

The magazine of modern homesteading

# COUNTRYSIDE

& *Small Stock Journal*

Volume 106 • Number 2  
MARCH/APRIL 2022

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# I AM COUNTRYSIDE

## The Joy I Find in Homesteading

BY FABBY MAGANA



Homesteading is hard work, a labor of love, but the moments I have for rest, even though short, feel like heaven; peaceful and enjoyable.



I grew up cooking on outdoor fireplaces and I still enjoy doing it. We have a wood cookstove but sometimes it's too hot in the summer to cook with it indoors.

**“LET NO ONE ACCUSE YOU OF A wasted life.”** I read those words once and they made a big impression on me. I think that is why I like homesteading so much. Always something to do; fencing that needs to be fixed, wood that needs to be split, gardening to be done, harvest that needs to be preserved, and all that involves taking care of livestock.

In homesteading, even pulling weeds is an important task as it yields for beautiful and fruitful harvests. None of your hard work is ever wasted; even mistakes are useful learning moments. You can see the fruit of your labor unfold before your eyes: little seedlings sprouting, beautiful flowers blooming, farm animals being born, and the satisfaction that comes when you sit at the table to enjoy the delicious food you, yourself grew.

I grew up on a small homestead, washing clothes by hand, foraging for food when we didn't have enough, using an outhouse, plowing and weeding big corn fields all by hand, using herbs for home remedies, and mending our clothes and shoes.

When I grew up, I had to move to the city to work and help support my family. I found a job washing dishes at a restaurant and because I was used to working hard, soon I was given the manager position. I was making money, but soon I became very stressed and unhappy. I was chasing the American dream and, in the process, I stopped dreaming.

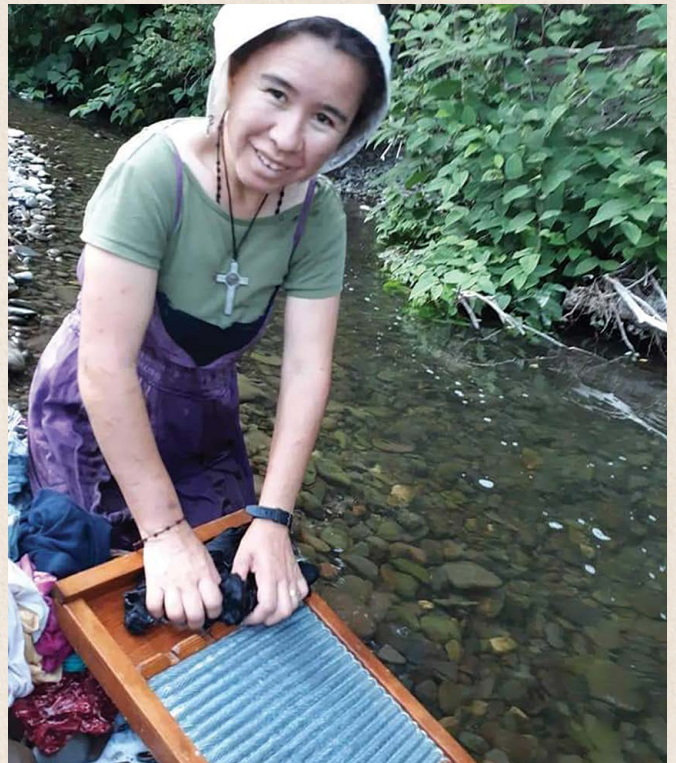
After I got married, I went back to homesteading and living in the country. I always knew that was the kind of life I wanted for my children. I learned to sew and to make soap and candy to earn an income for our family. It has been a blessing to be able to do what I like and still make a living out of it.

Homesteading is a busy life, but not a stressful kind of busy. I can be busy pulling weeds but I do it at my own pace surrounded by nature, cheerful birds, and my children playing nearby. Homesteading is a productive life, a blessed and happy life. ©

Homesteading is  
a busy life, but not  
a stressful kind of  
busy.



**Top Left:** Each year, we use about 30 face cords of wood between our cookstove and our regular wood stove for heating our home. It's hard work to get all of the wood we need for our daily use, but I enjoy it all.; **Top Right:** I feel my homestead is a safe haven where I can live my faith, my love for farming and family life to the fullest. Every moment is meaningful and every creature is important as part of God's creation.; **Bottom Left:** I think having a wood cookstove is an essential part of a homestead to not depend in modern conveniences. We found our perfect stove that is over 100 years old but works great.; **Middle Right:** Feeding and taking care of our livestock is so rewarding. Not only do they bring joy and entertainment to our lives, but they also help us make an income.; **Bottom Right:** I have come to realize that making bread is an art. I enjoy it very much and I know I have much to learn about it.



Let no one accuse you of a wasted life.

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**Top Left:** I have been blessed with the opportunity to make an income from my homestead and do what I like: selling my handmade products. This is my American dream! **Top Right:** We had a well in our home that dried out so we had no running water for two years. Thankfully I learned how to handwash clothes in the creek. This brings back good memories. **Bottom Left:** Homesteading has so many enjoyable moments and having farm animals is therapeutic. It makes it all worth it, even going out to feed them in a below zero weather. **Bottom Right:** I enjoy going out to the woods and collecting kindling wood for our wood cookstove. I don't see it as work but as a way to enjoy nature.

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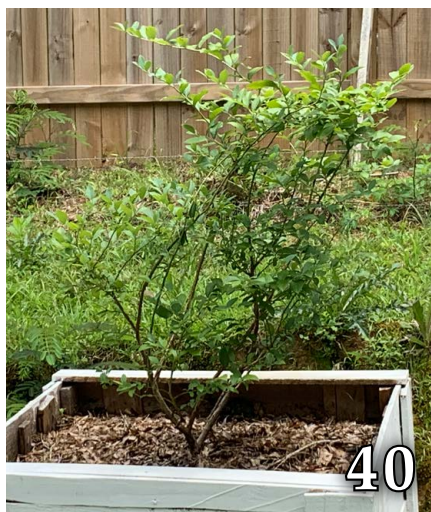
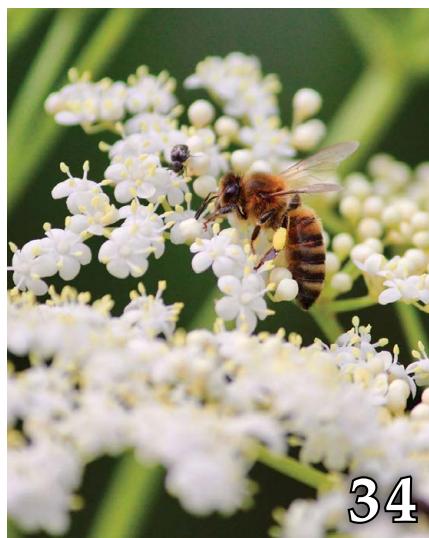
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**ON THE COVER** | James the peacock has his tail on display in all its glory, impressing the ladies and everyone who sees him! — Michelle Marine, Iowa, Instagram @simplifylivelove

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**EDITORIAL**

**Ann Tom, Editor**

editor@countrySIDEMAG.COM

**Marissa Ames**

Senior Editor

**Samantha Ingersoll**

Publication Designer

**Ana Skemp**

Audience Engagement

**ADVERTISING**

**Advertising Director**

adinfo@ogdenpubs.com

800-678-5779

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## Our Philosophy

At *CountrySide*, our purpose is to inspire self-reliant living on any level.

We acknowledge that the path to self-sufficiency is as unique as the person who accepts the journey.

We strive to strengthen the homesteading movement by sharing the diverse voices and knowledge of today's practioners.

We teach our readers how to grow and raise their own food; build, fix, and craft with their own two hands; and walk as gently on this planet as possible.

## Contact Us

**PHONE:** (970) 392-4419

**ADDRESS:** 1503 SW 42nd Street, Topeka, KS 66609

**ADVERTISING OFFICE:** adinfo@ogdenpubs.com

**EDITORIAL OFFICE:** editor@countrySIDEMAG.COM

**CUSTOMER SERVICE/BOOK ORDERS:**  
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## FROM THE EDITOR

# Welcoming Spring

**A**S THE ICE AND SNOW MELT AWAY and we enter into another year of growing, kidding, chick raising, and all other homesteading tasks that we enjoy, we are excited to share this spring issue with you.

I have always been interested in aquaponic gardening. So when Anita B. Stone pitched her Aquaponic Gardening article to me, I excitedly accepted. And she didn't disappoint! If you're interested in hydroponics and fish farming, you will want to check it out!

Two things that go hand-in-hand are gardens and pests. In this issue, Stacy Benjamin chimes in on how to deter critters from eating your garden goodies before you get a chance to. Last summer, I had a chipmunk that moved into my yard and wasn't shy about helping itself to my veggie garden. After several attempts, my Beagle/Jack Russell mix finally outsmarted it, and, well, let me just say that the nuisance was taken care of.

Another given when having gardens, whether it be flower gardens, vegetable gardens, or both, is they attract pollinators. And these creatures are a very welcoming sight to any yard. Watching them drink the nectar and gather pollen is such a relaxing pastime. If

you want to learn how to create a pollinator haven, be sure to read Kristi Cook's article on this very subject.

I love to hunt. And bow hunting for deer in the fall is always such a thrilling time. Something that I enjoyed doing when I was young was shooting my recurve bow while my dad shot his compound bow before hunting season began. When I got older and started to hunt, I hunted with a compound bow and recently switched to a crossbow, which I love. There are a few types of bows available and in this issue, Jenny Underwood and her hubby discuss how to make a self bow along with making the bowstring for it.

These are just a few of the informative articles included in this March/April issue. I hope you all enjoy it! Comments or questions are always welcome!



Ann Tom  
Editor, *Countryside*

**HAVE AN IDEA OR STORY TO SHARE, A QUESTION TO ASK, PERHAPS AN ANSWER TO A QUESTION? WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

*Countryside* Editor Letter  
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# Country Conversation & Feedback

Contact us at:  
1503 SW 42nd Street, Topeka, KS 66609; editor@countrysidemag.com

## Property Maintenance of a Different Sort

Anyone that has acreage always has a list. That list seems to grow rather than get smaller.

Most of the time, the list is compiled of various projects you see every day as you walk past them. Or you might remember them once you start working on one thing and realize you need to change the oil in the lawnmower or tractor first.

Cutting firewood, grading the driveway, fixing fence, cleaning out the chicken house, and remembering you're out of wood screws which means a trip to the hardware store.

Well, the maintenance I'm referring to is somewhat behind-the-scenes and forgotten about until an issue comes up.



I'm talking about property lines, deeds, and private road agreements. These are all very important documents that you need to become very familiar with and the foremost expert on.

For example, the property beside yours goes up for sale and the line is not clearly marked. You could have trouble down the road if your new neighbor decides to put up a fence or

starts cutting some trees down.

Do yourself a favor, get a surveyor out on your property and have him mark off all the lines.

Request that the surveyor drives a stake every 50 feet so you can come back and replace it with a steel post. Those wood stakes will rot over time and are easily knocked over. I like using some brightly colored tape to mark the tops of all the steel posts so it's extremely clear where the line is. You don't want the headache of someone cutting down a massive oak 15 feet over on your property and simply saying, "Sorry about that."

Once the new survey is completed, have it recorded.

Also, review all the other documents that are associated with your property. Understand the language and be aware if any changes should be made or updated. Some documents require an attorney to prepare them.

Another key piece of info you need to be up to date on is the electricity and water and how they enter your property. Can someone else tap onto a line that you paid for because it's in a common right-of-way?

Do your research, be very detailed, and don't leave anything to chance.

Reach out to people that have dealt with similar issues and see how they handled them.

A road maintenance agreement is another document that you may have with your property.

Review the document and make sure it's up to date.

Maybe right now you have great neighbors, and you are thinking, "Why bother with any of this?" Sometimes great neighbors must move unexpectedly, or a life event causes the sale of their property and it's a roll of the dice who's moving in and taking their place.

— Bryan Downs, Kentucky

## Yikes! It's a Mountain Lion!

It's a thrill to see a mountain lion, but if that sighting is a little "too close," it's also a scare.

Biologists believe mountain lions have become somewhat more brazen because lion habitat is dwindling, and because four-wheel drive, ATVs, snowmobiles, and hiking and mountain bike trail networks make it possible to reach true wilderness areas that were once rarely seen by humans.



Sightings of mountain lions seem more frequently reported and that often creates apprehension on the part of many who venture into the backcountry, or even a local golf course! So, here are some simple, but effective, precautions to help safeguard you from a dangerous confrontation

with a mountain lion.

There is safety in numbers so travel with a group. That may scare away a mountain lion that might otherwise consider confronting just one or two people. Keep children close to adults when hiking, biking, and exploring. Mountain lions are attracted to children because, most likely, children look vulnerable and small enough to take on. Don't allow youngsters to be by themselves, or ahead of or behind the adults.

Avoid any action that could initiate a problem. For example, if you see a mountain lion, don't seek a closer look. Give it lots of leeway to move away and escape from you.

If confronted, stand your ground and don't try to outrun the lion. Stand upright and tall, not bending over or crouching down. Face the lion, and maintain eye contact. Make yourself appear larger by opening out your jacket, raising your arms, or slowly waving your arms in big movements. Talk in a loud, firm voice as though you are addressing an auditorium full of people with no microphone. You want to appear too big for the mountain lion to fight. If there is a youngster with you, draw him/her close, but don't stoop to pick up the child. Remember, you have to look big and dangerous to the mountain lion — too big to tangle with.

Fight back if attacked, using anything available that could be a weapon — rocks, sticks, backpack, clothes, sports gear, tools, or your hands and feet. The mountain lion will most likely try to bite or paw your head and/or neck, so try to remain standing.

Report any confrontation to the Department of Fish and Game or a law enforcement authority.

— Dr. Stephenie Slahor

To get us in the spirit of summer, we ask you to share your favorite flower or vegetable garden photos that we will feature in the May/June issue!

Simply email them to:

[editor@countrysidemag.com](mailto:editor@countrysidemag.com)

## Intelligent and Friendly Pet Pig

Here are some pictures of a very intelligent and friendly pet pig I had for six years, Nigel. Sadly he passed away in March of 2018. I had raised him from two months of age. I've read that supposedly swine are the fourth-most intelligent animal, after chimpanzees, elephants, and whales/dolphins. After having one for a pet, I am inclined to that assertion! I let him roam about the five-acre home site as he pleased. He never left the place and always returned to his domicile when tired or in late evening.



Thank you for the excellent magazine!

— M. R. Koenig, Minnesota

## In Response to January/February Question of the Month: What are your go-to comfort food recipes?

### Sweet Potato Chili Bake

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups cubed, peeled sweet potato
- 1 sweet red pepper, diced
- ¼ cup diced onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ rib of celery, diced
- 1 cup corn, drained
- 1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 10 oz. can mild Rotel tomatoes
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 15 oz. black beans, rinsed and drained
- 4 ½ teaspoons brown sugar
- 3 teaspoons chili power
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 package (6 ½ oz.) cornbread/muffin mix



#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a Dutch oven, sauté sweet potatoes and red pepper in oil until crisp and tender. Add garlic and cook one minute longer. Add tomatoes, broth, beans, brown sugar, chili pepper, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 15-20 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

2. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Prepare cornbread batter per package directions and drop by tablespoon over chili.

3. Cover and bake 18-20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve with toppings of your choice.

4. NOTE: I bake ours in a 6-quart slow cooker container, then I put it in the slow cooker to keep warm if needed.

— Jerry Weldon, Knoxville, Iowa

## March/April Question of the Month:

We want to hear from you in 2022!

Are there DIY projects you would like to tackle but aren't sure where to begin or how to finish?

Send them to us; we'll share them with the *Countryside* community to see if we can find you a solution!

Share with us at:

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# Earth Day

In recognition of **Earth Day** on April 22, 2022, we've asked some of our writers to tell us what this special day means to them.



**MARISSA AMES**  
Editor *Backyard Poultry*  
magazine and *Goat*  
*Journal*, farmer at Ames  
Family Farm

"Self-sufficiency begins at ground level. Healthy soils feed healthy plants and trees, which then feed us or our livestock. Caring about the Earth's immune system — its soil — protects our future."





**JANET GARMAN**  
**Timber Creek Farm**

“Earth Day is the perfect day to think about how our farming practices impact our planet. Are we using techniques that help regenerate soil such as composting, and rotational grazing? What can we improve on? On our piece of Earth we are learning and incorporating silvopasture grazing to best utilize our land and keep the forest healthy. Our managed hardwood forest is selectively thinned every five to eight years. This allows new trees to flourish and prevents damage from older trees falling during weather extremes. Thinning the tree canopy is good practice for managing a hardwood forest.”



**ANN ACCETTA-SCOTT**  
**A Farm Girl in the Making**

“As the world recognizes Earth Day, I find myself stopping and thinking about the farmers, homesteaders, and the individuals who seek to live sustainable lives and own their food source. Our goal has always been to minimize our footprints left behind with little to no damage to the land which provides for us. This is not something new, this is our life and shall always be the way we live.”



**STACY BENJAMIN**  
**5R Farm**

“Earth Day is the perfect time to incorporate companion plantings in your garden. They can help retain soil moisture, decrease pests, and attract pollinators. There are lots of options including flowers as well as vegetable companions.”



MAKE  
*Every*  
DAY  
*Earth*  
DAY



**MICHELLE MARINE**  
**Simplify Live Love**

“‘Earth Day Every Day’ might sound like a cliché, but one of the reasons we love homesteading is because of the positive impact it helps us have on Earth. Composting, growing food, raising meat, and providing electricity are things we do each and every day with the earth and our own health in mind.”

# How to Build a Self Bow

BY JENNY UNDERWOOD



**I**F YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN ARCHERY a try, you're missing a fun, relaxing, and rewarding pastime! Not to mention it's the perfect opportunity to learn how to work with wood, build some muscle, and enjoy the outdoors. Or maybe you've considered it, but the price tags on custom bows were a bit too hefty for a hobby. If so, this article is for you! In it, you'll learn how to select and harvest a tree for bow wood, split staves, prepare staves for drying, and the actual making and finishing of a simple self bow. Oh, and this is a wonderful project for kids especially if you homeschool and want to teach woodworking.

First, you're going to need some

simple tools for the job. A chainsaw is handy but if all you have is a hand saw, you can make do with that. A saw, drawknife, pocket knife, measuring tape, pen, splitting implements such as wedges, a maul or a hatchet, a hammer, and a handmade tillering tree are all you need. Set up a workstation where you don't mind wood shavings or you can clean them easily. A vise to clamp your bow while working on it can also make the job easier but it's not a necessity.

You're also going to need access to woods where you can pick a tree to cut down or if this isn't possible, you can buy bow staves online. You will want a straight tree for at least

eight to 10 feet up. Many different kinds of wood make excellent bows so more than likely you'll have a few choices regardless of the area you live in. Hickory is one of the best woods especially for a beginner because there is no need to follow one growth ring. So for this article, we will focus on hickory. You will want a stout but not brittle wood that either grows rather straight or shoots well despite its curvature. Look for any obvious knotholes or insect damage and don't choose those. Less than 12 inches in diameter will make it much easier to work with so measure your trees! Here is where a chainsaw comes in handy! Cut down the tree and then

cut 80 inches in length off it. Make it the straightest, cleanest section your tree has.

Now split your bow wood into staves if it's big enough. If not, just use the entire piece as one stave. You'll need to remove the outer bark with a drawknife or a regular knife. This is called a whitewood bow. Once you have the outer bark off, you have the back of your bow. You will not remove any more wood from the back of your bow. The back is the part that faces away from you and is covered in bark. The belly faces you and is split. You will remove any wood needed to reach your desired draw-weight from the belly only.



Using an axe to rough out the bow.



Roughing out the bow in a stave.

Bring your tree section home and seal it on the ends with regular wood glue if you aren't going to work with it right away. This will help prevent it from splitting as it dries. Cheap wood glue works as well as expensive wood glue for this part so just use what you have. Your next step is to either let it dry or begin work on it right away. It's easier to work with green wood but you will then need to clamp or bind it to a straight surface such as a 2x4 or rafter to prevent it from twisting. The stave must be dried before tillering or it will take set. Set is the curve that a bow keeps after unstringing. It's preferable to have as little set as possible for optimal bow performance.

Draw your desired design on your stave and work down close to the dimensions. Do not finish the bow unless the stave is dried. After drying, you may then tiller or finish the bow. Carefully take

small amounts off the belly to achieve your draw-weight and even bending of both limbs. Your limbs must bend evenly or they will develop a "hinge" and most likely break. Remember to carefully remove small amounts of wood by scraping because it's possible to remove weight but you can't put the wood back on!



Bow stave drying.

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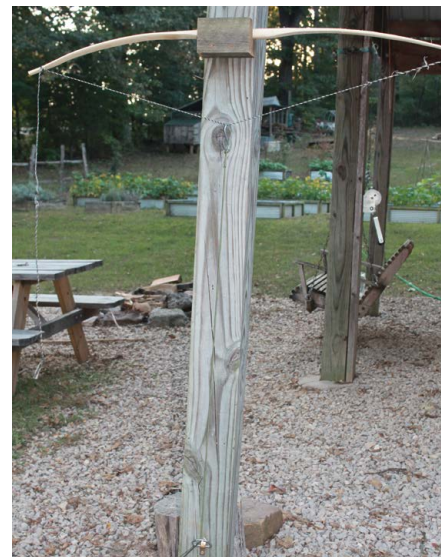
Bow handle in progress.



D-ring to run string through.



Simple holder tillering tree.



Tillering tree.



Almost finished bow.

To tiller your bow you will need a post or wall. Simply make a small holder for the bow to set on. Then several feet down directly under it, place a D-ring or small pulley. When you place your bow on the holder you will attach another string with a hook onto your bowstring and run it through the pulley or D-ring while you hold the other end. Gently pull the string and observe how the


limbs bend. Are they even or does one limb bend more than the other? If one end bends more than the other, take off small amounts from the one that doesn't bend as much until you've reached as close to even bending as possible.

A few considerations for making this an easier process are: cut your trees in the spring when the bark will slip off easier; make sure to seal your staves with glue or they will crack on you, and take your time on your project. It's also preferable to get your bark off rather soon to prevent insects from taking residence in your stave.

After reaching your desired draw-weight and tiller, you now should waterproof your bow. You may also stain it or leave it the natural color. This process is simple but very versatile as you can stain using natural or artificial stains and waterproof with anything from bear grease to a commercial sealant. A few beautiful natural

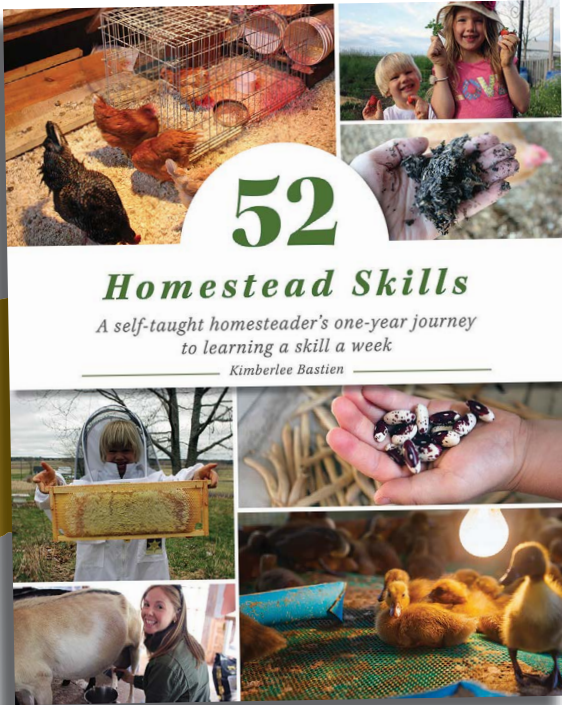
stains can be made from walnut hulls, flowers, roots (such as bloodroot or goldenseal), bark (such as dogwood), or even clay-based pigments. Other options are snakeskins, bamboo, or sinew. Remember the stains and wrappings do not waterproof it.

A string will also need to be made or bought for your bow. These are inexpensive and last a long time under proper maintenance.

I hope you will give this ancient and fun project a try. It may become your new favorite hobby or even become a business! Many thanks go to my husband for his help with this article. He has made several self bows for himself and our children. He made sure my directions were accurate and understandable. If you would like more detailed information, I recommend the book series *The Bowyer's Bible* which is a four-volume set that tells you everything about bow building that you can possibly imagine! 

**JENNY UNDERWOOD** is a homeschooling mama to four lively blessings. She makes her home in the rural foothills of the Ozark Mountains with her husband of 20 years. You can find her reading a good book, drinking coffee, and gardening on their little fifth generation homestead. She blogs at [www.inconvenientfamily.com](http://www.inconvenientfamily.com).

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It's hard to say what I like most about roasted radishes. It could be their vivid color or their juicy goodness or the fact that they turn out perfectly every time I make them. Whatever the reason, you haven't really tasted radishes until you've had them roasted. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised by their sweet, mild flavor.

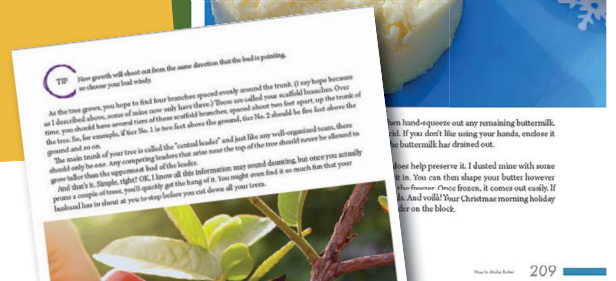
#### Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400°F
- Cut radishes with olive oil and lemon juice.
- Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Arrange the radishes, skin-side down in your pan.

- Roast for about 40 minutes.
- Sprinkle with parsley and gobbles these juicy morsels up while still warm.

#### Ingredients

- 20 radishes, trimmed and sliced in half



*52 Homestead Skills* follows homesteader Kimberlee Bastien as she learns one homesteading skill per week over the course of an entire year. The book details all of Bastien's adventures, from building a beehive and becoming a beekeeper to creating her own laundry and dish soap. Whether you already live on a homestead, are transitioning onto one, or are only thinking about it, *52 Homestead Skills* will help turn your dreams into a life worth living.

