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COUNTRYSIDE

& Small Stock Journal

Volume 106 • Number 3
MAY/JUNE 2022

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I AM COUNTRYSIDE

Northern Roots Family Farm

BY AMY LEWIS





We farm for our love of real food, for our community, for connection.

We farm for our roots, for mother earth, for our family, for our children, and most of all, we farm for future generations.



Photo by Cottage in the Woods Photography.

IF YOU WOULD HAVE TOLD my younger self that I would end up moving back to the north and farming, I probably would have laughed out loud at the very thought. Moving back up north to the Peace Country, let alone farming, was honestly never in our family's vision.

But life sometimes has different plans and I am forever grateful for it.

Although not having been raised on a farm growing up, both my husband and I spent time with our grandparents and learning from them and their farm life. From grain farming, raising livestock, gardening, cooking, to preserving food; those farming seeds were planted deep within us and, in time, blossomed into a dream to own a farm of our own. As a couple, we became increasingly aware of where our food was coming from, the welfare of the animals being raised for our food, and the state of the environment. We wanted our children to have a role in raising their food, as well as an understanding and connection to the natural world.

To fulfill that longing to get back to our family's farming roots, we left the hustle and bustle of the big city, quit our jobs, sold our house, and bought a farm. Our family farm is nestled on the outskirts of the majestic Peace River Valley near our hometown of Peace River, Alberta, Canada.

Northern Roots Family Farm's goal is to provide nourishing and wholesome food for our family, friends, and community. It is our mission that our food and products are handmade, grown and raised ethically, mindfully, and with environmentally conscious farming practices.

We started by focusing on hardy heritage breeds that would thrive in our cold climate with harsh winters. By investing in these breeds, it is our family's way of preserving some of these threatened livestock genetics. Our farm grew first with Chantecler chickens, next was our herd of Dexter cows, and then came a fiber flock of Shetland and Icelandic sheep. Finally, a heritage blend of pigs and honey bees graced our pastures and fields somewhere within there as well.

As our farm grew, so did the by-products of our farming. With beekeeping came not only honey, but beeswax and propolis. From raising livestock and butchering came tallow, lard, skulls, and hides. Being a shepherd, there were bags upon bags of beautiful wool fleeces each spring. Gardens became lush with flowers, herbs, and veggies. So I combined my passion for traditional skills and sustainable living by incorporating these into our farm crafted products. Tallow, flowers, and honey into handcrafted soaps, wool was washed and carded into roving for hand spinners or felted into eco-friendly dryer balls, and wax and propolis into beeswax wraps. A nose to tail philosophy for both food and handmade goods. 🌿



Photo by Ashley Yuremchuk Photography.



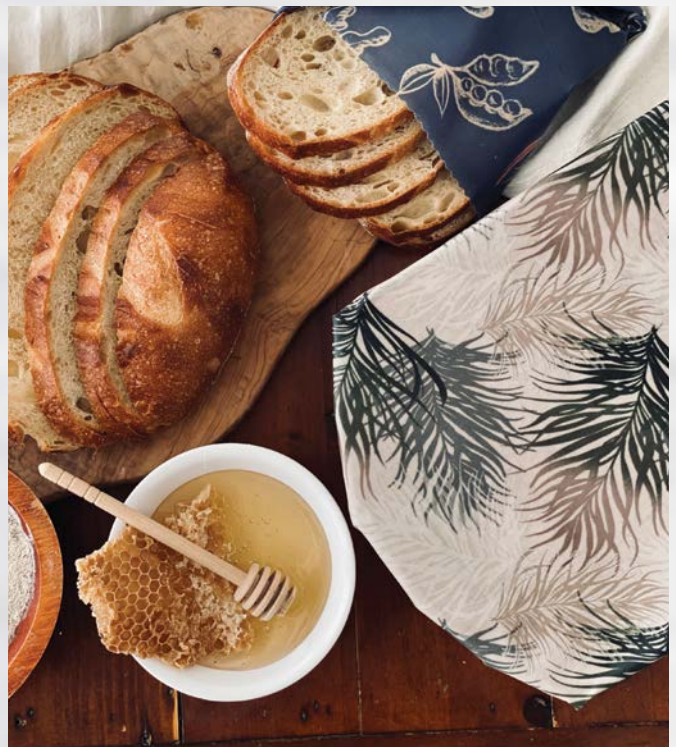
Our farm grew first with Chantecler chickens, next was our herd of Dexter cows, and then came a fiber flock of Shetland and Icelandic sheep.



