MISSOURI

They used to be all over the Ozarks, and sometimes you still see them. Patches that look like little cornfields, except that the stalks are a little too narrow at the top. The leaves a little too straight and glossy, the plants a bit too close together. That's because they're not true cornfields, they are sorghum cane fields.

Sorghum falls into three main cultivated categories. There is grain-type sorghum, usually called milo in this part of the country. There is broomcorn, a small-seeded type, which can be grown for grain but is best known as the traditional source of broom fiber. Then there is sweet-cane sorghum, used in making syrup. Johnsongrass is also technically sorghum, though hardly anyone (except a few stock ranchers) actually grow it on purpose.

Here in the Ozarks, when folks use the word "sorghum" with no qualifying trait, they mean the sweet kind. Sorghum grows sweetest in humid climates with plenty of summer heat, a description making it ideal for Arkansas and Missouri cultivation. In a region too far south to have a large maple population, too far north to grow true sugarcane, and too rocky to grow many sugar beets, sorghum became the prevailing sugar source for early settlers of the Ozark hills. Sugars were needed not only for sweetening but for preservation of more perishable foods, and remote homesteaders could not conveniently go buy sugar in town. As more towns sprung up and the population grew, farmers found sorghum an excellent cash



The Voyles in Missouri continue to press sorghum without new technology.

crop. Finished syrup and molasses, in addition to being non-perishable, were relatively lightweight. A dollar's worth of sorghum syrup, then or now, is much easier to transport than a dollar's worth of corn, oats, or hay.

Jim and Marge Voyles, of western Douglas County, Missouri, are among the relatively few farmers in their area who still grow sweet sorghum.

"Before refined sugar was (widespread), everyone pretty much in the Ozarks depended on sorghum for sweetening," Mr. Voyles said, explaining that those who didn't have their own pressing equipment were usually able to haul their harvested stalks to someone who could.

There are at least 30 named varieties of sweet sorghum cane, the more common of which include Ames Amber, Dale, Della, Honey Drip, Mennonite, Rox Orange, and Sand Mountain. But all varieties

are essentially grown the same way. The seeds are planted like corn, but slightly later, around the first of May. The stalks grow tall and thick and juicy, while the top of the plant develops a grain head. Before the grain ripens, in September, the sweet stalks are cut for pressing.

Cane pressing is traditionally the work of a horse, trotting in circles while harnessed to a wheel-powered cane press. Even today, horses remain the most common "engine" used in sorghum pressing. There are very few new models of sorghum presses; most of those in use are either pre-1960 machines or reworked sugarcane presses. Virtually no technological advancements have been made in sorghum extraction since the 1930s. In some communities a local gristmill was temporarily converted into a sorghum mill for several weeks each fall, but this was uncommon. Sorghum presses made to be operated by gas or

steam power have also existed for almost a century, but they too have always been rather uncommon. Jim Voyles owns two of these pressing machines, but says "The mills like I have, which are tractor-powered or belt-powered, were fairly rare; you hardly ever saw one."

The pressing and boiling are typically attended by several people—at the minimum it takes two participants, but four to six is a better number. When sorghum cane production was locally more common than today, it was commonly a community event, with neighbors all gathered around a single press and everyone helping out as each batch had its turn being pressed. In the Voyles' case, they have three or four friends who assist the process.

"This is a horizontal mill, so it can run off the belt," Marge said while loading a JD No. 810 Hercules Cane Press. "The other kind, the rollers are vertical."

The mill crushes and squeezes the raw cane, similar to the way apples are pressed for cider. On the other side, two products appear: the juice, which goes into a bucket or milk can, and the tailings, which fall on the ground. A pile of sorghum tailing is a distinctive sight, and one that many rural Ozarkers would immediately recognize if they saw. Tailings are often fed to horses or used as garden mulch.

But it's the other item, the juice, that is mainly desired. Coming out of the mill, it is a hue of green similar to a camouflage suit. It is opaque and might be mistaken for pond water full

of algae. This juice is poured into the vat where it will be boiled down.

Sorghum cane is sweet enough that it can be chewed raw for its juice. Quite commonly, during cane-pressing, common will chew a small piece while working. The taste is, as expected, sweet with a mildly grassy flavor.

The juice, once extracted, must be boiled down. The boiling vat is usually wood-fired (though a few sorghum producers use the more expensive gas-powered evaporator system which is actually made for maple syrup). The Voyles use a vat made from sheet metal and sealed to its frame by clay to prevent leakage into the fire. The boiling down, once there is a roaring fire in the under-chamber, will take about four hours on a dry day or up to seven hours on a wet day, since humidity makes evaporation time longer. The juice must be boiled down to 1/7 of its original volume.

This multiplicity of tasks that must be done to process sorghum is the main reason why it is so often a group event. Loading the press, collecting the juice and sweeping the tailings aside, dealing with the horses or tractor, tending the fire, and skimming off the white scum that forms on top of the seething liquid are just some of the chores that must be done almost simultaneously as part of the process. While some manage to do it all with just two participants (such as a husband/wife team), hardly anyone would deny that having for or five folks involved makes it much more expeditious and

predictable an operation.

When the syrup approaches being finished, it is checked regularly for the correct thickness: some use the "spoon test," but a tool called a hydrometer is more precise and is the method preferred by stores that would buy the product. In any case, the finished molasses or syrup is taken off the heat and poured into jugs and jars, where it thickens to its final consistency.

There is sometimes confusion as to the difference between sorghum *syrup* and sorghum *molasses*. According to the National Sweet Sorghum Producers and Processors Association (NSSPA), "molasses per se is a byproduct of sugar refining" from tropical sugarcane, and hence there is technically no such thing as sorghum molasses. All sorghum cane pressing can ever yield is syrup, the NSSPA maintains. But in the traditional usage of the Ozarks, only the thickest version is called syrup. "Sorghum molasses" is regionally used to describe the common thickness to which sorghum juice is boiled. The Voyles' flatbed trailer bears a sign with the words "Voyles Sorghum Molasses," not syrup.)

In the 1940s and 50s, sorghum pressing became less and less common in the Ozarks, but in the 1960s, Mennonite settlers from Kentucky brought with them many sorghum cane presses and began to revive the practice. Today there are dozens of farms still producing sorghum in the Ozarks, many of them being Mennonites or Amish, but others just being traditional Ozarkers who operate "general" farms. You probably will never meet a "sorghum farmer" who grows *only* that, and you wouldn't have them 100 years ago, either.

Sorghum merits as much respect as any other cash crop. It provides a local alternative to sugar and corn syrup, and a healthier one. It tastes just as sweet, whether you call it syrup or molasses.

For more information or if you have questions about raising and pressing sorghum, write to Jim and Marge Voyles, Rt. 1, Box 435, Ava, MO 65608.

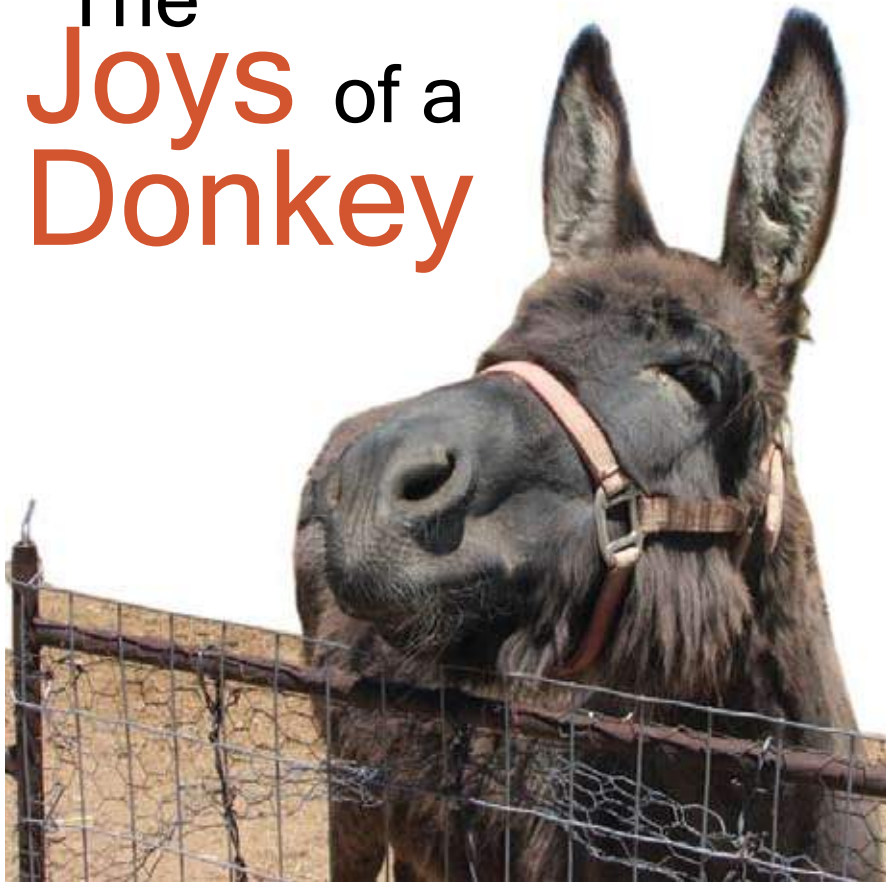
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Homestead livestock:

The Joys of a Donkey



By JEFF HOARD
HM RANCH

Nice ass! You know, I hear that often out here at HM Ranch. Unfortunately, everybody's talking about the Ranch's mascot, our donkey, Annie. All kidding aside, I want to point out the advantages of having a donkey on the homestead.

Personally, I've never been a horse



Annie with her mother.

person, but Karen and I have a few nieces and nephews and we wanted them to have something to ride when they visited from Idaho. We started out buying two previously adopted Bureau of Land Management (BLM) donkeys (a gelding and a jenny), but for various reasons could not tame them down satisfactorily so we took the jenny to a friend's home in the next valley to be bred so we could start fresh with a baby. Several months later I woke up early one frosty morning and saw that the jenny was laying "flat-out" on the far side of our front field. I very quickly slipped on my sweat pants, slippers and coat and went out to see if something was wrong or if the blessed event was about to happen. Just as I got to the jenny she jumped up and ran straight at me trying to kick me with her front hooves, I turned around and ran as fast as

my slippers would allow me back across the field with her right on my heels, all while yelling at her to *Whoa! Whoa!* (Now keep in mind I had only been awake about 10 minutes at this point!) I entered the house and asked Karen, "Did you see that?" She said, "See what?" She missed the whole terrifying event! After that we got dressed and went back out just in time to see Annie being born. The jenny fed Annie for about a week but then just suddenly abandoned her and spent all of her time with the gelding. So we started bottle feeding Annie with goat milk from our goats and promptly sold the other two donkeys!

When Annie was little we let her just run around the ranch 'unfettered' but when she started pushing through the screen door always wanting a snack and our attention she had to be put back with the goats. Although she never really got friendly with the goats, a donkey is a good protector (that's fairly common knowledge). If a coyote, stray dog or any predator enters the area she brays and chases the critter off. That's helped me out a lot. Although I like her running off the predator I also like being alerted to the situation. Annie, like her mother, is what is called a "Jerusalem Donkey." They have a cross on their back which from what I understand signifies that she came from the same lineage as the donkey that carried Jesus into Jerusalem. That in itself makes her extra special to us.

Like I had mentioned, Annie never really warmed up to the goats.

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Annie is tied to a tire, which allows her to wander a bit, and to a post (right), which is more restrictive.



diet of sticks and stones!

Because of the extended drought here we don't have the animals we used to but when this place was humming I would split my chores and more than a few times I would get busy and forget to finish up (hey, I'm old!) but a braying donkey will make sure you never forget to finish feeding and

Goats are pushy and obstinate by nature and I always felt a little sorry for Annie not having another equine to pal around with so I started playing with her a little bit. I figured I might be a good friend. (I'm more of a jack-ass than she is!) After a few weeks though the playing started to get pretty rough. We would clinch, dig in and try to push the other backwards. It was exhausting but good exercise. Win or lose I always felt like a world class Greco Roman wrestler after every bout! But during one match she bit me on the thigh. I don't bruise easily but this "nip" left one of those green/blue bruises. At first I thought it was just accidental but in subsequent matches it became obvious that she had added that to her arsenal and that ain't wrestling! So that ended that activity "toot sweet."

A donkey doesn't require much and Annie is not a picky eater like the goats and will eat virtually all of the feed that the goats leave behind (I call it goat leavin's). For that reason she doesn't cost much to keep which classifies her as a very cheap keeper. Sometimes it seems she could gain weight on a

will alert you to anything out of the ordinary.

My brother-in-law gave me lessons on trimming hooves so I do that myself. It's easy and only takes about 30 minutes every few months or so, she makes up for the time spent on her by eating weeds along the fence lines and mowing the lawn. Her efforts help keep the ranch looking neat and tidy. She does a real good job on the lawn; she leaves the trees and bushes alone and eats just the grass. I wait until I see her urinate then I'll let her on the lawn for an hour or so. Like a female dog their urine will kill the grass. I will also tie her up with a long rope to a spare tire so she can snack on weeds in our open areas. If she gets her rope tangled on something or if she just wants to go back to the shelter she brays (or "honks" as our youngest niece used to call it) and I'll take care of the situation.

She's a tough animal. In her 13 years she has never been sick, withstands our -20°F winter nights and provides riding pleasure for our younger family members. I believe an addition of a donkey would be an asset to any homestead and I recommend one as a grounds keeper, the kid's steed or as just a friend. However, I do not recommend one for a wrestling partner!



Annie is not only a livestock guard, she's also a riding buddy for the Hoard's nieces and nephews.

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The cow barn:

Hairy Udders SOMETIMES Cause Problems

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

Some cows have a lot of hair on their udders. This trait can help protect an udder from sunburn, “snowburn” or frostbite, but it can also be a disadvantage when calves are nursing in the spring when the cow is shedding. The long hair from the udder sometimes comes off in clumps and matted snarls, and a nursing calf can easily ingest a clump of hair and develop a hairball and fatal blockage in the gut. Calves like to chew and nibble on lots of things, and may suck/chew on the clump of hair until it comes loose, and swallow it.

Another (and perhaps more common) problem encountered in cows with hairy udders is strangulation of a teat. This can be a frustrating nuisance when cows have calves in winter or early spring when the cow

still has long winter hair. As the calf nurses, the hair becomes wet with milk and sometimes becomes curled around a teat. As the milky, matted hair dries, it may become entwined and stuck together in a strong, ropy wisp around the top of the teat. More hair may mat to it with each nursing, once this “hair loop” gets started. If it completely encircles the teat and is matted back into itself, you’ve got serious trouble. As the udder fills up again with milk between nursings and enlarges, the teats tend to enlarge also. Thus the rope of hair encircling the teat gets tight and cuts into the teat. The hair ring cannot expand, so as the teat fills up, the matted ring of hair constricts it.

If this hair ring is not noticed and removed very soon, it starts to cut through the skin of the teat. Once the skin is broken the teat becomes raw

and sore at that spot, and the cow may not let her calf nurse that teat because it is painful. She kicks him off when he tries to suck it. This creates a vicious circle; the teat becomes even larger and tighter because it is so full of milk, cutting off the circulation in the skin as the hairy ring at the top puts even more pressure on the swollen teat. Thus it becomes even more sore and tender so the cow refuses to let the calf nurse it out. If neglected, the strangulated teat will die and the cow will lose that quarter. You may even lose the cow if infection becomes systemic.

The first case of teat strangulation in our herd occurred about 32 years ago when we noticed a black cow with one large teat, while we were feeding hay. I always check udders daily on every cow when we’re feeding, because the first sign of a sick



Carefully cut the hair ring from the teat without cutting the tender skin.

calf is generally a full udder; the calf doesn't feel like nursing. This may be the first tip, even before the calf develops diarrhea.

As we drove back past the cows on the feed ground, I looked more closely at Beatrix's udder, and I could see the ring of hair cutting into the top of the teat. We brought her and her calf in from the field and put her down the chute — and carefully cut off the hair ring that encircled the teat. Fortunately the tight ring had only been there a short time; it had not yet made a sore nor cut into the skin. After it was removed, we milked out the large teat, and the cow then let her calf nurse it.

Since then, we've had several other cases. Some of the hair rings had cut into the teat by the time we discovered the problem, and made them sore and raw. The worst case was on a cow named Fancy Pants who was out in a large pasture in late spring, just before going to summer range. Since we were no longer feeding hay we were not looking at those cows closely every day nor checking them so constantly — the calves were big enough by then that scours was no longer a concern. They were on a mountain pasture and doing very well. We were riding through them every other day or so to check on them.

Fancy Pants' teat had probably been strangulated for two or three days by the time we discovered her situation. The teat was almost cut completely through on one side. We had to bring her home to the corrals to remove the hair ring and doctor her. It took awhile to heal up — several days of milking her by hand, since the teat was much too sore for her to allow the calf to nurse it. We applied an udder ointment to the raw teat after each milking, until it finally healed enough that she let the calf nurse it again.