Packed with skills such as making deodorant, building a chicken chunnel, and freezing jam, the 52 projects in this book will prove helpful to any homesteader (or anyone just looking to do more on their own). Life on a homestead might not always be easy, but as Bastien writes, "The learning never ends, and that's OK. Because life without a challenge would be boring." This book will help you through even the hardest parts of living on a homestead, and add a little bit of fun to the mix!

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# Single Loop Flemish Twist Bowstring

BY JENNY UNDERWOOD

**B**OWSTRINGS HAVE BEEN AROUND as long as there have been bows of course. While the style and materials have changed the actual function has not. Though you can buy quality bowstrings, it's a wonderful ability to be able to make your own. Not only is this cost-effective, but it's also a fun and relaxing hobby that you can do just about anywhere.

There are about as many different bowstring styles and materials as bowstring makers. The materials range from the very primitive made from plant fibers to the fastest and newest bowstring material available. The string we're making is a perfect string for beginners to make because it's easy to learn, minimal tools and materials are required (no jigs required), can be used on multiple bows, and can be used as a tillering string. The type of string you'll be learning is called a Single Loop Flemish Twist Bowstring. Happy twisting!

First, gather your materials. All you need is:

- 1-2 spools of Dacron B-50 string
- 2 nails
- Tape measure
- String wax (I use beeswax)
- Sharp scissors

You may only use one color of string, however, it's MUCH easier to keep your thread bundles separate if they're two different colors. Plus the multiple colors really add to the aesthetics of the finished string.

To begin, measure your unstrung bow from nock to nock. Now, add 20 inches to that total. Write it down so you don't forget and have to remeasure! For example, my bow is 66 inches long from nock to nock. I need to cut my strands 86 inches long.

We will be making a 16 strand,

two-bundle string. To do this, we will cut eight strands of each color or 16 strands of the one color. Again it is rather difficult to do this twist with the two bundles the same color so I do not recommend it!

Place two finishing nails at your measured distance apart on a wall or board (in my case it was 86 inches). Wrap your first color

around the two nails a total of eight times. Carefully cut the thread so you have eight equal strands. Repeat with your other color. Keep your two bundles of eight strands separate!

Now, carefully wax your bundles so they stick together. This makes your strands so much easier to work with. There is specialized



bowstring wax, but my preference is just a chunk of plain beeswax. To apply the wax, hold the bundle in one hand with the wax block under them and run them tightly across the block of beeswax or string wax. You will start at one end and pull down. Repeat with the other bundle.


Hold your two bundles in one hand and measure down nine inches. This is where you will start your single loop. Take the first color and twist it toward yourself. Then twist the second bundle towards yourself. Loop the first bundle over the second bundle. Repeat the twist. You will do this approximately 22 twists. Now you have your single loop. Check to make sure it fits over your nock but isn't too big or too small. You may need to add twists or reduce.

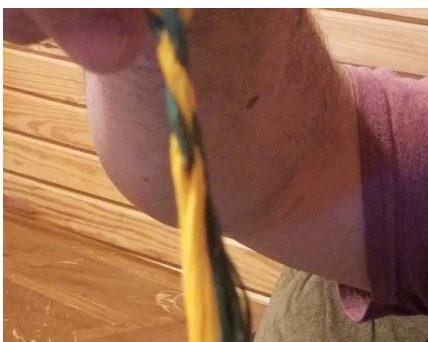
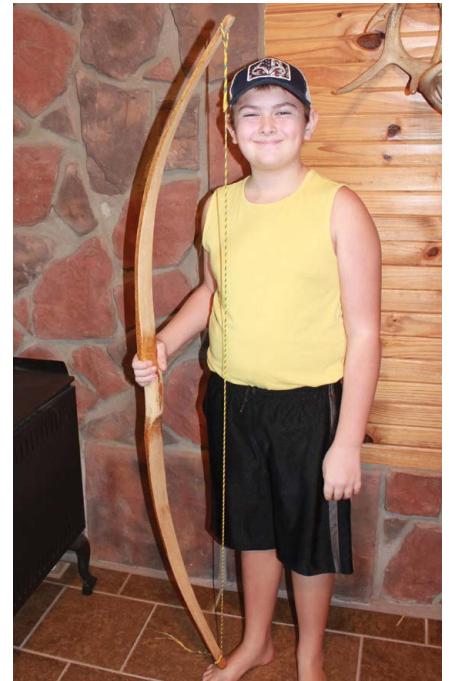
Next, you will start to twist your string. Create your loop and take the remaining tag ends and incorporate them into your string strand bundles (one in each). Wax to help keep everything stable. Begin your twist again. Only this time, you simply twist both bundles together, not separately. Just keep repeating until your thread is all twisted together.



Now you will place a bowyers knot or timber hitch at the end of this string. This allows you to adjust your string length to fit multiple bows or to use it as a tillering string. To create a timber hitch/bowyers knot, first, form a loop and take the other end, and put it down through the hole. Then take the string back on itself, turn it through three to four times. This process forms the knot. If you have difficulty with tying the knots many online videos show the process. It's quite simple once you've done it a few times.

You have completed your first bowstring. Congratulations! Just like any other craft or art, it's likely every time you make one you will continue to improve. Many people enjoy learning more complicated methods the further they advance in string building. That's the wonderful thing about skills like these. They are fun, practical, can be passed down, and provide a means of hobby or possibly full-time income.

Just a note on supplies: there are many wonderful traditional bowmaking suppliers. A couple that I recommend (I've ordered many times from these but have no other affiliation with them) are 3 Rivers Archery and Kustom King Traditional Archery. Both have been very reliable and provide good quality supplies at a reasonable cost. 





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# Downsizing as a Way to Continue the Homestead Lifestyle

*Interview with Longtime Homesteader and Farmer, Terry Garratt*

BY JANET GARMAN

I HAD A chance to catch up with a homesteader I have known for many years. Terry Garratt grew up knowing that she was going to live off the grid. At the Fresno County Fair, the goats captivated her. Her mother's family was a farming family and her cousins encouraged her in her dream of one day being an off-grid farmer.

As life happens, Terry met and married a man with no farming background. In 1971 they settled into a home on a quarter-acre lot and began their life together. As it would also happen, Terry found *Countryside* magazine during this time. She began gardening and rekindling the dream to live a farm life.

Soon after, the Garratt family moved from the suburban backyard garden to a larger property and began farming with goats in addition to the gardens. Terry notes that California isn't the friendliest state for farmers and homesteaders to begin. Regulations in California have been working against agricultural pursuits for years. Yet, they stayed. They persisted, mainly because of her husband's off-farm job in education.

Eventually, Terry and her husband landed on their 40 acres off-grid farm. Goats were the primary livestock and the Garratts made sure they raised plenty of food to support their dream of being self-sufficient.

Over the years, Terry has seen many changes in the world of homesteading. One thing we discussed was the higher costs of farming. Depending on the region, hay has exponentially gone up in price and that is a huge factor to consider when homesteading with livestock.

Moving forward to today, Terry is now a widow, living on a smaller property but still farming. After her husband's passing, she gave serious thought to being far from neighbors and family on the larger farm property. She searched and found a smaller farm that is closer to her now-grown children. She still has the ability and space to do what brings her joy in life. Her goals remain tied to stewardship of the land, as her heart and passion are in farm life, as well as her DNA!

Of course, I had to ask Terry what she would say to those retiring into homesteading life. The first topic

we discussed was adapting. Her advice is to do what you can now without hurting yourself. She says her plan is to continue her life and care of the farm but hire help from the community as she needs it. Having lived frugally and saving throughout life, she has the means to afford the help, even without being wealthy.

Moving from an off-grid situation to a much smaller property in a residential farming area can be an adjustment. Terry looked for an area where neighbors were respectful of her farm and garden pursuits. Fortunately, she found just the right place where she can do what she loves but has the security of being near her family. Both she and her animals have adjusted well.

On the topic of self-sufficiency, Terry advises that we should do what we can and buy what we can't. She includes the advice of not being so rigid that you make yourself do without to prove a point of self-sufficiency.

In addition, it is a good practice to get to know the people you buy supplies from. She always tries to have a connection to the community she is relying on for supplies.

Downsizing the farm was the way that Terry decided would enable her to continue an agricultural lifestyle after retirement. She mentioned that it isn't for everyone and added this pearl of wisdom, "isn't it great that we don't all want the same thing or it would get crowded there wouldn't it."

Along that same thought line, we talked about the future of homesteading. It is a very popular movement at this time. We both agreed that it isn't for everyone, and certainly not the retirement answer for most. She states that we will lose some homesteaders as time goes on. Some will drop off because they failed to understand what goes into this long-term. A percentage of

She includes the advice of not being so rigid that you make yourself do without to prove a point of self-sufficiency.





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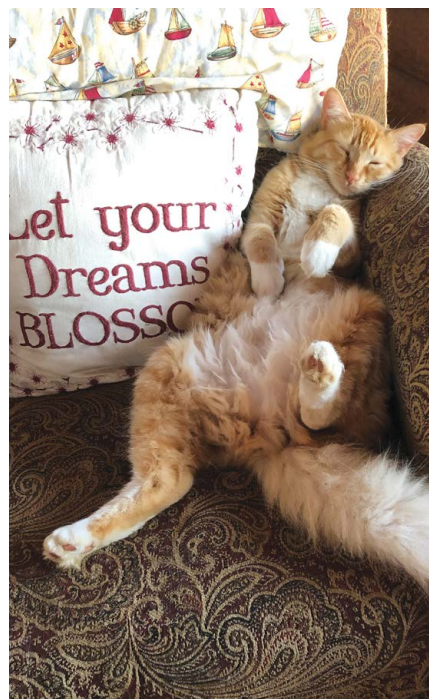
people will drop off because they got in over their heads. Some will migrate back with a better plan.

The future of Terry Garratt's farm looks bright. Her grown children and their children are all showing interest in the small farming property that Terry has put together. Her grandchildren, nearing adulthood themselves, seem eager to join in and help on the farm. In the future Terry sees herself continuing to evolve her dream and farming as she can. Smaller scale is one way to continue the life she loves. 

It is a good practice to get to know the people you buy supplies from.

Read Janet's six-part *Homesteading After Retirement* series at:

- [iamcountryside.com/homesteading/homesteading-after-retirement-part-1](https://iamcountryside.com/homesteading/homesteading-after-retirement-part-1)
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**JANET GARMAN** is a farmer, writer, instructor, and fiber artist living in central Maryland on the family's farm. She loves all subjects related to small farms and homesteading. Raising chickens, ducks, sheep, and fiber goats led her to write her most recent books, *50 Do-It-Yourself Projects for Keeping Chickens*, (Skyhorse Publishing 2018), *The Good Living Guide to Raising Sheep and Other Fiber Animals*, (Skyhorse Publishing 2019), and *50 Do-It-Yourself Projects for Keeping Goats* (Skyhorse Publishing 2020).

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# Disposing of Disposables

BY PATRICE LEWIS



**A**BOUT 10 YEARS AGO, our family made a deliberate effort to phase out disposable products and replace them with reusable and/or washable versions. We've never looked back.

Why did we take this drastic action? The reasons were multi-pronged. We didn't like our garbage output. We didn't like tipping plastics into the landfill. We didn't like buying things that could only be used once. We didn't like the throwaway culture that has permeated American society. And most of all, we didn't like wasting money (which is always tight).

Do you realize how many things we buy for no other purpose than to throw them away? Think about it: facial tissues, plastic cutlery, paper plates, plastic wrap, shopping bags, diapers, paper towels, feminine hygiene, even canning lids. By one estimate, the average American throws away nearly \$5,000 of disposable goods every year. What could you do with an extra \$5,000?

## A Nation of Disposables

Once upon a time, everyday disposables were not an option. Manufacturing simply wasn't up to it; and even if it was, most people wouldn't waste their money on single-use things. When did all that change?

In the wake of World War II, manufacturing ramped up hand-in-glove with advertising and disposable income. The old-fashioned methods of doing things — as well as the thrifty Depression-era wisdom of "Use it

up, wear it out, make it do, or do without" — gave way to the convenience of pre-packaged or instant foods, single-use cutlery and dishware, disposable diapers, paper towels, and facial tissues.

Suburbs, which supplied housing for millions of young families in the post-war years, became places of relative affluence and jostling for status (i.e., "keeping up with the Joneses"). As disposable income became more prevalent, manufacturers and advertisers saw a market for novelties such as paper plates or paper towels or disposable diapers, and set about convincing people that these items were sanitary, efficient, and healthy. Eventually these luxuries became "necessities," and the use of reusables began to diminish.

It got to the point where people shunned reusables. Those who continued to use handkerchiefs, cloth diapers, dish towels, or even canned their own food were considered hopelessly old-fashioned. It was only a few stubborn holdouts who believed they were saving money by sticking with the thrifty way of doing things.

## Cheaper in the Long Run

There's no question disposables have their place, particularly in medical or industrial settings. But at home, it's a lot easier than you think to wean yourself off stuff that can be thrown away, and embrace things that can be reused. Even giving up paper towels is a snap, which shocks some people.

Initially the cost is higher for some items, of course,



spills, dog vomit). For every other purpose, we use either rags (for messy jobs) or terrycloth towels (for kitchen use) purchased in bulk at Costco under the guise of “shop rags.” In the kitchen, I change the towel anywhere from twice a day (for light kitchen duties) up to four or five times a day (for active kitchen projects). A 60-count

but in the long run switching to reusables will save a significant amount of money. Best of all, you’ll never “run out” of some critical item (diapers, anyone?) in the middle of a blizzard or a lockdown.

So how do you dispose of disposables? The very first thing to do is walk through your house and take an inventory of what disposables you use on a daily basis. Everyone’s list will vary, but here’s a sampling:

- Paper napkins
- Paper plates
- Plastic cutlery
- Plastic wrap (Saran Wrap, etc.)
- Plastic/paper cups
- Shopping bags
- Vacuum cleaner bags
- Coffee filters
- Canning lids
- Baby wipes
- Toilet paper
- Disposable razors
- Feminine hygiene
- Paper towels
- Disposable diapers
- Facial tissue
- Batteries

Doubtless you can add to this list after walking through your own home. Now, for each item on your list, seek out the washable, reusable alternatives and invest in those. Yes, the cost is likely to be

higher initially. But how much will you save in the long run? (Hint: probably at least \$5,000 each year.)

Even the ubiquitous paper towel is easy to phase out. We go through one roll of paper towels about every two or three years, since we only use them for especially nasty messes (paint

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bale of terrycloth “shop rags” will last for at least 10 years of hard use before the towels become ratty or worn enough to transition to the rag basket.

Keep in mind one of the reasons people transitioned to disposables is they have an aversion to washing to reusables. This is something you’ll have to accept — reusables usually require washing. Because of this, if water is in short supply (natural disasters, power outages, even traveling), then disposables are the better option.

But in everyday non-emergency circumstances, weaning yourself off disposables is smart. Not only does it mean you’ve adapted to the reusable versions, but you’ll always have an abundant supply on hand.

### Facing the Future

It’s ironic that disposable products were originally touted as the wave of the future. Well, we’ve seen the future (envision the typical landfill) and it isn’t pretty. Now, forward-thinking people are changing the course of their personal lives and shifting toward reusables.

There’s one more factor of reusables that should convince you of their worth: supply-chain shortages. As we face an uncertain future in America with endless products in short supply, having your own personal stock of washable or reusable replacements for

disposable products is smart.

It’s time to rediscover the wonders of handkerchiefs, the ease of cloth diapers, the efficiency of reusable canning lids, the thriftiness of bowl covers, the ease of washable feminine hygiene, the usefulness of a rag basket — and a healthier bank account once all these reusable items are in your repertoire and you’re no longer wasting money on single-use products. Over time, you’ll wonder what you ever saw in disposables. ©

**PATRICE LEWIS** is a wife, mother, homesteader, homeschooler, author, blogger, columnist, and speaker. An advocate of simple living and self-sufficiency, she has practiced and written about self-reliance and preparedness for almost 30 years. She is experienced in homestead animal husbandry and small-scale dairy production, food preservation and canning, country relocation, home-based businesses, homeschooling, personal money management, and food self-sufficiency. Follow her website [www.patricelewis.com](http://www.patricelewis.com) or blog [www.rural-revolution.com](http://www.rural-revolution.com).

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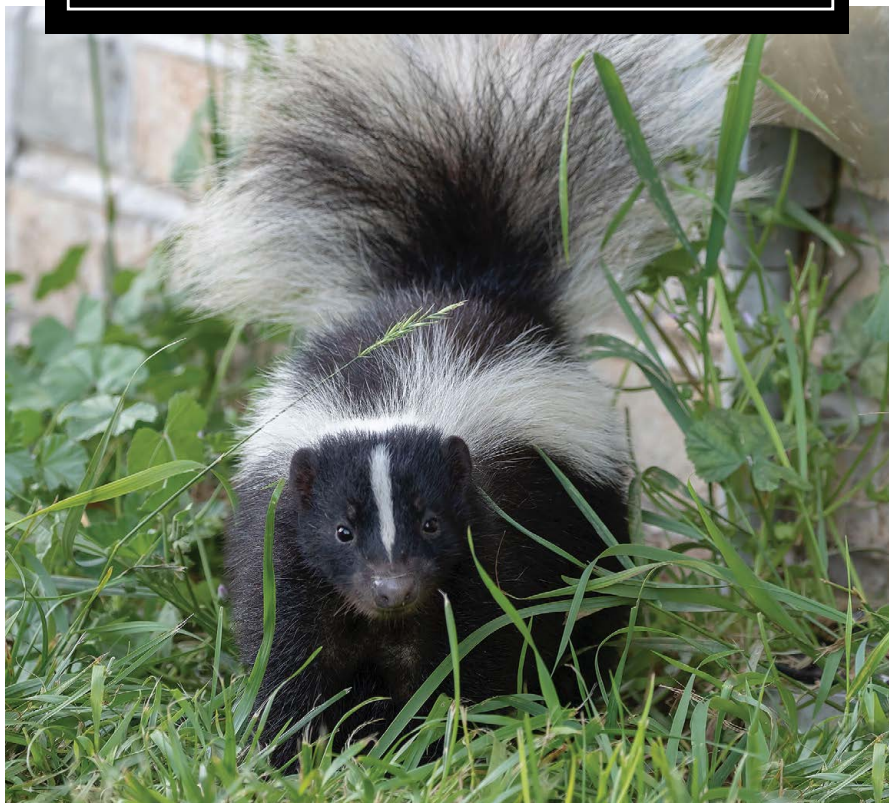
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# The Homestead Skunk

BY ANITA B. STONE



skunk and the widespread striped skunk which travels over most of our homesteads and is the most common one seen.

Should you spot a skunk on the homestead, it is noted to be non-aggressive toward humans, but it will spray any perceived enemy with its special sulfur-based perfume if it feels seriously threatened. However, both the spotted and the striped skunk are cautious about wasting their life-saving but foul-smelling compounds, since it takes about one week or more to replenish the cache. Consequently, should you meet up with a skunk and it feels threatened, it will give plenty of warning before it sprays by stomping, hissing, hand-standing, facing you, tail waving, and growling which actions tell you to stay away. Skunks relay this grand-standing action message by doing a handstand on their front feet, facing you, then bending into a “U” shape with both face and anus now poised in your direction, readying themselves to spray with alarming accuracy.

The striped skunk can spray with precision for 10 feet up to 20 feet. Besides this high degree of control, skunks can adjust the length and quality of output at will, from a spray to a well-focused stream, often aiming for eyes.

Spotted skunks are most skilled at these maneuvers. They handstand with their back vertical, shake their tail, fluff their fur, stomp, kick, and hiss in hopes of scaring you away. If their actions don’t work, they will assume the “U” position and, adjusting their “nozzles,” will continue to avert danger. Skunk odor can be detected as far as a mile and a half away.

Once you understand a skunk’s maneuvering, you can live in harmony with the critter on the homestead. You will find skunks living in an available cavity, an abandoned woodchuck or fox den

**W**HEN WE HEAR THE word, “skunk,” we don’t get a warm fuzzy feeling and are more likely to look for someplace to hide. That’s because skunks get a bad rap, some of it legitimate, but some mistaken. Surprising to many of us, skunks can be a help around the homestead, consuming quantities of harmful agricultural insects as well as various rodents.

Skunks have been around for a long time. Fossil records date from 10 to 11 million years ago, but genetic data traces them as far back as 30 to 40 million years past.

Over time, skunks have evolved

into many different and sometimes fascinating species. There remain uncertainties regarding the number of species and their classifications.

Currently, four groups of skunks are listed for the United States. These include the striped skunk, which is most common around the homestead, the spotted skunk, which is often seen, the American hog-nosed skunk, and the hooded skunk, both of the latter living only in certain areas of the southwestern United States. Although the possibility of additional skunk species is still under review, most skunks found in the United States are two species of spotted

because they would rather find a burrow already dug rather than construct their own.


Skunks are omnivores and eat whatever they can find, depending on the season. Some focus on insects and larvae, especially skunks with large front feet and strong shoulders for digging. Others have wider diet choices, including eggs, lizards, rodents, insects, grubs, beetles, amphibians, and a lot of fruits. Mushrooms and acorns are also favorite choices of skunks.

With such a diversified menu, skunks eat many unwanted and unwelcome critters around the homestead, including such destructive crop insects as Japanese beetles or yellow jackets, along with black widow spiders, scorpions, and venomous snakes. They are resistant to snake venom. They will also rid the homestead of rotting fruit, scrounging the fallen tree fruit, dispersing seeds, and eating any carrion they find.

We can be thankful that they are not pack animals and not picky eaters. They are also solitary, and can usually find enough food for themselves. Unfortunately, skunks have to protect themselves from predators, such as eagles, foxes, owls, lynx, coyotes, and pumas. Their populations wax and wane. The eastern spotted skunk is considered threatened, but not considered an endangered species or under federal protection at this time.

Like all creatures, skunks have a role to play in the ecosystem and like the rest of us, they offer positive and negative qualities. Having a skunk making itself at home under the homestead back porch may not be welcome, but their nocturnal entrance onto the homestead is a sign that homestead owners are getting some help from what is known as "nature's insecticide."

Aside from preventing garden pest overpopulation, skunks rid the environment of unwanted guests such as cockroaches, gophers, moles, snails, and rattlesnakes. Although they may dig in lawns and gardens, and can damage crops, they have their own role to play within the ecosystem. Some homesteaders consider skunks to be the local clean-up crew, with their diet of about 80% of undesirable critters, in both the field and near the home.

Perhaps if we give this non-aggressive creature a chance, it will prove to be beneficial on the homestead, and allow them to do their part in a world where nature offers a balance between human and omnivore. 

**ANITA B. STONE** is an eco-friendly journalist who nourishes her traditional habit of nature and horticulture. Her love of the land and passion for teaching at the local community college and at senior retirement centers fills her time. She is always searching for new methods of improving the environment, growing food to benefit people, domestic animals, and wildlife. She is an author and Master Gardener in North Carolina, teaching others how to farm sensibly, making life easier and fulfilling, and admits she will always stay young-at-heart, just like her grandchildren.

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## Create a POLLINATOR HAVEN

BY KRISTI COOK



Bees travel from flower to flower gathering nectar, depositing pollen throughout the garden.



The sphinx moth is an excellent pollinator. Yet their larvae, the tomato hornworm, is considered a nuisance by many. Plant extra host plants (tomatoes) for these pollinators just as you would plant extra milkweed for the monarch butterfly.

**B**EEKEEPERS ARE A VARIED SORT OF PEOPLE. There are city dwellers, country residents, beach fronters, in-betweeners — all with different tastes, preferences, likes, and dislikes. Yet, one area nearly every beekeeper agrees on is the importance of not only our honey bees but pollinators in general. And one way to help these little guys is to create a pollinator haven. But don't think you have to have a large garden or acres of land to get started. Just a simple flower pot sitting on a balcony filled with nectar and pollen-rich plants is all that is needed to get started down the path of helping local pollinators. So, start with the following basics to get your pollinator haven growing.

### Who are the Pollinators?

Bees and butterflies are the most commonly known pollinators, but hummingbirds, moths, beetles, and even some bats pollinate. The role these insects and animals fill is nothing short of a

miracle. According to EarthWatch ([earthwatch.org](http://earthwatch.org)), approximately 75% of flowering plants and at least a third of our food crops require the assistance of pollinators to reproduce and set quality fruit. Without them, our gardens would be bare and our plates dull.

Sadly, pollinator numbers are dwindling, and not just the bees. Bats, butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds are disappearing at alarming rates. Pesticide use, disease, and loss of habitat are the main culprits. Fortunately, anyone can help protect these vital creatures by providing safe food, adequate shelter, and reliable water sources.

### Provide a Safe Food Supply

While no one enjoys watching “bad bugs” decimate a favorite garden specimen, the unintended consequence of pesticide use is the death of “the good guys.” Bees either die on contact or take tainted nectar and pollen home, killing the hive. Butterflies and moths suffer the same fate while their larvae, or caterpillars, die from consuming poisoned leaves. Bats and hummingbirds ingest not only the poisoned nectar but contaminated insects, as well.

Fortunately, the best alternative to pesticide use is to plant more flowers. The more flowers you have, the more beneficial insects you will attract, which will naturally drop the pest load due to their predation of pests to a more balanced level where pollinators, pests, and flowers can all live in harmony. Over time, as has happened in my yard, the need for any pesticide, including organic options, usually becomes unnecessary.

To accomplish both goals simultaneously, fill garden spaces with native flowers of every type, size, and color with varying bloom times from early spring to late fall. Yes, you can even add a few

non-natives; check local guidelines before introducing non-natives to your area. Provide brightly colored, tubular-shaped flowers for the hummers and butterflies. Plant dainty flowers for bees, moths, and butterflies. Night bloomers entice bats, while bowl-shaped flowers appeal to beetles. Whenever possible, choose natives over hybrids, as many hybrids provide little to no usable nectar or pollen.

And don’t pull up those dandelions! Dandelions are one of the first food sources available in late winter to early spring, giving many pollinators a much-needed food source after a long winter. Clover is also a victim of the “perfect lawn” scenario. Yet, clover, like dandelion, is another of the earliest food sources in many areas and provides loads of food for honey bees and other pollinators.

### Adequate Shelter

Like all creatures, these hard workers require a safe place to call home. As you fill your space with flowers and other vegetation, you’ll also be creating safe havens. For instance, some bees choose to rest overnight in wilted squash flowers. And beetles call moist soil under closely planted beds home, while butterflies and moths happily live out their larval stage on host plants.