Photo by Ashley Yuremchuk Photography.



Facebook: @NorthernRootsFamilyFarm
Instagram: @northernrootsfamilyfarm



CONTENTS

May/June 2022

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 4 I Am Countryside
- 11 Editor's Letter
- 12 Country Conversation
- 84 Recommended Products
- 88 Just for Fun
- 90 Almanack
- 93 Capture Your Countryside
- 94 Marketplace
- 96 Breeders Directory/Classifieds

NEW! Look for



AUDIO ARTICLE

throughout *Countryside*, then visit iamcountryside.com to listen to these articles online!

HOMESTEADING

- 16 Tractor Tire Repairs Made Easy
By Jeremy Chartier
- 20 Earn Extra Money With Agritourism
By Michelle Marine
- 24 Families Learning Together
By Marissa Ames
- 28 Incorporating Homesteading and Homeschooling
By Jenna Dooley
- 32 So, You Want to Raise Farm Kids. Here are a Few Things to Consider
By Michelle Marine

BEEKEEPING

- 36 Natural Versus Grafted Queen Rearing
By Kristi Cook
- 38 Are Queen Excluders a Good Idea?
By Kristi Cook

GROWING

- 40 How to Build a Permanent Home Herb Garden
By Jenny Underwood
- 42 10 Best Herbs for Stress Relief
By Rhonda Crank
- 46 Growing Sweet Corn
By Jenny Underwood
- 48 Be Careful With Plants: They May Be Toxic!
By Dr. Stephenie Slahor, Ph.D.

POULTRY

- 50 Open a Rhea Farm to Diversify
By Kenny Coogan
- 53 Flock Files: Caring for Chicks With Pasty Butt
By Lisa Steele
- 54 Breed Profile: Langshan Chicken
By Tamsin Cooper

ANIMALS & LIVESTOCK

- 56 Raising Heritage Breeds
By Cathy R. Payne
- 60 Care of the Newborn Calf
By Heather Smith Thomas
- 64 4-H Pig Breeds; Making the Right Choice
By Janet Garman
- 68 Basic Hoof Care for the Horse Owner
By Heather Smith Thomas

FARM TO FORK

- 70 Easy Brunch Panini
By Hannah McClure
- 71 Fried Fruit Pies
By Hannah McClure
- 72 DIY Seasoning Blends
By Hannah McClure

SOAPMAKING

- 74 Starting Your Own Soap Making Business
By Virginia Montgomery

OUTDOOR LIVING

- 76 Bear Country? It Bears Watching!
By Dr. Stephenie Slahor, Ph.D.

SIMPLICITY

- 80 Ten Ways to Simplify Your Life
By Patrice Lewis



ON THE COVER | Newborn Dexter calf. — Amy Lewis, Alberta, Canada @northernrootsfamilyfarm.
See more from Northern Roots Farm on page 4.

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Pomona's Blueberry-Maple Preserves

Ingredients

- 2¼ pounds blueberries
- ¼ cup water
- ¼ cup lemon juice bottled
- 1½ teaspoons calcium water
- ¾ cup pure maple syrup
- 1½ teaspoons Pomona's Universal Pectin



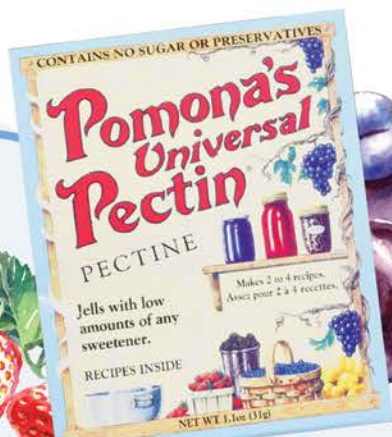
Before You Begin

Prepare calcium water: combine ½ teaspoon calcium powder (in the small packet in your box of Pomona's Universal Pectin) with ½ cup water in a small, clear jar with a lid. Shake well.

Extra calcium water should be stored in the refrigerator for future use.