Many of our cows do not have such long hair on their udders, but some do, and we watch them closely. Sometimes at calving time they have matted hair hanging down and if we get a chance while the cow is in the barn for calving, we pull those



Hair can become matted around teats when a calf is nursing, and that can lead to serious problems for the cow.

clumps off, just to prevent possible problems. A newborn calf trying to find a teat may start sucking on a clump or mat of hair and could easily ingest the wad if it pulls loose. We know some ranchers who clip the hairy udders at calving time.

It always pays to check udders frequently when calves are young. When our calves are still in the fields, before they go to spring and summer pastures, we routinely check the cow herd twice daily for any signs of sickness in the babies, and we make a point to check all the cows' udders while we're at it. Checking udders is a good clue to the health of a calf; a calf with scours or pneumonia will often go off feed as one of the earliest signs of illness.

If you are looking at udders daily to see if the calves are nursing or not, you'll also notice a hair ring around a teat before it gets to be a problem. There's no substitute for regular supervision and constant observation, for keeping cattle healthy. Close attention to detail makes all the difference when it comes to preventing or correcting serious problems, and hair rings on teats is a perfect example. 🐾



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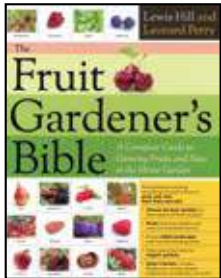
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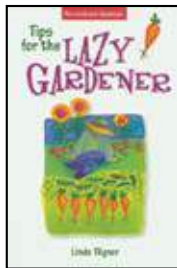
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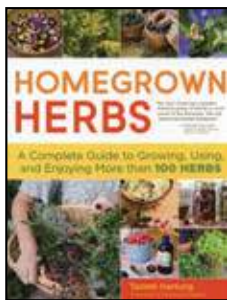
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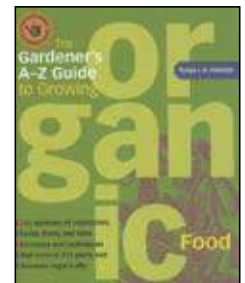
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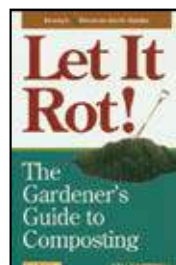
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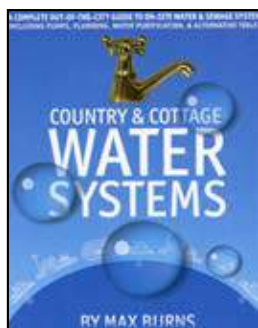
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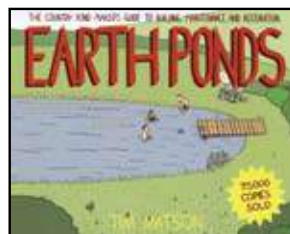
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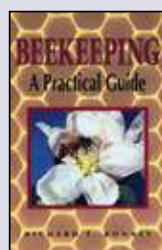


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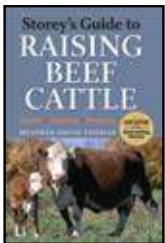
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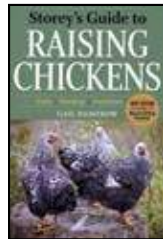
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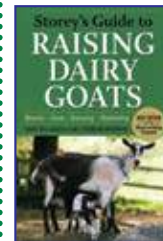
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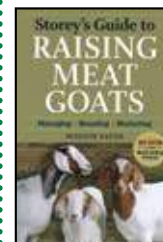
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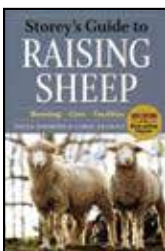
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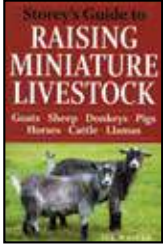
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Pushing Cattle into the Chute, & Tail Twisting Tip

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

When pushing cattle through a chute runway—heading toward the squeeze chute for processing—cattle often balk if the runway is not constructed to take advantage of cattle’s natural tendency to follow the animal ahead of them. Curved runways work best. Many of the old-style straight chutes are less user-friendly because the cattle see what’s happening up front and may not want to move forward.

Ranchers use all kinds of methods to keep cattle moving, or to move a reluctant animal into the squeeze chute if that individual balks. Whips,

stock sticks, electric prods (hot shots), etc. are often employed, and sometimes the rancher merely grabs the tail and gives it a twist. Whatever method is used, care should be taken to not injure or upset the animal. An electric prod, used just once to encourage a reluctant animal with a temporary shock, is often more humane than poking, jabbing or beating on the animal—which may create more pain, and potential bruising.

Tail twisting generally works, but again, there is a humane (and most effective) way to do it, versus inhumane twisting and potential injury or risk of breaking of the tail. According to Dr. Joe Stookey, (Western College

of Veterinary Medicine, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) there are proper and improper ways to do this. “I was recently at a large stock show and realized that a lot of people are using the tail twist as an accelerator rather than as an ignition switch. For best results

you need to take your hand off the tail as soon as you get the desired response,” he explains.

“If you do it properly, you can readily train a cow to know that if she doesn’t step forward you will twist the tail. You can easily do this with naïve cows (that have never had their tail twisted before) in a chute. Yet many people do it wrong. They know how to twist the tail and get the cow to move, but they don’t let go. If they just keep applying the twisting pressure even after the cow starts to move, she balks again when she gets to another spot where she doesn’t want to move forward. Then the person has to up the pressure—and this creates potential for breaking the tail,” he says.

Animals respond best to pressure-release. It's like training a horse. They learn to give to pressure (as when teaching a horse to lead) because they know that the pressure will be removed as soon as they respond. Alternately applying pressure and releasing the pressure works much better than applying continual pressure. If the animal gets no relief from pressure — no reward for proper response — the animal will simply quit trying or may actively resist.

Even though more and more ranchers are learning about low-stress handling, and how to work with the cattle instead of against them, many people still don't understand how to handle cattle and take advantage of their natural tendencies as prey animals with flight zones, instinctively moving away from pressure. When working and sorting cattle in a corral, you are training them — either making them easier to handle next time, or worse — by the way you treat them. All too often people poke or hit/whip a cow even after she is moving the proper direction, or as she goes by. Instead of being rewarded for doing the right thing or going the right way, she is being punished. This only confuses her and won't make it any easier to sort or move her the next time.

"With the tail twist, you should always let go once the animal is actually starting to move. If you keep twisting, she doesn't learn anything," says Stookey. "Our group here at the college recently uploaded a video onto YouTube that shows how a person should properly apply a tail twist on a cow." www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRmw1AqjYiY.

"It seems rather elementary at first glance, until I reflected that for years I had done it wrong, plus I now notice many other people doing it poorly too. It wasn't until I fully understood the concepts of pressure and release — releasing as soon as you get a response from the animal (which is a form of negative reinforcement) that I learned how to do it right. Watch this video and see how we do it. The video clip will either be a refresher or a new lesson," says Stookey.

Nutrition Group Leads Protest Against Aspartame in Dairy Products

By KIMBERLY HARTKE
WESTON A. PRICE FOUNDATION

According to the Weston A. Price Foundation, American consumers are Acrying foul over a dairy industry petition to add artificial sweeteners to flavored milks. If FDA answers in the affirmative, artificial sweeteners will take the place of sugar in flavored milk served to school children and to many other classes of dairy products. (*Ed. note: When this news first came out, the dairy industry petitioned to completely omit labeling of artificial sweeteners. This has since been reversed.*)

Numerous scientific studies point to toxic effects of aspartame, including cancer, digestive issues and memory impairment.

While aimed principally at replacing sugar in flavored milks served to school children, the petition also asks for the right to obscure artificial sweeteners in a host of dairy products including nonfat dried milk (always added to reduced-fat milks), yogurt, cream, half-and-half, sour cream, eggnog and whipping cream.

Researchers and holistic health advocates have warned about the toxicity of artificial sweeteners for many years:

- Thousands of adverse reactions to aspartame have been reported to the FDA, mostly concerned with abnormal brain function, brain tumors, epilepsy and Parkinson's.
- Children's brains are four times more are more susceptible to damage from excitotoxins like aspartame than those of adults and react with ADD ADHD type symptoms, impaired learning, depression and nausea.
- People who are sensitive to aspartame can have life-threatening reactions to it.

Scientific evidence for the precautionary principle can be found on PubMed.com, a respected scientific database. Here a just a few of the representative studies:

A scientific study published in the *European Review for Medical and Pharmacological Sciences*. 2012 Dec;16(15):2092-101, **Studies on the effects of aspartame on memory and oxidative stress in brain of mice**, found impaired memory performance and increased brain oxidative stress by repeated aspartame administration.

In May, 2010, *The International Journal of Genomics* published a study **In Vivo Cytogenetic Studies on Aspartame** where scientists observed significant chromosomal aberrations in the bone marrow cells of mice following exposure to aspartame. Because of the genotoxicity they found, scientists advised caution when using aspartame in food and beverages as a sweetener.

A Swiss study with mice and rats, published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* in December 2010 found Aspartame (APM) exposure is especially harmful for pre-term fetus, rats of both genders, and male mice. Scientists found APM to be a carcinogenic agent in multiple sites (liver and lung) in mice and rats and that its effects are increased when exposure starts from prenatal life.

The Weston A. Price Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nutrition education foundation with the mission of disseminating accurate, science-based information on diet and health. Named after nutrition pioneer Weston A. Price, DDS, author of Nutrition and Physical Degeneration. The Foundation phone number is (202) 363-4394, www.westonaprice.org, info@westonaprice.org.

The poultry yard:



BY BRENDA PENSHORN
TEXAS

It has been at least 20 years since I have written. There isn't a lot of sit-down time around here. I have a few thoughts about chicken tending.

Our main meat for 25 years has been rabbit and goat. We keep chickens for the eggs. I do hatch out my own chicks. In Texas we have a lot of very smart snakes, so my husband built two snake-proof cages. I place my broody hen and her eggs in the cage when I can hear the chicks pick-

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ing inside the egg. I set the mother hen up with a nest inside the cage. The chicks are raised in the cage until they are too big for a rat snake to eat. I remove the mother when she is no longer needed. Usually there are 50% roosters. We do eat these roosters. They get moved to a bigger cage until they are big enough to eat. I dress them out, much like a rabbit—I skin them! It is fast, easy, clean. Who needs the skin anyway? Raised in a cage, they are very tender.

Raising chickens with their mother in a cage can have its own challenges. The hen will scratch apart most any covered feeder. I found that using a cheap plastic bird feeder would reduce feed waste. Hang the feeder two inches above the floor of the cage, and place a large lid or plate underneath to catch the crumbs.

I have a worm bin. I added rabbit manure to it and soon discovered lots of soldier fly larvae—en masse. The chickens *love* them! I have since found that the larvae are a perfect protein for chickens. It is possible to grow these in large amounts and decrease the use of so much commercial feed.

The soldier fly lays its eggs in moist, wet dung or mud. They decompose garbage faster than the earthworm or red worms. The castings from the larvae, and the liquid they produce, are excellent fertilizer. The best thing is that you do not have to go buy them. You build it—they will come!

My flock of bantams is free-range. The border collies make it unpleasant for them to come into the front yard or porch, so they prefer to stay out in the pasture. My other flock is a mix of



Milo sprouts (top) and a dust bath (below) keep the chickens occupied. Their water is supplied by gravity-fed rainwater (above right).

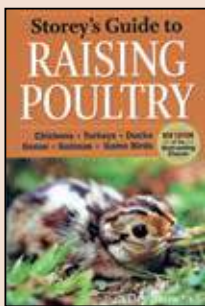


Auracana and Reds. They stay closed in a pen until two hours before sunset. After two hours of freedom, they head back into the henhouse as the sun sets. They can be better protected in a closed-up henhouse. We have learned to pick up the pet food bowl before we turn them out. They will make a beeline for it every time. If that bowl happens to be on the porch, no one will like what the chickens leave behind.

Because my large hens are penned up all day, I provide them with a covered area of ashes to dust themselves in. The cover keeps the ashes dry, and the ashes help the hens fight the lice. Inside the pen I also have "chicken grazing stations." In large containers I drain holes, add dirt or potting soil to within two inches of the top. In the

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summer I plant milo, in the winter I plant oats (we live in southern Texas). I cover the container with half-inch wire or an old diamond shaped barbecue grate and secure it to keep the hens from getting at the dirt.

In a very short time this grain will sprout and I have fresh green growth for my hens to peck at. This will also make the yokes darker. We have an abundance of "Ball moss," a bromeliad. It grows in the trees, it is very

easy to gather, and the chickens love to eat it. All of these things to dust in and peck at help my hens to not get too bored while they wait for their two hours of freedom.

Elevating the water container on a cinder block helps to keep the water cleaner. We capture rainwater off of our roof. The tanks set four-feet up off the ground, so we can use gravity flow for our watering. The tank has a spigot at the bottom to attach a hose. The hose is run to the chicken pen, attached to an automatic float, and this is attached to a large container that holds the chicken's water. Each morning I empty the container and let it refill with fresh water. (Minnows are in the rain tank to keep the mosquitoes from breeding.) I enjoy reading other folks' ideas. I hope this gets the creative wheels turning for someone.

Skinning a Chicken

By JOHN RODEN
MONTANA

I enjoyed hatching chicks in my Styrofoam incubators. I soon found myself with a lot of chickens. Half of them turned out to be roosters. They all ate feed. I sold some egg-type pullets and kept some breeding stock. The rest I killed on installments each week.

The skin of a chicken has fat in it. It also has flavor. I had a heart attack so I avoid fat.

I am not a detail person so I will give you an idea of how I skin and cut up a chicken. I used to work in a chicken factory as a teenager. I can have it done in the time you are heating the water to scald the chicken.

I take a large dip net and catch two chickens. I chop off their heads. It seems they like to chase me around after that. I hold them by the legs to let the blood drip out.

I lay them on a garbage can with a flat lid. I put the backs down and feet away from me. I slip a sharp four-inch knife blade under the skin at the "knee" and go down to the foot. Then I go under the skin to the other "knee" and down. I grab the skin and pull it in opposite directions. One has a gob of skin in each hand. I toss the skin in the feather bucket. I cut under the skin on the back and pull it in both directions.

One is now ready for the wings. I slip my finger under the skin on top of the wing and pull. Use the knife on the heavy wing feathers. The wing joint is in the breast meat. Cut it and put the wing in the pan for the meat.

The legs are self-explanatory. Twist and cut them. It takes practice.

For the breast, put the knife in the hole where you cut out the wing and cut the ribs around to the point of the breast. After doing the other side, grab the breast and pull. The meat on the breast can be filleted later. The meat is put into cold water. Change the water often to cool the chicken. Then one can fix it or freeze it for later use.

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USDA Announced March Winners of Cutest Bird Photo Contest

A nest of adorable robins and a bright red hen are the winners in the USDA Cutest Bird Photo Contest for the month of March. Andrea Ever-

hard of Berlin, New Jersey, and Amy Erickson of Manhattan, Kansas, are the winners in each of two categories in the Biosecurity For Birds competition.

Everhard's photo taken from her bedroom window of robin mom and two hungry babies won in the category of Cutest Bird Family. "This little family was a daily joy for weeks as we watched the mother build the nest, hatch the eggs and feed the babies," said the delighted winner. "But then one day, we looked out and the nest was empty. It broke my heart."

She is convinced, however, that robin mom and dad have reestablished a home somewhere safer. "That consoles me." It is also a cautionary tale for any bird lover, particularly those who raise backyard poultry. Be sure that the birds are protected on all sides and above from

hungry predators.

"Big Comb," a member of Erickson's in-law's flock of backyard poultry won the Cutest Bird category. "I love birds and I enjoy photographing them," she said. She took a number of photos of the nine birds among the flock in her in-laws' Dave and Patty Verner's back yard. On a bright day, with the sun shining on her feathers, Big Comb was a stand out.

A graduate student in wildlife biology, Erickson is turning her love of birds into a lifelong career. Her graduate project is the study of grassland birds. "I get to look at birds all day," she said with a smile.

The four-month Cutest Bird Photo Contest began in March. At the end of each month, the winning photos will be posted on the Biosecurity For Birds website. The winners will be considered for inclusion on the 2014 Biosecurity For Birds Calendar. For an entry form, contest rules and more information visit https://web01.aphis.usda.gov/biobird_contest.nsf/contest_entry?OpenForm.

The Biosecurity For Birds program, began in 2004, is designed to educate backyard poultry owners and bird enthusiasts about highly contagious poultry diseases and other threats to birds. The program helps inform bird lovers how to prevent disease and tells them what to do if they suspect their birds are infected.

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To learn more about SE Guard and Salmonella enteritidis poultry vaccination, visit www.merck-animal-health-usa.com.