However, some pollinators require different types of shelter. Hummingbirds love to rest in nearby trees and shrubs and especially on vine-covered trellises that provide a lookout for competition at the hummingbird feeders. Various bees prefer to live underground or in dead trees and branches, while others enjoy drilling holes in wood and nesting in plant stem cavities. To provide for their needs, leave patches of bare earth, snags of deadwood, piles of plant debris, and old lumber throughout your landscape.



Mass plantings of Liatris, cilantro, basil, and other sources of nectar provide much-needed shelter for bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.

### Reliable Water

Scatter water sources throughout the garden or yard to provide a constant water source for all the pollinators. Reservoirs such as birdbaths, saucers, and ponds need sloping sides to allow small pollinators to safely drink from the water’s edge without risk of drowning. Small stones placed throughout drinking holes provide landing sites and sunbathing opportunities. Butterflies are especially appreciative of mud puddles that give not only moisture but also much-needed minerals. The key is to make sure water sources never go dry and offer cool water whenever possible.

No matter where we live, pollinators play an integral role in the success of our gardens and the success of the overall ecosystem. As their populations continue to decline, we can ensure their recovery by providing pesticide-free food sources, adequate shelter, and dependable water. Working together, we can save our pollinators. ©

Plant a variety of flowering plants to create a welcoming habitat for pollinators.

- Asters
- Astilbe
- Blackberry
- Bee balm
- Bellflower
- Black-Eyed Susan
- Blanket Flower
- Butterfly Weed
- Catmint
- Clover
- Crape myrtle
- Day lily
- Delphinium
- Goldenrod
- Ground ivy
- Jessamine
- Lantana
- Lavender
- Liatris
- Marigold
- Milkweed
- Mint
- Moonflower
- Native blueberry
- Oregano
- Phlox
- Pineapple sage
- Poppy
- Purple coneflower
- Redbud
- Salvia
- Sedum
- Sunflower
- Tomato
- Thyme
- Yarrow
- Zinnia

**KRISTI COOK** lives in Arkansas where every year brings something new to her family’s journey for a more sustainable lifestyle. She keeps a flock of laying hens, dairy goats, a rapidly growing apiary, a large garden, and more. When she’s not busy with the critters and veggies, you can find her sharing sustainable living skills through her workshops, articles.



# ALL THAT BUZZ ABOUT BEES

BY DOROTHY RIEKE

**P**ERHAPS THE ONLY ASSOCIATION most of us have had with honey bees is a fear of a sting. How often have we moved quickly to avoid a confrontation with a bee that probably is just going about its business?

One of our neighbors had beehives. These were always “off-limits” to me. However, I was not averse to eating peanut butter sandwiches thickly spread with sweet, rich honey.

Bees have played an important role in the history of our country. Down through the years, farmers have been raising bees to pollinate fruits and vegetables and provide honey and other bee products for our use.

## PROBLEMS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Years ago in Great Britain, economic conditions were deteriorating. Some people had no jobs and no hope of getting one. Great Britain actually seemed overpopulated for its resources. The queen and her advisors spent hours trying to solve this economic problem.

Some, in that group, were evidently aware of the organization of beehives. Why not pattern their political and social systems after the bees’ organization? After all, there were the queen, workers, and the drones. Did not society have the same? The hive was ruled by the queen; the country of Great Britain was ruled by a queen. The hive had the workers so did Great Britain have employed workers. And, of course, the hive had the drones whose job was to mate with the queen. It seemed that Great Britain, at that time, had an overload of drones who had no jobs. During hard times, hives ejected the drones. Why not do the same with those who are unemployed? At that time, emigration seemed

the answer to a difficult problem.

As it turned out, many were willing to leave Great Britain in search of better futures. Thousands boarded ships with few possessions and much hope.

## BEES IN AMERICA

Of course, bees were also transported to America, and unique kinds of beekeeping began.

After the white man with their bees arrived in America, Native Americans reportedly named the bee, “White Man’s Fly.” These people had been using honey from wild bees. They often raided these beehives by using smoke to confuse the bees. Obviously, some were stung with such tactics.

## USES FOR HONEY DURING COLONIAL DAYS

Honey was in great demand once honey bees were imported. For years, honey has been used for sore throats, digestive disorders, skin problems, hay fever, and as an antiseptic in poultices to treat cuts and burns. Honey has been used as a salve to heal burns and prevent infections for thousands of years. Recent medical news reports that honey sterilizes wounds and promotes healing and also reduces pain, odor, and wound size.

## COLONIAL BEEKEEPING METHODS

Colonial beekeeping was accomplished in several ways. Often the colonists waited until the winter months when bees were too sleepy to harvest honey. Using smoke to distract the bees, they cut the comb out and drained the honey.

One of the first types of bees brought to the colonies were the Black Russians, smaller than today’s honey

bees. They were shipped to the Colonies in skeps or woven baskets. Later the colonists made tree hives. They cut down trees and utilized some parts of the trunk as hives with removable tops.

The Colonists liked gum trees because of the quick-rotting centers. These hives were called "bee gums."

Later, the bees were housed in box hives, clay jars, or straw skeps. Some people made honey bees build nests in glass jars. They could then see how the hive worked.

### BEES DURING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

By the time the Revolutionary War broke out, honey bees had been in America for 133 years. Amazing but true, bees played roles in the American Revolution. The "Battle of the Bees" occurred in October of 1780 on Mc Intyre's Farm in North Carolina.

Loyalists, led by Capt. John Doyle were traveling with sixty wagons to be filled with bags of corn and oats that they would steal from farmers because they needed to replenish their supplies.

A young boy told the McIntyre family that the enemies were coming to take their crops. The patriots hid on the farm and waited for the arrival of the British. As the British gathered the stock and began bagging the grain, some beehives were accidentally tipped over. As the bees attacked, so did the colonists. Eight loyalists were killed; 12 were wounded. Yelling, stinging, and confusion reigned until the British retreated.

Another story is about Charity Crabtree, a Philadelphia beekeeper. She kept soldiers busy by beating her bee skeps with a stick. Angry bees stung the Redcoats making them retreat. Then, she left to warn George Washington of an attack. Another version of this legend is that Charity, a Quaker young girl, was trying to leave to tell Washington of an attack on the fort

when the British soldiers arrived. The story is that she upset her beehives and escaped on her horse to warn Washington.

Of course, in defense, honey bees will attack. Because of these incidents during the Revolutionary War, bees have earned a place in America's history.

It is said that Washington commented, "Neither you nor

your bees shall be forgotten when our country is at peace again. It was the cackling geese that saved Rome, but it was the bees that saved America." This quote was in regard to Charity's actions.

It is also recorded that on Christmas night, December 25, 1776, George Washington and his troops were crossing the ice-clad Delaware River during a winter



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storm. According to reports, George sat on an empty box once used as a beehive. Of course, it was winter. His mind was undoubtedly upon the coming fight. We assume that box was now empty; or if it was not, the bees were inactive during that cold winter weather. Evidently, he was not stung that cold winter evening.

**BEEES IN RECENT DAYS**

Down through the years, bees have been especially beneficial. For some time, honey has been used in place of sugar. Most of us had experience with that during World War II. Beeswax is used for making shoe polishes, lipsticks, candles, and even to coat the insides of wine bottles. Years ago, and perhaps today in some locations, mead, an alcoholic beverage, was made with honey. Because of the popularity of bees and honey, a beehive was featured on coins.

Of course, beekeeping has changed since the Colonial days. Modern hives are easier and safer when harvesting honey, and the bees survive. Today, also, bees generally live through the winter with adequate food. Years ago, the hives would be cleared of honey leaving the bees to starve.

Today, honey continues to be a valued item used in many ways. The enzymes, minerals, and vitamins in honey are especially healthful. It is the only food source that contains Pinocembrin, an antioxidant associated with improving brain function.

Yes, honey bees and honey have invaded our lives to assist in better living and better ways. However, honey bees are in danger today perhaps because of Colony Collapse Disorder. Because honey bees pollinate over one hundred different crops, they are extremely important to worldwide agriculture. One-third of what is eaten is pollinated by bees. Unfortunately, the most delicious crops adding "a special taste" will disappear if the bees aren't active. The USDA recently announced that they will be supplying a subsidy toward saving honey bees. Let's do all we can to see that bees are protected in our country. ©

**DOROTHY RIEKE**, living in southeast Nebraska, is married to Kenneth and has one daughter. She has lived on farms all her life and has raised both chickens and turkeys.

**SOURCES**

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Beekeeping is truly a one-of-a-kind hobby! Here are some of the perks you'll get with bees you won't find with traditional livestock and poultry.

## 1 MINIMAL WINTER WORK

If the beekeeper has helped the colony store plenty of food and has addressed pest, predator and disease issues, there is little to do in winter.

## 2 BEES MAKE HONEY AND MORE

Bees make more honey than they need to survive a winter on their own. They share the surplus with the beekeeper. You can also use byproducts like beeswax, propolis, and royal jelly for candles, soaps, and more. You don't need to harm your bees to harvest these products.

## 3 HONEY BEES POLLINATE

Honey bees' main foods are nectar and pollen collected as they fly from flower to flower. Their hairy little bodies pick up the sticky pollen from flowers. This is the pollen that then transfers to the sticky stigma on another flower and pollination occurs.

## 4 RELATIVELY COST-EFFECTIVE EQUIPMENT

While your initial setup takes a few bucks, beekeeping equipment is far less expensive than other farm or agricultural equipment. A hive of honey bees doesn't require oil, gasoline, diesel or anything else to run.

## 5 ROOM TO GROW

If you produce too many colonies for your backyard, then unlike cows or something else big, you can simply ask a neighbor or friend if you can put some of your valuable honey bees on his property. No land to buy or rent.

## 6 NO FENCING CALAMITIES

Unlike cows, goats, sheep, pigs, and other farm inhabitants, bees don't require fencing nor will they knock down or otherwise destroy your fencing.

## 7 BEES WORK FOR NEXT TO NOTHING

Honey bees feed themselves — a honey bee can forage for nectar and pollen efficiently in a 2- to 2½-mile radius of their colony — and clean up after themselves as well.

## 8 SLEEP IN AND GO ON VACATION

You don't have to get up at 2:00 in the morning to check if they are hatching or calving. You can also go on a reasonable vacation without commissioning a bee sitter.

## 9 FUN FOR CITY DWELLERS, TOO

You don't have to own large tracts of your own land or barns. You can live on a small plot right in the city and keep your own bees, pending you follow all local regulations and your setup is respectful of neighbors.

## 10 HONEY BEES ARE THE KEYSTONE FUNDAMENTAL POLLINATOR SPECIES

Honey bees produce an almost perfect energy food — honey. You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect beekeeper. Honey bees do not necessarily require the management skills of a learned beekeeper for optimum results.

# EDIBLE LANDSCAPING IDEAS FOR ANY YARD

Have the Best Yard in  
Your Neighborhood  
by Landscaping With  
Edibles

BY RHONDA CRANK



**I**N THE PRESENT STATE OF our economy and breaks in the food supply chain, more and more people are looking for edible landscaping ideas. Landscaping with edibles is finding its place in neighborhoods and homesteads alike as people look for ways to help feed their families.

## What Does Edible Landscaping Mean?

Edible landscaping is simply replacing ornamental shrubs, flowers, and plants with those that produce food. Some neighborhoods have HOA rules against having a garden bed in the front lawn, but many are finding a way around that by using edible landscaping ideas to produce food.

There are many beautiful plants that are edible. When designing your ideal homesteading land or your lawn in town, there are many options to have a gorgeous landscape.

## Why Plant Edible Landscaping?

### 1) Planting perennials provides produce for years to come.

Perennial plants will produce year after year without having to be replanted. Fruit trees, nut trees, berry bushes, many herbs and flowers, and even a few vegetables are perennial plants.

### 2) Planting annuals provide a variety.

Annual plants are those which must be replanted every year to produce because they only last one season. Using annuals in edible

landscaping allows you to plant the things you liked last year and choose something new you would like to try. This adds a variety of color, texture, and nutrition to your family's diet.

### 3) Edible landscaping provides a beautiful view.

All plants flower to produce their fruit. Many provide spectacular displays of color, scents, and landscape interest. Some of my favorite things in the garden are edible flowers. They add beauty, insect repellent, beneficial insect attraction, and food.

#### 4) An edible landscape provides pleasure.

Gardening of any kind brings pleasure to the gardener. Picking the garden spot, prepping the soil, choosing the plants, planning the layout, planting the seeds, tending the plants, and reaping the harvest; each step is a journey of pleasure. There is always something to learn when you're a gardener.

#### What bushes are edible?

We won't exhaust the list here, but I will share a few of the more common bushes used in edible landscaping.

#### BLUEBERRY BUSHES

These are usually the first ones people think of. They are productive the second year. If your space is tight, they do well in elevated planter boxes. Blueberries are one of the most nutritious fruits you can grow. They freeze well, are their sweetest when dehydrated, and make excellent jams, jellies, and wine.

#### RUGOSA ROSE BUSHES

These are versatile and one of my favorites. They can grow up to eight feet tall if unpruned. Edible flowers will enchant you with their fragrance. The petals of the rose are delicious in salads and make wonderful teas.

The rose hips, which are left after the bush has finished flowering in the fall, are one of the highest sources of vitamin C available. They can be eaten raw or dehydrated for later use.

Store them in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. Use them for teas and other hot beverages to boost the immune system. They make excellent jams and jellies. They also serve as a nice privacy or protective barrier.

#### RASPBERRY BUSHES

Easy-to-grow and if you choose an ever-bearing variety you will



have a longer harvest starting in mid-summer right up to the first frost. They make delicious jams and jellies.

Just a word of caution, do not plant raspberry bushes within at least 100 feet of blackberry bushes. They share common diseases carried by certain mites and aphids.

#### ELDERBERRY BUSHES

Believe it or not, these make beautiful edible landscaping. They can reach 20 feet tall if left untrimmed. In the spring, you will be dazzled by an amazing display of star-shaped white flowers which will develop dark purple fruits.

In the fall, you'll be rewarded with brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows in full spectrum. The elderberry is one of the best immune-boosting berries available. They make excellent teas, syrups, wine, and elixirs.

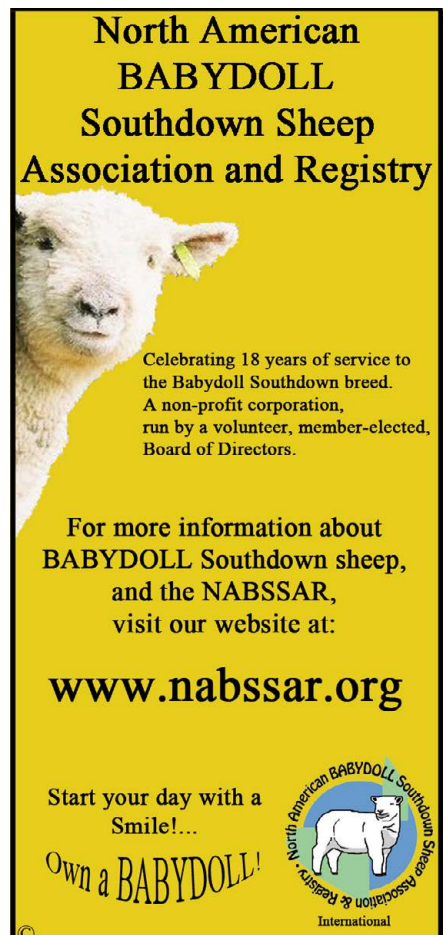
Dehydrate and crush into powder for long-term storage. They freeze well if you want to make syrups or wine.

#### ROSEMARY

Most people don't think of rosemary as a bush because it is usually grown in an herb garden or in a container for kitchen use. However, it can get three feet tall and five feet wide in warm climates

where it can be planted in the ground as a shrub.

Rosemary is an evergreen making it an anchor for edible landscaping ideas. The needles can be used fresh in almost any recipe. It's a fragrant attractant for beneficial insects.



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### Fruit and Nut Trees in Edible Landscaping

Fruit and nut trees are a long-term investment. Dwarf varieties can start producing in one to three years while standard varieties can take five to seven years to produce a main crop. Once they start producing, they will produce for 30 years and longer if well cared for.

Choose the spot you plant them carefully. Once they have put down a root system, transplanting may kill them and at the very least it will stunt their growth and production.

Make sure to check the cross-pollination needs of your trees. Many varieties require a male and female or another variety in the same family to produce fruit. There are several self-pollinating varieties to choose from which is helpful if you are limited on space.

Some of the more popular fruit and nut trees are pecan, walnut, peach, apple, fig, satsuma, pomegranate, orange, mulberry, banana, and avocado.

### Edible Flowers for Landscaping

Planting edible flowers is an ancient part of gardening. Many people, like myself, plant flowers that are edible, serve as beneficial

insect attractants, and/or insect repellants. Who doesn't love dual-purpose things?

#### MARIGOLDS

Annual, edible flower often the first thought of, but not all varieties have a pleasant flavor. The tasty varieties have a citrusy tang with peppery undertones. Most people use them in salads or sprinkled over egg dishes. Perfect insect repellent.

#### NASTURTIUM

One of my personal favorites. This annual flower comes in a variety of breathtaking colors. The leaves and flowers are edible with a mild peppery flavor but not truly spicy. They are delicious on pizza, in salads, or used as any lettuce would be. Great insect repellent.

#### BALSAM

This annual flower is also known as the "touch-me-not" because their mature seed pods will explode at the slightest touch or breeze. The beautiful flowers and leaves are

edible. The greens have a taste reminiscent of mustard greens. They are said to be high in vitamin C and their calcium content is similar to whole milk. Marvelous beneficial insect attractant.

#### CHAMOMILE

A cheery, annual plant known for its medicinal properties. While both Roman and German varieties are edible, German chamomile is most preferred because of its sweet taste. The flavor is akin to apple blossom.

When the flowers look like a shuttlecock, they are the most potent and are ready for harvest. Both fresh and dried flowers are used in healthy teas, desserts, hot drinks, popsicles, salves ... great insect repellent in the garden.

#### CALENDULA

Annual flower which comes in a rainbow of orange, yellow, peachy, and strawberry colors. Petals and leaves are used medicinally. They tend to taste bitter. Most often used in herbal medicine but it is enjoyed in soups, salads, and rice dishes. Works well as an insect repellent.

#### *A note on edible flower safety:*

Only eat organic flowers. Many plants purchased at a nursery are treated with herbicides and/or pesticides to prolong their shelf life before purchase. This makes them unsafe for human consumption. Because these flowers grow easily from seeds, it's recommended to add them to your edible landscape by planting their seeds.

#### Tips for Edible Landscaping

There are a few gardening tips that are applicable to all edible landscaping.

1. Choose disease-resistant plants when possible. Within plant families, some varieties are more resistant than others.



**NASTURTIUM**



**BALSAM**

2. Know which plant diseases are prevalent in your area and choose plants resistant to them. Your local extension office, farm and garden supply, or local gardeners can help you with this information.

3. Know your gardening zone and choose plants recommended for your area. This will save time, energy, and money.

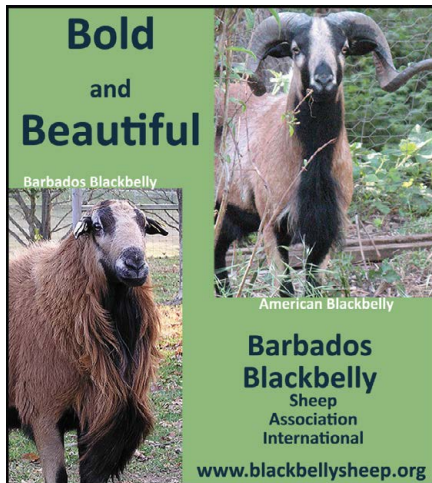
4. Plant what you like to eat. Planting something in your edible landscape which you and your family won't eat is a waste of time, money, and energy.

5. Be sure you know the regulations for any HOA you may be a part of.

6. Draw out your edible landscaping ideas in your garden journal. Be sure to consider sun and shade requirements, soil needs, and the height of plants in relation to one another. Adjust as many times as you need to before planting.

Now that you have the basics, what edible landscaping ideas will you put to work in your yard? 🌱

**RHONDA CRANK** is a Southern-born farm girl. Going barefoot in the garden, working with her animals, and all things homesteading bring her joy. She and her husband are organic homesteaders using wisdom and skills their grandparents taught them, with a little modern ingenuity mixed in. In 2014, Rhonda created The Farmer's Lamp in response to the many questions they were being asked about their lifestyle. Her passion is sharing their experience and how-to-knowledge through her website, books, videos, and articles. They desire to help others on their own homesteading journey.



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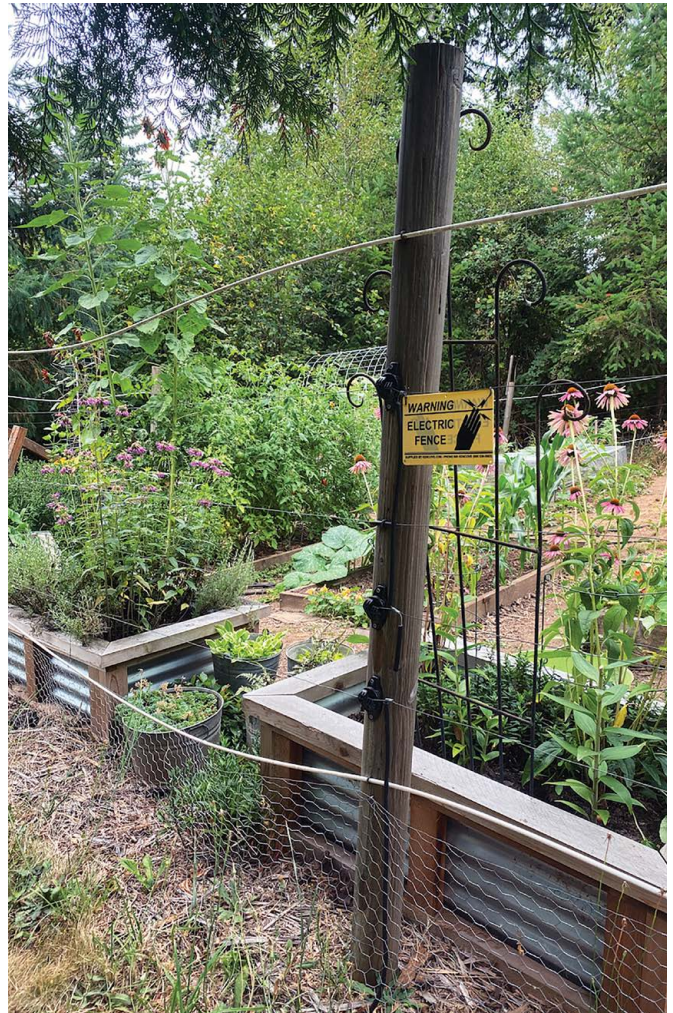
# CRITTER PROOFING YOUR GARDEN

BY STACY BENJAMIN

THERE'S NOTHING BETTER than the sense of satisfaction that comes from growing your own food — and nothing worse than the feeling of disappointment when a critter eats the fruits of your labor before you do! After moving to a rural area after years of gardening in a city backyard where the only garden pests I had to worry about were chickens, it wasn't long before I got a crash course in all the wildlife that are only too happy to eat your garden down to nothing! In addition to deer and songbirds which are common garden pests, we've also had to contend with everything from rabbits to squirrels, voles, and chipmunks. As much as I enjoy living close to nature and getting to see wildlife up close on a regular basis, I've come to realize that the cutest critters can be the biggest pests! Here are some of the steps that we've taken to protect our garden to ensure that we get to reap the rewards of our labor.

## DEER FENCING

Installing an electric fence was the first measure we took to protect our garden from the deer. A deer fence needs to be a minimum of six feet high, with the strands of wire placed close enough together so that the deer can't squeeze through — trust me on this because it does happen! Our fence is six feet high with multiple strands of electric wire alternated with vinyl-coated cable spaced about eight inches apart. Our fence is powered by a solar charger, and it's pretty



Electric deer fence constructed with several strands of hot wires and vinyl coated cables for visibility.

low-maintenance. It is important to remember to keep it turned on and tighten up the wires if they sag over time. Deer are quick to get past your defenses when they see an opportunity, and it only takes one slip-up to see the surprising amount of damage they can wreak in a short time should they get into your garden.

I've also tried protecting a few small garden beds located outside the electric deer fence by wrapping them with thin woven deer netting, and my advice to you is don't even bother with that because the deer can chew right through it. As an added layer of protection, we also have fencing around our chicken and turkey flocks, and they are well away from our garden. If you have a free-range flock or some high flyers, you may find that a six-foot high deer fence is not tall enough to keep everyone out.

## BIRD NETTING AND CAGES

Raspberries and blueberries were two of the first things I planted in our newly fenced garden, and



Cute but unwelcome garden visitors that squeezed through the electric fence.



The thin woven type of deer netting is easily chewed through by deer.



Raspberry beds protected with bird netting.

I couldn't wait for those first summer harvests. Unfortunately, I had to compete with the hoards of marauding songbirds that I would frequently see flying around the farm with berry-juice-stained beaks! We tried two methods of excluding birds from our berries, and the method that I like best is the cage that was made with a series of hoops using plastic electrical conduit and covered with chicken wire. There is a door that rolls up on one side so that I can get in and access the berries. Very occasionally a small songbird will find its way into the cage, but the good thing about this design is that it's easy to let them out by opening the door and they don't get caught up in the chicken wire itself.

The other design we've used is to hang bird netting over the hoops and install landscape staples to secure the netting tightly to the ground. But it seems that no matter how hard I try to secure the netting, birds always find their way in and get caught in the net. I make it a point to go up to the garden every morning and evening to check if anyone is caught inside or in the net, and I can usually manage to free them without too much trouble. This method is a bit easier to install, but it does pose a greater risk to birds, which is why I prefer the chicken wire cage method.



Voles are a constant pest in the potato beds.

### **RABBITS AND RODENTS**

It wasn't long before I realized that a strand-style electric fence wasn't going to keep all four-legged critters out. The lowest strand of wire is about 10 inches from the ground, which leaves easy access for rabbits, squirrels, and chipmunks. We added two-foot-high chicken wire around the bottom of the fence (after first trying one-foot-high chicken wire with not much success), and the two-foot-high chicken wire has



A berry cage constructed with chicken wire.