Directions

- 1 Wash jars, lids, and screw bands. Place jars in a water bath canner with a rack, fill at least 2/3 of the way full with water, and bring to a boil. Boil jars for 10 minutes to sterilize. Turn down heat and let jars stand in hot water until ready to use. Simmer lids in water in a small pan and hold there until ready to use.
- 2 Rinse blueberries, then remove and discard stems.
- 3 Place blueberries and water in a sauce pan. Bring the berries up to a boil over high heat, stirring occasionally and gently. Avoid crushing the berries as much as possible. Continue to cook the berries, stirring occasionally, until the berries have softened and have begun to release their juices — about another 1 to 2 minutes. Then remove pan from heat.
- 4 Measure out 4 cups of the cooked blueberry mixture. Pour the measured blueberry mixture into a large sauce pan. Add lemon juice and calcium water and stir to combine.
- 5 In a separate bowl, combine the maple syrup and pectin powder. Mix well and set aside.
- 6 Bring blueberry mixture to a full boil over high heat. Add maple syrup-pectin mixture, then stir vigorously for 1 to 2 minutes, over highest heat, to dissolve pectin. Return preserves to a boil, then remove from heat.
- 7 Fill hot jars with preserves, leaving ¼ inch of headspace. Wipe rims with a damp cloth, screw on 2-piece lids, place filled jars in hot water bath (water covering the jars at 1 or 2 inches) and boil for 10 minutes. Remove jars and let cool for 12-24 hours. Check seals, lids should be sucked down. Eat within one year. Lasts 3 weeks once opened. Yields 5 cups.



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EDITORIAL

Ann Tom, Editor
editor@countrySIDEMAG.COM

Marissa Ames
Editorial Director

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

BEAR TALES

SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER when I wrote about the whippoorwills, armyworms, and deer hunting at my grandparent's cabin in the woods of northern Wisconsin. Those are just a few of the wonderful memories I have of the cabin in the woods. Another fond memory I have is watching black bears rummage through the garbage at the local dump.

Back in those days, the folks who lived in the area would take their trash to the dump, with everything from tin cans to old refrigerators and everything in-between. Of course, the in-between included food, which attracted the bears.

In the evening, my family and I jumped in the car headed to the dump. We waited quietly (inside the car) for the bears to appear before dusk. They would enter the dump area from all directions, select a pile of garbage to dig in, and sit and eat to their heart's (and belly's) content.

Another memory I have of black bears at the cabin was when my mother would take the bacon grease from breakfast and pour it on the trees a bit of a distance from the cabin. She would get up right at dawn to check her bacon-flavored trees. If there were bears outside (and oftentimes there were), she would excitedly wake me up to watch them with her.

Several times a momma bear would be licking the grease as her cubs climbed out of the trees to join her.

They never did any damage. They would come to lick up the grease and be on their way until the next time. To this day, I get overjoyed when I see bears in the wild. However, I do not condone putting bacon grease or any other attractants around your property as bears can be very dangerous, especially when their cubs are near.

In this issue, Dr. Stephenie Slahor joins us to talk more about bears and how to stay safe in case of an encounter.

You'll also find something new in this issue. We've added an "Audio Article" symbol to a few articles. If you're unfamiliar with an audio article, it is an existing online article that is converted into a playable audio file that plays alongside the written content. It's a great way to give your eyes a rest and to listen and learn while on the run.

Enjoy!



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!

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Country Conversation & Feedback

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

In Response to “Treasured Coffee Cakes” (March/April 2022)

I made the cherry crumb cake from Rita Heikenfeld’s article but used canned blueberries instead of cherries as I am not a fan of cherries. I also used a 21-ounce can of blueberries and baked it in a 9x13 pan as stated at the bottom of the article.



I don’t know if I miscalculated the amount of butter I used for the topping but it didn’t turn out crumbly. I laid pieces of the topping over the blueberries and baked for 30 minutes. It was amazing! I don’t care for anything too sweet and this had just the right amount of sweetness. This will be my new go-to dessert for family gatherings and potluck get-togethers.

Thank you for the wonderful recipe!

— Mary B., Wyoming

In Response to March/April Question of the Month: (DIY Projects Questions)

Regarding the question of the month, how do others efficiently and economically boil maple sap using wood? Using wood is the most economical method here. How do you create enough heat to steam in a timely manner using the wood approach? I’m currently using the barrel method with pans on top, but it’s hard to keep the sap rapidly steaming/boiling. In our experience, LP takes about a third, if not less, of the time, but it is costly compared to wood. How do others typically set up their sugar shack without spending a fortune?

— Troy P., Ohio

In Response to “Skunks on the Homestead” (March/April 2022)

I thoroughly enjoyed Anita B. Stone’s article, “The Homestead Skunk” in the March/April issue of *Countryside*. Ms. Stone proves herself to be an excellent writer. Too good a writer to dismiss what I think is a typo without checking. She states “...skunks can adjust the length and quality of output at will...” Was quality meant to be quantity? I’d hate to think that a skunk can control the degree of potency of its famous defense.