^[1] "Trends in Foodborne Illness in the United States." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011.

PHARMA TO FARMER

My Journey Toward Food Enlightenment With the Help of a Little Black Pig

BY LORI BELL

I love animals and always have; however, I am also a meat eater.

In my early 20s I did a short stint as a vegetarian. For me, it was more of a self-righteous choice. As a young adult, I questioned why I would choose to eat meat from one innocent creature that happened to be born into a species that was farmed for its flesh, while I snuggled with my companion animals each night after school. I couldn't wrap my mind around the differences, so the best thing I could come up with was to give up meat all together.

My meatless existence was short lived. As a busy and active teenager in the early 1990s, I found my body craving protein and no amount of tofu could put my hunger to rest. I sheepishly fell off the meat-free wagon as the result of an "encounter" with bacon. While at the time I felt some associated guilt, the truth is that I have never really looked back and never gave vegetarianism vs. meat a second thought.

When I became a mother of two boys while trying to maintain my full-time pharmaceutical sales rep job, food was often an afterthought for my family. I was living the life in the fast lane, juggling the job, daycare, bills, and diapers. Meal choices were

often made on the run and in the car, dropping by the drive-thru on the way to one appointment or another. I gave no thought to eating meat, let alone the kind of meat that my family and I were eating, how it was raised, and what it meant for our bodies.

And then something happened—I lost my job.

At that time, my world was shattered. My income came to a screeching halt and I had to make some life adjustments in order to simply survive while staying within a very tight budget. No more Nordstrom or eating out for my family. Even the

cheap fast food was a no go for us as I began to realize how quickly those "fast and cheap" meals at the drive-thru can take a toll on the family budget. The unexpected changes in my life resulted in deliberate lifestyle changes, which meant a lot more cooking at home for my family.

We actually started eating breakfast together. Every day. Cooking dinner for my family wasn't so bad either. I clipped coupons and went to the store to buy cheap meat.

In order to keep making ends meet, I started looking for a local job. I started working a few hours per week





tographs of animals being raised in horrid conditions. On the pages I saw pigs cramped in cages, where they spent all of their waking days unable to even turn around. There were giant metal sheds crammed full with white chickens that never had the chance to feel the sun on their backs or scratch in the dirt. And there were awful photos at slaughterhouses, where sick and decrepit animals were left to die in misery. As I flipped through the pages, I remember pausing

animals are not healthy, so in order to keep them alive until they can be slaughtered and turned into meat for my family, they are fed copious amounts of antibiotics. In addition to keeping the animals alive, they have the “benefit” of also acting as growth promoters.

This is the “food” I’m feeding my family? I learned that giant international corporations own and slaughter upward of 90% of all our meat. These agribusiness giants contract with “growers” to raise the animals in CAFOs, emphasizing “efficiency” at the expense of the welfare of the animal.

Agribusiness is a model of vertical integration, where the multiple stages of a product’s creation and distribution are all owned by the same corporation, often headquartered and making decisions from out of state. Intensive industrial livestock production not only means a terrible life for the animal, but it is bad for the local environment and community, with awful working conditions for the workers. Not to mention the nutritional impact on human bodies.

Scientific studies show that meat, eggs, and dairy products from pastured animals are ideal for your health¹. Compared with commercial products, they offer you more “good” fats, and fewer “bad” fats. They are richer in antioxidants, including vitamins E, beta-carotene, and vitamin C, and they do not contain traces of added hormones, antibiotics or other drugs. Because they are not confined in crowded facilities daily antibiotics are not required to keep them alive. I also learned that grass fed meat is lower in fat and calories. Often the meat is very lean, due to its diet of grass and its ability to roam freely. CAFO beef can have one-third more fat than a similar cut from a grain-fed animal, resulting in lower calorie meat. Even better, grass fed meat is naturally significantly higher (two to four times more) in omega-3s, the “good” fats. One less nutritional supplement I now have to take.

This is not true only for cows. Housing chickens indoors and depriving them of their natural choice

at a local non-profit organization called Friends of Family Farmers or “FoFF” for short. I didn’t know that much about the organization, but the name sounded great.

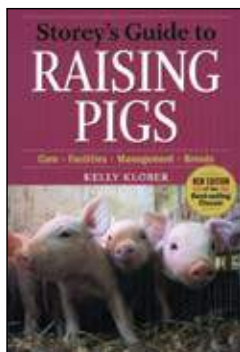
It didn’t take me long to realize that I had a lot to learn when it came to the food I fed my family and the way it was produced. Friends of Family Farmers is an organization whose mission is to promote and protect socially responsible agriculture in Oregon, but I really had no idea what that meant. Then one day, I picked up a coffee table book called *CAFO – The Tragedy of Industrial Animal Factories*, and began to thumb through it.

The book is a large oversized picture book filled with graphic pho-

and looking up to ask the ladies in the office, “This isn’t real, right?” A personal transition was taking place.

The majority of our meat in America comes from animals that are raised in what are called *concentrated animal feeding operations*. These operations, called CAFOs for short, are about as far away from Old MacDonald’s farm as you can possibly get. Almost all animals raised for meat in the United States are confined to metal sheds, where they live out their days on concrete floors with thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of other animals. These poor creatures live in their own feces and breathe in all of the toxic gases that are associated with untreated waste. These

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of greens, their meat and eggs also become artificially low in omega-3s. Eggs from pastured hens can contain as much as 10 times more omega-3s than eggs from factory hens.[9] And the taste? This does not take a science experiment—you can see the color difference in each cut of meat and every egg you break open from a pasture-raised farmer. Happy meat is healthy meat.

After learning about modern meat production, I trotted off to the meat substitutes section, for which I had no coupons.

As meat options in my home freezer dwindled, my husband began to take notice. He and my youngest began to protest the veggie meats.

I went on the hunt for humanely-raised meat. The farmers that I spoke to were actually more akin to my mind's eye image of Old MacDonald's farmer. These were the type of farmers that I wanted to support with my family's food dollars.

And, the taste! One of the most drastic differences in the meat I bought from farmers raising their animals humanely was in the flavor of the meat. My husband and boys commented on how the meat that I brought home was some of the best they had ever tasted. Even my mainstream grocery shopping in-laws commented on how flavor-filled, succulent, tender and juicy our meat was.

Having become enlightened about how the majority of food in America is produced, I found myself devouring whatever books or articles on food and food issues that I could get my hands on. Books such as *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, and *Omnivores Dilemma*. I read John Robbins' *The Food Revolution* and Nicolette Niman's *Righteous Porkchop*. I watched *Food Inc.* I was supporting my community by buying local, I was keeping within the budget, and family's health was all the better for it.

But I found myself wanting to participate in the process. I wanted to understand the entire lifecycle of an animal that would go on to feed my family. Going against the advice of my husband and acting on a bit

of an impulse, this is how I came to know the sweet little black pig named, "Eddie."

When my husband and I married almost 10 years ago, we created our home in a little town called Colton, which sits in the cascade foothills about 30 miles southeast of Portland, Oregon.

We bought two acres, fixed up an old home, and I proceeded to commute out of Colton whenever I had the chance to get my city fix. Over time, I found myself sticking closer to home on free weekends. I rarely gave a second thought to the two acres of weeds in the backyard other than that they served to host my boys' dirt bike track.

Now the two acres in the back started to take on a whole new shape for me. I could understand the reason why these two little acres in the middle of nowhere came into my life.

The garden, greenhouse, and chicken coop went over well with the hubby, but when it came time to turn the dirt bike loop into a pig pasture, the buck stopped there.

With the impending delivery of Eddie the piglet looming, I had already paid for this pig and they do not have a Nordstrom customer service policy. I had to work fast to figure out where Eddie could live. Another neighbor and dear friend, Kaitlin, had also reserved a piglet for her family, and we decided that it was much better for the pigs if they had a buddy, and a deal was struck. The pigs would live at Kaitlin's house, with her many more acres, horses,

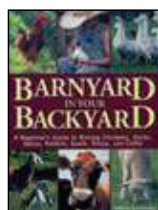
goats and abundant chickens to keep Eddie and Elton company. We would share the food costs, and I would help with the chores.

Eddie and Elton are heritage breeds. Because of the increased standardization in the pork industry, pigs have been bred to grow quickly in an industrial setting and have certain meat characteristics. Selecting genetics for such characteristics has resulted in those pigs losing many of their natural instincts to survive outside on pasture or be good parents. Eddie and Elton's mother Gretel, had the ability to move around, and get what she needed in order to properly nurture her piglets.

We brought the two little squealing piglets to their home in the back of my husband's work truck via two very loud gunnysacks. Frightened and scared, we should have heeded the advice of the farmer who bred them: that to put them in an enclosed area for the night and befriend them before turning the little oinks out into their new pasture. Alas, we did not. Just as dark fell on the quaint farm, we promptly got the terrified little creatures out of the back of the truck and plopped them in their pasture. As one would imagine, the frightened piglets just ran. They just took off into the forest and the electric fence didn't stop them.

We called the farmer we got them from and pleaded for help. "We've lost the piglets." "You what?" asked the voice at the other end of the phone. "I'll be right over!" Apparently our farmer friend was on her way to a work function when we

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diverted her to the scene of the jail-break. She showed up lickity split dressed in nice clothes and a long trench coat, but quickly slipped on some muck boots and called out to the little pigs.

After calling for about an hour with flashlights in the dark, the piglets showed themselves, although they wouldn't be caught. We opted to leave food out for them in hopes that they would settle in. The next morning, much to our delight, we found both little piglets sleeping cozily under a heat lamp in their pig house. The piglets were home and comfortable in their new setting.

Once the piglets settled in, they quickly learned that Kaitlin and I treated them with belly scratches and food. The pigs would see us coming and would run to greet us with happy grunts and faces filled with anticipation of the goodies we brought them that day.

It's amazing how social and smart pigs are when you get to

know them. It wasn't long into my journey with Eddie that I began to think about the inevitable—the day when he would turn from piggy to pork. I wondered how I was going to do it and if indeed I could do it. Mostly, I tried not to think about it, as I was becoming very attached to this little pig.

They grew so fast and became very bold in their frolicking. One morning Kaitlin was awoken by a noise at about 5:00 a.m. There was the sound of all sorts of rustling and things being shifted around in her basement. Afraid that there might be a burglar in the house, Kaitlin grabbed a baseball bat and slinked quietly down the stairs. When she arrived in her basement laundry room, Kaitlin found Eddie rooting through clothes piles and Elton stuck in the doggy door, just waiting to be rescued.

As time to slaughter grew near I called around to numerous mobile slaughter facilities, who would show

up at the farm, slaughter the animal and take it somewhere else to be processed. The man I chose to do the job was someone who took the time to explain the process to me and spoke about humane handling of the animal. I felt that he got it, and a date was put on the calendar.

Eddie was 250 pounds, and I decided that I would be present at slaughter.

On the day that the truck rolled up, my stomach was in knots. I had gotten to Kaitlin's house early to spend extra time with my sweet "little" pig. I thanked both he and Elton for doing their jobs well, for being good pigs, and for what they would give to my family. And quick as he could, Eddie waddled over to check his new visitors for treats, sat down and got a scratch under his chin, and bang. Done.

The man had walked up to the pigs and shot them directly in the head one after another. Neither creature knew what was about to happen. I wept for my loss and in just a split second, my little pig went from animal to meat.

Kaitlin and I stayed while the carcasses were broken down into halves. I noticed the beauty of the pigs' skin, the depth of their fat as it stretched over the bodies, how bright and healthy their organs looked, and the beautiful vibrant color of the meat. The slaughterer noticed too, telling us that our pigs were some of the best he had seen in 20 years of being in the business, attributing their quality directly with the quality of their life and their breed. "This is a nice pig," he kept saying.

It sounds silly to say that a pig changed my life, but as I look back and reflect, that's exactly what Eddie did for me. Eddie was not an anomaly—most animals are kind and respond well if treated with kindness and respect.

When our freezer is empty, I will get another piglet and start over. It will be another emotional experience, but I am committed to staying connected to my food.

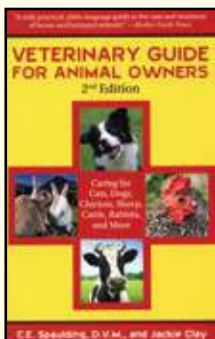
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¹J. Animal Sci 80(5):1202-11

CAFO Threat Close to Home

More and bigger is not better for anything more than a few wallets

BY ANNA JONES
PENNSYLVANIA

Today's small farmers face a myriad of challenges. Not the least among them are drought, finances and volatile markets. I would like to make COUNTRYSIDE readers aware of another more insidious threat to their health and very livelihood – the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) threat.

Together with my husband, mother and children, we live on a 31-acre farm in South Central Pennsylvania. I love the season of spring, especially here on our farm. We have so many blooming trees, both in the woods and cultivated. Our woods are alive with woodland flowers and we are fortunate enough to have a tributary and creek coursing through our property. There are also multiple springs on our property that feed into our creeks. Right now the alfalfa and clover are starting to rise up in the fields, getting ready for their first cutting in June. Songbirds are everywhere and the swallows have made their way back to our garage and barn. It sounds very idyllic here on our farm, doesn't it? Normally it would be, except for one thing.

Last year our immediate neighbors were given a building permit from our township to construct two 600-foot long buildings that house 81,000 chickens and roosters for fertile egg production. Everywhere we are at on our small farm, those two huge buildings that border our 11-acre cornfield, loom in our vision. We can see them from the house, from our fields – we cannot get away from them.

Along with the community around us, we tried to reason with and present our township with research and very valid reasons why such an operation was not good for the community. We presented concerns about truck

traffic on our small country roads and how we were fearful should the school bus meet a tractor-trailer. Another issue we raised was well contamination, how much water the 81,000 chickens would need, and how that would impact our well water supply. Two of the small farms that are adjacent to the operation or their rented lands are "Certified Naturally Grown." Ours is one of those farms and we are concerned about the pollution coming out of the chicken houses and



how the land application of the manure will affect our fields and marketability. The chicken houses also lack a sufficient setback from a neighboring property line, but our township and local conservation office did not enforce the deficiencies found within the plan. Many in the community are elderly or have serious health problems – what will be the effect of all of the pollution and odors on the residents who have compromised immune systems?

We were told in very impolite terms by our township that we were just "newcomers" – we're third generation farmers, by the way. We were also told that we just didn't like farming and we were trying to stop a family from making a living. One member of our planning commission actually told the community that if we didn't like what was happening that we should go and live in a bubble. The

township also told us that they were powerless because of the ACRE law (Right to Farm Law) in Pennsylvania, and this operation is considered "normal farming." If the township did try to enact laws or stop this type of operation, they would be in violation of the ACRE law and would be susceptible to having a lawsuit placed against them by the State Attorney General's office.

You cannot imagine our frustration as this situation progresses. It is truly a case of Goliath vs. David or big Ag vs. small family farm. Every day we are faced with tractor-trailers rumbling past and horrible smells – smells so bad that one of my children became physically ill. Our well has already been affected, as have at least eight other families' wells. Our access road to our back fields has been blocked by our neighbors so they can enact their "biosecurity zone" for the chicken houses. Two of my children have neurological difficulties and I am fearful for their health and development. One of our neighbor's has suffered from a stroke recently and his doctors have told him that the pollutants coming out of this operation could very well have contributed to his stroke. Our community has been polarized by having a CAFO put in; it is not the same farming community that it had been. Big Ag has moved in and we will never be the same – our whole way of life has been threatened and drastically altered.

Big Ag has lots of money and influence, both politically and industry wise. Proponents of industrial farming seek political office and use their power for their own gain. Our lead Township Supervisor is son-in-law of one of the operators of the CAFO and employed by the industry. Members of our State Conservation Office have industry ties.

I continually ask myself if there is

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Dead Snails Leave No Trails

BY LOREN NANCARROW & JANET HOGAN TAYLOR

Natural Pest Control for Home and Garden



If you've ever had a swarm of fruit flies in your kitchen or a gopher wreaking havoc in your yard, you may have wondered what a conscientious gardener or homeowner can do short of heavy-duty chemical warfare. *Dead Snails Leave No Trails* is a comprehensive guide to repelling both indoor and outdoor pests using organic methods—it's the perfect DIY solution to eliminate unwelcome visitors in your home and garden while keeping yourself, your family, and the environment safe from harmful chemicals. With a few easy-to-find items, you'll learn how to: Make your own all-purpose pest repellents with simple ingredients like chile peppers and vinegar; Use companion planting to attract

beneficial insects and animals or repel harmful ones; Keep four-legged intruders—including squirrels, deer, rabbits, and skunks—away from your prized vegetables and flowers; Safely eliminate ants, roaches, and rodents from your house or apartment; Protect your pets from critters like ticks and fleas. Full of tips, tricks, and straightforward instructions, *Dead Snails Leave No Trails* is the most user-friendly guide to indoor and outdoor natural pest solutions. **192 pages, \$12.99 + \$4 S&H + WI Residents add 5.5% tax.**

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any benefit of such an operation to our community? I see the feed truck bringing feed from who-knows-where when they could be using local grain. I notice the trucks going by picking up eggs and also delivering construction equipment and feel like I'm living next to a factory. Our roads are being chewed up by the big trucks—who is going to pay for that? Us, the taxpayers of course! I try to garden and am engulfed by horrible ammonia odors. My husband notices that our back field cannot drain properly anymore because the hydrology has been so drastically changed because of the way our neighbors had to alter the 11-acre field next to us to get these chicken houses in. My children are threatened health-wise and already I've noticed complications. No, there are no benefits to us, but plenty to our neighbors. They will benefit monetarily in a major way by having such a contract to produce fertile eggs. Our neighbors won't have to pay for road improvements caused by the trucks rumbling to and from their farm—it will be the local community.