Strawberry bed protected with hardware cloth to keep out smaller rodents.

worked to keep the rabbits out. I also made small round cages using half-inch hardware cloth to protect some of my smaller transplants which worked fairly well, but making these individual cages is more labor-intensive than wrapping the base of the electric fence.

Even with the added layer of protection provided by the low chicken wire fence, all manner of rodents still get into the garden. It seems like every year they go after something new, and we are constantly troubleshooting a new problem. We had mice digging up from below ground into the strawberry bed, so we lined the bottom of the bed with half-inch hardware cloth. The next year, the chipmunks started raiding the strawberry patch, so we built a lid covered with hardware cloth over the top of the bed — after first trying chicken wire and realizing the one-inch openings were not small enough to exclude the chipmunks. It's pretty labor-intensive working with hardware cloth, but it's worth the effort to protect those highly valued crops.

I've long had some critter, I suspect voles, dining on my potatoes before I dig them up. It hasn't been enough of a problem to bother doing anything about, but last summer ground squirrels suddenly discovered my garden and began digging up from below in several of my raised beds. Combine that with the Douglas squirrels digging down into the beds from above, and enough was enough! I tried to start a fall garden from seed, only to be thwarted by digging everywhere. I am slowly beginning the process of using vinyl-coated steel hex wire (similar to chicken wire but a little sturdier) to line the bottom of a few of the raised beds that had the most activity this year, and I also put a layer of wire over the top of the beds. We'll see how this works out next year, and what new problem I find myself dealing with because I know it will be something! 🌱

**STACY BENJAMIN** lives on four and a half acres in St. Helens, Oregon with her husband and her flock of four dozen-ish chickens and heritage Narragansett turkeys. She is an avid gardener who enjoys preserving her garden harvest, as well as making handmade soaps and other natural products. Find her on Instagram @5farmoregon and @5farmsoap and on her website [www.5farm.com](http://www.5farm.com).

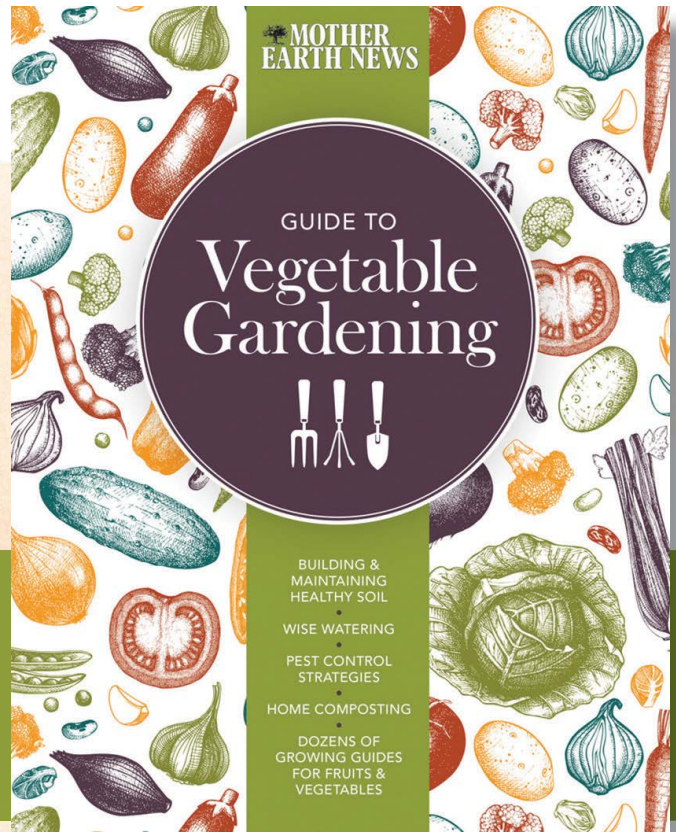
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# AQUAPONIC GARDENING FOR HOMESTEADERS

BY ANITA B. STONE



**A**QUAPONICS COULD be one of the top-notch methods for homesteaders. Why? Because it is a simple agricultural system that can be placed almost anywhere: in your backyard, in a greenhouse, or indoors. And it operates through a completely natural process that mimics the functioning of lakes, rivers, and other natural waters.

Aquaponics is an integrated, combined plant and fish system where one element benefits the other. The system utilizes both aquaculture and hydroponics, which when combined, results in a symbiotic process that

builds an effective nutrient exchange very much the same as in any natural ecosystem.

The general concept for the construction of an aquaponics system is not complicated and is open to many different configurations, depending on the intent and scope of the builder.

Simply put, the four primary components are fish, water, bacteria, and plants. Fish are placed in a fifth component — a water container — where their byproducts interact with bacteria, which transform the waste into plant-available nutrients. The water is then provided to plants and the plants, in turn, help clean

and revitalize the water to be safely returned to the tank. Plants grown in this cyclical arrangement use 90% less water than those raised in traditional systems and grow three times faster than is characteristic of other gardening methods. The result is a highly flexible, self-contained, and productive system, with the best part being that you get to harvest both fish and plants from one garden, all without the use of artificial fertilizers or pesticides.

Construction of any of the possible types of systems requires specific information depending on which fish are chosen, their requirements, the type and size of

the tank, and the irrigation method. In one commonly used system, after the fish are established, plants are placed in a "growing bed" which is elevated above the fish tank, usually on a flat board. The growing bed is filled with a growing media, which supports the plant structure and aids in keeping the water clean.

This media can be of several types, such as expanded shale, coconut fiber, rice husk, perlite, clay pebbles, lava rock, or other available substances. The tank water can be carried to the plants by hand, or in larger operations through a connection of pipes with the installation of a pump. The water returning to the tank is automatically rejuvenated by the activity of the plant roots as they remove nitrogen from the water, as well as by the filtering action of the growing medium.

Aeration of the water occurs as it flows through the medium and air space before returning to the fish via gravity or by pump action.

Except for the addition of food for the fish, aquaponics is a closed system where the water can be recirculated indefinitely needing only to be topped off when evaporation and transpiration from plants lowers the level. Aside from the above description, known as the "media-filled bed system," there are numerous other possible arrangements.

One other method is a vertical design which allows a large amount of food to be grown in a small space. In this design, plants are stacked on top of each other in a tower system and water from the tank is pumped to the top and flows through wicking material from which plants absorb water and nutrients.

Another frequently used design uses rafts, in which several platforms made of tubing float on top of the fish tank. Plants are singly placed in cups on the tubes through which water from the fish tank is piped. Roots from the plants dangle

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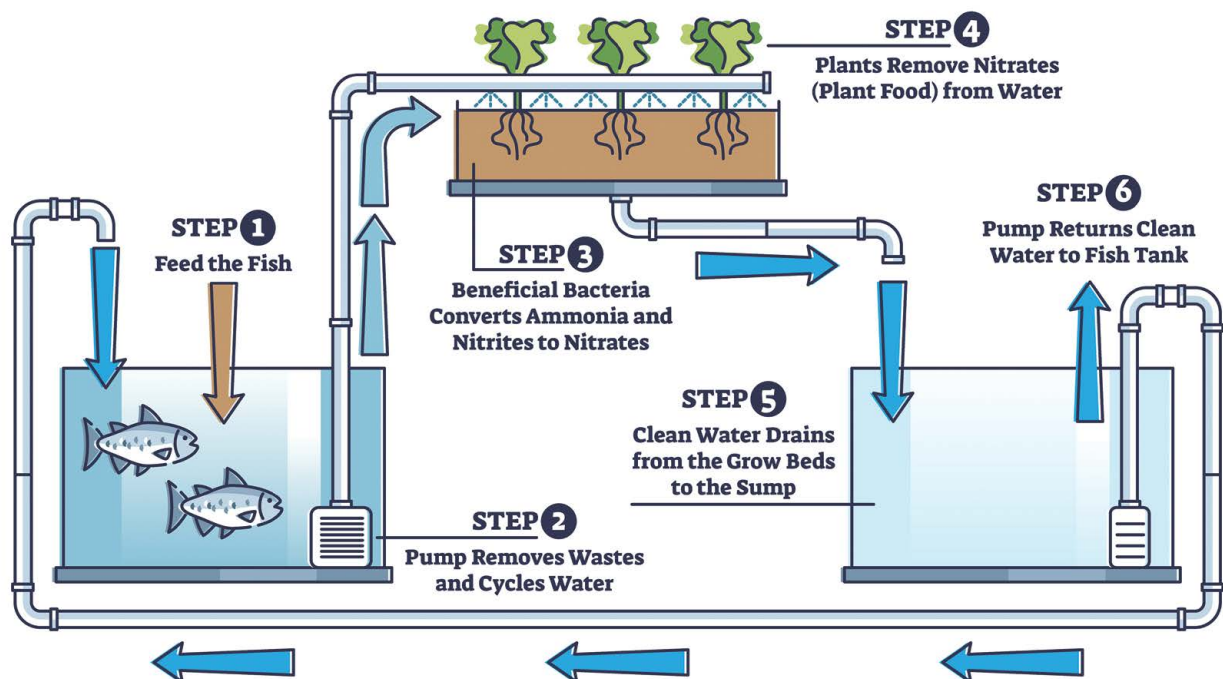
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## AQUAPONICS



in the water to be bathed and fed. In this system, roots are only partially submerged, leaving room for aeration. A healthy pH level in the aquaponics system is 6.7 to 7.0.

Although some technical issues, such as water pH need to be monitored, the system is a highly flexible, "self-cleaning" solution to growing plants.

An aquaponics system offers numerous designs since the general theory and primary components can be assembled to suit individual circumstances and purposes. Additionally, the components do not need to be purchased as specifically made for such a system; fish tanks, for instance, can be made in any size, preferably round to facilitate circulation of waste, or of any material such as plastic tubs, glass fish tanks, barrels, or even

non-waterproof containers lined with plastic pond-liner material.

A single tank can be used or several smaller ones. Placement of tanks can be indoors or out; if placed outdoors, a south-facing location with at least six hours of sunlight is required.

Greenhouses are handy because of temperature control and protection from intruders. If the tank is indoors, a grow light for both the fish and plants, plus a heat source will be necessary.

Occasionally, a permanent base can be made for the tank to keep it stabilized and firmly in place. The fish require specific conditions to survive and thrive. If chlorinated water is used, wait a week before introducing the fish to allow the chlorine to dissipate, and an average of one fish per 10 gallons of water is

recommended to give the fish room to circulate. If an outdoor area is used, the fish can be stocked as soon as the outdoor temperature reaches 70 degrees F.

Use disease-resistant fish that fit your needs and space. You can use ornamental fish such as Koi or goldfish, tilapia, or game fish such as bass, catfish, and bluegill. Trays for planters are easily obtainable, either repurposed, made from household plastic containers, or bought from fish specialty enterprises.

Ideally, any of the planters should be six to 10 inches deep much like raised vegetable beds. The establishment of beneficial bacteria will occur naturally but will require a few days of circulation to become adequate for the system to be self-functioning. An aerator may be needed for larger projects.

In conclusion, aquaponics is remarkable in that it is a closed system that conserves water, is organic, and closely mimics a natural ecosystem, requiring only that the fish be fed. A little research on the internet, reading fish books, or speaking with fish experts can help avoid unnecessary oversights. For some fish, such as tilapia, food like duckweed can be homegrown. Make sure the water level and a healthy balance of components are checked regularly.

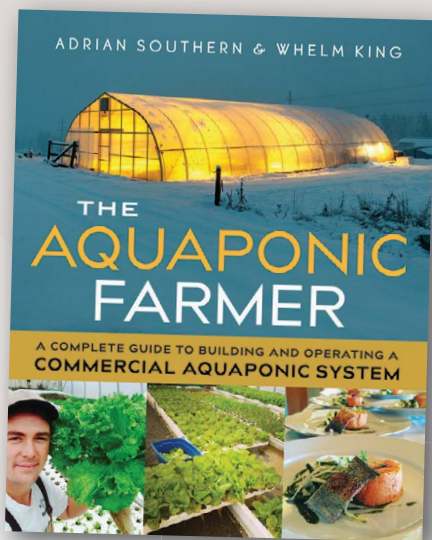
An aquaponics system is cost-effective, with no waste and no need for harmful chemicals. Growing leafy greens, lettuces, and herbs are great choices for new aquaponics experimenters, and a small system, watered by hand, can be set up in a kitchen or bedroom. Where there is light, every homesteader can participate in a rather miraculous homemade ecosystem's functioning and enjoy all the products as a result. ©

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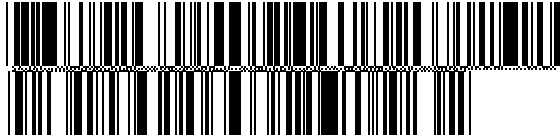
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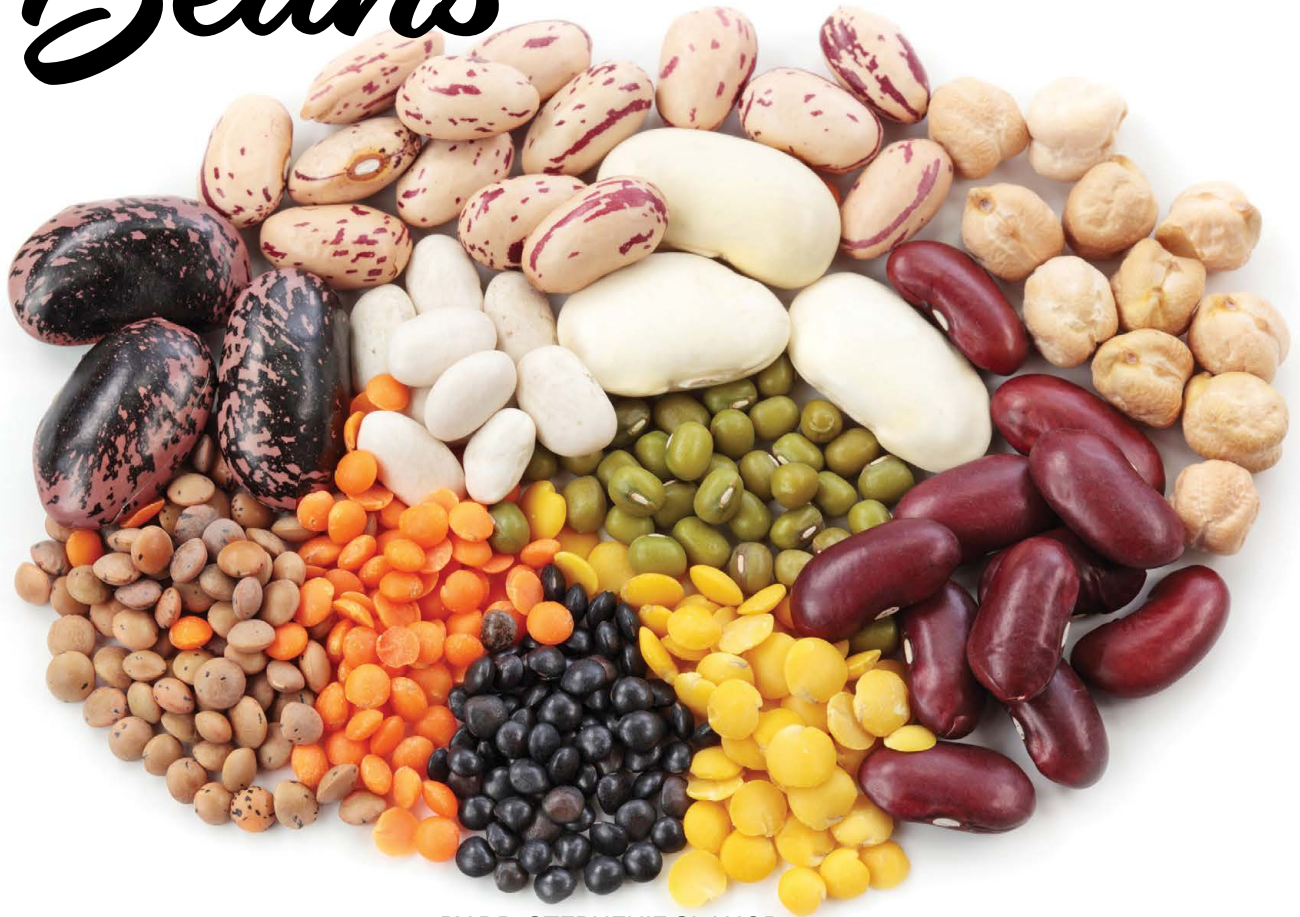
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# ALL ABOUT Beans



BY DR. STEPHENIE SLAHOR

**E**VEN IN PREHISTORIC TIMES, our ancestors were enjoying the flavor and nutrition of beans. For thousands of years, beans have served us as a source of good nutrition, especially in protein, B vitamins, and fiber.

Grown in many areas and gardens of America, beans are a popular favorite for flavor and versatility for casseroles, chili, side dishes, soups, and stews. Pole beans grow tall and get their name because they need support poles as they grow. Runner beans also grow fairly tall and may also need support to prevent them from falling over, but they tolerate cooler temperatures than most pole beans. Bush beans grow like a bush, of course, so they won't

need support poles. But they may need protection from strong winds or too much sunlight. Figure on about six hours of sunshine or a site with partial shade for most bean plants.

To decide which beans might be right for your garden and table, here is a list of some of the varieties, their characteristics, and their best uses. While you can use some beans like green beans in their fresh-picked state, many, if not most, beans need to be dried before you harvest them. Most beans to be dried should be left alone until the beans in the individual pod dry and "rattle" inside.

For better results in sprouting, soak the beans overnight before

planting. When planting beans, put the bean's "eye" downward, about two inches deep. Beans do better when planted directly into the soil so they have room to spread, rather than being confined to a pot. If the soil is particularly saturated with moisture, wait a few days so the beans don't rot. Choose a balanced fertilizer for a once-a-month dose, but one with not too much nitrogen. Your bean plants' neighbors should NOT be onions, garlic, peppers, basil, fennel, or sunflowers. And next year, use the "bean area" for a different vegetable because the beans that were there will have fixed the nitrogen in the soil. In other words, rotate your crops!

Now, which ones?

## BLACK

These have a firm, meaty texture and a distinctive flavor. Because of their deep black color, they add “looks” as well as flavor to meals. The Condor black bean resists disease well. Zorro black beans are often canned. Zenith black beans hold their black color well, even after they’ve been boiled or canned.

## BLACK-EYE

These are a fleshy tan color with a central black spot that gives them their name. They are particularly popular in Southern cooking. Tradition says that black-eyed beans or “peas” should be eaten on New Year’s Day for good luck through the New Year.

## FAVA

Sometimes called broad beans, these need about five months to mature fully. Ianto fava beans have tall vines. Masterpiece fava beans are shorter but have large pods. Windsor favas only need about two-and-a-half months to mature.

## GARBANZO

Sometimes called a chickpea, this bean is round with a pointy end. Tan in color, it has a nut-like flavor making it an ideal addition to bean salad. Garbanzos, bean sprouts, and Italian dressing or oil and vinegar dressing make a tasty treat as a change from a lettuce-based salad.

## GREEN BEANS

Bush or pole, these popular beans are a favorite for the kids to cultivate because the beans sprout easily in about 10 days and grow quickly. Green beans are usually eaten fresh but can be canned, frozen, or pickled.

## GREAT NORTHERN

These take about 60 to 90 days to mature, but both the Matterhorn variety and the Powderhorn variety are disease resistant. They are dried after harvest and will store well.



## KIDNEY

The color and shape of this type of bean give it its name. It’s widely used for chili, bean salads, and casseroles. High in good fiber, these grow bushy and have pretty white flowers to boot! They mature after about 80 to 100 days, depending on the variety.

## LIMA

Large or small, lima beans are versatile and maybe that’s why they make up about one-tenth of the total production of America’s bean farms. Large limas keep their shape well when cooked for long periods. Small limas cook quickly and can be mashed easily. They can be eaten fresh or after drying. Two varieties are Christmas and Fordhook and both do well in hot climates.

## NAVY BEANS

These need to be dried but are ready to harvest after about 100 days. They are compact plants — something to consider if your garden space for beans is limited.

## PINK

These go well with tomato-based sauces so they’re favorites in chili or barbecue-style dishes.

## PINTO

These striped and colorful beans are much associated with Mexican fare. They can be eaten like a green bean after about 85 days,

or harvested after about 150 days when the individual beans are ready to be dried.

## SOYBEAN

In China and Japan, they are long-standing favorites, but they are relative newcomers to American gardens and dinner tables. Soybeans are about 35% protein and can be cooked, or used roasted and salted as a snack.

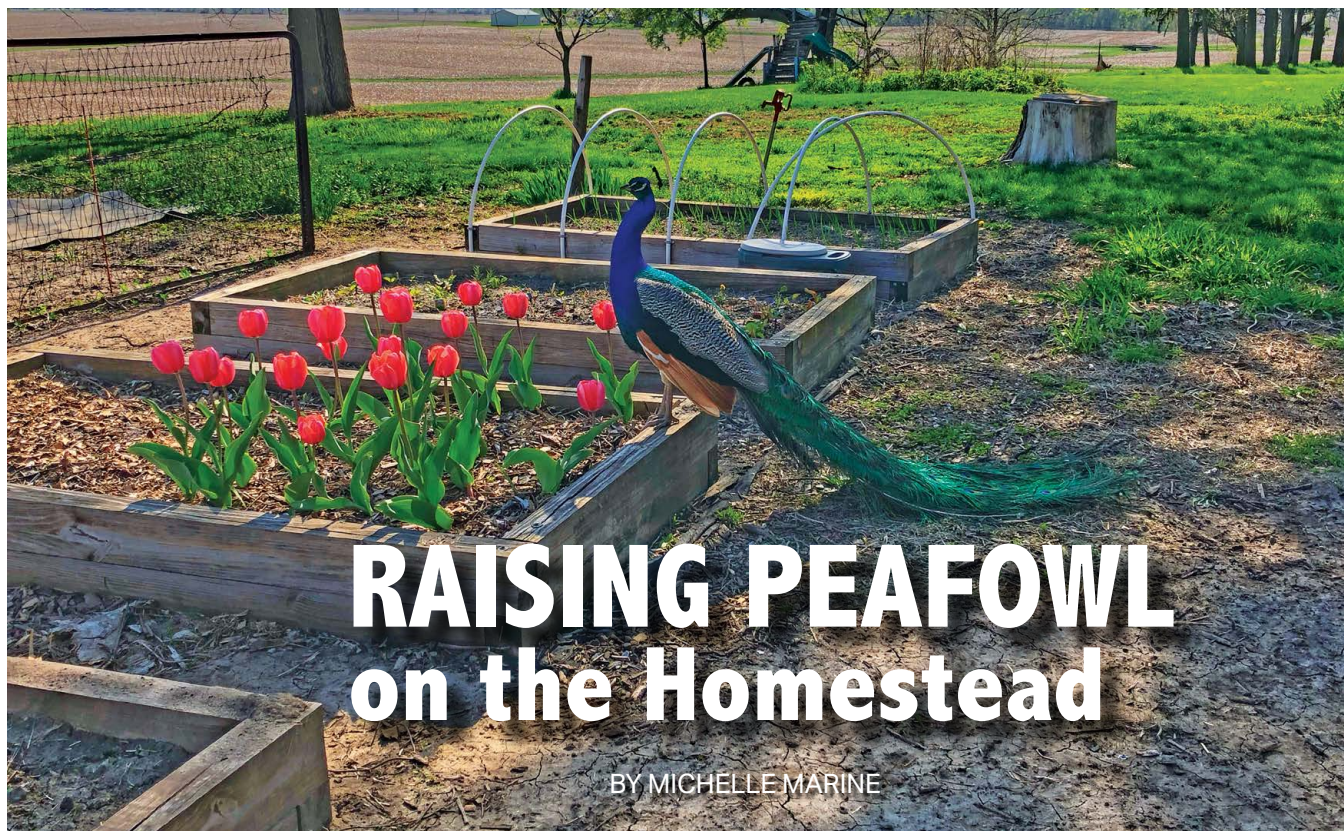
## WHITE

These are especially good for long, slow cooking in soups or other long-simmering main dishes because they hold their shape well.

Whatever the variety, beans are a good addition to the garden and the table! ©

### DR. STEPHENIE SLAHOR'S

farm and ranch background includes cattle, horses, mules, donkeys, dogs, cats, sheep, goats, rabbits, birds, chickens, geese, turkeys, and tortoises — but not necessarily all at the same time! She would be one of the first to agree that, indeed, “Variety is the spice of life!” Her degrees are a Ph.D. and a J.D., which, she says, “cost a fortune in time and money, but well worth it!”



# RAISING PEAFOWL on the Homestead

BY MICHELLE MARINE

**F**IVE YEARS AGO, OUR FAMILY WENT ON a three-week summer road trip from Iowa to Seattle and back. When we came home, we found a full-grown peacock named James Potter living in our chicken coop. He wasn't a planned addition, nor even really wanted. But he needed a home after his family moved to town, and he seemed content to stay put. So, we kept him. For about six months, he was the only bird we had on the farm apart from our tom turkey, Tarzan.

Tarzan and James shared a special love-hate bird bond that humored so many people. They followed each other around, strutted for each other, and sometimes tried to fight. They were almost always together, and they roosted very close together at night too. Watching them strut for each other was one of the funniest things I've seen!

Sadly, James got sick in the winter of 2020 and died in February. Death is part of the homestead experience, but James' death was particularly hard on the family. We all really grew to love that peacock in the years we had him. That spring, my husband gave me a new

peacock pair for my birthday. We named them Tony and Cleo and they have been amusing us ever since. Peacocks are an entrenched part of our homestead now, even though we never set out to own them.

If you're looking for natural tick control, peafowl will happily eat all kinds of bugs around the farm, including ticks.

## Peacock Facts

Peacocks, most closely related to pheasants, are beautiful, majestic birds. There are three main types of peafowl: Indian blue, Green peafowl from Myanmar and Burma, and Congo peafowl from Africa. The Indian blue variety is the most

common and is the type we have. They're winter-hardy omnivores and eat a varied diet of foraged bugs, plants, flowers, seeds, and sometimes small mammals like mice. Their tails grow in slowly as they age, and they don't reach full sexual maturity until about three years.