— Ali Farhat

In my article about skunks, by the use of the word, “quality,” I was referring to the shape of the emitted spray, not to any change in the chemical character of the liquid. The form of the spray as delivered can be deliberately manipulated by the skunk into either a narrow stream or a more widespread, diffuse mist, depending on the nature of the perceived threat. This variation is controlled at will by the gland’s sphincter muscles. Thanks for the question. I hope this clears up the confusion.

— Anita Stone

In Response to "Whole Wheat Cookery" (March/April 2022)

I enjoyed Jenny Underwood's article. I have adapted existing recipes to whole wheat. The thing to remember is that whole wheat flour absorbs more liquid than white flour does. So, if you are adapting a recipe, you need to remember to add more liquid to compensate. I thought that overbaking had caused my bread to be too dry, but this was not the case. Once I added more liquid (in this case, stout), the recipe was fine.

Also, in my experience, the "toothpick doneness test" for quick breads does not work very well. Checking the temperature is much more reliable.

This is an adapted recipe (whole wheat flour replaced white flour).

STOUT BREAD

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cups dried currants or raisins
¼ lb unsalted butter (1 stick)
¾ cup brown sugar
1 beaten egg
11 oz bottle of stout beer
2 cups whole wheat flour
½ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon of King Arthur Flour's apple pie spice (or a mixture of Allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and/or dried ginger to equal 1 teaspoon or to taste)

Ingredients should be at room temperature.

INSTRUCTIONS

Soak dried currants or raisins in water.

Melt butter over low heat. Stir in brown sugar. When cool, stir in egg and beer.

Drain currants. In another bowl, mix whole wheat flour with the drained currants. Add spices.

Add dry ingredients to wet. Mix only enough to combine. Do not overmix. You do not want to develop gluten, which will make the bread tough.

Spoon batter into a greased 9-inch loaf pan.

Bake at 350 degrees F for about 70 to 75 minutes.

Test it for doneness after 60 minutes with a food thermometer. When the bread is baked, the center should be 200 degrees F. If it is 200 degrees F at either end of the loaf but not yet at the center, leave the bread in the pan on a rack outside your oven to continue baking in the hot pan. This will prevent overbaking and keep the bread from being too dry.

When the bread is cool, loosen the bread from the four sides of the pan, and free the bread.

— Kathleen Spaltro, Woodstock, Illinois

We want to hear from
you in 2022!

May/June Question of the Month:

With summer fast approaching, many folks, myself included, look forward to cookouts with friends and family. Beyond the usual burgers and hot dogs, what are your favorite grilled recipes that you're proud to serve at these gatherings?

Send your favorites to us:

Countryside Editor,
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In Response to "Spirit of Summer Photos" (March/April 2022)



— Charlie Nichols

— Tom Fuller

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TRACTOR TIRE REPAIRS

Made Easy

BY JEREMY CHARTIER



AUDIO ARTICLE*

Tractor tire repairs can seem like a daunting task due to their size. As counter-intuitive as it may be, the extra-large nature of these round rubber behemoths makes our lives a bit easier compared to an average car tire. There are a lot of commonalities between tractor tire repairs and automotive tire repairs because, well, they're all tires. Let's look at what the layman can repair in the field and some tips and tricks of the trade.

Tractor Tire Repairs

Many tractor tire repairs require you to remove the tire from the rim. Most times you only need to partially dismount the tire, and even more often; the tire will dismount itself. If you find yourself in need of fully dismounting a tire, you'll want to pick up a set of tire irons or "spoons." These tire tools are meant to allow you to pry the tire off the bead without damaging your rim. You can find these tools at your local tractor store, truck stops, and most discount tool suppliers. Look for the longest ones available to give yourself leverage.

Seating a Bead

Many old-timers like to use a flammable fluid and a match to seat a bead. Yes, it'll work, but most of these fluids are deleterious to rubber and may compromise your tire. Not to mention it's a safety risk. The safer way of reseating a bead is with a ratchet strap around the tire. Tighten the strap, use a spray bottle of water and dish soap to coax the bead back on, and use a large mallet to finish seating the tire as you inflate. Use a rubber, wood, or dead-blow hammer in case you whack the rim by accident.