I caution all of you to be aware of what is happening in your community and stay abreast of current local laws. Please show up at the local meetings and let government officials know that you care. There are groups out there that help communities organize and face the threat of a CAFO or CAO (Concentrated Animal Operation). We've been fortunate enough to have two fantastic groups working with and helping us, the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project and Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group. Yes, we are fighting back! We have our own citizen's group—Responsible Agriculture Now!—and have a citizen monitoring group for pollution to our local creek. I feel like David, fighting for my community, my farm, and my family. And like him I will eventually succeed against the insurmountable odds. Why you may ask? Because having grown up on the same farm I now farm with my husband and kids, I have had an innate love of the land bred into me and I will fight for what is mine—I'm sure all you Countrysiders understand. 🌱



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Originating on the Dorset coastland, Portland aran is a creamy white

yarn, which is crisp and firm with a good stitch definition. It is slightly “sticky” in texture, so will felt well for accessories or outerwear. In contrast, the Teeswater DK is a worsted knitting yarn from the Teeswater breed of sheep, which produces wool that is long, lustrous, wavy and fine. By worsted spinning the yarn, it adds a further softness, resulting in a lean, smooth and luscious yarn to work with.

Adding a softer more delicate touch is the Polwarth four ply yarn. The fine crimp fleece is woollen spun to create a very white and bulky yarn with a slight luster.

These breeds of sheep are all on the Watch List for the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, United Kingdom, with varying degrees of rarity or risk to their future. Using this wool encourages the continuance of these breeds of sheep, as well as providing a living for farmers.

More information is available at www.blackeryarns.co.uk. 🌿

Tuned Out

BY JERRI COOK
COUNTRYSIDE STAFF

What I'm about to share might surprise you, but for the life of me, I can't figure out why. Ready? I've never seen an episode of *Dancing with the Stars* or *Survivor*. I have no idea what *NCIS* is, nor do I care to know. I can't name a current sitcom. Next to the telephone, nothing irritates me more than television entertainment—mostly because it's anything but entertaining. Shows like *American Idol* (which I watched once for about 10 minutes) are mind-numbing devices meant to soften the good sense you were born with so when the commercial comes on, you'll want to buy whatever it is the show's sponsors are selling. It's not just that every time I watch network television I can feel myself getting dumber; I can also feel myself getting even less group-oriented than I already am.

Television entertainment is inherently anti-social. Watching requires complete focus on the screen. The less you interact with others, the better. Adults have a hard time pulling themselves away from the captivating oracle in front of them, but children don't stand a chance. Not only are children who watch copious amounts of television programming dumbed-down, they're also more violent towards adults and their peers.

Young people have come to believe that they are intellectually

superior to their parents and other adults, and that intellectual superiority entitles them to use violence to communicate. If you want to know why children have the idea that they're the ones running the show, just watch a modern "family" sitcom—any one of them—with the sound off.

The model of the nuclear family that shaped America's perception of domestic stability in the 1960s is the same model that influences 21st century Americans. It's true that as a society we have become more accepting of non-traditional family models, but the nuclear family remains the ideal. The nuclear model hasn't changed significantly, but the model for interpersonal non-verbal communication within families appears to have shifted dramatically. This became evident to me as I sat in silence watching *Leave it to Beaver*.

I didn't intend to watch television

at all. I certainly didn't intend to watch it with the sound off. But, as luck would have it, our 17-year-old television was beginning to fail. It would only be a couple of weeks before we would hear a loud popping noise followed by the smell of smoldering electric parts. I have no idea why, but after coming into the room and finding a soundless television emit-



ting a black-and-white scene from another place and time, I decided to just sit there and watch.

The episode entitled *Larry Hides Out*, first aired on January 9, 1960. As the title suggests, Beaver's friend Larry runs away from home and hides out at the Cleaver's. A search for Larry ensues. As the Cleavers and Larry's mother looked for the boy, I found my composition book and pen and started to write. Something about the way the characters were interacting was piquing my interest, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. It was at that moment I saw Ward pat June on the hand; it was the first time any of the characters had touched in two scenes. I decided to focus on the physical strategies used by the writers of a 1960s family show to convey family closeness. I started taking notes.

In all, I counted 10 incidents of touch in the half-hour episode. Of the 10 incidents I recorded, Ward Cleaver was the character doing the touching nine times. In all nine instances, the father used touch to convey power and status. He touched June's arm to lead her out of a room, as he did with Larry's mother when she came over. He patted his wife's hand to assure her he was on top of things with the Beaver, and he touched Beaver's shoulder to guide him from the bedroom. With every touch the writers conveyed that the father was the one in charge. It's well established among communication experts that touch conveys power—the power of familiarity, the power of persuasion, the power of authority.

During the entire episode, there was no physical contact between juvenile characters. Adults touched each other briefly on the hand or arm, and they also touched the juveniles briefly on the shoulder or arm. Larry's mother didn't even hug him when he was discovered in Beaver and Wally's bath tub; she simply patted him on the shoulder. The writer's use of touch accurately reflected the social and family values of mid-twentieth century America—one of which was, keep your hands to yourself.

With the progression of time, America has become a much more tactile

society, encouraging more physical communication between friends and family. I decided to see how many more instances of touch there would be in a modern family-based sitcom. Fortunately for me, Nickelodeon was running an episode of *Boy Meets World* following *Leave it to Beaver*. These two shows, while 36-years apart in their inception, have essentially the same premise; both are about a suburban nuclear family unit with two male children, and both focus on the antics of the younger son.

It became immediately evident to me that the progression of the prototypical family unit had remained essentially unchanged over four decades. The trend has been, and remains, to preserve the model of the nuclear family unit; this is unlikely to change unless there is a radical shift in our entire social and cultural paradigm. Even though under pressure in modernized countries like the United States, the model of the conventional monogamous family unit retains an impressive degree of centrality and stability. What seems to have changed is the authority figures. Modern sitcoms reflect a shift of power in the family unit from parent to child.

The episode of *Boy Meets World*, entitled *Singled Out*, first aired November 1, 1996. In this installment the main character, Corey, is sent to hospital with appendicitis, while his older brother, Eric, becomes a contestant on a television dating game. I found it interesting that in this sitcom there were two distinct plot tracts; whereas in *Leave it to Beaver*, the plot was basic and singular. Modern sitcoms have come to rely heavily on multiple story lines to hold the interest of an increasingly short-focused demographic – children. The multiple, but shortened storylines require the increased use of physical contact between characters to convey the story. Not only has the incidence of touch between characters increased, the quality of physical contact has become alarmingly violent.

I counted 18 incidences of touch between the show's characters. This didn't surprise me; it was what I expected to find given the social pro-

gression which has occurred since the 1960s. What did surprise me was the difference in the quality of touch, and how the writer's incorporated physical contact and non-verbal behavior into the character's personas, using it to regulate the flow of communication.

Perhaps the thing that struck me most was how violent the non-verbal communication was. In one scene Topanga, Corey's girlfriend, shoves him forcefully out the door while the mother looked on and laughed. This was an incident of horseplay, meant to convey belonging and (here's the kicker) teenage intimacy. I am sure I would have never noticed this with the sound on. I'm equally sure no script writer in the 1960s would have ever considered conveying these positive emotions through such violent non-verbal communication.

In another scene Corey reaches up from his hospital bed and grabs his visiting teacher, Mr. Feeney, by the lapels while the hapless parents stand silent. It is obvious Corey needs something from his teacher. The whole scene struck me as entirely inappropriate. Has our society deteriorated to such a degree that writers believe showing a student using threatening proxemics and aggressive physical contact to ask for a teacher's assistance is acceptable? I am beyond certain that Beaver never grabbed one of his teachers.

I concluded my silent experiment, and sat in the stillness pondering what I had seen. Yes, the nuclear family model is intact, but sorely damaged. This is reflected in modern family-oriented television shows. Unlike Beaver Cleaver's parents who were obviously in charge of the family, the juvenile characters of *Boy Meets World* are running the show. The parents and other authority figures are marginalized through non-verbal communication, specifically inappropriate use of proxemics and touch. The manner in which children communicate within their peer group as well as with adults has become more violent and ill-mannered. This is reflected in even the tamest of television shows. So, I don't watch them.

Not that I don't ever watch televi-

sion. I do. I watch the *Farm Report* on RFDTV. I watch *Downton Abbey* on PBS. I watch CSPAN – some of you may have caught me talking about immigration reform with a reporter from the *Washington Post* back in early April. (I was strenuously objecting to the labels "unskilled" and "mindless" when referring to farm work.)

I'm also quite fond of the History Channel and NatGeo. But I shun network reality shows, dramas, and sitcoms offered by big media, which explains why I'm not much of a conversationalist at parties – as evinced by my horrible performance at the last gathering I was invited to. I can't talk about who's my favorite on *American Idol*, because I neither know nor care to know who the contestants are. It upsets folks when I tell them this, so I try not to say anything and appear interested. I'm a horrible actor.

I encourage the COUNTRYSIDE community to watch a modern television sitcom with the sound off. Let me know if you see what I saw. If nothing else, when we meet up at a social function, I'll have someone to talk to. It gets lonesome in the corner all by myself. ♣

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BY LOIS M RESLER
COLORADO

Country neighbors:

Tossing TV Enhances Life

Don't worry, be happy...

I read Kathy's (of South Dakota, May/June 2013) letter "Life is full of uncertainty" and her tendency to worry. The issues she brought forward, especially the terrible deterioration of our privacy with Internet intrusions, is a serious concern. As with anything, we can weigh the bad with the good. I have a computer in my home, yet I retain my choice to not be satellite dish or landline phone "hooked," and have the choice to drive down the eight miles of gravel mountain road to use the public library computers. I am glad for that convenience, to study the weather, email my grandsons in a distant state, and easily research other scientific topics that intrigue me. The library clerks have shown me this USB "thing" (*Ed. note: She's referring to a USB flash/jump drive.*) that I can download data into (it looks like a thumb, and stores amazing amounts of information that I love to study). I can then drive back up the mountain to my little rural home place, and study off the USB "thing" loaded onto my computer at my convenience.

At the library, there is a big bookshelf where everyone in the community leaves free books and magazines we can borrow or keep. Many of us "rebel" elders are living quiet, sustainable lives on the mountain and using the library as our safe media center, and we've "forgiven" the evil, intrusive side of the Internet, and simply choose to not focus on that in

order to stay tuned in to the changing era. I have met people in their 70s and 80s, going for additional college degrees via the library's computer system, and retaining their private rural lifestyle.

In socializing with one another at the library, we are updated about current art/music functions around the village, who needs help or a pat on the back now and then, and there is a community board for jobs, so even some of us old folks can find additional cash flow. There is a community room hooked onto the library where we can stop to play cards and chess, and attend all the forums that go on. It's interesting learning how many others have gotten rid of their televisions—no more negative news, or alternate lifestyle programs promoted as "anything goes." The bad point of getting rid of my television has been missing the Discovery Channel and the super documentary programs.

As we grow older (and hopefully wiser) we weigh the good/bad happenings that continually occur through the eras. My family's longevity genetics are well-known, and when I listened to my great-grandparents and all sets of grandparents, I realized at a young age the oddities from generation to generation, and changes in perception. My great-grandparents thought the next generation was "bad," my grandparents stated the same to my parents, and my parents stated the same to me. (My goodness, what my parents said after WWII ended and rock 'n roll music set the stage for my generation!) Now I'm thinking the same thing watching my own children and grandchildren. This has pulled me towards more basic values and to set an example of beliefs that, hopefully, the younger ones can tune into and adjust to their wants/needs. Nothing is ever perfect. Yet keeping things simple has proven to keep one's health, psychology, finances, and relationships stronger.

With "how to" knowledge, negatives will winnow away, yet do stay alert to the "real" bad stuff happening, so we can change if needed. Finding good folks, taking good paths, and doing good deeds lessens fear and worry.

After getting rid of my television 12 years ago, I actually found myself going through "withdrawal" for two months. My choice was based on the urge to get rid of the negatives in my house that created anxiety. I discovered that when I visited my son John, 75 miles away and in the city, he brought to my attention how I was now glued to *his* television, and not talking to him on my bi-weekly visits. I explained I was just getting the weather and news, yet I realized how fast we can sabotage any good intention or goal. But by setting the right example, my son added up how much cable cost him monthly/yearly, and he made the choice to get rid of his too. By that time we were happily gardening and visiting in my sojourns off the mountain to his place. We both got into music (big time), reading, and listening to the radio. We shared deep discussions about art work, writing, and gardening. He dug up his yard in the city and turned it into a vegetable garden with

fantastically tall sunflowers.

When the pressure valve went out on my water pump, I challenged myself to "go without," and see how much water I was *really* using. I started harvesting rain water in this semi-arid environment with dishpans, and realized how much water ran off the steep roof of my little home, even dew. I invested in pails at the dollar store – these filled up so fast, all my water needs were met. (Better that my "worry" time was being used to monitor how much water I had been taking for granted and wasted than on tv news. I set up an oak half-barrel behind my hand-built windwall (windbreak) for cozy summer solar-heated baths, and this reduced my stress to zero. I could work outdoors in the garden, monitor watering use to crops (carefully carried in pails – don't spill one drop), make ice tea from water I carried home free in jugs from a ranch where I work as a ranch hand part-time, and leap into the oak barrel outdoors and soak. I relaxed in the warm water to the birds singing, antelope walking past, shade from the pine and aspen, and everything was *great!*

It takes half a pail of water to flush the toilet, and bathing less often, my skin was softer and not dry. It took only half the amount of water for the garden to grow bigger/better crops. It was amazing. If I had wasted my time worrying about the pump valve, survival, the world's problems, or evil on the Internet, I never would have learned about my relationship with water. I continue harvesting rainwater in five big barrels, and nothing is wasted.

I told this to my nephew Greg in Wisconsin, and he, his wife, and four children started harvesting rainwater and built a handmade swimming pool. The water flows from the barrels on his deck into the pool, and a hose connected to the swimming pool drains into their garden. (Yes, they dug up their yard and made a vegetable garden.)

Here's hoping that you find a miracle in every day – no matter how great or small. ☘



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Country neighbors:

our downsizing experience

BY BARBARA FRANK
WISCONSIN

When Wendell Berry wrote, "Don't own so much clutter that you will be relieved to see your house catch fire," I don't think he was being facetious. There were times during our forced downsizing that I actually hoped one of our overstuffed 10' x 26' storage units would burn down.

How we got to that point is a long story. The short version is that we spent many years living in a big house, where we raised and homeschooled four kids and ran two businesses. Our kids grew up, the economy tanked and killed our primary business, and we were left with a house full of stuff

and a looming

property
tax bill
of \$6,300.

Not wanting to lose a paid-off house to the tax man, we sold it, and lugged all our stuff to Wisconsin, where we filled two storage units and a rental house with our possessions.

We moved three times in the next four years (weeding out some of our stuff along the way), and finally bought a 1,000 square-foot ranch.

We moved in with the rest of

our stuff, filling the finished basement and the two-car garage almost to the ceiling.

Now it was crunch time. There was no way we could live with everything crammed into a much smaller space. So we committed to going through every box and making every decision necessary in order to fit into the house comfortably, with room to spare.

At first, I considered each item to be valuable because of the memories it held or because of its usefulness. This wasn't helpful, because it kept me from getting rid of almost anything. So I changed tactics. What got me on this new track was the linen closet.

It was so tiny! It only held the bare

minimum of wash-

cloths and

tow-

els, with

no room for

sheets. So I decided

sheets would go in our

bedroom closets.