Technically, only the male is the peacock. The female is a peahen. Though called peafowl, many people call them all peacocks interchangeably. Male peafowl have lovely eye-feather trains that can reach five feet long by the time they're full grown. They lose these feathers each summer during their annual molt and regrow

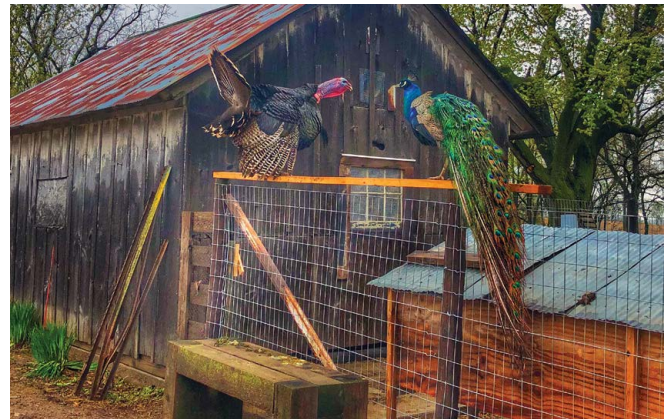
them by late winter.

In early spring they are ready for their mating ritual of fanning their tails and shaking their tail feathers. If you’ve never seen a peafowl strut, you are really missing out! They shimmy and shake with the best of them, making a noise that sounds a bit like a rattlesnake! In the typical bird fashion, the peahen is much more drab. She does not have the colorful eye feathers or the full tail, but she still struts her little brown tail in much the same manner as the peacock!

### Drawbacks of Peafowl

Peafowl aren’t very common on homesteads, and most people have a strong love or hate relationship with them. They’re known for their loud screeches, especially during mating season in the spring, and they sometimes fight their own reflections in house windows, car windows, or anything reflective. We often find them standing on our cars, and they also enjoy perching on porch railings and house roofs. Their poops are big, and they will happily deposit them everywhere, including on your car, your porch, your roof, etc.

They can be difficult to keep around and must be trained to stay put. We successfully trained ours by keeping them locked up for several months, but other people report their peafowl flying off, never to return. My biggest complaint about peafowl though, is that they will destroy your garden if they’re so inclined. They are strong flyers, so tall fences won’t necessarily keep them out, and they love to scratch for all the seeds you plant. Our female especially loves to dig up my seed potatoes and spring peas.



### What are Peafowl Good for?

With so many drawbacks, you might be wondering what on earth peafowl do to earn their keep. Obviously, it’s all perspective, but peafowl are good for some things around the farm. Collecting their feathers is a favorite pastime. The feathers can be used for crafting or an extra income source. They’re fun to use in home décor or for turning into homemade wreaths. Since they lose and regrow their feathers every single year, there are lots of opportunities to collect feathers!

Peafowl are also curious and friendly, and they can be trained. I don’t discount their amusement factor as enough to warrant their place on the farm. Watching a peacock in flight with his tail streaming out behind is beautiful to watch!

If you’re looking for natural tick control, peafowl will happily eat all kinds of bugs around the farm, including ticks. They are reputed to be good snake fighters, but I have never personally seen this. They’re also not afraid to go after small rodents like mice and rats. They’re good foragers and don’t need to be fed much — but they do like cat food and chicken food as well! 🍗

**MICHELLE MARINE** is an Eastern Iowa based freelance writer, photographer, and digital content creator living on five acres with her husband, four teens, and menagerie of birds, pigs, sheep, goats, dogs, and cats. She publishes the eco-friendly lifestyle blog *Simplify, Live, Love*, and is also the author of *How to Raise Chickens for Meat* (Skyhorse Publishing 2020).

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A broody turkey and her beautiful speckled eggs.

## Tips for Natural Brooding of Heritage Turkeys

BY STACY BENJAMIN

**W**ITH SELF-SUFFICIENCY GAINING POPULARITY, you may be considering expanding your flock beyond just chickens. Why not add heritage turkeys to your farm? Heritage turkeys provide not only a source of meat; they also produce delicious eggs for about six months out of the year and provide beauty and a never-ending source of entertainment.

### Broad-Breasted Versus Heritage Turkeys

It is important to understand the distinction between the broad-breasted turkey varieties that are the staple of Thanksgiving dinner and heritage turkeys. Broad-breasted turkey poults are sold in feed stores in the spring and are often labeled “white” or “bronze.” Broad-breasted turkeys cannot reproduce naturally because they have been selected for abnormally large breast size, hindering reproduction. In the commercial turkey industry, artificial insemination produces fertile eggs to raise the next generation of Thanksgiving turkeys. If you want to raise turkeys year after year from your flock, you will need a heritage turkey variety.

### The Definition of a Heritage Turkey

According to The Livestock Conservancy, heritage turkeys are defined by these three criteria:

- capable of reproducing through natural mating
- have a long productive outdoor lifespan
- have a slow growth rate

Heritage turkey varieties include Royal Palm, Bourbon Red, Bronze, Black, Slate, White Holland, Beltsville Small White, and Narragansett.

### Flock Size

We keep a small flock, also called a rafter, of heritage Narragansett turkeys. Our flock currently consists of one breeding tom and seven mature turkey hens. We don’t keep more than one tom year-round because I find it impossible to keep two mature toms from fighting with our set-up. We keep our flock together year-round with no separate breeding pens. You’ll want to have a few turkey hens in your flock to minimize potential injury to your hens from over-mating by the tom, as well as to make sure your tom has company while some of your turkey hens are broody or raising young. A bored tom may look to your chicken hens for company, and that may cause some problems, as you can imagine.

### Tips for Successful Natural Brooding

Although you can use an incubator to hatch turkey eggs, I prefer letting a broody turkey do the work for me. It avoids the mess of an indoor brooder, and it is a heartwarming experience watching a momma turkey with her little ones. When the conditions are right, and if you have a good momma turkey, you can expect up to a 90% hatch rate from natural brooding. Here are a few things that I’ve learned over the last several years raising poults that will improve your chances for success.

#### 1. Provide a Safe Nesting Area

It’s not uncommon for turkey hens to go broody in unsafe areas for raising poults, such as out in the relative open where a predator can easily find them. Sometimes they’ll go broody under the coop where it would be difficult for you to check on them. We have a small coop that we leave vacant most of the year except when raising poults. Turkeys don’t need anything fancy, but I recommend providing a separate nesting area, with a door that can be closed at night, to keep the soon-to-be momma

turkey and her little ones safe. Be sure to provide a soft nesting material to minimize the chances that eggs will break during the 28-day brooding period. There will usually be some breakage, so give your broody turkey a few more eggs than you are hoping to hatch, just in case.

### 2. One Broody Hen per Nest

Chickens aren't the only ones that like to share nests; turkeys do it too. It's always a cute sight to see broody turkeys sharing a nest, and it's tempted me into letting them hatch eggs together more than once. However, I have seen broody turkeys competing over eggs, and I've had some less-than-optimal hatches with more than one broody turkey in the nest. Now I resist the urge to let them share a nest, and I only allow one broody turkey in the hatching coop. I try to minimize the number of coop intrusions by fencing off the hatching coop to keep curious chickens and other turkeys from investigating when the broody momma is off the nest for her quick bathroom and food breaks. Don't be surprised if your broody turkey seems like she's



A poult on its first adventure with Momma.

on the nest for more than a day without taking a break. Turkeys are determined broodies and can set for a long time between breaks!

### 3. Give Them a Healthy Start

Turkey poults need proper nutrition early on to boost their immune system. Turkey poults grow more

quickly than chicks, and because of this, they need feed with a higher protein content than chick starter. I feed a 30% game bird starter to our poults for the first six weeks. They can then be transitioned to a turkey grower with approximately 20% protein. I also put powdered vitamins and electrolytes in their water for the

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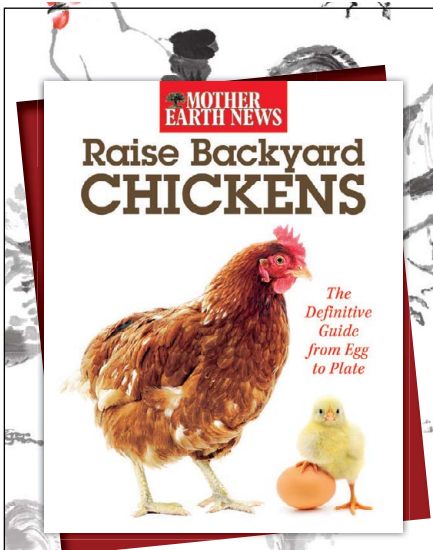
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Poults learn to fly at a young age, so provide them with lots of roosting structures.

first week or so to give them an extra boost.

**4. Minimize Stress**

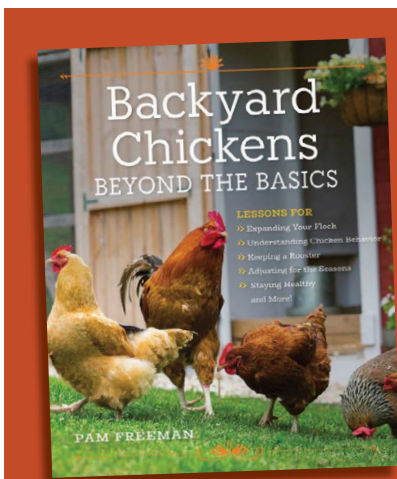
Young poults have fragile immune systems, and they can be easily chilled or stressed. If the weather is cold or rainy the first couple of weeks after they've hatched, I minimize their outdoor time by keeping their coop closed for the worst weather part of the day. While it is fun to pick up and hold

the young poults, try to avoid chasing or panicking them in your attempts to get a snuggle. Too much stress can be detrimental to them, more so than it is for chicken chicks.

**5. Provide Protection from the Flock**

Although turkeys are much larger than chickens, turkey poults are just as tiny as chicks. It's important to minimize the risk of the little ones getting stepped on. This can easily happen if the momma hen is chasing off a curious onlooker or if your tom turkey tries to get romantic with the momma after his long separation from her during her broody period. This is another reason I like to put up a temporary fence around the hatching coop to give momma turkey and her poults a safe area for them to grow up until they get a bit stronger and are ready to meet the rest of the flock. I typically take down the fence when the poults are about four weeks old.

I hope these tips help you raise your own heritage turkeys! 🍷



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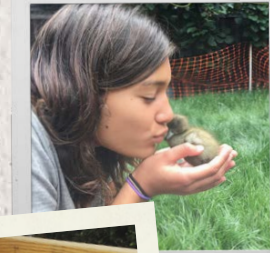


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## BREED PROFILE: PLYMOUTH ROCK

### *The Historic All-Round American Favorite*

BY TAMSIN COOPER



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**BREED:** The Plymouth Rock is most commonly known in the original Barred variety, also known as the Barred Rock.

**ORIGIN:** Developed in New England in the late 19th century, primarily from Dominique and Asiatic fowl. Genetic analysis of the White variety genome has

identified the paternal line as approximately half Dominique, a quarter Black Java, and the remainder mainly Cochin, Light Brahma, Black Minorca, and Langshan, while the maternal line was roughly half Black Java and half Cochin.

**HISTORY:** Barred chickens, with both rose and single combs, were common in the eastern United States in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the late 19th century, the rose comb was chosen for the Dominique standard. However, several breeders were interested in developing a larger version and experimented by crossing the single-combed lines with various Asiatic types. The first birds exhibited as Plymouth Rock, at the 1849 American Poultry Show, do not appear to have developed into a stable breed. Birds shown in Massachusetts in 1869 are considered the forerunners of the modern breed. These descended from a line starting in 1865 by a single-combed Dominique rooster on a Black Asiatic hen (either Cochin or Java). At the time, birds

of different origins frequently intermingled or were crossbred, so other Asiatic and European breeds likely contributed to the initial Dominique sires. This is borne out by genetic analysis. The American Poultry Association (APA) accepted the standard in 1874, but the traits were initially difficult to achieve. Crossing in Asiatic breeds for size degraded the barred pattern's clarity, although this was achieved by 1900. In addition, yellow skin and single comb are recessive traits, while the feathered shanks of Asiatic breeds have multiple genetic sources. Clean, yellow legs and the single comb had to be carefully selected to form standardized lines.

Occasionally, white chicks were hatched from Barred parents. The white plumage gene is recessive, so if two parents carry it, they will occasionally give rise to all-white birds. These offspring bear only white genes, so the trait is consistently passed on. In this way, the White variety arose in Maine in 1875 and was accepted by the APA in 1888. This line went on to form one of the bases of commercial strains.

The Barred Rock quickly became popular and remained so until the 1950s, when commercial hybrids became established in the poultry industry. Plymouth Rocks are now regaining popularity in backyards and sustainable farms due to their hardy, docile, dual-purpose nature.

#### **CONSERVATION STATUS:**

Recovering, according to The Livestock Conservancy Priority List.

**BIODIVERSITY:** A composite breed with hardy traits from Dominique, plus contributions from Asiatic breeds. Black Java and Langshan largely contribute to the chromosome where genes for immune responses mainly reside.

**DESCRIPTION:** Large-sized with long, broad backs and moderately deep, rounded breasts. Their shanks and toes are yellow, as are the beaks



Single comb of Plymouth Rock. Photo by Steph Merkle.



White Plymouth Rock pullet. Photo credit: The Livestock Conservancy.



Photo credit: The Livestock Conservancy.

of most varieties. The comb, face, wattles, and earlobes are bright red. Wattles are rounded, earlobes oblong, and both much smaller in the hen. Eyes are reddish bay, and legs are unfeathered. The original barred plumage consists of regular, well-defined light and dark bars crossing each feather evenly, giving an overall bluish appearance. The barring is produced by a dominant gene that adds light bars to dark feathers. Roosters have two copies of the gene, while hens carry only one, making males normally lighter than females. For show purposes, breeders may maintain darker and paler lines to exhibit males and females of similar shade.



Photo credit: David Goehring/flickr.com CC BY 2.0 creativecommons.org

**VARIETIES:** Originally Barred, from which the White is derived. Other varieties have been created by crossing various breeds carrying the desired traits: Buff, Silver Penciled, Partridge, Columbian, and Blue. These have gained acceptance into the APA, as well as Bantam versions of all these colors plus Black.

**SKIN COLOR:** Yellow.

**COMB:** Single, upright, ideally evenly serrated with five well-defined points, the front and rear points being smaller than the middle three. Medium-sized in male, small in female.

**POPULAR USE:** Eggs, meat.

**EGG COLOR:** Brown.

**EGG SIZE:** Large.

**PRODUCTIVITY:** Around 200 eggs per year; fast-growing to market weight of 6–8 lb.

**WEIGHT:** Hen 7.5 lb.; rooster 9.5 lb.; bantam hen 32 oz.; rooster 36 oz.

**TEMPERAMENT:** Calm, friendly, adaptable.

**ADAPTABILITY:** Perfectly suited to the backyard as they are cold-hardy and good foragers. Chicks feather out quickly, and hens make successful brooders. ©

#### SOURCES

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**TAMSIN COOPER** keeps goats and chickens on her smallholding in France, where she aspires to live as sustainably as possible. She follows the latest research on farm animal behavior and has mentored on animal welfare courses.



## Getting Your Kids Involved With 4-H and FFA

BY VIRGINIA MONTGOMERY

**T**HE FAIR SEASON WAS always filled with awe and wonder in my household, even from an early age. My father would take us through the livestock exhibits, and I would look up at the cages of poultry in amazement at the various colors and shapes of chickens. I used to beg to put a few hens in our backyard as pets. Quickly, I was shut down with the common misconception that we would need a rooster. It was in middle school that I truly found myself in a livestock setting. It started in an agriscience education classroom. I had decided I wanted to be a farmer after a visit to a dairy farm, and immediately, I signed up for an agriscience class and thus quickly bought my first rabbit, a Dutch I named Kool-Aid. I went on to win third place in the spring show, and I was hooked. FFA and 4-H had become my passion. Years later, I competed with rabbits, chickens, and a goat named Echo. Echo became my best friend and showed me the support I needed

during difficult times, as did 4-H and FFA. The lessons I learned helped form me into the person I am today. Now that I am a parent, I find myself using these lessons with my children, especially as my son grows closer to joining 4-H.

4-H and FFA are very similar programs, with the main difference being age requirements. FFA is for students from seventh grade until they graduate, though some join the collegiate level. 4-H is aged five to 18. Another difference is that FFA is sponsored through a school and 4-H is done through a county extension program with many clubs in the area. Children and teens in both clubs are encouraged to explore interests through projects. Sometimes these are agriculturally based but not always. Both programs encourage leadership, entrepreneurship, and community through their programs. Often, students choose a path of entrepreneurship and learn responsibilities associated with such. One example is market animals. Frequently, they raise an

animal to auction off for meat. The child is responsible for a record book and keeps track of expenses. Students learn the value of work through this. Both programs offer a leadership program where students learn meeting agendas and planning. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) is also heavily influenced within FFA.

FFA students will learn hands-on through an SAE project, also known as a Supervised Agriculture Experience. The projects can vary from market animals to food preparation. This provides students an opportunity to explore their interests. They can even do a research-based SAE. Regardless of the type of SAE, these can help provide an opportunity for a child to take initiative in their learning.

Being in FFA can allow students to compete in contests and even get college scholarships. FFA encourages students to pursue career paths. In my most recent agriculture classroom, we learned interview skills and built resumes.

Some advisors even helped with job placement for students.

Many programs have various certifications, including welding, where the students will receive a welding certification. This helps students by providing the ability for them to leave school with a well-paying job. Many programs encourage alternatives to college, such as trade school. Trade schools help students who are not academically inclined. They gain a broader knowledge about other options for them and receive encouragement from pursuing their passions.

When I had my first son, I had preconceived notions that he would be competing like I did within 4-H. He grew older, and now he would rather play Minecraft than work in the garden with me. He enjoys the chickens but loves to play video games. For a while, people asked if I was upset that he would not be in 4-H. I laughed. 4-H is not just about agriculture. 4-H is an agriculture and STEM program, and their main view is "learning by doing." This means a child can do just about anything they want. My son can learn programming through 4-H and enjoy his interests while doing so. Unlike other youth programs, 4-H gives the child a choice in what they pursue. Almost every interest your child may have can be pursued as a project area within 4-H.

These programs allow kids to have a choice in learning instead of being told to learn something. Children thrive in a nurturing environment where they can be themselves. 4-H is often used within a homeschool setting since it provides socialization to those kids involved. These kids are allowed to choose their interests and form their own opinions on topics and self-identity. The 4-H organization releases annual reports including statistics regarding the benefits involved in students. Many of these

show a positive impact on children.

My main project areas for both were livestock. I recommend starting small with any project and finding a mentor for your child. A mentor will be able to answer questions your child may have. A lot of times, the youth leader at either organization will have a piece of excellent knowledge in the overall projects that a student will be interested in.

Overall, youth programs are always a fantastic idea when your children are young. When involved

in programs that center around family, they are far more likely to enjoy it. I look back often at my time engaged in both programs and think fondly about my time. I encourage everyone to look into FFA through their local schools, and 4-H can be located through a local county extension office. ©

#### RESOURCES

4-H: <https://4-h.org/>

FFA: <https://www.ffa.org/>

**VIRGINIA MONTGOMERY** is a writer out of Pensacola Florida, where she is currently pursuing a Bachelor's in English Creative Writing and writing her first book. She is a 4-H alumni and looks forward to when her three children come of age to share her passions with! Her family currently raises Columbian Wyandottes and gardens.

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# American Tarentaise Cattle

BY JENNA DOOLEY



Having a docile cow that can produce high-quality milk as well as grow a heavy steer for beef on less acreage is a very valuable asset. The beef quality of American Tarentaise is also excellent. Our family has been enjoying raising our own grass-fed and grass-finished American Tarentaise beef for several years now. We couldn't be happier with the quality of their beef. Everyone who has purchased our beef raves about its flavor and tenderness of it.

## Where did this amazing breed come from?

They originated in the Tarentaise Valley in the heart of the French Alpine mountains. This breed was isolated to this valley for many years and as a result, there was very little mixing with other breeds. They also adapted to be able to forage at the high altitudes where other breeds could not.

In France, Tarentaise cattle are dairy cows with very unique and high-quality milk. They use this milk for specialty cheeses. Since they are such good foragers, they can be healthily sustained on forage and hay alone without the need for feeding them grain.

## How did they end up in America as a beef cow?

In 1972, one of the world's leading cattle scientists, Dr. Ray Woodward, imported them to Canada and then

**W**HEN I FIRST HEARD about American Tarentaise cattle back in 2015, I was intrigued to learn all about a widely unknown breed. My husband had a coworker who was raising these cattle. He was excited to share his knowledge about them. The more I learned about them, the more interested I became in having some of these beautiful cattle on my homestead. As a result, my husband and I purchased three young heifers from this coworker that year.

We now have a growing American Tarentaise herd consisting of seven cows, seven heifers, and a bull. We also have several steers that we are growing out for beef. It makes my heart so happy to look out and see these beautiful cattle grazing on my property.

We enjoy this breed for many reasons, these cattle have some great characteristics. Some of these are that they are a great option for grass-fed/finished beef operations. They are also extremely docile which makes them perfect for the family homestead. They are wonderful foragers and we have found that you can graze three Tarentaise on the same amount of land you could only graze two Angus or some other beef breeds.

These cows are great mothers. Originally a dairy breed, their milk

is 4% butterfat which is comparable to that of a Jersey cow. Also, they produce a lot more milk than other beef breeds. As a result, they raise very healthy and fast-growing calves. Healthy calves result in a lot less work and input from us as the grower/producer. Fast-growing calves mean more beef to eat or money in our pocket when it comes time to harvest or sell them. Also, the longevity of the cows is great. Having a cow that can remain healthy and produce healthy calves for the long haul is invaluable. We have one cow, in particular, that is 17 years old, and she is still healthy and raises healthy calves.

Their original breeding for dairy makes them an excellent choice for a homestead cow. On most homesteads, limited acreage can be an issue.



a year later to the United States. His goal was to find a breed that was a moderate size at maturity and would improve upon Hereford, Angus, and Shorthorn breeds.

He was specifically looking to improve milk production and quality, calving ease, fertility, udder health, pink eye resistance, and also have carcass characteristics that would uphold the beef standard. A bonus is that this breed is extremely docile.


The Tarentaise cattle fit the description of what he was looking for and the result was the very successful American Tarentaise breed. The original breed from France was auburn-colored. The breed was mostly crossed with Angus cattle resulting in having both red or black colored calves. Having the black color is valuable to some producers as black cows typically bring more money to the market here on the east coast in the U.S. While we do own both color variations, our favorites are the red colored ones for the simple reason that we think they are just beautiful cows.

In 1973, The American Tarentaise Association was formed and has worked to promote the breed and get them more recognized in the U.S. ever since. I've had the pleasure of talking to and becoming friends with the president of the association, Tabitha Baker. From my conversations with her and other American Tarentaise owners, it is abundantly clear to me that the breeders of these cattle love them dearly and are very proud of them.

While this breed is still not well known, it is beginning to gain traction and popularity. My personal hope and desire is to see more people learning about the breed and choosing them for their own homesteads or even larger cattle operations. I think the American Tarentaise is a perfect option as a 4-H breed, a beef herd, a family beef cow, or even a family milk cow.

My goal in sharing our excitement about them is to introduce others

to a wonderful breed and inspire people to look into them and decide if this is a breed for their family to try out. If you are interested in learning more, please visit the American Tarentaise

Association online at <https://americantarentaise.org/>. Please feel free to contact them as they are always more than happy to share about the breed and help those interested in learning more. 

**JENNA DOOLEY** lives on a 136-acre farm in the Blue Ridge Mountains of SW Virginia with her husband and their eight children. Jenna is passionate about raising food for her family as well as sharing about and educating others on homesteading and natural living. Jenna shares on her blog at [www.flipflopbarneyard.com](http://www.flipflopbarneyard.com) and youtube channel, The Flip Flop Barnyard.



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 A photograph of three piglets in a barn. One piglet is in the foreground, looking down at the straw bedding. Two other piglets are behind it, one looking towards the camera. The barn has wooden walls and a large wooden structure on the left.
 

# BRINGING HOME YOUR FEEDER PIGS

BY JODI CRONAUER

**T**HE DAY HAS COME. Your feeder pigs are ready to be picked up. But are you ready? Most pigs are weaned and ready to go home with their new owners between four to 12 weeks of age. Knowing what age your pigs will be and how big they are at the time you pick them up is important knowledge to have prior to picking them up.

Some additional and key factors to consider are the time of year your pigs will be ready and what the weather conditions will be like. Your shelter areas and bedding will vary greatly if your pigs will be coming home to you in February or in May. Where you live in the United States will also impact all of your preparations and decisions. In the southern states, where it does not get as cold, there will be less concern about warmth for the pigs as much as immediate shade and wallows.

If you get feeder pigs each year, then you more than likely have shelters and waters already in place, you know how much and what type of feed you need, and you have their pens or pastures already in place. But, if you are just getting into raising your own feeders for pork, you will have a lot to get ready. The most crucial decision should be what breed of pig is going to work the best for you on your property. Researching the pros and cons and then deciding on

Most feeders start out between 20-40 pounds and will be butchered between 230-275 pounds.

the breed that fits best is going to make the next few months or a year much more enjoyable. Once you have decided on the breed, you will

need to determine the best shelter for your new pigs. Keep in mind that most feeders start out between 20-40 pounds and will be butchered between 230-275 pounds. Getting to this weight will take anywhere from five to 11 months depending on the breed. Some breeds, like the Kunekune pigs or the American Guinea hogs, mature to a smaller size and take a little longer to reach their butcher weight, so knowing your goal is essential.

Your shelter should be something that works from the time of purchase all the way through to butcher. Some good examples are A-frame shelters, calf hutches, Quonset huts, or stall-type areas. The best shelter is going to be the one that provides the best shelter and warmth for your pigs.

Living in northern Wisconsin, the stall-type setting does not provide ideal warmth throughout the frigid winter months but could work well

in the warmer, southern states. The A-frame and calf hutches are both small enough to allow the pigs to basically heat themselves. The heat that they give off rises to the peak and then comes right back down on top of them creating their own warmth. In a stall or a Quonset-type building, there is too much rise to the heat, and it just dissipates above the pigs. This works great in the warmer states where they do not want or need that additional heat but is not ideal in the colder states during the colder months. Bedding is going to be needed if your weather is cold or cooler. Straw works the best for loft and keeping your pigs warm. Hay can be used but does not provide the loft of straw.

Another important item to have already figured out prior to picking the pigs up is feed. Do the pigs you are purchasing eat free-choice feed or do they get hand-fed? Do they eat hay and if so, what kind works best for this type of pig? Do the pigs require additional minerals in their diet? Can you purchase the feed they are already used to at the same mill as the breeder? If hand feeding, how much is fed at each feeding? And, is the feed being fed now ground or pelleted? Having the correct feed prior to pick up will make the transition easier and will ensure better results. The Idaho Pasture Pigs we personally raise are grazing pigs and the key to making sure they graze and eat grass instead of just digging in the dirt to find more minerals is to make sure the mineral content in your feed is correct. Not all swine feed is the same and you need to be very conscientious of the feed requirements for your new pigs.

Having fresh water is also essential in having healthy pigs. One thing most people do not realize is that pigs do eat snow and do very well. Having access to water is still a good idea. Different types of waters for pigs include a 55-gallon drum with a gravity

nipple attached, water lines with pressurized nipples, automatic waterers, and short troughs to fill with water. Deciding what type of water system fits your weather and location is going to make watering much more stress-free. If the weather is going to be warm when you bring your pigs home, you will need to not only have sufficient water but will also need a nice wallow and sufficient shade for your pigs to cool off.

Now, you have your shelter, water, food, and bedding, it is time to pick up the pigs. Whether picking them up in a trailer, dog crate (plastic or wire), a home-built container, or the bed of your truck with a topper attached, you need to make sure you have some dry bedding. Straw or hay works the best as it provides comfort and warmth as well as helps prevent the pigs from sliding around on the slippery bottom. Blankets are not ideal as they just slide and bunch up, providing no aid and allowing the pigs to just slide around in the crate causing possible injury during transport. Make sure you have adequate ventilation for the pigs and again, this needs to be based on the temperature and weather conditions in your area at the time of pick up. Cold and windy conditions will require more bedding and less wind flow through the crate or

trailer. Really hot temperatures will still require bedding to keep them comfortable and prevent slipping and injury, but more ventilation is advised and is going to keep them cool on the ride home.

You have researched and found the breed of pig that best fits you and your farm, you have prepared for the pigs' arrival, and you have the travel arrangements all set. You should feel confident that this is going to be a wonderful experience and that some delicious home-grown pork is in your future. Have fun and enjoy! 🐷

**JODI CRONAUER** lives in Wisconsin with her husband and her three sons. They raise Idaho Pasture Pigs (IPPs), Kunekune pigs, and American bison as well as Gypsy Vanner horses. The meat from their pigs and bison is rich in essential nutrients because they eat grass as their primary diet. Jodi is the author of *Raising Pigs on Green Pastures* (Dorrance Publishing, 2021). Available in the *Countryside Shop* at <https://shop.iamcountryside.com>.



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# Fly Control to Protect Horses

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

**B**ITING FLIES CAN BE A tremendous irritation to horses. There are several methods of fly control on your farm and ways to protect horses from flies that come from other areas.

**MINIMIZING FLY NUMBERS** — Methods that can help reduce fly population on a farm include the use of premise sprays, fly traps, parasitic wasps, and feed-through larvicides. Some flies, especially horse flies, deer flies, and stable flies, can fly long distances and come to your farm from neighboring regions.

Around the barnyard, some horse owners utilize parasitic wasps — the harmless tiny wasps (sometimes called fly predators) that lay eggs in fresh manure. The wasp larvae feed on fly larvae and can help control flies that breed in manure. These wasps should be released early in the fly season. They only work on flies that lay eggs in manure, such as houseflies, horn flies, and stable flies.

Horse owners should try to control flies at the beginning of the warm season — whenever it occurs in their area before the insect populations become large. Try to get ahead of the curve by

reducing early populations so there are not so many to reproduce. Cleaning up organic debris (old bedding and manure, decaying plant material that can become breeding sites) is very effective. Old hay or bedding should be removed or scattered so it can dry out. These flies must have moist decaying material in which to lay eggs. Don't pile up organic material; a pile holds moisture and makes an ideal habitat for fly larvae. Some people pile up lawn clippings, which may supply enough stable flies to torment all the horses in the neighborhood.

Some people use a feed-through product added to the grain, and it goes on through the horse. Some of these contain a larvicide that kills fly larva that hatch in manure. Other products contain an insect growth regulator that hinders the growth of immature fly larvae, and they die.

Many horse owners think this method is safer than overhead fly sprays in barns because you don't have to worry about contamination of feed, or irritation of the horses' eyes. The feed-through products only work in the small area around a stable or pasture, however, and have no effect on flies that come in from neighboring

areas. Another drawback to this method is that stable flies also breed in other materials, not just manure. People often become lax in the clean-up of old bedding and other organic material, thinking they have the problem under control.

#### FLY SPRAYS/WIPE-ONS —

There are dozens of sprays, wipe-ons, and spot-ons for use on horses, but almost all of them contain pyrethroids (such as permethrins) or pyrethrins as their active ingredients. These are about the only options, for effective products that are safe to use on horses. These are fast-acting, so you could apply them to the horse just before you plan to ride or work with the animal. Most products should be applied to the legs or belly since that's where stable flies will be biting.

Spot-on products only need to be applied in a few locations on the horse, such as at the poll, tail head, at the point of each hock, and behind each knee. This seems to give protection for about two weeks. Spot-on products tend to last longer than most of the sprays and wipe-ons and also seem to work better for horses that are allergic to some of the sprays.

If biting midges (also called punkies or no-see-ums) are a problem, making horses itchy from an allergic sensitivity reaction to bites, these tiny flies can often be thwarted with diligent application of insecticide. Midges can make the animals miserable, and often bite along the midline of the belly — creating a crusty, itchy area. They are easiest to kill if you get enough insecticide on the animal and it stays on. Since they tend to feed on the belly, it is essential to apply it all along the belly, and reapply it if the horse walks through tall grass, or stands in a pond, or sweats.

Stable flies are hard to kill. They don't spend much time on the animal so they don't

## PHYSICAL PROTECTION

In situations where flies can't be fully controlled, fly masks can keep flies away from the horse's face. There are also fly sheets that can help keep biting flies off the horse's body and fly boots that cover the legs.

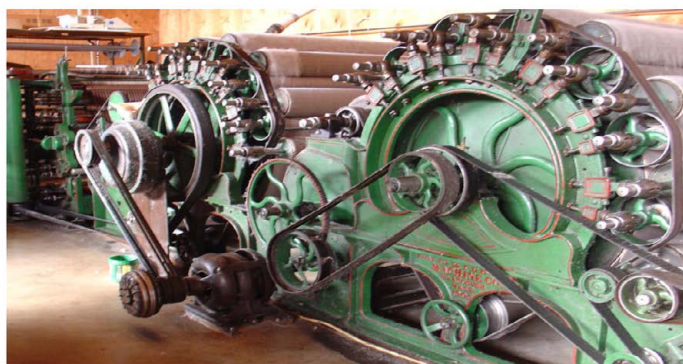


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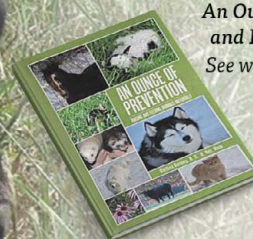
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pick up enough insecticide to kill them. They zoom in, feed quickly, and fly away. Many of them survive to come back again a few days later.

The horse's lower legs don't retain insecticides very long. Even though a spray or wipe-on tends to bond to the hair after it dries, and is not easily rubbed off, it can still be washed off. Every time it rains, or the horse walks through wet grass or water,

## SENSITIVITY ISSUES

Some horses develop sensitivity to certain products. It's important to not overdose. Read labels, apply the product correctly, in the proper locations and amounts, and always watch for any signs of skin reaction. Try it first on a small area of the body before you apply it all over the horse, to see if there is any type of skin reaction. It may take more than one application, however, before you know if the horse will react.

Some horses develop sensitivity over time. Everything seems fine, and then the horse has an allergic reaction after you've been using the product for a while. The horse may suddenly develop welts or hives.

Most insecticides contain petroleum products or alcohol, which are irritating to the eyes, mucous membranes, and genitalia. Never spray the horse's face. If you need to apply it to the head, spray it onto a cloth and wipe it carefully on the face, avoiding mucous membranes. If you get too close to the mouth or the membranes of the nose, the animal may start salivating and sneezing.

stands in a pond to protect himself from flies, or sweat runs down the legs, it washes off insecticide.

If the horse has been out in the rain or sweating a lot, you may need to reapply a product sooner than the label recommends. It's difficult to keep enough on the legs to do much good, and the products that are effective need to be reapplied frequently.

Always follow directions when using any fly repellent or insecticide, to make sure you'll get the optimum benefit from the product, without putting your horse's health (or your own) at risk. Apply them in a well-ventilated area, and don't handle or use these if you are pregnant.

Some horse owners try different methods, such as tying cattle ear tags (formulated for horn fly control) on the horse's halter or braiding a fly tag into the mane, but this is a systemic type of control, which may not be good for your horse. Some of the cattle fly tags contain organophosphates, a more toxic type of chemical.

**FLY TRAPS** — Some flies are difficult to control with premise insecticides or manure management because they come in from other areas. Horse flies and deer flies usually emerge with the first hot days of summer, after their larvae develop in mud or water in marshy areas. Since they attack quickly and leave, most topical insecticides are not very effective against them. There are some fly traps that help, however. The University of Missouri has a website that shows how to construct a trap for horseflies.

There's also a commercially available trap that works well for horse flies, deer flies, and other types of biting flies. The Epps Biting Fly Trap uses a dark-colored panel to simulate the silhouette of an animal and light-colored panels above and below it. Horse flies and deer flies tend to fly over, under, and around the legs of an animal before biting, and strike the light-colored panels and fall into soapy water in trays under the trap and drown. The soap breaks the surface tension of the water and the flies can't float — they immediately sink and drown. ©

**HEATHER SMITH THOMAS** ranches with her husband near Salmon, Idaho, raising cattle and a few horses. She has a B.A. in English and history. She has raised and trained horses for 50 years and has been writing freelance articles and books nearly that long, publishing 20 books and more than 9,000 articles for horse and livestock publications. Find Heather online at [heathersmiththomas.blogspot.com](http://heathersmiththomas.blogspot.com).

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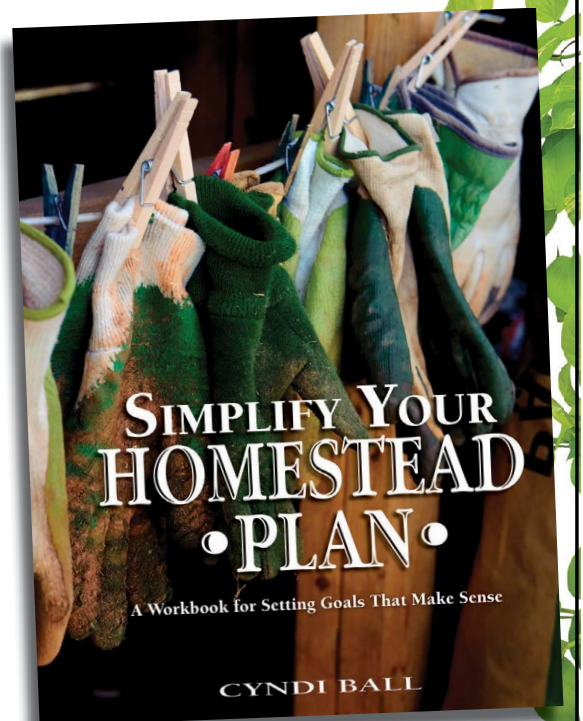
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# SLOPPY JOE LOADED BAKED POTATO

BY HANNAH MCCLURE

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground venison, pork, or beef
- Note: If using venison, you will need 1 tablespoon bacon grease or lard*
- 4 to 6 medium/large 6-8 oz potatoes (russets are a great baking potato)
- 1 small orange bell pepper, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2/3 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup water plus 1 cup water (for Instant Pot potatoes)
- 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon yellow mustard
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke OR Worcestershire sauce
- Shredded sharp cheddar cheese, for topping

For potato mixture:

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- 3 tablespoon softened cream cheese
- A dash of milk

## INSTRUCTIONS

- In an Instant Pot, pour 1 cup of water and put in metal trivet.
- Rinse potatoes thoroughly and poke with a fork 2-3 times on one side of the potato.
- Place potatoes on trivet only making one layer. Most Instant Pots hold 4-6.
- Close lid and put to sealing position. Cook potatoes on manual (high heat) for 14 minutes. Once done cooking, let it naturally release before removing potatoes.

*No Instant Pot? No problem. You can prepare your potatoes as follows:*

- Allow rinsed potatoes to air dry.
- Poke holes with a fork on one side.
- Lightly oil your potatoes with olive oil, bacon grease, or avocado oil.
  - Lay on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
  - Bake for 35-55 minutes (time varies based on the size of potatoes) at 400 degrees F.

**While potatoes are baking, prepare your sloppy Joe meat mixture as follows:**

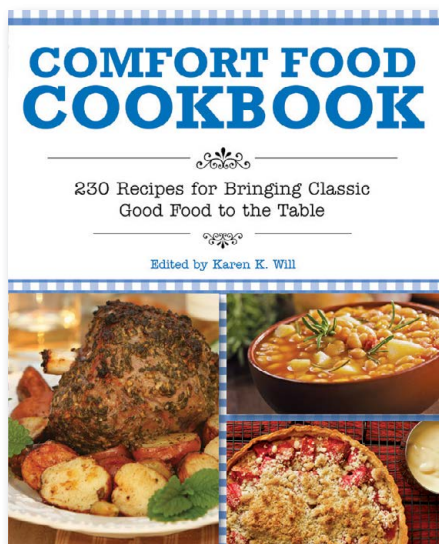
- In a medium/large skillet on medium/high heat, brown ground meat. Once meat is browned, add in diced bell peppers and cook about 3 minutes till softened.
- Add in minced garlic and stir for 30 seconds to a minute. Once you can smell the garlic, add in tomato paste, stir well, and lower heat to medium/low.
- Add in ketchup, water, mustard, chili pepper, Worcestershire sauce or liquid smoke, salt, red pepper flakes, and black pepper. Stir well to combine.
- Cook for 15 minutes. If mixture is too thick, add a bit of water (1 tablespoon at a time) till you achieve your desired thickness. Note that you will be topping your potatoes, so too runny will be harder to work with.

Once potatoes have finished, remove and allow to cool 15-20 minutes. Remembering the potatoes will still be warm to work with.

- Cut potatoes in half, lengthwise, and scoop potatoes out of their skin into a small mixing bowl.
- Mix potatoes with 2 tablespoons softened butter, 3 tablespoons softened cream cheese, 2 tablespoons sour cream, and a dash of milk. Mix to your liking. I prefer a chunky mixture but smooth works as well.
- Fill potato skins with potato mixture. Make sure to not overfill.
- Spoon on sloppy Joe mixture (about 1/4-1/3 cup per potato depending on the size of potato).
- Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Top with shredded cheese.
- Bake at 350 degrees F for 8-10 minutes. 🍴

**HANNAH N. MCCLURE** is an old soul homemaker and mother of four from Ohio. Gardening, keeping bees, sewing, raising chickens/seasonal hogs, and baking/cooking from scratch are a few things she enjoys in her homemaking. Always learning and always chasing her littles. Find Hannah on Instagram @muddyoakhennhouse.

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# TREASURED COFFEE CAKES

BY RITA HEIKENFELD

**S**PRINGTIME IS SURE BUSY here on our little patch of heaven, and I look forward to the days getting longer and the weather getting warmer!

There's much to be done, from tilling the gardens for the planting of early greens and vegetables, weeding the asparagus patch, removing dead canes from the berry bushes, and hoeing gently around the herbs in my herb garden.

We entertain a lot during the spring. We're all happy to gather together after the winter.

I especially enjoy serving brunch

to family and friends. Coffee cakes are a given at our brunches, and today I'm sharing two treasured recipes.

The first is a yeasted and fruited crumb cake from friend Elaine Hennessey. Elaine and I met at church a long time ago and when we would host bazaars, Elaine always brought these fruited crumb cakes, which were best sellers.

The second recipe is an heirloom one from my mother-in-law, Clara Heikenfeld. It was her signature cake for the card parties that she hosted.

The bonus for both of these recipes is that the base is a cake mix. These cakes are not only pretty to look at and quick to make but will elicit requests of "more, please."

For those of you who shy away from anything not made from scratch, take a second look. As I mentioned, think of cake mix as the first step in a time-saving process of making your own special occasion cakes.

So the next time cake mix is on sale, buy an extra box or two. And take a bit of time to make one, or both, of these family favorites.

## ELAINE'S CHERRY CRUMB CAKE

Bakery quality crumb cake from your kitchen!

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 box yellow cake mix, 15.25 oz., divided (see instructions)
- 1 package rapid rise or regular active dry yeast
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup warm water
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup butter, melted
- 1 pound can cherry pie filling or your choice

### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Butter or spray a 9x9 cake pan.

Whisk together  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups cake mix with yeast and flour.

Add eggs and water. Blend until mixed, then beat for 2 minutes either on medium speed with the mixer or vigorously by hand.

Combine the rest of the cake mix with melted butter until crumbly. Set aside.

Spread batter in pan.

Spoon pie filling evenly over batter.

Sprinkle crumb topping evenly over fruit.

Bake 35-40 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Check after 35 minutes.

The toothpick may have a bit of topping clinging to it.

Let cool a bit before serving.

Make 1 larger cake

Use a 9x13 pan and check after baking 30 minutes. Cake won't raise as high and topping won't be as thick, but you'll get more servings!

### *Gilding the lily:*

\*After cake cools, drizzle a little confectioner's sugar glaze on top.



### TIP

1 packet of yeast is approximately  $\frac{2}{4}$  teaspoons.

Store yeast in the freezer for longer life.

Bring to room temperature before using.



Beat either 2 minutes on medium speed or vigorously by hand. Don't overmix.

Spread  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the batter evenly in prepared pan.

Sprinkle  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup streusel mixture over batter in pan.

Spread remaining batter over streusel.

Top with reserved streusel. Swirl into batter with a knife.

Bake 40-50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Check after 40 minutes.

After removing from oven, take a knife or offset spatula and run it around the edges of the pan, including center. Let cool 15-20 minutes.

Remove from pan and serve.

*Gilding the lily:*

Drizzle cooled cake with confectioner's sugar glaze.

**\*MASTER RECIPE  
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SUGAR GLAZE**

Whisk together:

- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla
- 1 tablespoon water or more as needed

**RITA HEIKENFELD** comes from a family of wise women in tune with nature. She is a certified modern herbalist, culinary educator, author, and national media personality. Most important, she is a wife, mom, and grandma. Rita lives on a little patch of heaven overlooking the East Fork River in Clermont County, Ohio. She is a former adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati, where she developed a comprehensive herbal course. [abouteating.com](http://abouteating.com)  
[rita@communitypress.com](mailto:rita@communitypress.com)

**CAKE MIXES: A  
DEPRESSION ERA  
INVENTION**


*Cook's Illustrated* shared some interesting tidbits about the origin of cake mixes.

John D. Duff of P. Duff and Sons, a Pittsburgh molasses company, was searching for a way to use up his molasses surplus. He dehydrated it, combined it with flour, sugar, and dried egg, and that mix allowed home cooks to make gingerbread by just adding water.

Because the Depression was a time of true frugality for most folks, this was an inexpensive and easy way to make a cake.

It was after World War II that cake mixes hit the big time. Big flour companies spent the war working on dry mixes for troops. When the war ended, the companies returned their focus to busy consumers.

That's when the development of cake mixes began in earnest. Betty Crocker, Duncan Hines, and Pillsbury all got into the "mix," so to speak.

In 2020, close to 187 million Americans used dry cake mixes, so consider yourself in good company! 

**CLARA'S CINNAMON  
STREUSEL COFFEE CAKE**

This cinnamon-scented cake is a good keeper at room temperature, covered.

**INGREDIENTS**

**CAKE:**

- 1 box yellow cake mix, 15.25 oz.
- 1 box vanilla instant pudding mix, 4-serving size
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons favorite neutral oil
- 1- $\frac{1}{3}$  cups water
- 2 large eggs

**STREUSEL :**

Combine together —

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup brown sugar, packed, light or dark
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter, melted

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Cake:**

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Grease and flour 10" tube or Bundt pan.

On low speed in mixer or by hand, blend cake mix, pudding mix, water, and eggs.

# Pomona's Cranberry-Habanero Jelly

## Ingredients

- ¼ cup cranberries finely chopped
- 1¼ cups yellow bell pepper finely diced + seeded
- 2 teaspoons habanero pepper minced + seeded
- 1½ cups white vinegar 5%
- 2 teaspoons calcium water
- 2½ cups sugar divided
- 2 teaspoons Pomona's Universal Pectin

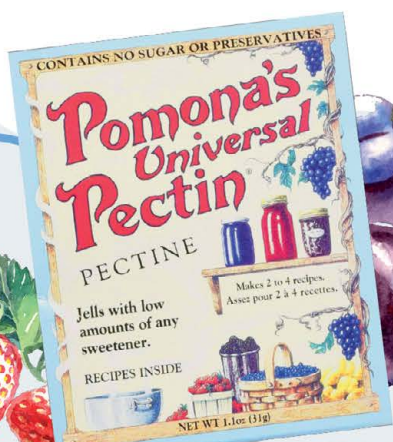


## Before You Begin

Prepare calcium water — To do this, combine ½ teaspoon calcium powder (in the small packet in your box of Pomona's pectin) with ½ cup water in a small, clear jar with a lid. Shake well. Calcium water should be stored in the refrigerator for future use.

## Directions

- 1 Wash jars, lids, and bands. Place jars in canner, fill canner 2/3 full with water, bring to a boil. Turn off heat, cover, and keep jars in hot canner water until ready to use. Place lids in water in a small saucepan; cover and heat to a low boil. Turn off heat and keep lids in hot water until ready to use.
- 2 Combine chopped cranberries, diced yellow pepper, minced habanero pepper, and vinegar in a saucepan. Cover, bring to a boil, and then reduce heat and simmer, still covered, for 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
- 3 In a separate bowl, combine pectin powder with ½ cup of the sugar. Mix thoroughly and set aside.
- 4 Add calcium water to the pepper mixture, mix well, and return the mixture to a full boil over high heat. Slowly add pectin-sugar mixture, stirring constantly. Continue to stir vigorously for 1 to 2 minutes to dissolve pectin while the jelly returns to a boil. After the pectin is fully dissolved, add the remaining quantity of sugar and stir to dissolve it. Once sugar is dissolved, and the jelly returns to a full boil, remove it from the heat.
- 5 Fill hot jars to ¼" of top. Wipe rims clean. Screw on 2-piece lids. Put filled jars in boiling water to cover. Boil 10 minutes (add 1 minute more for every 1,000 ft. above sea level). Remove from water. Let jars cool. Check seals; lids should be sucked down. Eat within 1 year. Lasts 3 weeks once opened. Yields 4 cups.



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# Whole Wheat Cookery

BY JENNY UNDERWOOD



I CAN'T REMEMBER EXACTLY when I first began dabbling in whole wheat cooking but it was about 20 years ago. My husband and I had started to make a change in our diet and lifestyle and bleached, white flour became one of the first things to go. However, my results with 100% whole wheat were not exceptional and I generally combined ½ unbleached all-purpose and ½ whole wheat.

Then I met a wonderful flour called Prairie Gold and tasted 100% whole wheat bread that was phenomenal! It was light, moist, and absolutely delicious. I began to experiment with baking completely with it and we loved it. After reading how much more nutritious

the freshly ground flour was (some say the store flour has lost almost 90% of its nutrients) I began to feel the pull to grind my own flour. A few years later, I made the plunge and bought a grain mill which revolutionized my baking.

It's best to grind small amounts of flour at one time to keep it from going rancid.

The first thing to consider when buying a grain mill is what type you will prefer: electric or manual. I have both. I use my electric one multiple times a week. It grinds

eight cups of flour in under two minutes without overheating the flour. I paid about \$250 for it 10 years ago and have only had one repair on it. We also bought an excellent manual mill that is capable of converting to electric.

Our thoughts were if we lost power we could still have a mill and if our other mill went out, we wouldn't have to be concerned about getting it replaced.

The second thing you should think about is price and ease of use.

If it is outrageously expensive and hard to use, will you use it? If it's super cheap and hard to use, will you use it? I recommend figuring how much flour you use on a daily/weekly basis and then

determining how long that will take you to grind. I personally don't want to spend five minutes on one cup of flour. Make sure your mill has good reviews and can be repaired if necessary. Don't buy from an unauthorized dealer if you're depending on the warranty! I bought one online and found out later that the warranty wouldn't be honored because the dealer wasn't registered with the company. The company ended up repairing it anyway and only charged me shipping that one time but they didn't have to. So check before you buy.

Think about the noise and mess involved in grinding. Mine is noisy enough but the flour is enclosed in a bin so it's not messy. I can live with the noise for a few minutes.

I buy my wheat berries in bulk from a local Mennonite bulk food store. I generally keep between 50-200 pounds at one time. I place them in the freezer for a couple of weeks then store them in an airtight container to keep out bugs. Never store them in a damp place where they can draw moisture.



Making our whole wheat pizza dough.

It's best to grind small amounts of flour at one time to keep it from going rancid. I grind two to three days-worth at once. If you need to store it longer, I recommend the freezer for freshness.

There are many reasons to use freshly ground flour. First off, the taste is amazing! You will be shocked at the difference in flour ground two minutes ago versus six months ago. Secondly, the vitamins and minerals in old flour don't even begin to compare with the fresh stuff!

Now it's time to cook! A few tips to remember when cooking with 100% whole wheat: the flour absorbs liquid slower so don't add too much flour thinking you need more; kneaded bread dough will be a bit stickier than white bread dough; don't overbake or it will dry out. I have used whole wheat flour in place of white flour in several recipes including gravy, biscuits, muffins, rolls, bread, pancakes, waffles, pie crust, and cookies.