Not much room

there either,

so I had to make

a rule:

two sets of sheets

per bed. I picked the

two nicest sheet sets

for each bed,

and took everything

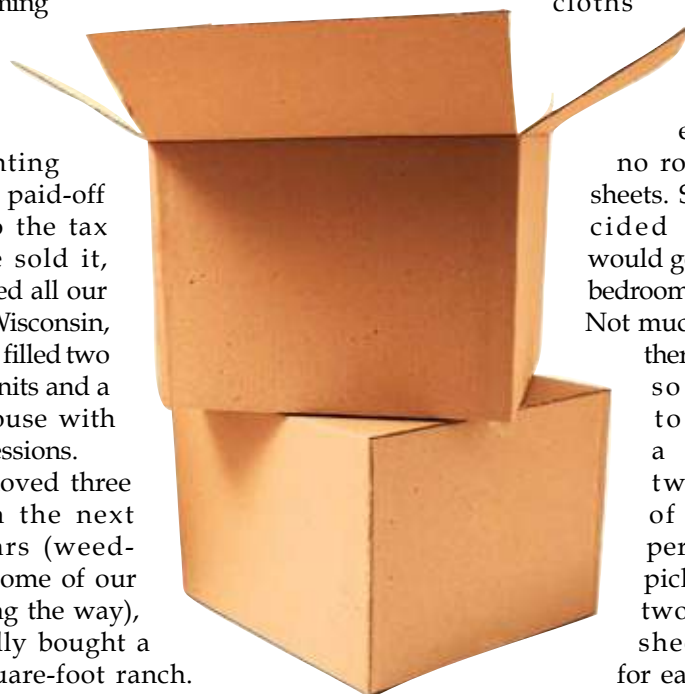
else to Goodwill before I could change my mind. Ditto for the towels and washcloths: I kept two sets per person, and gave away the rest. Many of these items were in great shape, but I had to accept that there was nowhere to keep them; they'd have to be useful to someone else.

Keeping a limited number of the "cream of the crop" in each category (clothes, kitchen items, home décor, etc.) and quickly giving away the rest made our job much easier. In fact, at one point we were making daily trips to Goodwill (luckily just five minutes away) to keep things moving along.

We sold or gave away most of our furnishings, keeping only our favorite necessary pieces. Many trunkloads of clothes went to Goodwill. Out of the dozens of boxes of things our kids made, wore or loved, I kept only a few precious items from each child's infancy. Toys and baby items I had saved for future grandchildren were sold right off the driveway. I sold books and homeschool supplies online and to people on our mailing list (we have a homeschool publishing company).

Our goal was a cleared out-garage by winter, so we could get the cars in before the snow arrived. Happily, we reached our goal before the first snowflake fell.

It's been 18 months since we moved into our little house, and we love it. I can't get over how much easier and less expensive the small house lifestyle is. Our utility bills are half of what they were in the house we sold. Our property taxes are less than a third of the old house's prop-



erty tax! When I clean house, there are only two bathroom sinks to clean, not four, and far less carpet to vacuum. I used to have to psych myself up to clean our old house because it took a couple of days. Now I can do it in 90 minutes.

Best of all is the freeing feeling we got as we jettisoned our stuff. I was attached to everything because it held the memories of our happy family years, when everyone was together. But I can recapture those times by flipping through our photo albums; I've learned I don't need the actual "stuff" around to do that.

The biggest challenge of living in our little house is keeping the clutter from coming back. I can no longer let piles of paper (non-urgent mail, magazines, newspaper articles and recipes I've torn out) stack up until I have time to go through them because there's just no room for them. I have to pitch, file or follow up on each piece of paper as it comes in.

Other items seem to land on the kitchen table quite a lot (it's by the back door): sunglasses, hats, cell phones, etc. The solution to this problem is that old saying, "A place for everything and everything in its place." Anything that can't be put away needs to have a spot assigned to it, and that spot is not on the kitchen table!

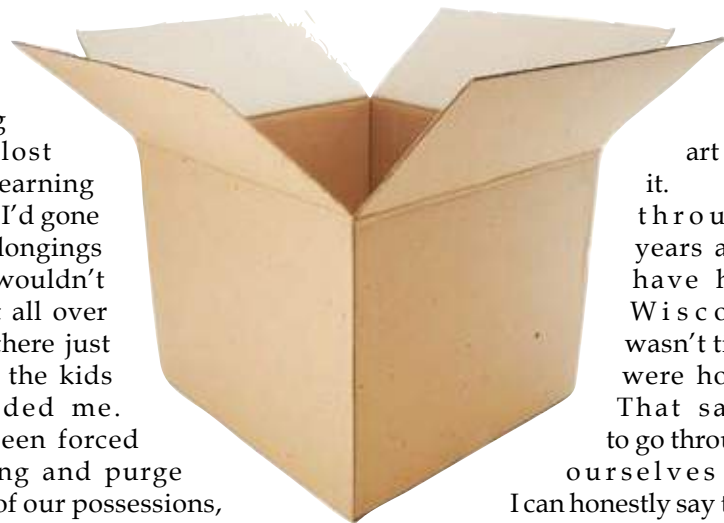
Since the purge, I've also adopted a policy of "one in, one out." For example, while shopping recently, I found a great deal on dishcloths and bought several. That meant I had to get rid of several old ones. This reflects simple logistics more than self-control: the drawer will only hold just so many dishcloths. So for every new item I buy, an old one has to go.

I continue to give away or pitch things, forcing myself to make immediate decisions instead of procrastinating. Most of the time I don't miss what's gone; in fact, I've forgotten most of what we sold or gave away. There have been a few times since we moved here that one of us said, "I wish we still had the such-and-such." But then we make do without

it, and we're fine. Making do is a lost we're relearning

I wish I'd gone all our belongings then we wouldn't to haul it all over sin. But there just when all the kids and needed me. having been forced everything and purge 1/2-2/3 of our possessions, downsizing sure feels good. Our very favorite things made this little house a home very quickly. It's a blessing to only have room for your most treasured items, because you enjoy them more without so many other things in the way.

I'm also glad that my kids won't be faced with years of our clutter to go through some day because we already got rid of it. As for all those baby things we gave away, the ones I was saving for my someday grandchildren, wouldn't you know my first grandchild finally arrived a few months ago. But he's already been given so many gifts that he wouldn't have needed the stuff we saved anyways. ✿



art but it. through years ago; have had Wisconsin wasn't time were home That said, to go through ourselves of

I can honestly say that decision to keep only our

house a home very quickly. It's

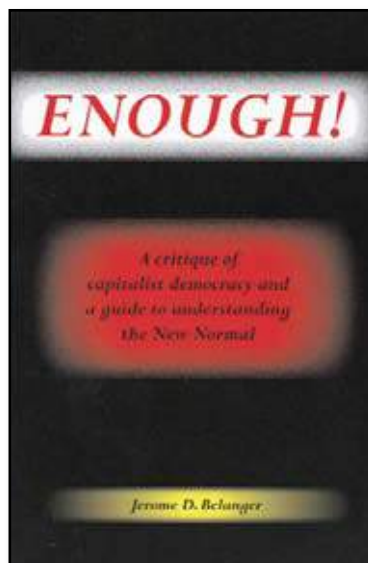
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Country neighbors:

POST POUNDER VS HUSBAND

By SUE DICK
CANADA

As far as I can tell, the blame lays squarely with Prince William of England and his then fiancée, Kate, the future Duchess of Cambridge. I had my flash of insight as I was innocently flipping through a *Maclean's* (a Canadian) magazine when I saw the picture that gave me inspiration. I don't remember now the exact words of the caption, but the picture showed a tall William and fragile-looking Kate on either end of a manual post-pounder, showing the world how game they were to try anything, in connection with some military (or civilian?) project.

Most everyone (or at least country folk) knows roughly what a mechanized post-pounder looks like. Gas powered, or PTO driven, they are generally hydraulic nightmares of the highest caliber, which brook no mistakes and forgive no carelessness. It's only too easy to imagine the dangers a body might come to even without the helpful mangled-stick-figure-man caution stickers plastered all over them. On the better models, a mechanized "arm" holds the post in question while a heavy weight smashes down repeatedly, driving the post in to the desired depth with no effort (other than stopping one's ears) on the part of the operator. As these savage machines are prohibitively expensive to purchase, we have rented them on occasion when we have had fencing to complete in a hurry, or when a long straight row beckoned. However, there are many places you can't use these noisy Leviathans. The gas-powered ones must be hauled around by something (atv

or truck) and the PTO-driven ones require tractor access. At this point I must mention that for our farm a post-hole driller or auger wouldn't work. Our soil is very sandy and even with backfilling our posts are much sturdier pounded in rather than placed and backfilled. We've had some fence-challenging animals over the years. On our raw little farm there are still many impenetrable places a vehicle cannot go, hence we can't tow machinery in. Of course sheep and goats will happily clear that problem up for you (impenetrable bush), but the problem is you need a fence to keep those tasty little coyote snacks in, leaving one in a bit of a "chicken or the egg" type quandary.

Seeing that photograph I was instantly inspired. I had never seen a manual post-pounder before that point and now that we actually have one, I must confess I have my sincere doubts that the Duchess was able to lift her end. A manual post-pounder strongly resembles a police battering ram. Essentially constructed of a heavy steel tube (greater than the diameter of post you might pound with it, naturally) with long handles running the length of either side and a heavy metal cap. This object slides over the post in question and a person on either side (or one very strong person) then proceeds to bash the post in with an up and down motion, observing all reasonable safety precautions. Here was our solution to weekend fencing. If we were going to just do a few posts, we'd use the manual post-pounder, but first we had to make one.

Now welding, while an indispensable farm skill, is not something

husbands are born knowing how to do (of course, neither are wives, but it doesn't often come to that if we don't want it to; I freely confess that I'm all about equality of the sexes until the heavy lifting starts). As we were once urbanites with no welding opportunities, occasions or experiences, this skill, along with most others, had to be learned the hard way. As Adam became more proficient, we trusted his welded works more and more. The litmus test, as we reckoned it, was retrofitting brackets for removable bale forks on our tractor bucket. Since the brackets have remained in place after much loading, unloading, and moving of 1,700 lbs. bales, we figure he's got it down now. However, the post pounder was still a bit earlier on in our farming adventure. I showed him the picture and he confidently agreed it wouldn't be too hard to make. We sourced out the heavy materials required and on one balmy Spring day he spent the morning in the garage cutting, grinding and welding the pieces to form one 90 pounder-pounder. The heavy steel tube was 1/4-inch thick with a six-inch inside diameter and measured three-feet from tip to tip with a 1/2-inch plate steel top. I could only lift the monstrosity, but do nothing else with it. Thankfully, Adam being a very strong man, took full charge of everything.

We decided that now that the frost was out of the ground we'd try it out on the newest paddock division we wanted to make, "The Lamb's Barn." This was a smaller paddock of roughly a 1/4 acre where we could safely enclose imminent ovine mothers and their new lambs for closer observation. Sandwiched between the bull pen and the winter pen, it had the added benefit of not allowing our resident bull nose-to-nose access with his harem, an always-risky temptation that was best to avoid if at all possible.

We headed out down the path, each holding one of the post-pounder's handles, its heavy weight balanced confidently between us. To shorten our journey carrying the

metal monstrosity we pitched it over the existing fence rather than taking the long way through the other pens to reach it (a gate was in order, we wryly noted). Of course, Murphy's Law always in full force on the farm, our ram, Waits (so named after the singer Tom Waits for his unusually deep, gravelly baaa) chose that moment to come out from around a bush and the edge of the pounder clipped his head. His front knees buckled momentarily but then he shook his formidable head and eyed it balefully. A few test sniffs and he rammed it with his head producing an admirable bell-like tone from its hollow depths. As we clambered over the fence he walked away uninterested, seemingly no worse for wear. I can personally vouch for the thickness of a ram's skull, since Nature designed it for maximum bashing capabilities. Since reaching maturity we have been unable to enter the sheepfold unarmed with Waits around, or he'd happily seize the opportunity to ram us into next year.

With our ovine antagonist gone, we lugged the pounder over to the first post laying ready in its place. I held the post at an angle while Adam heaved the pounder up and slipped it over the top like a sleeve going over an arm. When it was on we raised the post to its full six-foot length. At the count of three we each began to raise and lower our respective ends. The jarring of the pounder made the hands go numb within moments, despite work gloves, and after only five strokes I called a rest, out of breath and strength. It was impossible to breathe while using this tool, as it required such a straining effort and my head already swam. Undoubtedly the weaker of the two, I rested so long that Adam grew tired of waiting for me and grasped both handles and began to pound it in himself. I watched in admiration as his barn jacket strained handsomely against his broad shoulders and then a terrible thing happened. Unbeknownst to us, on the previous pound the weld had loosened on the top cap. Adam's next forceful downward



motion popped the welded cap right off sending the metal sleeve plunging to the ground over the post. As I watched this happen in disbelief, my first thought was that his feet would be mashed, but the top of the cap, still attached to the sleeve by one corner and askew like a jaunty baseball cap, caught Adam's head on the way down and he dropped like a felled ox. The cap pinged off his head and flew off a full 10 feet in the air before Adam even hit the ground.

I gasped and jumped up as Adam floundered to his knees, blood obscuring his face, "I'm hurt!" he gasped unnecessarily. I ran over and grabbed him under the arms and hauled him to his feet. "I'm hurt!" he repeated again. Babbling placating words, I helped him over to the fence he must now climb over to save a very long journey around to our main gate right through the curious flock of sheep. As an aside, if you've never kept sheep you can't imagine what it's like to try and keep your balance in the woolly press. Not renowned for their intelligence, they flock tightly around you with their deafening baaas wondering what you might be bringing them. It's very hard to keep one's balance and Adam was having trouble enough.

I was surprised he managed the climb over the fence, a trail of splattered blood behind him, and we began the drunken walk to the yard. I bellowed at the top of my lungs for my older son whom I could hear

outside. He came running down the path and I saw the look of shock when he saw his father's bloody face and stumbling gait. I yelled for him to grab his little brother and get him in the car seat. He must have flown because when we got to the house both kids were sitting buckled up in the car. I helped Adam into the car and grabbed the sweatshirt from my son's back to staunch the flow of blood while I ran inside to get the keys and my purse, and then we drove to town well above the speed limit (a half-hour drive at the best of times, only 15 minutes this time).

In emergency they didn't even triage us, we walked in with Adam's face covered in fresh and dried blood, and were immediately ushered into a curtained-off room. I went back and did paperwork and when I returned, there was already a nurse cleaning the wound while our kids watched with the morbid fascination of the young.

"Can you hold this?" she asked me, indicating a fresh pack of gauze she had under slight pressure. I did as she asked while she got scissors to begin snipping away the offending hair around the wound. The wound measured three inches long and poured out blood so copiously it was impossible to determine its depth. It was hard to tell with all the gore, but it appeared to be slightly sunken and I prayed that wasn't the case.

Adam by now had recovered his aplomb and we laughed and chatted while she worked. Wincing in discomfort he nonetheless kept up his end of the conversation until the doctor came in, and I marveled at his fortitude. The jovial doctor irrigated the wound (still bleeding) and trimmed away more hair, then lifting one of the lips of the scalp with some forceps asked, "Hey, you kids wanna see your dad's skull?" The little ghouls trooped right over and we all observed with some curiosity the smooth dome of my husband's skull as it was washed with saline.

"Really, you can see my skull?" Adam asked, disappointed none of us

had our cell phone to take a picture. It was a wasted opportunity.

It was amazing that there was no damage to the skull, and it took nine stitches to close up his scalp again. His bruised, shorn scalp shone whitely around the long row of ugly stitches as the doctor checked his eyes and reflexes. For now, it seemed other than the physical damage to his scalp and the tremendous headache he had, there was no lasting damage and no evidence of concussion. With common sense instructions to bring him back should he experience blurred vision, nausea, impaired motor function or excessive sleepiness, we were released.

I removed his stitches after a week and the wound was healing beautifully. We had a formal work-related dinner to go to exactly eight days after the accident and Adam regaled his customers with the gruesome tale, as everyone couldn't help but notice his enormous bald spot and shining scar, and it provoked questions wherever we ambled in the hall. The pounder remained like a sleeve over the half-sunk post for a few weeks while he recovered enough to help me lift it off and carry it back. His hair grew back sparsely around the scar until you couldn't see it anymore, and life got back to normal.

In the end, the posts still needed pounding and we hired a professional welder to fix the post-pounder. We subsequently use it like one would enlist the aid of a rabid dog, with great caution and precaution. We wear steel toes, hard hats, no solo use, and we're always watching the cap to make sure it won't bean anyone. Despite having seen the arc of trajectory from the original lid bouncing off of Adam's skull and mentally marking where it landed, the original cap was never found.

When I think of the picture in MacLean's magazine of the future King and Queen of England holding the handles of a post-pounder bigger than the one we have, him wearing a sober blue suit and expensive shoes, her wearing a designer dress and equally expensive heels, I just smile and think "Photoshop." 🍷

Country neighbors:

Where Do They Come From?!

Frogs in the basement, gophers under the house...

BY WILLIAM L. SEAVEY

We live in the woods along California's central coast. Our little town, Cambria, is known for its proximity to Hearst Castle, wineries, and gorgeous land and seascapes in general.

Paradise? Yes, maybe. (To live here, however, you have to "buy in." We sold *two* houses to get *one*!) But everything paradisiacal has its paradoxes.