Breads made with 100% whole wheat will have a more complex flavor and after eating homemade bread that way, you'll find that white tastes rather bland and chewy. I've found my whole wheat stays much more moist and fresh even several days after baking. Here

are some delicious recipes for you to try:

### **BLUEBERRY MUFFINS**

#### **INGREDIENTS**

½ cup olive oil (not extra virgin) or melted butter  
 ½ cup maple syrup  
 2 eggs  
 ¾ cup milk  
 2 cups whole wheat flour  
 2 tsp baking powder  
 ¼ tsp salt  
 Cinnamon  
 2 cups blueberries  
 Nuts (optional)

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.  
 Combine oil, syrup, and eggs and beat.  
 Add milk and mix well.  
 In a separate bowl combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt and mix.  
 Add dry ingredients to wet. Mix well.  
 Fold in berries and nuts.  
 Spoon into greased muffin tins and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden. Allow to cool for 5 minutes then remove and cool completely.



### HOMEMADE WHOLE WHEAT YEAST BREAD

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp yeast
- 2 cups warm water
- 2 Tbsp raw sugar
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 Tbsp salt
- 6 + cups whole wheat flour

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Combine water, yeast, and sugar. Allow to sit until bubbly. In an electric mixer or by hand beat in the eggs, oil, and enough flour to make a thick batter. Allow to sit covered for 20 minutes. This is your sponge and makes the bread lighter. Next, add enough flour to make a stiff dough and your salt. Knead on dough setting until it forms a shaggy ball on dough hook (about 2 minutes), adding small amounts of flour as necessary to keep it from being too sloppy. If you're kneading by hand this will take longer (perhaps 5-10 minutes). After it's a shaggy ball, hand knead until smooth. Then place in an oil-coated bowl turning to coat and cover it. Allow to rise for 45-60 minutes or until doubled in a warm place.

Punch down and form into two loaves. To do this, divide the dough in half, then pat it out into rectangles about 8x10 inches. Roll up the dough on the long side and then tightly tuck in the ends. Place in oiled bread pans turning to coat and cover. Allow to rise for 45-60 minutes and bake in a preheated 400 degrees F oven for 15 minutes. Then turn it down to 375 for the remaining 20-30 minutes. The loaves are done when golden brown on top and hollow sound when thumped. Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes in the pans, then turn out to cool completely on a plate or baking rack. Try not to slice while it's hot!



Another favorite in our home is whole wheat maple syrup chocolate chip cookies. These are super moist and have a delicious texture and flavor. They keep fresh for days (if they last that long).

### MAPLE SYRUP CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

#### INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup melted butter or plain olive oil
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup raw sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 package dark chocolate chips

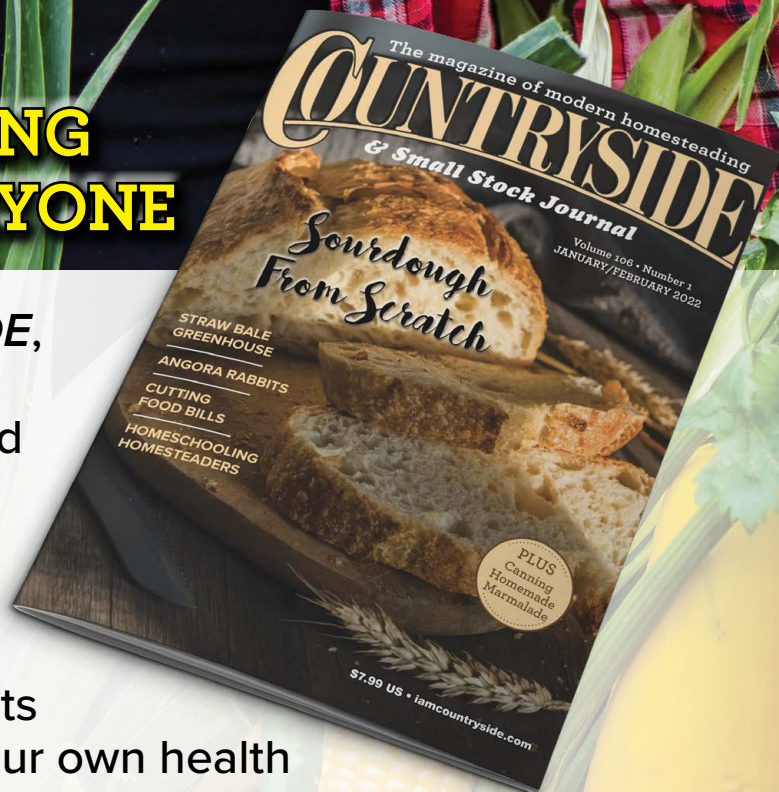
#### INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Cream together oil/butter and sugar and syrup. Add eggs and beat well. Add vanilla, baking soda, and salt. Beat well. Add flour and chocolate. Gently combine until mixed but don't overmix. Drop by spoonful onto greased cookie sheets and bake for 7-10 minutes until slightly golden on top. Don't overbake or they'll be dry! Remove from oven and cool.

Freshly ground flour is a superior ingredient in my opinion. I was somewhat skeptical that it would make a big difference when I started but I was proven wrong. And once I got the hang of it, cooking with 100% whole wheat became easy. As with anything, there is a learning curve, but I hope by reading this you'll be more confident in making the switch to whole wheat cookery! 🍪

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CYSHSAD



## Foods That Fight Inflammation in the Body

BY RHONDA CRANK

**U**SING FOODS THAT FIGHT inflammation in the body is an effective way to alleviate pain.

You are what you eat, right? Isn't that what we learn as children? Well, it's true.

I have dealt with inflammation in my body since my early 20s. I was thankful to learn that I could not only alleviate my pain but also prevent outbreaks of inflammation with certain foods. By incorporating foods that fight inflammation in the body I was able to get real relief.

I'm sure you're familiar with the term "anti-inflammatory diet." But do you understand

why inflammation in the body is dangerous and how food plays a large role in the issue?

The inflammation process in your body is not a bad thing. It's a safeguard. Your immune system becomes activated when your body is injured or becomes infected. This process is called inflammation.

The redness you notice around a cut as it starts to heal is part of your body's inflammation process. The brain receives signals telling it to send white blood cells to begin repairing and healing a certain thing in the body. This is acute inflammation and resolves itself as the body heals.

Chronic inflammation is over an extended period and damages your body. It plays a role in the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. It's also associated with an increased risk of cancer, diabetic issues, joint pain, depression, and other chronic illnesses.

Using foods that fight inflammation in the body is an effective way to alleviate pain and prevent disease.

One of the most powerful weapons to combat inflammation comes not from the pharmacy, but the garden.

Research reveals certain foods impact the levels of C-reactive protein, a marker for inflammation in your blood. Foods such as processed sugars and all processed, prepackaged foods, release inflammatory messengers which cause persistent inflammation in the body.

Before you add foods that fight inflammation to your diet, you first have to stop consuming refined or processed foods. Sugary cereals and drinks, fast foods, and breads made with modern wheat all cause inflammation in your body.

The good news is, these foods are readily available and effective.

## Foods That Fight Inflammation in The Body

To fight inflammation, we have to focus on foods high in antioxidants to aid in tissue and cell repair. Omega-3s are also vital in regulating the body's inflammatory process and in managing pain related to inflammation.

### Olive Oil

Olive oil is a staple of the Mediterranean diet. It has been linked to heart health and longevity. It's rich in monounsaturated fats that are good for your veins and is high in polyphenols which are antioxidants. It's important to use quality olive oil. To be sure you're getting a good one, it should have the date harvested, be traceable back to one farm, and a best by date on it.

### Dry Beans

Pintos, black beans, garbanzos, all kinds of dried beans are readily available. They are loaded with protein, minerals, B complex vitamins, and vitamin K. They are also rich in fiber and high in antioxidants.

### Broccoli

Broccoli is a member of the cruciferous family of veggies. They are the underdog in my opinion. High in phytochemicals called glucosinolates, powerful antioxidants broccoli is one of the best foods that fight inflammation in the body.

It's an excellent source of vitamin C, potassium, calcium, and vitamin A. I enjoy broccoli fresh from the winter garden sprinkled with a little olive oil and real salt. You can enjoy it grilled, sautéed in grass-fed butter, in stir fry, or covered in cheese. Broccoli soup is an excellent

food to eat in the winter to be warm and healthy.

### Almonds

As an excellent source of monounsaturated fats (comparable to olive oil), vitamin E, manganese, magnesium, and plant protein, almonds are an important member of the foods to fight inflammation. They are especially beneficial when eaten raw, but who can resist coating them with a little cacao powder and olive oil for a delicious treat.

### Carrots

Carrots are known for their high levels of beta-carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A. Vitamin A is essential to a healthy body and has antioxidant properties. Carrots also have zeaxanthin and lutein — both associated with inflammation reduction in the body.

### Avocados

Besides being rich in monounsaturated fats, avocados are a superb source of magnesium, fiber, and potassium. Eating just half an avocado will provide most of your RDA of vitamins C, A, E, and B-complex vitamins.

### Blueberries

The health benefits of blueberries are considerable. As one of the foods that fight inflammation in the body, they are important due to their high number of polyphenols. Their other inflammatory fighting qualities include flavonoids, anthocyanidins, phenolic acids, and tannins. All of which are known to repair cellular damage caused by free radicals.

Blueberries are incredibly easy to grow in containers making it easy for anyone to grow their own!



### Turmeric and Ginger

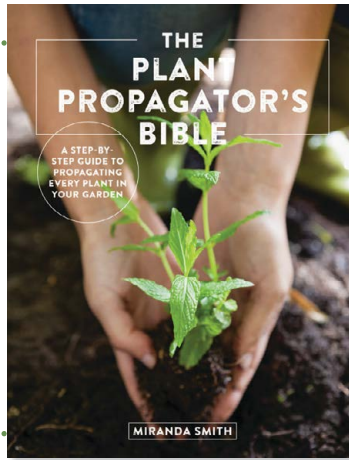
I grouped these two because they potentiate one another in powerful ways. While individually they have been used for thousands of years to help relieve pain, anxiety, depression, and especially alleviate inflammation, together they are unbeatable.

This is my go-to instead of ibuprofen. It's known as Golden Milk and is used for joint pain and general inflammation in the body.

I keep a jar in my cabinet, which is ½ cup turmeric powder, ¼ cup ginger powder, 2 tsp black pepper (don't leave this out, it allows the turmeric to be taken up by the body), and 2 Tbs cinnamon, well combined.

When I'm ready to have a cup, I heat 8 oz of grass-fed whole milk or coconut milk then stir in two teaspoons of the turmeric/ginger mixture. I also like to add a little bit of ghee or butter for a richer taste and to cut some of the spiciness of the Golden Milk. The warmth and taste are comforting to the mind as well as the body.

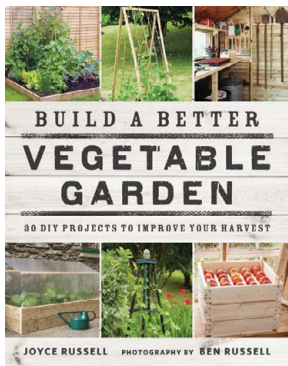
This is not an exhaustive list of foods that fight inflammation in the body, but it is a good place to start. You will be relieved to see how quickly your body responds to these foods and at how much better you feel. 🍵



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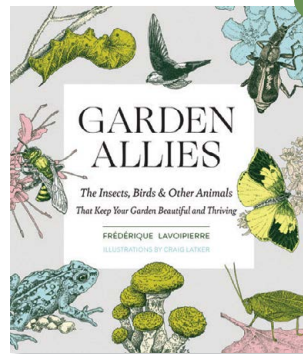
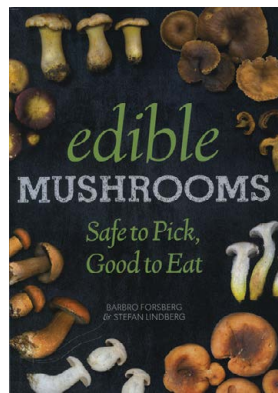
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Wandering the woods in search of mushrooms is one of life's great pleasures. But be careful to pick the right ones! *Edible Mushrooms* presents 40 edible species and reveals how, when, and where to find them (-knowledge author Barbro Forsberg gained over the course of four decades spent mushrooming in the woods).

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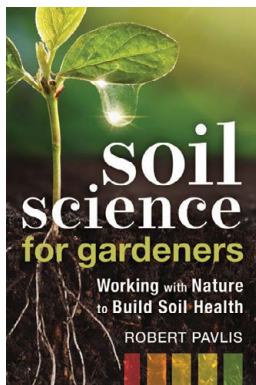


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In *Garden Allies*, Frédérique Lavoipierre shares fascinating portraits of the birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects that inhabit our yards and gardens, describing their life cycles and showing how they keep the garden's ecology in balance. With beautiful pen-and-ink drawings by Craig Latker, *Garden Allies* invites you to make friends with the creatures that fill your garden.

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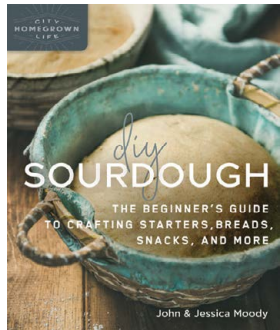
Get the most from your cast-iron cookware with the 40 fabulous recipes found inside *Cast-Iron Cooking*. From a full English breakfast to chilaquiles, pan pizza, cheesy beer fondue, and more, these gourmet recipes are specifically designed for your cast iron. You'll also learn how to buy the cast-iron pots and pans that are right for you and how to care for them successfully.

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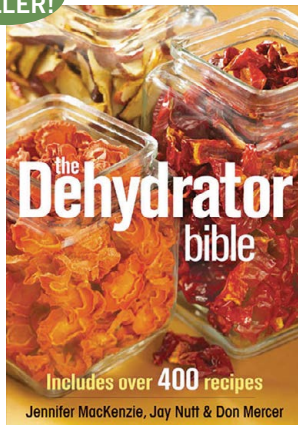
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Includes over 400 recipes  
Jennifer MacKenzie, Jay Nutt & Don Mercer

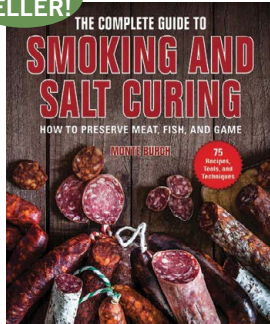


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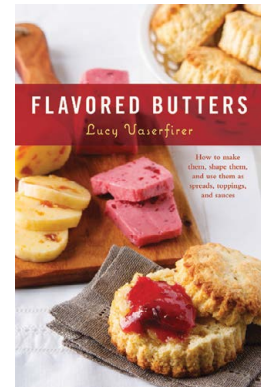
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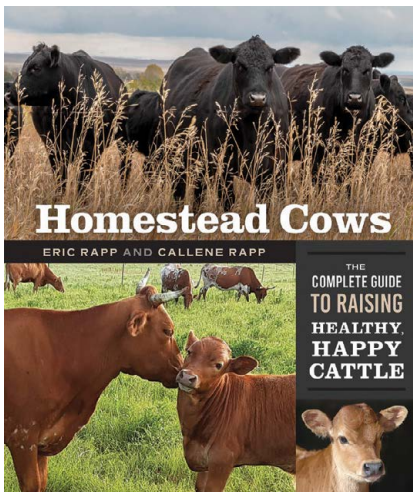
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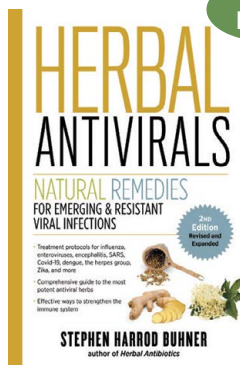


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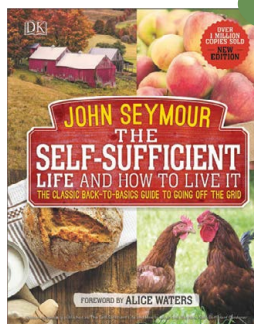


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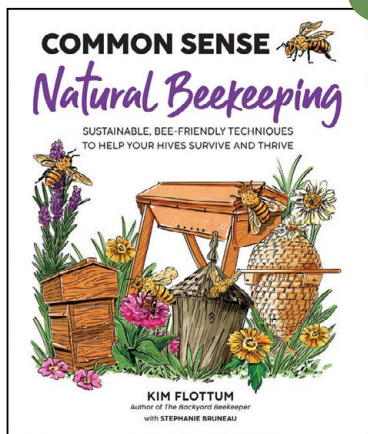


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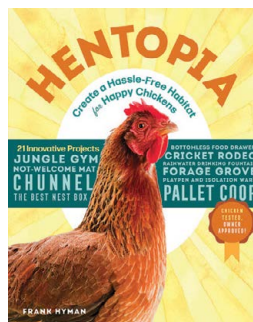


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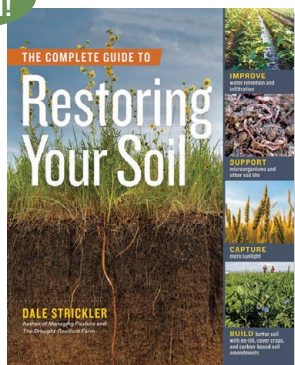
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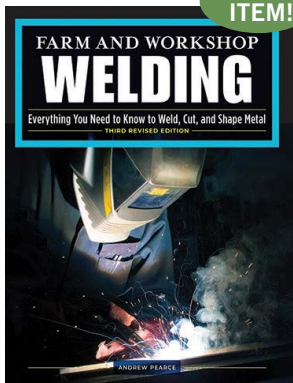
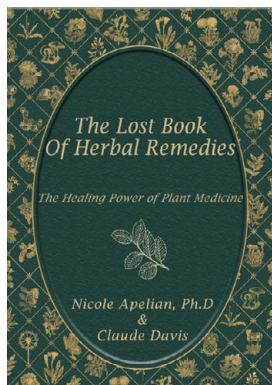
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With more than 2,000 black-and-white illustrations and clear, practical instructions given by expert handyman and blacksmith Paul N. Hasluck, *Metalworking* offers everything you need to know to turn a chunk of metal into a useful and well-crafted product. This ultimate, do-it-yourself guide to metalworking is ideal for all handymen, handywomen, and industry professionals — amateur and seasoned alike!

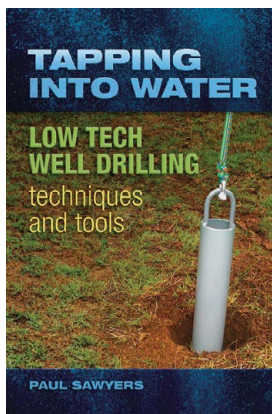
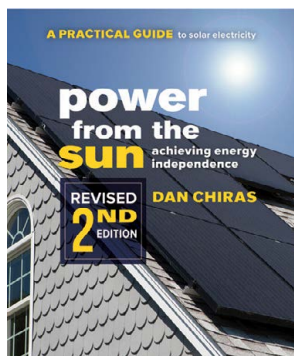
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Written for the layman, this is the fully revised and updated guide for individuals and businesses interested in generating their own electricity using the sun. Practical and accessible, it provides a basic understanding of electricity, wiring, and solar energy, and guides the reader through site assessment and determining the type of system needed, providing a solid understanding of grid-tied and off-grid systems, along with important guidelines on installation.

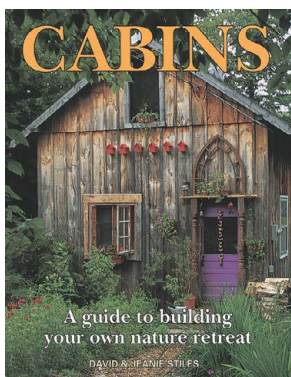
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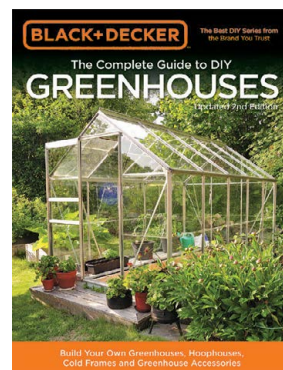
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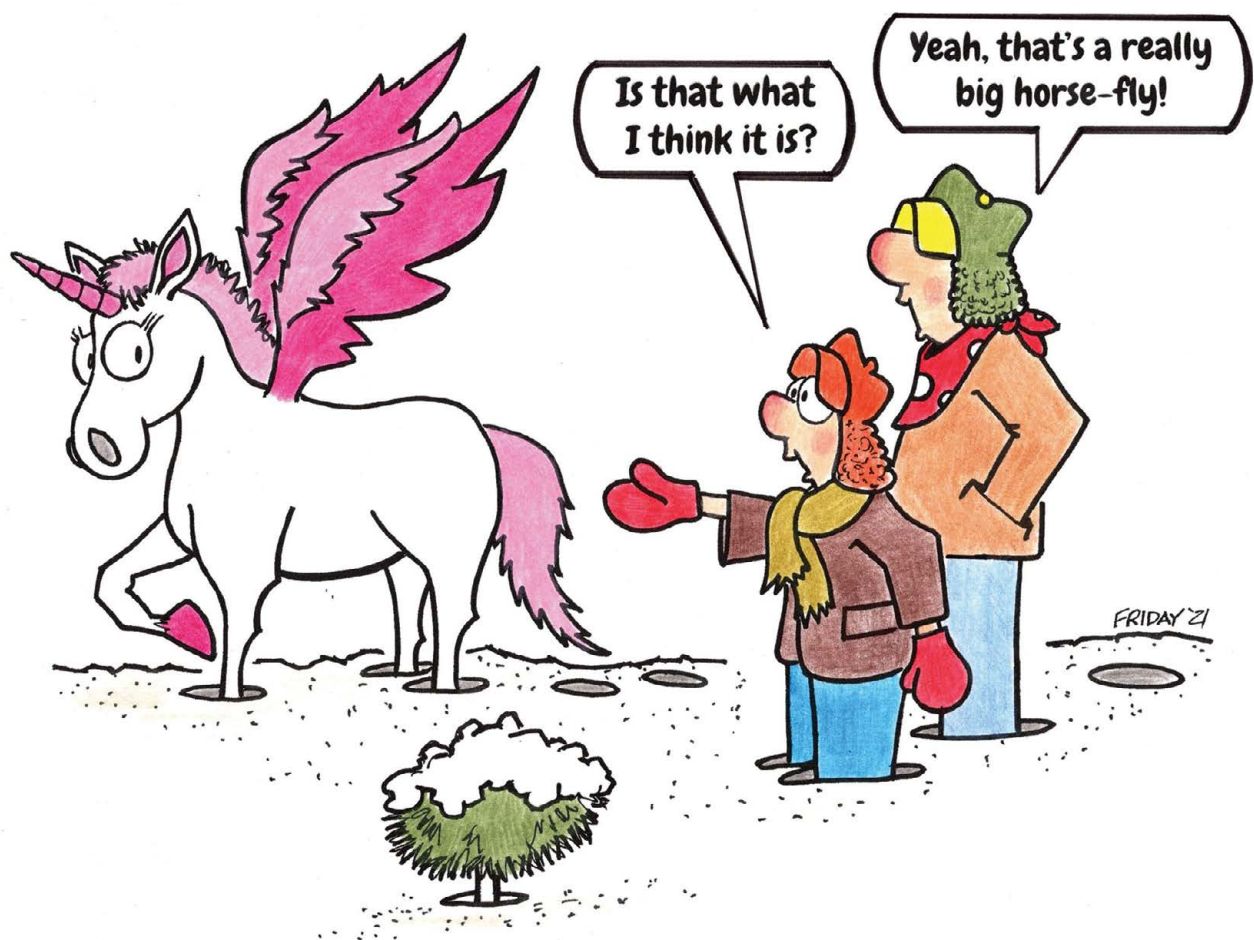
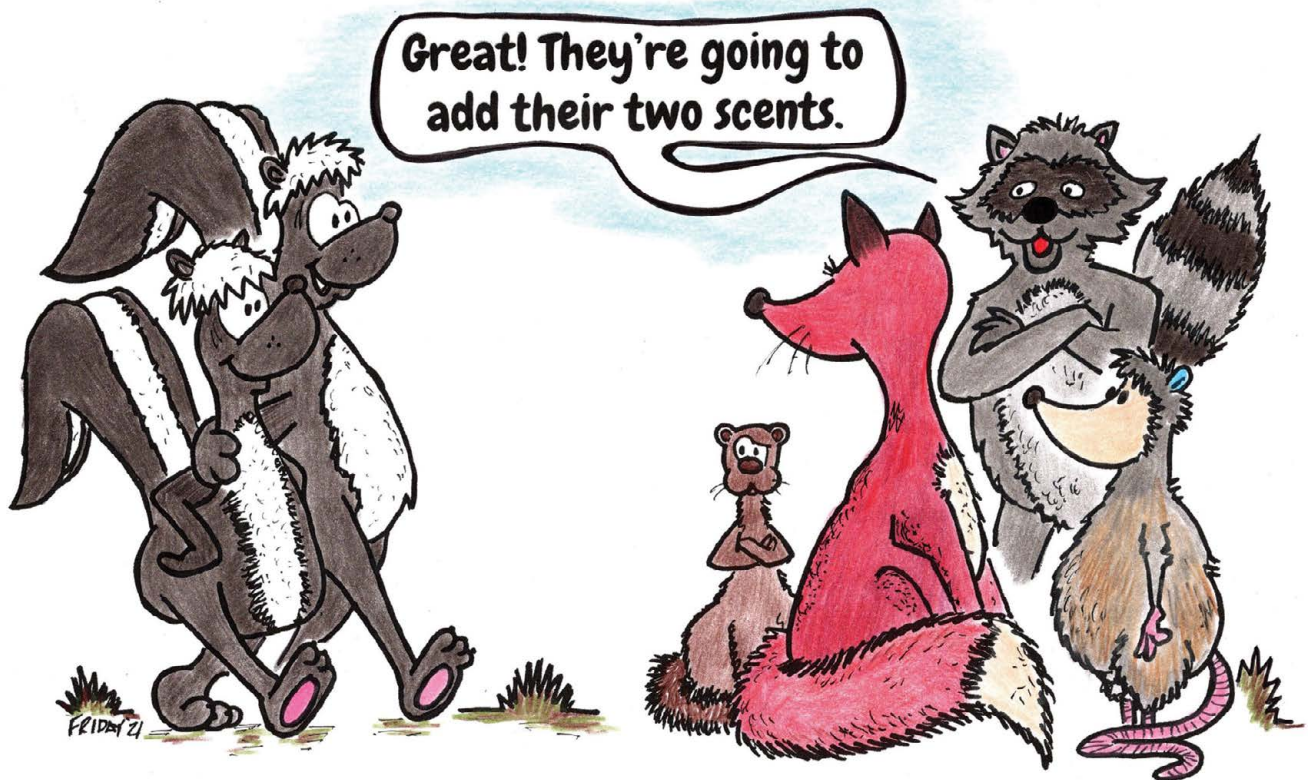
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## MARCH/APRIL READER CONTEST

J X O P L Y M O U T H R O C K E G A T I R E H A  
 V C I Z Y S E L B A S U E R S E D R A Z S P X E  
 G T A R E N T A I S E B E E K E E P E R S P I Q  
 Z F D P M X Q A S J P P G N I D O O R B D P K V  
 Z N D G I U S E U K M A O U N B C T N G T W F T  
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INFLAMMATION  
 COFFEE CAKES  
 SLOPPY JOE  
 POTATO  
 SKUNKS  
 REUSABLES  
 DOWNSIZING  
 BOWSTRING  
 BOW  
 BEANS  
 LAWN  
 ORGANIC  
 EDIBLE  
 LANDSCAPING  
 HORSES  
 FLY CONTROL  
 FEEDER PIGS  
 PLYMOUTH ROCK  
 BROODING  
 HERITAGE  
 TURKEYS  
 PEA FOWL  
 BEEKEEPER  
 BUZZ  
 POLLINATOR  
 EARTH DAY  
 TARENDAISE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The winner will be chosen randomly from all of the submissions returned by April 1, 2022. The winner of the November/December Reader Contest was John Merica, California. Congratulations to you, John! Enjoy your new camp mug.