Despite the advantages of a fairly modern house built in the 1990s, our locale smack dab in a forest has, at times, seemed to offer an open invitation to every critter imaginable trying to escape the generally cool and occasionally stormy weather. (Or just freeload off our human detritus.)

All of you who live in rural areas are familiar with the havoc raccoons, deer, gophers—even bear—can wreak. Our fellow mammals love to cozy up to us, and you no doubt have ways of dealing with them—tall fences, armor-clad garbage cans, sonic deterrents, etc.

But I'd like to focus on the much smaller critters that somehow, and often inexplicably, have managed to get inside our house over the years—mice, frogs, potato bugs, flies, fleas, mosquitoes, you name it—and what we have done about them (if anything).

These incursions have been frequent enough that I like to consider myself a kind of Pest Troubleshooter (at least my wife does, who orders me to do something about them with regularity).

The situations are not always threatening. I'll never forget the time I was sitting on the stoop and a small frog hopped up to me, seemingly entreat-ing me to rescue him from an unwilling incarceration in the dry apartment we built attached to our home. I can imagine how long he must have been trapped there—but how did he even get in?

Then there was the time giant potato bugs started appearing on our carpeted steps far from the outdoors. They were deftly removed to the woods.

But on the more virulent side, there are The Rodents. I capitalize them as they are a category of pests all their own, from the little mice that can squeeze between cracks as little as 1/4-inch wide to the gophers who can (and quite possibly did) burrow under our house, died, and left a very foul odor.

The tiny mice that have gotten in have been a royal pain in the arse. Over time, I discovered these 1/4-inch cracks existed everywhere—around the edges of the electric garage door and next to the molding in door jams. Once inside, we employed a variety of measures including traps, poison pellets and "sticky pads."

After some effort, we have gotten this under control. Prevention involved capping those little cracks with metal or plastic barriers using lots of duct tape. Also, an always-on electronic deterrent device seems to have made a difference, at least in the garage.

Under the house we have a giant crawl space that has a different



story altogether. Large rats have burrowed under the concrete foundation and occasionally found a dry home there. I built an office in part of this space (there is an eight-foot ceiling) and I was one day looking squarely at a big rat on the desk in front of me! It was unnerving, but the starving critter (like the frog) may have been looking to be rescued (we'd plugged all the outside burrow holes with rocks). I've also used an electronic device that you can bait with peanut butter to zap them.

Now, onto The Fleas. We never had them until we got cats – which were never allowed outside until we went on a vacation and had a friend caretake them with the *explicit* instruction to keep them *inside*. He obviously failed to do so because eventually fleas took over the entire house, getting in every room (they *love* carpet).

We bombed the entire house with a no doubt toxic aerosol spray – to very limited effect. (We hoped the fleas would eventually die off, as the cats were banned to an outside, fenced deck. The fleas didn't die.) Finally we got diatomaceous earth and sifted it into the carpet. It clogs the breathing pores of the fleas. That worked.

One amazing interloper was a mama bird (probably sparrow) who nested in our dryer duct, nearly completely sealing it off from the outside! My wife complained the clothes weren't drying, so I went to work. I checked the outside, but all I could find was a little lint build-up. I ended up pulling the dryer off its stand and disconnecting the hose from behind it. Only then did I discover, deep within the hose, a bird's nest complete with six eggs! Mama bird and eggs had been cooked. What animals do to keep warm....

I'll end this critter saga with the still mysterious situation that arose when a critter (most likely a gopher, but possibly a rat) nested under the floorboards of a room in our house, died, and left the Odor of Death.

It lasted for days and made the room simply unoccupiable. We'd hope it would go away, but in the meantime we covered the floor with a thick impermeable plastic mat and

a throw rug on top of that.

I realized we might have to extricate the critter by removing the Pergo floor (not fun) or a portion of it. I chose to drill a three-inch diameter hole to peek under there in the hopes of finding it/them. No luck. All I found was insulation (excellent for critter nesting).

I went on the web and discovered other nightmare stories – but *also* some solutions. Baking soda, tobacco, and lime *could* help remove the odor. So I shoved a lot of baking soda down the hole, covered it, and hoped for the best.

A few days later the approach had either worked, or natural decomposition had turned the trick. In the struggle against home invaders of the critter kind, it was at least a partial victory. 🍀

William L. Seavey's latest book of inspiring and humorous essays is I Could Have Been President, available at williamseavey.com.

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By M. "JACK" GOODWIN
MISSOURI

Last year I lost my job. I'm a teacher and had survived the initial years of the recession but our student population was in serious decline so it wasn't really a big surprise.

So, we made plans. Lots of plans. We had a small house in southern Missouri which was all paid off so we felt pretty comfortable knowing that when the end came we would sell our house and 10 acres near St. Louis and move back. We knew that there was a lot of work to be done there but we were up to the task (or so we thought).

Our goal was to make the house self-sufficient. We had most of the really hard work done but we hadn't been back to the house in over five years. We knew that there would be repairs, cleaning, brush, utilities but we had no idea what we were in for.

The day we arrived we parked the moving truck in the driveway covered with four-foot-tall weeds, and opened the door. Immediately the smell of rotting wood and mold

turned our little move into a major adventure. This first assault was overwhelming so we retreated to a hotel in hopes that the enemy would be gone in the morning.

No such luck.

Over the next 20 weeks we cried, worked, sweat, cleaned, fought off attacking rats and insects, repaired, and replaced.

Here are a few of the things we learned (details to follow in the future):

- Living in the country isn't as easy as they say it is;
- Mother Nature is not always your friend;
- If there's a hole in the roof, there are probably two more that you cannot see;
- Bugs are bigger in the country;
- If all you have is dial-up, you're not in the country, you're in the dark ages;
- The bugs *will* get you if you're not careful;
- Rats are really, really big;
- If the neighbors are friendly they're probably armed;
- Air conditioning is a luxury you can't do without;
- Humans are not at the top of

the food chain;

- Clothing and shoes are not going to last;
- There is something under the floor, in the attic, and in the closet;
- Compost isn't as sweet-smelling as they make it sound;
- You can get poison oak *and* poison ivy at the same time;
- Fire is the farmer's best friend, unless the farmer is your neighbor;
- Wave to everyone who drives by...or else;
- Don't leave the circle of light;
- What in the world is a cave cricket?
- Attics are really, really hot and insulation is sticky;
- The amount of trash you produce is directly proportionate (by a factor of two) to the sum of money you have spent on groceries;
- Entertainment is not an option;
- There is nothing wrong with your phone—"they" have taken control and you will have to drive down to the end of the road just to get a signal—and forget Internet;
- There are no tornado sirens;
- You must turn off the power when it rains;

- Personal hygiene is a challenge;
- Codes?! We don't need no stink'n building codes!
- The doctor, the police and the fire department are all 30 minutes and three beers away;
- Your address is a GPS coordinate, unless the postmaster wants to change it;
- The fire department will watch your home burn unless you pay them \$50;
- You can't get hold of the fire department to pay your \$50, because no one is ever there;
- There is some sort of conspiracy that tells the fire department personnel when you're heading their direction so they vacate the premises so you can't pay the \$50;
- Your mail will be forwarded from your last residence to your new post office where it will be forwarded to your old residence where it will be forwarded to your new residence where it will be forwarded...;
- Your mail carrier is also your primary source of gossip, and it takes 30 minutes of conversation to get your mail;
- "Out here in the country, we do things a little bit differently..." (Direct quote.)
- There are no secrets, none, don't even try...;
- Neighbors' house burned down, fire department never showed up. Source of fire—unknown. Other neighbors took pictures, turned it into a block party;
- Kids were really fast learners when it came to shooting;
- Clothing optional—yeah it's true—ooh la la;
- Cat's missing, buzzards circling;
- Found: Dead raccoon, adjacent to food storage. (Should I worry?)
- Thirty-second rule reduced to two seconds (fear trumps reason);
- Always wear shoes;
- Get used to rusty nails (ouch, I think that one hit bone);
- Check for ticks. Again. One more time. You know the guy up the street got Lyme disease? He was

in the hospital, like three weeks. It was *in - his - ear...*;

- Plastic is garbage to be buried, paper is to be burned in the burn barrel, and metal is recycled by Bruce and Fast Freddie (No joke.);
- If you save up all your garbage for six months you can pay the guys in the truck \$50 and they'll haul it away (which will save you \$70);
- When the covered wagons went by the house, I knew I was in trouble;
- Not sure why the neighbor's red truck was chained to the tree. Tree is still there, but the truck is gone;
- Always be on the right side of the chained heavy metal gate;
- "Possums are food?"
- Google search at library: What is trichloromonofluoromethane? Will it kill me?
- Quote: "Hi, hauw ya'all do'in? Have yu bin cawled of Gawd?" Google translation: "Hello neighbor, have you had your immunizations?"
- A mouse can render your vehicle inoperable—twice! Then the stupid thing will die in there and stink it up for weeks on end, and you can't get to it because it's way down in the fender and no matter how hard you shove the vacuum hose in there it won't come out!
- Mental note: Screw rat trap to floor so the rat won't carry it away;
- Rats like medication bottles. They can't open them, but they use them as trophies in their nest;
- Label cans with permanent marker so you know what's in them after the mice eat the label off;
- Jurassic Park rules apply: Don't go into the tall grass;
- Cat will not—under any circumstances—walk on the floor;
- That's not dirt;
- Did you know that grounding rods are eight feet long and you have to drive that bugger all the way into the ground?
- My property has six inches of dirt as top soil, everything under that is rock;
- Pray often, pray well. ☸

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Country neighbors:

Re-Storying

BY MICHAEL MCKENNA
MEXICO

WWW.SIMPLECHOICEFARM.COM

I like most homesteaders, have many irons in the fire when it comes to income. I do furniture restoration, among other things, and when I am not doing all the other things, I write about them.

I have been pondering about my furniture restoration and painted patina work; I am often asked what it is, and why I do it. I have learned a lot from these reveries, and wanted to share them with you.

I realized that our treasured possessions—curious, that word, actually: it tells us immediately, that these “things,” our homes, furniture, objects, hold us dear, as much as we hold them. We carry the histories of our families, our homes and homesteads, and the stories of our lives.

Our memories of Grandma live on for us, through her cupboard, which has now become ours: opening a door, touching the handle, cool or warm to our hand, allows us contact, a sense of continuity that enriches our lives with meaning, floods our senses with memory, beckons to us from across the years, and tells us...our shared story.

This is one of the reasons, I enjoy restoration so much. For me, it is, literally, re-storying.

Restoration of these pieces allows me to bring forward what each piece is carrying, and so often they carry the history of our lives, and much that is often forgotten.

This work of restoration is never just about furniture. It's bringing back to heart and mind the gleam

in your grandma's eye, the sweet smell you remember in her house, the times spent, making a pie, or biscuits, perhaps



Beautiful views of the McKenna homestead in Mexico.



in a cloud of flour, deftly, gently, working the dough with her well-worn oak rolling pin. The real cupboard is what's in the mind's eye, and in our hearts.

A well-loved piece of furniture is the medium of those thoughts that it carries, and they bear these fond memories. Sometimes a piece merely needs to be cleaned up, refreshed, so to speak, so it may take its rightful place in your house of memories.

These are the pieces that interest me—that I want to work on. The pieces that gave someone joy, are a joy to restore.

Often the piece itself is not necessarily “special,” as far as its actual construction, it's the memories that make it special. It is these pieces that are truly worth restoration.

At auctions, I often see exceptional antique pieces that never came alive, never were really cared about, and often, they may not attract quite the level of at-





Michael refinishes a number of beautiful pieces on their homestead in Mexico, where they also run a bed and breakfast.

tention you might expect, despite their obvious monetary value.

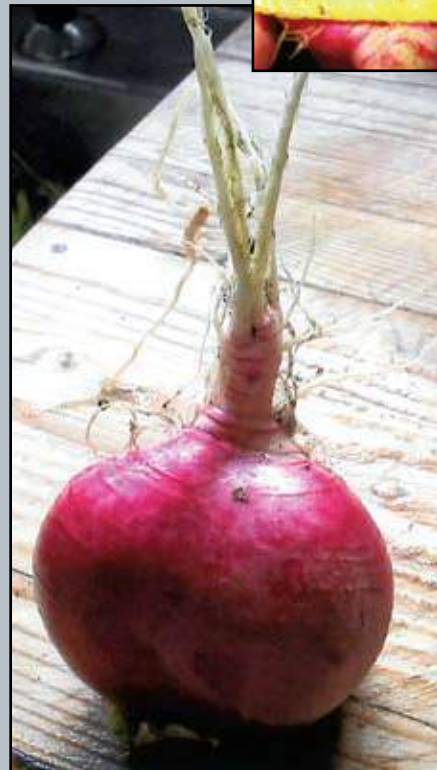
When I see a piece that mattered

to someone, it has an aura—it is precious—you'll see that—some pieces will attract everyone's attention. All they know is that they desire it, but what is really happening, is that piece was beloved, and all the memories it carries pulls people towards it, with the forcefield of love. It's a kind of gravity, the gravity of angels, perhaps.

Recently at auction, I noticed a little, round, French sewing table. Immediately I knew it evoked so many memories—all the hands that opened and closed the drawers, reaching for pins, thinking over the sewing, all the envisioned projects, sewn, and some, never, the creativity emanating from it, an authority of emotion, the connections, kept intact across time.

A client asked me recently, "Do you have other people do your 'grunt work'?"

I replied that there is no such thing as "grunt work" for me—every part of working on a piece of furniture, any part of a wall, or gate, a door, that has meaning and stories for someone, the layering of applied light, carefully, attentively rubbed skins of color, that allows these memories to shine, is important. It is all important. 🌱



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COUNTRYSIDE: I was cleaning up the garden and under the tomato vines I found two large... I didn't know what they were. I had a couple of friends over, so we cut it and tasted. It was an enormous radish, very solid all the way through and not too hot. It was 8-1/2 inches in diameter!

This was grown in one of my raised beds, which I have added many organic nutrients to for the past three years, including alpaca manure that was about three years old, and my red wiggler worms and their vermicompost— *Shirley, Colorado*

Poor Will's COUNTRYSIDE Almanack

~ for ~

Middle & Late Summer 2013

BY W. L. FELKER

Now is the high tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay.
— James Russell Lowell

The Ephemeris for July Phases of the Wild Raspberry Moon and the Sweet Corn Moon

As wild raspberries come to the end of their season, the Sweet Corn Moon brings sweet corn to market across the northern states (of course the sweet corn from the South comes north sometimes even with the Apple Blossom Moon).

July

8th: The Wild Raspberry Moon becomes the new Sweet Corn Moon at 2:14 a.m.

15th: The moon enters its second quarter at 10:18 p.m.

22nd: The moon is full at 1:15 p.m.

29th: The moon enters its final phase at 12:43 p.m.

The Sun's Progress

Aphelion, the point at which Earth is farthest from the sun, occurs at July 5: 10:00 a.m. The sun traditionally enters the sign of Leo on July 22.

The Planets

Starting on July 4, Jupiter be-

comes the morning star, and it will continue to appear in the pre-dawn sky throughout the rest of the year. Mars remains in the morning sky in Gemini. Saturn is still in Virgo, shining deep in the west before midnight. Venus moves retrograde into Leo, keeping its position as the summer evening star.

The Stars

Late at night, July brings Hercules almost overhead, bearing ripening tomatoes, sweet corn from the Sweet Corn Moon, green beans, and summer squash. Cygnus (the Northern Cross), Lyra with bright Vega, and Aquila with its anchor star, Altair, are rising in the middle of the Milky Way, presiding over preparations for autumn breeding of ewes and does.

The Shooting Stars

July 27–28: The Delta Aquarids are the major shooting stars of July. Watch for them after midnight, near Aquarius (below the Northern Cross). You might see up to 20 meteors per hour.

A Key to the Nation's Weather

The typical July temperature at average elevations along the 40th Parallel, the average of the high of 85 and the low of 65, is 75 degrees. Using the following chart based on weather statistics from around the country, one can calculate approximate temperatures in other locations close to the cities listed.

Fairbanks, Alaska	-15
Seattle, Washington	-12
Cheyenne, Wyoming	-9
Portland, Maine	-7
Minneapolis, Minnesota	-2
Average Along the	
40th Parallel:	75
Washington D.C.	+3
St. Louis, Missouri	+4
Little Rock, Arkansas	+6
Atlanta, Georgia	+7
New Orleans, Louisiana	+8

The Ephemeris for August The Phases of the Sweet Corn Moon and the Blackberry Moon

Dark blackberries usher in the season of late summer. When they

are ripe enough to pick, then all the crickets and katydids will be singing through the nights, and the first bird migrations will be underway.

August

6th: The Sweet Corn Moon becomes the new Blackberry Moon at 4:51 p.m.

14th: The moon enters its second quarter at 5:56 a.m.

20th: The moon is full at 8:45 p.m.

28th: The moon enters its last phase at 4:35 a.m.

The Sun's Progress

August 22 is Cross-Quarter Day and marks the halfway point between summer solstice and autumn equinox. The sun enters Virgo on the same day.

The Planets

Jupiter and Mars in Gemini rise well before dawn, shining in the east. Mars moves retrograde into Cancer at the end of the month, moving away from Jupiter, but retaining its position as one of the morning planets. Venus and Saturn, both in Virgo, shine in the west after sundown.

The Stars

When you do your morning chores or watch for shooting stars before dawn, look to the east to find winter's Orion rising and filling the sky. When it rises in the evening, the harvest of corn, soybeans and garden vegetables should be complete.

The Shooting Stars

August 11–12: Late summer's meteors are the Perseids. Find them, up to 60 per hour, near Perseus in the northeastern sky. This will be the best meteor shower of the summer, and the moon will be dark.

A Calendar of Holidays & Special Occasions for Homesteaders

August 6: Jamaican Independence Day: Demand may increase for older lambs, rams or ewes, up to 65 pounds, at this time.

August 7-9: *Id al Fitr* (The Festival of the breaking of the Ramadan Fast): Sheep and goats for this market should not be older than a year

Key to the Nation's Weather

The typical August temperature at average elevations along the 40th Parallel, the average of the high of 83 and the low of 63, is 73 degrees. Using the following chart based on weather statistics from around the country, one can calculate approximate temperatures in other locations close to the cities listed.

Fairbanks, Alaska	-18
Seattle, Washington	-9
Cheyenne, Wyoming	-7
Portland, Maine	-6
Minneapolis, Minnesota	-3
Average along the 40th Parallel:	73
Washington D.C.	+2
St. Louis, Missouri	+5
Atlanta, Georgia	+5
Little Rock, Arkansas	+7
New Orleans, Louisiana	+9

**The Almanack Daybook
July**

1: Tornadoes, hurricanes, floods or prolonged periods of soggy pasture are most likely to occur within the weather windows of July 3 through 7 and July 18 through 23.

2: Fish, game, livestock and people tend to feed more and are more active as the barometer is falling one to three days before the weather systems that arrive near the following dates (on which cold fronts normally cross the Mississippi River): July 6, 14, 21, & 28.

3: Potato leafhoppers reach economic levels in some alfalfa. The oats crop is ripening throughout the southern and central parts of the country.

4: Today is United States Independence Day And Puerto Rican Independence Day: Consider marketing lambs and kids for cookouts, especially if your county fair is over.

5: Red cones of the staghorn sumac become prominent, and early woolly-bear caterpillars are wandering the byways. Squash beetles bore into the squash vines.

6: Blackberries sweet and black in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, are August-size across the North, but still green.

7: Count the frost-free days remaining in your region, and calculate the estimated harvest and the fall garden schedule.

8: New moon today and full moon on July 22 may increase the chance of tornadoes in the South and Midwest and the landing of a hurricane in the Gulf region.

9: Field corn is silking, and detasseling operations have begun in seed cornfields.

10: Be alert for conditions which would favor the transfer of ringworm and club lamb fungus in crowded show conditions.

11: Easter (both Roman and Orthodox) in 2014 comes on April 20. Plan your breeding of does and ewes to provide five months for gestation and then enough time for your animals to reach the preferred weight of between 25 and 60 pounds.

12: Rose hips are forming on the wild roses that grow throughout much of the country, good for your does and ewes.

13: Lots of extra wethers you don't want to cull? It may be time to start a "pack goat" operation. Pack goatling gives hikers an alternative to backpacks, and offers unbeatable companionship

14: Tufts of thistle down hang in the grass. Milkweed pods form in the fields. And cucumber-pickle picking peaks.

15: The moon enters its second quarter today, a time when lunar stress is at its lowest.

16: Pokeweed gets green berries as Japanese beetles reach major levels in the soybeans.

17: Elderberries are turning purple, and the second cut of alfalfa is often half complete along the 40th Parallel.

18: Prepare for August seedings of alfalfa, smooth brome grass, orchard grass, tall fescue, red clover and timothy.

19: If you intend to use a cull ram as a teaser ram later this fall, have him vasectomized now.

20: When morning birdsong diminishes and insect volume increases, then collard, kale and cabbage sets are often planted for fall.

21: Goat milk soap is now being used in some nursing homes because preliminary tests show that it leaves human skin softer than other types of soap.

22: Today is full moon day, a time to be extra gentle with spouses, children, clients and animals.

23: Harvest fruits and vegetables as the moon wanes.

24: When the foliage of multiflora roses is yellowing, then white snake-root (poisonous to livestock) is budding in and around the woodlots.

25: Autumn turnip planting and tobacco topping are often begun today, guided by the first blossoms of tall ironweed.

26: If your goats and sheep keep getting worms, their grazing, feed and sleeping areas may be saturated with creatures that have a six-week life cycle.

27: In July forage pastures, clip alfalfa plants when blooms have just started; its energy will be directed back to making foliage instead of producing seeds.

28: July can be peak parasite month in the pastures.

29: When Joe Pye weed sends out its purple flowers in the wetlands, then farmers are preparing for August seeding of alfalfa.

30: Wild grapes ripen; the dry onion harvest starts; geese become restless as a Judas maple here and there turns red.

31: At the very end of July, when the Summer Triangle of stars moves overhead just before bedtime, normal average temperatures start to fall in every state of the Union.

August

1: Cold fronts normally cross the Mississippi River on the following dates: August 4, 10, 17, 21, and 29.

2: Most of the corn has silked by now, and most of the soybeans are flowering or are setting pods.

3: Black walnut trees begin to lose their leaves, a sign of the great leaf-

fall to come.

4: Take cuttings from your geraniums, coleus and other plants you'd like to save indoors this winter.

5: Tornadoes, hurricanes, floods or prolonged periods of soggy pasture are most likely to occur between August 8 and 13 and between August 27 and 31.

6: Today is Jamaican Independence Day. Older lambs and kids may be just right for a holiday barbecue.

7: Today begins the feast of Id al Fitr, the breaking of the Ramadan fast. Lambs and kids born in the spring may be suitable for this market. And even though you may be living a ways from an urban area, customers may be willing to come to you for the right animal.

8: In the second week of August, average temperatures start to drop between one and two degrees per week.

9: The field corn is maturing now, some of the soybean fields are turning, more than half of the nation's tobacco crop has been topped, and at least a fourth of all the potatoes have been dug.

10: Seed the lawn, and band seed alfalfa. Smooth brome grass, orchardgrass and timothy are also good crops for August planting.

11: It is watermelon harvest time in northern states, and everbearing strawberry harvest peaks in the central states.

12: Calculate estimated losses in productivity due to late planting, drought, insect infestations, hail and other problems.

13: Acorns are falling as spicebush berries redden and the corn silage harvest starts along the 40th Parallel.

14: The second brood of corn borers, and the second generation of bean leaf beetles and rootworm beetles may be threatening your crops.

15: The Dog Days sometimes end by today, when the first late summer cool front sweeps across the nation.

16: Plan ahead to market your lambs and kids in September: Labor Day, of course, is on September 2.

17: There are two other holidays in the year's ninth month: Rash



Hashana, Jewish New Year on September 5-6, and the Harvest Moon Festival on September 19, celebrated by some Korean Americans and those of Asian descent.

18: The harvest of winter wheat and oats is complete throughout most of the nation; now the Canadian-border states bring in the spring wheat.

19: Elderberry picking is about over in most of the country.

20: The Blackberry Moon is full today, filling all the northern blackberries with juice and chilling the nights in the mountains.

21: Wild grapes are ready to pick. A few fields are being prepared for winter wheat seeding.

22: Today is Cross-Quarter Day, halfway between summer solstice and autumn equinox. It is a traditional point at which to fine tune harvest, canning, freezing and breeding schedules.

23: If you have spent too much money on hay or grain this year, you might plan to adjust your breeding schedule in order to time it better with next year's peak pasture growth.

24: Summer apples are almost all picked.

25: A third to a half of the nation's field corn is often mature, and denting has occurred on more than three-fourths of all the fields.

26: Keeping track of exactly when ewes and does come into heat and are bred can simplify your winter.

27: Be especially careful with your pregnant ewes and does during cold snaps at the end of August and throughout September. Sometimes environmental stress can induce abortion.

28: Prepare cold frames in northern states, then seed your late autumn greens and radishes in September for October, November and December salads.

29: Watch closely for the first sign of cycling in ewes and does. If you breed on the second cycle, the chances of producing twins are increased.

30: Soybean leaves are turning gold from Georgia to North Dakota, and pods could be set on almost all of the acreage.

31: Pickle season is often over by now. Peach picking may be done for the year.

Lunar feeding patterns for people and beasts

When the moon is **above** the continental United States, creatures are typically most active. The second-most-active times occur when the moon is **below** the earth.

Date: Above Below

July 1-8: Mornings; Evenings
9-15: Afternoons; Midnight to Dawn
16-22 : Evenings; Mornings
23-29: Midnight to Dawn; Afternoons
July 30-August 6: Mornings; Evenings
7-14: Afternoons; Midnight to Dawn
15-20: Evenings; Mornings
21-28: Midnight to Dawn; Afternoons
29-31: Mornings; Evenings

Results of the Sckrambler Sweepstakes

A prize of \$5 was promised to the the 3rd, the 9th, the 43rd, the 68th, the 99th or the 142nd person who returned the correct answers to the May-June Sckrambler. Out of the 32 correct replies received by my deadline, Jeffrey Yeager, Cincinnati, Ohio, was the 3rd, and Susan Peckham, Little Compton, Rhode Island, was the 9th.

If there are other winners, their names will appear in the next COUNTRYSIDE.

KYS: SKY

IHHG: HIGH

OWL: LOW
 MUHIDYTI: HUMIDITY
 CANEIHURR: HURRICANE
 YOEEHGRMTR:HYGROMETER
 TEJ TSMRAE: JET STREAM
 HZEA: HAZE
 ROBATEMRE: BAROMETER
 MTAOPSHERE: ATMOSPHERE
 AAAEVLNCH: AVALANCHE
 RETEMOMENA: ANEMOMETER
 CYCLANTIONE: ANTICYCLONE
 STRATUSALTO: ALTOSTRATUS
 AINROWB: RAINBOW
 WTRAE PSTOU: WATER SPOUT
 SIMT: MIST
 LOCDU: CLOUD
 TTNAIOIPRECP: PRECIPITATION
 NASD VEDLI: SAND DEVIL

And Here is This Month's Sckrambler

Those who are the 3rd, the 24th, or the 58th to reply correctly by my deadline of June 25th will win \$5. There should be no typos in this puzzle, and no typo prize will be awarded. If you happen to find a typo, however, you may simply skip that word without penalty. Send your entries by regular mail (postcards preferred) to Poor Will at P.O. Box 431, Yellow Springs, OH 45387. The names of any winners whose correct responses are received after my deadline to COUNTRYSIDE (June 25th) will appear in a later issue. ✻

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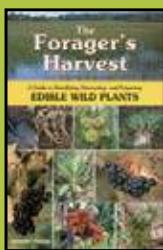
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LOFTY PINE FARM, Deb Yeagle, 2882 Cty. Rd. 82, Lindsey, OH 43442-9753. 419-665-2697. <loftypine@yahoo.com> Llamas, Suri & Huacaya alpacas—starting \$300, fleece, judge. Teeswater, Merino sheep.

Vermont

NORTH OF THE ANDES ALPACAS, Rhonda Henning, 6394 Chester Arthur Rd., Enasburg, VT 05450. 802-933-5166. <northoftheandes@myfairpoint.net> Huacaya. Fiber or pet males \$300, bred and open females starting at \$800, all ARI registered. Email for pictures.

West Virginia

GLORY B FARM, Barry & Barbara Bales, Ballard, West Virginia. 304-573-1526. <bbales@citynet.net> <www.alpacanation.com/gloryb.asp> Award winning alpaca breeding stock & products.

Bullfrogs

Idaho

RANA RANCH BULLFROGS, PO Box 1043, Twin Falls, ID 83303-1043. 208-734-0899. <phrogpharmer@aol.com> American Bullfrogs (Rana catesbeiana). Deep soothing music on your pond. Purpose bred bullfrogs—healthy, hardy and prolific. Free info sheet.

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Texas

CAPYBARAS, We have them, adults, subadults and seasonal babies. Quality, healthy, free range, non-stressed animals. Also Huacaya alpacas. Bill Schuchman, Jourdanton, Texas. 830-277-2149. <aliceramley7@yahoo.com>

Cattle

Indiana

KIRTLEY FAMILY FARMS, Kevin & Christy Kirtley, 22100 Cammack Rd., Noblesville, IN 46062. 317-407-8001. <cakirtley@frontier.com>

<www.kirtleyfamilyfarms.com> Lowline Angus. Genetics for Grass-fed Beef, Fullblood and Percentage Lowline Angus cattle, embryos and semen.

Kansas

LA DORADA, Elizabeth Lundgren, D.V.M., 22484 W. 239 St., Spring Hill, KS 66083. <watusi@aol.com> <www.ladorada.com> Ankole-Watusi cattle.

UNDERHILL FARMS, Lynn & Karen Kaufman, 187 21st Ave., Moundridge, KS 67107. 620-345-8415. <info@underhillfarms.com> <www.underhillfarms.com> Belgian Blue Cattle.

Nebraska

BOHATY'S BRITISH WHITES, Walter & Nancy Bohaty, 1371 42nd Rd., Bellwood, NE 68624. 402-367-4741. <nbohaty@gmail.com> <www.britishcattle.com> Registered British White cattle.

Ohio

RIVERVIEW FARM, Fannie Thom-an, Crown City, OH. 740-256-1724. Miniature Jerseys—semen available. Also miniature horses. <www.miniaturejerseys.com>

Oregon

WHISPERINGHILLS FARM, Joe Schallberger, DVM, PhD & Sue Schallberger, DVM, 6515 Kurtz Rd., Dallas, OR 97338. 503-704-2408. <wisper@comcast.net> <www.whisperinghillsfarm.com> Polled Shorthorns. Fast growing grass-fed Shorthorn genetics. Also Suffolk sheep.

Pennsylvania

WILSON LAND & CATTLE CO., Russ Wilson, 1532 Stitzinger Rd., Tionesta, PA 16353. 814-354-2325. <ancattle@gmail.com> <www.blackanguscalf.com> Registered Black Angus.

Texas

AAVALON FARM, Sharon & George Adams, 1059 AnCR 468, Palestine, TX 75803. 903-549-2036. <aavalonfarm@hughes.net> <www.aavalonfarm.com> Belted Galloways. Semen available. Visitors welcome.

Wisconsin

J.E. TOSTENSON, James Tostenson, W925 County Rd. H, Fremont, WI 54940. 920-538-2716. Unique Jerseys, cows milk on grass alone, bulls outcross on most U.S. Jerseys.

Dogs

Oklahoma

AMERICAN WORKING FARMCOLLIES ASSOCIATION, Elaine Reynolds, HC 1 Box 23, Felt, OK 73937. 920-857-6979. <farmshepherd@yahoo.com> <www.farmcollie.com> Multipurpose Farm Dogs: English & Australian Shepherds, Standard & Border Collies, Shetland Sheepdogs and Kelpies.

HEAVENS LITTLE ACRES, Marshall & Jana Hager, 5716 N. State Hwy. 97, Sand Springs, OK 74063. 918-245-1291. <hlacres@aol.com> Akbash LGD, raised with Nubian dairy goats.

Tennessee

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West Virginia

TIMBERS CROSS FARM, Sue Doohan, HC 75 Box 32, Strange Creek, WV 25063. 304-765-5453. Maremma/Pyrenees Crossbred. Neutered & vaccinated. Sold as working pairs only. Started pairs \$500 / Experienced pairs \$700. Pups available occasionally, \$150 each. Buyback guaranteed.

Equine

Ohio

STRASSERHUTEN FARMS, Robert & Corinne Strasser, 4318 Hatrick Rd., Rootstown, OH 44272-9770. 330-325-7608. <rstrasser@neo.rr.com> <www.strasserhutenfarms.com> Irish Dexter cattle, miniature donkeys. Grass-fed freezer beef for sale.

Game Birds

Minnesota

OAKWOOD GAME FARM, INC., PO Box 274, Princeton, MN 55371. 800-328-6647. <oakwoodgamefarm.com> We sell day-old pheasant and chukar partridge chicks and eggs. Ask about our new smaller quantities on eggs and chicks.

Pennsylvania

HOUSTON RUN GAMEBIRDS, Steven Stoltzfus, 606 White Horse Rd., Gap, PA 17527. 717-468-9240. Bobwhite and Coturnix quail, pheasants & chukars. Specializing in flight conditioned birds. Call for more information.

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Timminicks Tragopans. Wild Turkeys: Eastern and Merriams.