### Win a *Countryside* Mug! To submit, either:

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*Countryside* Reader Contest  
 1503 SW 42nd Street, Topeka, KS 66609

**Print, fill out, then take a picture and email to:**

editor@countrysidemag.com

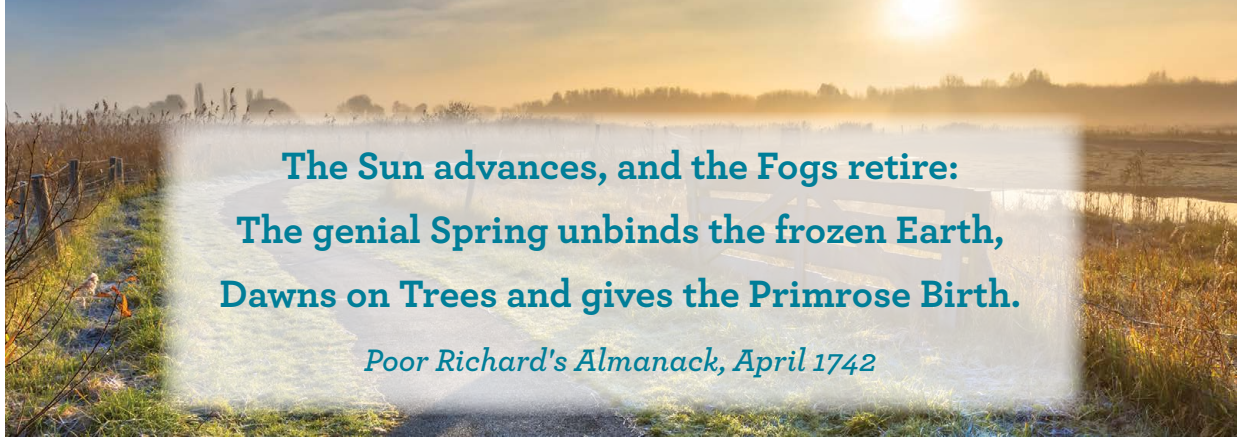
Be sure to include your contact information so we can inform you if you won the *Countryside* mug. Available for purchase at [iamcountryside.com/shop](http://iamcountryside.com/shop)

# Poor Will's COUNTRYSIDE almanack

FOR EARLY SPRING OF 2022

BY W. L. FELKER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>March</h1>		Climate change may increase the chance of wet weather late into spring. Plan ahead for early soil preparation/ planting.	Today is Ash Wednesday, the start of Christian Lent. Roman Easter is on April 17. Orthodox Easter is celebrated on April 24.	In reviewing your culling program, consider that older sheep and goats often command higher prices at the end of Ramadan (May 2).	With Passover and Easter so close together, begin working with both markets to sell your new lambs and kids.	Continue to keep your chickens' water between 50 and 70 degrees F in the coldest springs. Give them lawn clipping treats, too.
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Red maples flower and crocuses blossom, beginning the countdown to the last hard frost seven weeks from the maple and crocus bloom.	Transplant vigorous sets of collards, cabbage, broccoli, and kale to the garden. Put in potatoes, oats, and field corn after forsythia blooms.	Uncover and fertilize strawberries. Spread natural fertilizer on all your garden spaces. Cut off tips of young black raspberry branches and remove old canes.	Spray fruit trees when temperatures are expected to stay above freezing for several days. Do late pruning on colder afternoons.	Seed tobacco and explore marketing possibilities for this and other small-acre cash crops (like asparagus).	Transplant shade and fruit trees, shrubs, grape vines, strawberries, raspberries, and roses while the ground temperature remains in the 40s and 50s F. Complete field planting preparations.	Your mares may come into heat as the day's length nears 12 hours. Be sure they are up-to-date on their vaccinations. Check for bot eggs.
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
Daylily spears are often coming up. When the rivers are high, carp mate in the shallows. Flocks of robins continue to move north even in the coldest springs.	New Year's celebrations for immigrants from Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos begin in a month. Earmark your lambs and kids for this market now.	Set flats of pansies and hardy vegetables out of doors on milder days to harden them for late March or early April planting (and sales).	Warm-weather crops, such as tomatoes and peppers, could be ready to set out on May 15 if you start them this week under lights.	Today is St. Patrick's Day: Plant peas and potatoes as conditions permit. Watch for termites to swarm near old barns and outbuildings.	Check the weight of kids and lambs every two weeks. Plan ahead for Ramadan sales of halal meat to begin in late April this year.	March begins the season of highest losses from coyotes, mountain lions, and bears. Check electric fences for weed and vine growth that could weaken voltage.
<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
American toad calling season coincides with the first days of duckling and gosling hatching season.	Sweet corn planting season and lettuce planting season are open in the garden just as it's time to clean out the hen house.	Fresh pasture sets the stage for bloat in your livestock. Transition animals slowly to new growth.	Check the woods for morel mushrooms when May apples first appear.	Horseradish, dock, and dandelion roots are often dug when foliage just begins to emerge; root quality is usually at its best before the soil begins to warm.	Cut some lush pasture and let your sheep and goats get used to the taste before you let them out in it.	Wild onions are growing throughout much of the country; they can change the flavor of the milk that your sheep, goats, and cows are giving.
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
The dark moon favors maintenance of your animals: trim feet, worm, and treat for fleas and ticks.	March is the time to watch your animals for signs of high worm load.	The March 29 cold front is likely to be strong this year, influenced by the upcoming new Moon. Prepare for frost deep into the South.	Be ready for carpenter bees: Seal their last year's entry points and treat the wood with insecticide. Do it in the cool of the morning.	The graduation cookout market begins in early April. Have kids and lambs ready to sell for those celebrations throughout the spring.		
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		



**The Sun advances, and the Fogs retire:  
The genial Spring unbinds the frozen Earth,  
Dawns on Trees and gives the Primrose Birth.**

*Poor Richard's Almanack, April 1742*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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# April

<div style="font-size: 2em; font-family: serif;">April</div>					Ramadan begins today, with month-long daylight fasting. Advertise your lambs and kids for the close of Ramadan on May 2. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1</b></p>	The April 2 high-pressure system initiates a period of unsettled weather that brings an increased chance of tornadoes in the South and Midwest. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b></p>
Japanese beetle grubs move to the surface of the ground to feed. Flies begin to bother livestock as the weather warms. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>3</b></p>	Some sheep owners are putting their flocks to work cutting grass, controlling weeds, and reducing the undergrowth in forests. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b></p>	Livestock given dry hay before being let out to new pastures tend to gorge themselves less and develop bloat far less frequently. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>5</b></p>	Livestock may not get enough nutrition from forage during wet springs. Take up the feeding slack with supplements. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>6</b></p>	Eastern tent caterpillars may begin to weave webs on flowering fruit trees. Destroy the webs as you find them. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>7</b></p>	Since this week of April is a major tornado window of the year, severe storms could well occur. Have a disaster plan for your family and property. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>8</b></p>	Keep looking for morel mushrooms when orchard grass is ready to harvest. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>9</b></p>
Keep a record of kills by predators. Patterns almost always appear in animal behavior, especially in connection with weather changes. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>10</b></p>	Make sure your boar is getting enough vitamin E and selenium. If he isn't, he may not be the breeder that you need throughout the coming months. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>11</b></p>	Approach representatives of various religious faiths to discuss the most appropriate way to make your lambs and kids available for their feast days. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>12</b></p>	Watch for bloat in your livestock as warmer weather causes pastures to surge. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>13</b></p>	New Year's Celebration for immigrants from Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos begins today and lasts through the 16th, favoring animals in the 70-pound range. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>14</b></p>	Before the spring gets too far along, give annual vaccinations and have blood work done on your flock and herd. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>15</b></p>	Tomorrow is Roman (traditional) Easter. Save your newly weaned, milk-fed lambs weighing not older than three months, for this market. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>16</b></p>
Be ready to meet the demand for asparagus at your roadside stand and at farmers markets. Plan for the peak time next year as you refine your marketing schedule. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>17</b></p>	When ticks and mosquitoes become troublesome, the morel mushroom hunting season is often about over. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>18</b></p>	When the tree line starts to turn green, weevils appear in alfalfa, and cabbage worms take over the cabbage. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>19</b></p>	A major increase in the average daily amount of sunlight is occurring now throughout the country. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>20</b></p>	Don't forget to market your sheep and goats for Eid al Fitr, the Islamic festival of the breaking of the Ramadan fast. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>21</b></p>	Take care of the paperwork for registering animals you intend to show or sell. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>22</b></p>	Passover ends today. Milk-fed lambs and kids below 60 pounds are favored for this market. Lamb stew is a traditional Seder dish at Passover Seder dinners. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>23</b></p>
As April comes to a close, highs in the 90s become possible. Excessive heat can make male mammals sterile for months at a time. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>24</b></p>	Spring rains can increase the risk of internal parasites in livestock. Make use of stool sample analysis to ensure that drenching has been effective. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>25</b></p>	Aphid infestations move north from the Deep South into the fields and gardens. Cutworms and sod webworms work the cornfields. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>26</b></p>	Shear your ram's and buck's scrotum for hotter weather ahead. You could shear the early lambs, too; they tend to grow better in the heat without a lot of wool. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>27</b></p>	Shear Angora goats and rabbits to promote the growth of new hair. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>28</b></p>	Consider exploring the possibility of selecting some of your late-winter lambs and kids for the Navaratri Hindu market this coming autumn. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>29</b></p>	Chances of frost now virtually disappear in the South and become relatively insignificant throughout much of the North. <p style="text-align: right;"><b>30</b></p>

**THE SUN** Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on March 13. Spring equinox occurs and the Sun enters Aries on March 20 at 11:32 a.m.

By April 1, the Sun reaches almost 60% of the way to summer. It enters the sign of Taurus on April 19.

**PHASES OF THE BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE MOON** A winter resident in much of the country, the black-capped chickadee adds its mating calls to the morning chorus throughout late winter and early spring, bringing cheer and the promise of warmth.

**PHASES OF THE GILDED GOLDFINCH MOON** Goldfinches are transformed with their golden plumage as daffodils flower and the Great Dandelion Bloom moves north across the United States. Killdeer, meadowlarks and scarlet tanagers return to the woods. Toads and frogs call in the night.

**THE PLANETS** Venus, Mars, and Saturn are all in Capricorn during March, rising in the east before

dawn. Venus is the brightest of these morning stars and can be seen to almost touch Mars on March 12. Jupiter continues to travel in Aquarius, hidden from view for the first part of the month, then appearing well behind the other major stars close to sunrise.

In April, Saturn, in Capricorn, is the earliest of the morning stars, preceding Venus and Mars, which remain the two most prominent morning stars before dawn. Jupiter moves retrograde into Pisces, becoming the last of the major planets to enter the morning sky in April. It can be seen very close to Venus (in conjunction) on the early morning of April 30.

**THE STARS** By the middle of March, all of winter's stars are clustered together now in the far west just a few hours after dark. They take the Milky Way with them and completely disappear from view by three o'clock in the morning. By that time, however, the summer band of the Milky Way appears in the northeastern sky, along with Cygnus, the Northern Cross, and Aquila.

If you get up before dawn in April, you will see the sky the way it will look after dark in early August. Hercules has moved to near the center of the sky. The Summer Triangle, which includes bright Vega,

Altair, and Deneb, are just a little behind Hercules, that is to his east. The rich star-dense band of the Milky Way passes through the triangle, separating it from autumn's Pegasus, the Great Square, rising on the eastern horizon.

**THE SHOOTING STARS** The Lyrid meteor shower begins on April 16 and peaks on April 22-23. Expect up to 20 shooting stars per hour in Lyra, almost overhead in the eastern sky after midnight when the Big Dipper is overhead. The waning moon may make it difficult to see the fainter shooting stars.

The Eta Aquarid meteors run from April 19 to May 28, peaking in early May. Find them low in the east before dawn while you are still looking for Lyrids.

**METEOROLOGY** Major March weather systems usually cross the Mississippi River on March 2, 5, 9, 14, 19, 24, 29, and on April 2, 6, 11, 16, 21, 24, and 28.

March is likely to come in like a lion throughout the country as the Moon turns new. Be prepared for tornadoes in the first days of the month, as well as around full Moon time. Lunar perigee on March 23, so close to full Moon on March 17, will bring severe weather to the third week of the month, rains in the South, snow in the North.

The fourth week of March should be relatively mild, and early spring plantings, such as daffodils, will bloom at average elevations along the 40th Parallel. The approach of new Moon on April 1, however, will bring dangerous conditions once again as Gulf winds clash with Arctic high-pressure systems.

Conditions will become more conducive to outdoor activities as the moon waxes through apogee and into its second quarter. Full Moon on April 16, so close to lunar perigee on the 19th, however, will increase the chance of frost throughout the northern half of the United States and threaten flowering fruit trees. The final third of April should be mild and sunny until frost again becomes likely with the advent of the new Warbler Migration Moon.

**LUNAR FEEDING PATTERNS**

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.

Activity is likely to increase at new moon and full moon and at perigee (when the Moon is closest to Earth), especially as the barometer falls in advance of cold fronts near those dates.

DATE	ABOVE	BELOW
March 1 – 9	Afternoons	Midnight to Dawn
March 10 – 17	Evenings	Mornings
March 18 – 24	Midnight to Dawn	Afternoons
March 25 – 31	Mornings	Evenings
April 1 – 8	Afternoons	Midnight to Dawn
April 9 – 15	Evenings	Mornings
April 16 – 22	Midnight to Dawn	Afternoons
April 23 – 30	Mornings	Evenings

**March 2:** The Black-Capped Chickadee Moon is new at 12:35 p.m.

**March 10: Second Quarter:** 5:45 a.m.

**March 10:** Lunar Apogee (the Moon farthest from Earth): 6:00 p.m.

**March 18:** Full Moon: 2:18 a.m.

**March 23:** Lunar Perigee (when the Moon is closest to Earth): 1:00 a.m.

**March 25:** Last quarter at 7:00 p.m.

**April 1:** The Gilded Goldfinch Moon is new at 1:24 a.m.

**April 7:** Lunar Apogee (the Moon is farthest from Earth): 2:00 p.m.

**April 9:** Second Quarter: 1:48 a.m.

**April 16:** Full Moon: 1:55 p.m.

**April 19:** Lunar Perigee (when the Moon is closest to Earth): 10:00 a.m.

**April 23:** Last Quarter: 6:56 a.m.

**April 30:** The Warbler Migration Moon is new at 3:28 p.m.

**CALENDAR OF FEAST DAYS AND HOLIDAYS FOR FARMERS, GARDENERS, AND HOMESTEADERS**

**March 1, 2022:** Mardi Gras

**March 2, 2022:** Lent Begins.

**April 1, 2022:** Ramadan: Month-long daylight fasting begins. Advertise your sheep and goats to the halal market in preparation for the close of Ramadan on May 2.

**April 1 – June 30, 2022:** Graduation Cookout Market: Inquire at nearby high schools, colleges, and universities for exact dates, advertising one month ahead.

**April 14 – 16, 2022:** New Year's Celebration for immigrants from Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos: The Asian market often favors animals in the 60 to 80-pound live-weight range.

**April 15 – 23, 2022:** Passover: The Jewish market typically is best after religious holidays come to a close. Milk-fed lambs and kids below 60 pounds are favored for the Passover market.

**April 17, 2022:** Roman Easter: Save your newly weaned, milk-fed lambs weighing about 25 to 45 pounds and not older than three months, for this market. Light-colored meat is best, a sign of the suckling animal. Lambs weighing under 20 pounds or more than 50 pounds may not bring the best price.

**April 24, 2022:** Orthodox Easter: Orthodox Easter animals should also be milk-fed. They can be a little bit bigger than the Roman Easter lambs (between 40 and 60 pounds), and should be nice and fat.

**May 2, 2022:** Id al Fitr: Islamic Festival of the breaking of the Ramadan Fast: Sheep for this market should not be older than a year. Castrated or uncastrated males are acceptable, as are ewes. The best weight for Ramadan sheep is around 60 pounds, but weaned lambs between 45 and 115 pounds are often used. Older sheep often command higher prices during this period.

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**THE SCKRAMBLER**  
MARCH/APRIL  
TIME TO GO FISHING

- |          |                |
|----------|----------------|
| SABS     | LUBLDAEH       |
| PARC     | SFIHCTA        |
| NUSHFIS  | LLWYDAEE. EIKP |
| LILGLBUE | THRNRNOE. KIPE |
| PAIECRP  | GFDHSOI        |
| CKRESU   | OALSNM         |
| NMNWOI   | AUERGS         |
| EHCRP    | EGLNUMUSEKEL   |
| MURD     | CIKRLPEP       |
| ORTTOU   | OEUNRTSG       |

The 3rd, 7th, 24th and 40th correct solutions will win five dollars for their authors. Send your answers to:

Poor Will  
P.O. Box 431  
Yellow Springs, OH 45387

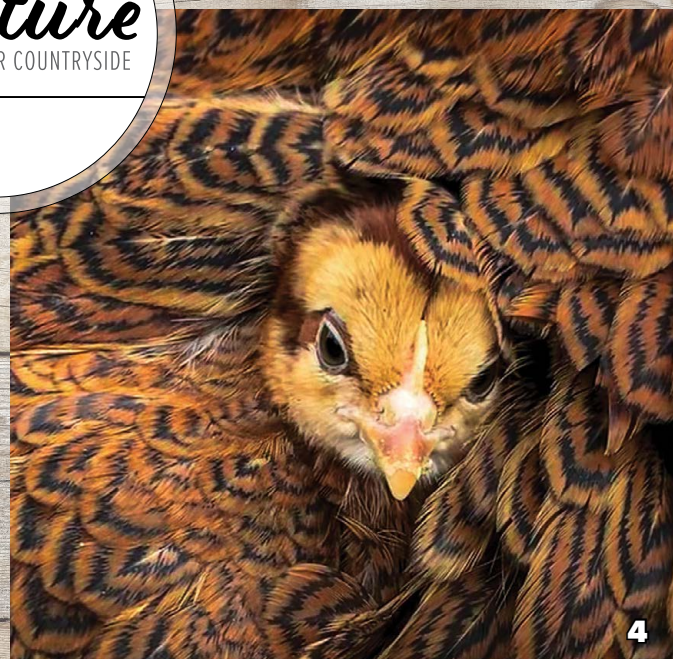
There should be no typos in this puzzle, and no typo prize will be awarded. If you happen to find a typo, however, you may simply skip that word without penalty.

**WINNERS & ANSWERS**  
OF THE NOV/DEC SCKRAMBLER

Poor Will promised five dollars to the 3rd, 27th, and 44th persons who solved the Sckrambler before the answers appeared in Countryside. The winners this time: the 3rd was Jane Townsend of Nebo, NC; the 27th was Helen Talsma of Mayer, AZ; the 44th was Catherine Martens of Mattapoisett, MA.

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| DABREG/BADGER               | LAITGNIR/RINGTAIL                   |
| OYOTCE/COYOTE               | KKUNS/SKUNK                         |
| FOLW/WOLF                   | ATC/CAT                             |
| GDO/DOG                     | WAKH/HAWK                           |
| LBCAK EARB/BLACK BEAR       | EEALG/EAGLE                         |
| YARG FXO/GRAY FOX           | LLGTRIAO/ALLIGATOR                  |
| BBOCTA/BOBCAT               | SEALWE/WEASEL                       |
| UNTAINMO NOIL/MOUNTAIN LION | ERD XFO/RED FOX                     |
| TRESED WERHS/DESERT SHREW   | QUITOSOM/MOSQUITO                   |
| AOCCRN/RACCOON              | TEARG WHTIE KRASH/GREAT WHITE SHARK |

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- 1 Goat eye or portal to another dimension? 📷 Lacy Armentor, Texas @lacyarmentor
- 2 Stella Grace and Patsy bonding over snacks. 📷 Brooke Lynch, LayZGrace Farm, North Carolina
- 3 Duck eggs + violets = cupcakes for a picnic dinner. 📷 Ana Skemp, Wisconsin @ deeprootscommunityfarm
- 4 May I help you? I'm a little busy here. 📷 Paul @17chickensandcounting



EMAIL PHOTOS in JPG format to editor@countrysidemag.com with "Capture Your Countryside" in the subject line.

MESSAGE US ON FACEBOOK facebook.com/iamcountryside

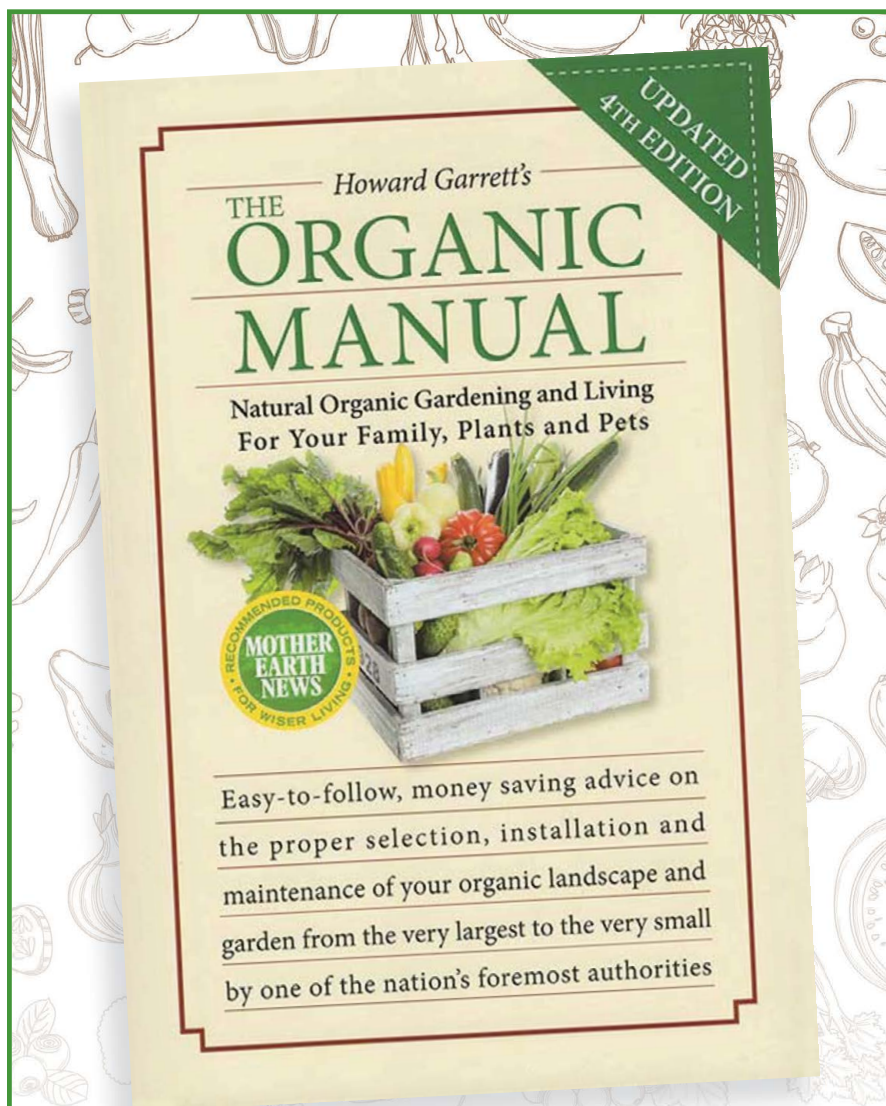
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The best kept secret of all (uncovered in this book) is that organic gardening is better in every way. Whether you're hoping to grow beautiful landscaping or delicious, healthy food crops, *The Organic Manual* explains bed preparation, planting, pest control, and compost making. It also covers natural living advice. The organic method Garrett describes is the most efficient, most cost-effective, and most fun of any approach possible. It also produces the best trees, shrubs, flowers, fruits, and vegetables that you'll ever grow.

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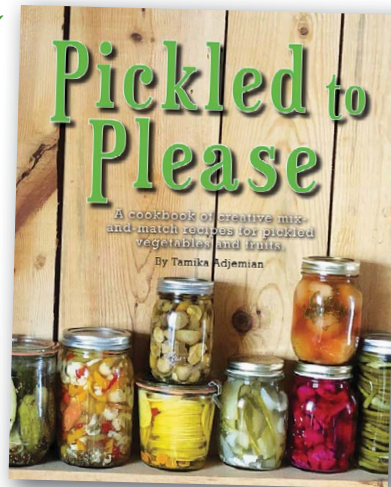
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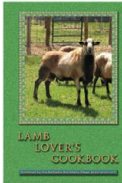
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