Goats

Arizona

WITCH HAZEL DAIRY, Hazel McGuffin, PO Box 622, Vernon, AZ 85940. 928-358-0741. <witchhazeldairy@gmail.com> <witchhazeldairy.weebly.com> Nubians

California

HYONAHILL, Ruth McCormick, 24900 Skyland Rd., Los Gatos, CA 95033. 408-353-1017. <ruthmcc@flash.net> Registered Oberhasli dairy goats. Beautiful, quiet, delicious milk. Send for color brochure.

Indiana

CUATLIL' RED BARN, Margot Cassel, 7501 N. Nebo Rd., Muncie, IN 47304. 765-730-0145. <lilredbarn@hotmail.com> <www.lilredbarngoats.com> Nigerian Dwarfs.

Iowa

D & E DAIRY GOATS, 2977 Linn Buchanan Rd., Coggon, IA 52218. 319-350-5819. <ranch@iowatelecom.net> Alpine, Saanen & LaMancha. Selling 200 head annually.

Massachusetts

MENDING WALL FARM, Ed & Judy Lowe, PO Box 722, Assonet, MA 02702. 508-644-5088. <mendingwall@meganet.net> <www.mendingwallfarm.homestead.com> Nigerian Dwarf, Tennessee Fainting.

Oklahoma

CIMARRON VALLEY RANCH, Cleveland, Oklahoma. 918-694-9281. <deb@cimarronvalleyranch.com> <www.cimarronvalleyranch.com> Nigerian Dwarf goats, Dexter cattle, Miniature Hereford cattle.

HEAVENS LITTLE ACRES, Marshall & Jana Hager, 5716 N. State Hwy. 97, Sand Springs, OK 74063. 918-245-1291. <hlacres@aol.com> Akbash LGD, raised with Nubian dairy goats.

Pennsylvania

GOATSVILLE ACRES, Marilyn Ryan, 15 Carbondale Rd., Waymart, PA 18472. 570-488-5369. <mlyan@echoes.net> <www.goatsville.com> Purebred Mini Nubians.

Wisconsin

WILD GERANIUM HOLLOW FARM, Season Treder, N6476 Cty. Rd. N, Princeton, WI 54968. 920-229-4930. <wild_geranium_hollow@yahoo.com> <www.wildgeraniumhollowfarm.com> Miniature Nubian, Nigerian Dwarf Goats. Perfect milking goats for your small farm.

Hogs

Arizona

THE ROCKING ROBIN RANCH,

Prescott, Arizona. 928-925-6886. <www.minijersey.org> Registered: Heritage KuneKune pigs, mini Jersey cattle, Nubian goats & Bulldogges.

Arkansas

FARMERS HEREFORD HOGS, Thomas Hardin, 13776 E. Hwy 56, Ash Flat, AR 72513. 870-322-8423. Registered Hereford hogs.

Missouri

HEREFORD HOGS, Steven Dabney, 7415 High Point Dr., Raymondville, MO 65555. 417-457-6703. <aar7ac@yahoo.com> Registered Hereford hogs—gilts & boars available.

Nebraska

MEADOWLARK FARM, Larry Raurert, 4767 N. Quandt Rd., Grand Island, NE 68801. 308-381-1518. <meadowlarkfarm@lycos.com> Registered Hereford hogs. Boars, gilts, feeder pigs, multi-bloodlines.

Pennsylvania

WHITE BISON FARM, Dave & Jodi Cronauer, 394 Russet Rd., Patton, PA 16668. 814-674-2330. <apache_jc@yahoo.com> <www.whitebisonfarm.com> Idaho Pasture Pigs, KuneKune Pigs, American Bison, Gypsy Vanner Horses.

Large Black Pigs

Kansas

UNDERHILL FARMS, Lynn & Karen Kaufman, 187 21st Ave., Moundridge, KS 67107. 620-345-8415. <info@underhillfarms.com> <www.underhillfarms.com> Large Black hogs.

Michigan

HORTON FARMS, Robert & Christine Horton, 11650 Remick Rd., Blanchard, MI 49310. 989-561-2386. Large Black Hogs.

Miniature Cattle

Arizona

THE ROCKING ROBIN RANCH, Prescott, Arizona. 928-925-6886. <www.minijersey.org> Registered: mini Jersey cattle, Nubian goats, Heritage KuneKune pigs & Bulldogges.

Colorado

TWO SHOES RANCH. Registered Miniature Herefords. Bill & Dona Shue, 696 Co. Rd. 22, Craig, CO 81625. 970-824-0105. 2shoesranch@gmail.com http://2shoesranch.com

Pennsylvania

WELSH MOUNTAIN FARM, Amos T. Ebersol, 590 Red Hill Rd., Narvon, PA 17555. 717-768-3652. Mini Jersey Cattle.

Miniature Horses

Wisconsin

TRAILS END STABLE, Medford, Wisconsin. 715-785-7286. Reg. AMHA-AMHR Miniature Horses.

Miniature Pigs

Washington

NORTHWEST MINI PIGS, Melissa Nading, 103 Ridgcrest Ln., Longview, WA 98632. 360-609-1971. <www.northwestminipigs.com> Raising quality mini pigs for your family.

Miniature Sheep

Kansas

SHEEPFIELDS, Diane Spisak, Wellsville, KS. 785-883-4811. <www.akbashdogs.net> Babydoll Southdown Miniature sheep, Akbash Dogs, Polish bantam chickens.

Pigeons

Arkansas

CEDAR MIST LOFT, Mike Owen, 601A Acklin Gap Rd., Conway, AR 72032. 501-329-2377. <sales@boxesforbirds.com> Rare breeds of pigeons & fowl. USPS approved live bird shipping boxes.

Poultry

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Florida

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Iowa

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Oklahoma

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Wisconsin

PURELY POULTRY, PO Box 466, Fremont, WI 54940. 800-216-9917. <Chicks@PurelyPoultry.com> <www.PurelyPoultry.com> 300 varieties: chickens, bantams, ducks, geese, turkeys, guineas, peafowl, swans, pheasants, ornamental pheasants, chukars and quail.

Rabbits

Pennsylvania

WOOLLYBEAR FARM, Littlestown, Pennsylvania. <woollybearfarm@earthlink.net> Satin Angora rabbits. Babydoll Southdown sheep. Fiber: Alpaca, Mohair, sheep & rabbit.

Sheep

Colorado

DESERT WEYR, Ken & Oogie McGuire, 16870 Garvin Mesa Rd., Paonia, CO 81428. 970-527-3573. <www.desertweyr.com> <sales@desertweyr.com> Black Welsh Mountain sheep.

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Idaho

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Michigan

SANDHILL MIST, Ken & Elizabeth Rosenow, 725 West Free Soil Rd., Free Soil, MI 49411. 231-464-5466. <liz@savage99.com> <www.sandhillmist.com> Icelandic.

THE LAVENDER FLEECE, Laurie Ball-Gisch, 3826 N. Eastman Rd., Midland, MI 48642. 989-832-4908. <www.lavenderfleece.com> Icelandic, Leicester Longwool. Also Icelandic Sheepdogs.

THE WHITE BARN FARM, Kim & Irv Preston, 10080 S. Wyman Rd., Blanchard, MI 49310. 989-561-5030. <The6PslnAPod@power-net.net> <www.TheWhiteBarnFarm.com> CVM/Romeldale. Breeding stock/fleece.

Minnesota

PERGAMINO FARM, 320-396-2361. <charpspun@aol.com> Corriedales, CVM/Romeldales and East Friesians. Fleeces and other products.

Missouri

MISSOURI KATAHDIN BREEDERS ASSOCIATION, Randy Wehner, 12 Morningside Ln., Long Lane, MO 65590. 417-345-1515. <MoKats@case-agworld.com> <www.case-agworld.com/MKBA.html> Katahdin Hair Sheep. Why shear when all you want is meat? Missouri Katahdins are hardy, good mothers and excel on forage.

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Oregon

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Pennsylvania

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Various

Wisconsin

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Associations

AMERICAN BLACK WELSH MOUNTAIN SHEEP ASSOCIATION, Eugenie McGuire, Sec./Treas., PO Box 534, Paonia, CO 81428-0534. <info@blackwelsh.org> <www.blackwelsh.org>

AMERICAN EMU ASSOCIATION, 1201 W Main St., Suite 2, Ottawa, IL 61350. 541-332-0675. <info@aea-emu.org> <www.aea-emu.org> Emu.

AMERICAN HIGHLAND CATTLE ASSOCIATION, Historic City Hall, 22 S. 4th Ave., Ste. 201, Brighton, CO 80601-2030. 303-659-2399, fax: 303-659-2241 <info@highlandcattleusa.org> <www.highlandcattleusa.org> Benefits of Highland Genetics: Enhance Beef Quality; Infuse Grass Genetics; Increase Browning & Foraging Ability; Improve Calving Ease; Add Maternal Longevity.

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ANKOLE WATUSI INTERNATIONAL REGISTRY, Becky Lundgren, 22484 W. 239 St., Spring Hill, KS 66083-9306. 913-592-4050. <watusi@aol.com> <www.awir.org>

BARBADOS BLACKBELLY SHEEP ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, registry for American Blackbelly & Barbados Blackbelly hair sheep. Carol Elkins, Secretary, 80830th Lane, Pueblo, CO 81006 <info03@blackbellysheep.org> Directory of breeders at <www.blackbellysheep.org> No shearing, economical, addictive meat quality.

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CONTINENTAL DORSET CLUB, Debra Hopkins, Exec. Sec./Treas., PO Box 506, North Scituate, RI 02857. 401-647-4676. Fax 401-647-4679. Dorset sheep. <cdcdorset@cox.net> <www.dorsets.homestead.com>

FINNSHEEP BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION, 6861 Old Pipestone Rd., Eau Claire, MI 49111. 269-461-4101. <FBASecretary@finnsheep.org> <www.finnsheep.org>

HEARTLAND HIGHLAND CATTLE ASSOCIATION, for free information on Highland cattle call 417-345-0575 or email <heartlandhighlandcattle@gmail.com> Check the webpage, <www.heartlandhighlandcattleassociation.org>

ICELANDIC SHEEP BREEDERS OF NORTH AMERICA (ISBONA), Membership Secretary, 253 North St., Mechanic Falls, ME 04256. 207-740-5110. <membership@isbona.com> <www.isbona.com>

INTERNATIONAL FINNSHEEP REGISTRY, Deb Olschefska, Secretary, 3937 Ridgewood Rd., York, PA 17406. 717-586-2117. <www.internationalfinnsheepregistry.org>

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NORTH AMERICAN BABYDOLL SOUTHDOWN SHEEP ASSOCIATION AND REGISTRY (NABSSAR). Protecting, preserving, and promoting the Babydoll Southdown. Educational bi-annual newsletter, information, and breeder list. <www.nabssar.org> NABSSAR Registry: 641-942-6402.

NORTH AMERICAN DOG SPORTS & REGISTRY (NADSR), PO Box 916, Marshfield, WI 54449. 715-254-4989 <nadsr@nadsr.us> <www.nadsr.com> Bulldogs, curs, puggles, Alaskan huskies & more.

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NORTH AMERICAN SHETLAND SHEEPBREEDERS ASSOCIATION (NASSA), P.O. Box 51, 222 Main St., Milo, IA 50166. 641-942-6402. <www.shetland-sheep.org>

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After chores:

The Year of the Tomato

By CHUCK CLOUGH
ALABAMA

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One spring day, just as my two younger brothers and I were getting ready for a short fishing trip, the Old Man drives up. He had been in town for something or other, and when we saw him, it meant *work*.

Just last week he had been talking about starting in the tomato business, but we boys didn't think much about it. That would mean growing tomatoes for a cannery about 30 miles from here.

We boys were so busy getting our fishing gear together and digging worms, we didn't even hear him drive up. Normally we could hear that old Dodge truck all the way down to the corner and have plenty of time to escape down to the hog pasture next to the barn. The barn cut off his view from the road, and the hog pasture was badly overgrown. Our escape route was down into the worst snake-ridden part of the hog pasture. Even as mad as he got at times, the Old Man would never try to make it through there. Mostly he would just wait for us until we got hungry enough to come sneaking back home.

But, now we were caught like a rat in a cage, with no escape in sight. When the Old Man caught you within hollering distance, you were flat out caught. He had this sound in his voice that sent cold chills down your spine that meant come here or die a horrible death.

He had a bunch of large cardboard boxes in the back of the truck and he proudly opened one up so we could easily see the contents—100,000,000 tomato plants!

The Old Man had a way of looking at you that struck terror in your heart and made you jump to whatever task was at hand. The next thing we knew, we were unloading tomato plants to beat the band.

The next day we were all up at the crack of dawn. After breakfast I went to catch one of the horses, which I hitched up to a small sled upon which was a old rusty 55-gallon barrel. This was to haul water for the tomato plants when we put them in the ground. After the barrel was filled from the spring down in the pasture, we arrived in the field where the Old Man gave us a two-hour lecture on the proper way to place the tomato plants in the ground. As the sled driver, I drive the horse and try to keep in a straight row. Gary takes a sharp stick and punches a hole exactly six inches deep and 18 inches apart, pouring a can of water therein. Howard places a tomato plant in the hole and with his foot, pushes dirt carefully around the plant. Here we go for hours at a time. *Drive-punch-pour-place-push....Drive-punch-pour-place-push.*

Dusk finally arrived and a much welcome rest as we head for the barn. My two brothers still following the horse and sled, Gary is still punching little holes in the ground and Howard is still pushing them with his foot. They punch and push little holes all the way to

the house and finally stop when they run into the porch.

I unhitch the horse and let him into the barn lot where I can catch him tomorrow morning, and head for the house. After supper it's off to bed. That night I dreamed of giant tomato plants 100 feet high. Acres of them. We couldn't get at the tomatoes so we had to saw the whole plant down. There we was sawing like mad and the Old Man, instead of yelling *T-I-M-B-E-R*, yelled *T-O-M-A-T-O!* When it hit the ground, I hit the floor and woke up with the Old Man pounding on the bedroom door. Time to get up and start another day.

Time goes by, the weather is good, and it's harvest time in the tomato field. We had bushel baskets all over the place. I fetch the horse and sled, and away we go. In no time at all we have a load. The Old Man jumps into the truck and heads for the cannery. An hour later he returns, smiling, for another load. He returns smiling for two more loads and we think in no time at all we are gonna be rich.

The next load he returns frowning, parks the truck, slams the door, gives us boys a look that means, "don't say a word and I won't kill you," and stalks to the house. We sat there for the longest time, not knowing what to do, knowing whichever direction we turn will be the wrong one.

The Old Man finally comes out of the house and points towards the barn, which we know means "put up the horse and stay out of my sight." Later that evening we finally creep into the house and the Old Man, in a better mood, tells us the story which I will do my best to relate, as I wasn't there.

Leaving out the cuss words, it seems that the cannery starts out giving you a good price and when they think they have you hooked, start telling you that all you have is culls, only fit for catsup and hardly worth anything.

Loading dock man: "Pull that load over to that other dock." (My Old Man having the unmitigated gall to ask why.)

Loading dock man (Taking his life in his own hands): "Because this load is all culls."

My Old Man: "what the \$#\$%* do you mean culls?"

Loading dock man (Making the mistake of walking up to the Old Man.): "Just unload them and pick up your money at the office."

My Old Man grabs the loading dock man, lifts him off his feet and throws him into a bin of half rotten tomatoes, where he sinks up to his neck. The Old Man picks up his money and drives off smiling.

Halfway home he starts thinking. What's he going to do with a million ripe tomatoes? Why, he'll put an ad in the paper, that's what. Folks from town will trample one another to death to buy them. The next morning the Old Man gets up real early, feeds us breakfast, and sets us up by the road in anticipation of the rush. "Now boys, here's how you do it...." Half a day later, here we sit waiting for a customer... Is that a car coming? Yes, and it's slowing down.

"Howdy boys."

"Howdy sir."

"Can you boys tell me how to get back to town?"

"Well," says I. "Let me think about that for awhile..." The city man thinks fast, and in a couple of minutes he's on his way with a bushel of fine tomatoes.

We sold quite a few, canned some, ate a lot of them, and forced so many on the neighbors they started running when we came around. The mailman caught a few, but couldn't prove it was us.

One day we were sitting on the porch and the Old Man pondered aloud, "Next year we might grow us some watermelons..." 🍉

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If you choose to heat with wood, you know the value of having a readily-available heat source right in your back yard. You also know how much money you can save by heating with wood. At Central Boiler, we believe the same things you do. Heating an entire home, shop and more with an E-Classic outdoor wood furnace makes good sense to a lot of people who choose to live in a rural settings. And if you choose to heat with wood, an E-Classic improves your family's living environment by eliminating the fire hazards, dirt, smoke and time-consuming chore of tending a traditional wood stove.

Visit **CentralBoiler.com** or
call **(800) 248-4681** for the dealer nearest you.

All E-Classic outdoor wood furnace models adapt easily to new or existing heating systems. It's important that your outdoor furnace and system be properly sized and installed. See your local dealer for more information. ©2013 Central Boiler • ad6454