Split Rims

Farmers are notorious for using aging equipment well beyond its expected life span. If you ever come in contact with equipment that has a split-rim, be warned. They're a dangerous sort and should be managed by professionals with a rim cage. You can tell a split-rim by the removable half-moon steel edge on one side. These are dangerous and have caused fatalities while being worked with.

Sticks and Stems

One common flat tire-inducing issue is broken tire stems. It's surprisingly easy to catch a stem on a stump, stick, or rock during hard use, especially when navigating brush and overgrown fields. Changing a tractor tire valve stem is a laborious but straightforward job. You need to dismount the tire enough to reach the stem hole inside the rim to pull a new stem through. Optionally, you can use a Quick Stem, which you don't need access to the inside of the rim to install. It's a simple rubber crush washer design and works well on low-speed tires like tractors and implements. Using a stem replacement like this will let you forgo dismounting the tire, saving you time and effort.



Punctures

Tractors may work in fields, but many see heavy use in the farmyard doing all sorts of things. Building structures, moving equipment, and even being impromptu engine lifts are all within the scope of practice for most tractors. Operating in these environments inevitably ends with an errant nail or screw finding its way into the tire tread. There are a few ways to remedy a tire puncture like this.

String Plugs

A tractor tire repair tool worth investing in is a well-built tire string plug kit. You can buy cheap, plastic-handled tools at the bargain store, but these always seem to break the handles, risking hand injury. Look for quality, steel-handled tools that won't send you to the hospital.

String plugs are old-style tire plugs that have been

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popular for a long time; however, they have their limitations. They provide a quick repair; however, they don't protect the tire from future failure. Therefore, string plugs should be considered a temporary repair, not a permanent fix.

Tire Patches

Always use an inside patch to finalize a tractor tire repair where a string plug is used. The combination of patch and plug will seal the air in the tire and keep moisture from penetrating the carcass of the tire, which will lead to internal belt rust and rot. To use these patches, you need to access the inside of the tire, which means at least a partial dismount from the wheel. This job is easier done at your barn or shop versus in the field, so consider the string plug the field fix and the patch the final stage of repair.



Patch Plugs

The NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) in the USA has been advocating for "combination tire repairs" for a long time. The NHTSA states that a plug and patch repair is the only safe way to repair a road-going tire. A string plug and patch combination qualifies; however, there is a product available on the market that combines these into one easy-to-use system; the patch plug.



The patch plug is favored by professionals who want to do the job right. Patch plugs are shoved into the tire from the inside out, and feature a steel spike to allow you to push them through the tire. Using a patch plug will be

the best tractor tire repair for punctures, sealing the air within and protecting the tire's carcass from moisture incursion.

Tread Gouges

Tractor tires are prone to damage and abuse, especially in rock or brush-rich environments. Gouging the treads is inevitable in these situations, and as long as the damage only pertains to the rubber lug itself and



not the main tire where the steel belts reside, it's not a big concern. Gouges and cuts on the lugs of tires are par for the course, so don't be overly alarmed by them unless they compromise the main body of the tire.

Sidewall Damage

Sidewall damage, be it cuts, gouges, or dry rot, are not candidates for safe tractor tire repair. Although these are low-speed equipment tires, it's still a dangerous game to operate a tractor (especially at comparatively high speeds) on tires that have compromised sidewalls. If you have a sidewall failure, decode the tractor tire size on the sidewall and find a suitable replacement tire. If you're stuck replacing a tire, it may be prudent to replace both on the axle or all the tires. Before buying a duplicate of what you had before, consider what the best tractor tires for your farm may be. It might be time to upgrade to a different tread style that suits your needs better. 🇺🇸

*NEW! Listen to this audio article online at <https://www.iamcountryside.com/tractors-farm-equipment/tractor-tire-repair-made-easy/>

At 12 years old, **JEREMY CHARTIER** became involved with his local 4-H group, later joined the local FFA chapter, and showed livestock until his college years. After graduating from the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture at UConn, he joined University of Maine's Poultry Service Provider training program. Today Jeremy sells started pullets to local backyard farmers, is still involved with 4-H as a poultry showmanship judge, and writes about his passion for farming.

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BEST OF COUNTRY LIFE - Foss, OK



This country home includes 5-BR, 4-BA and sits on 2 acres. The property is very close to Foss Lake. There is a massive back porch with views of the pastoral environment.

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Earn Extra Money With AGRITOURISM

BY MICHELLE MARINE



What is agritourism, you might ask? Quite simply, agritourism is the melding of agriculture and tourism. The term was first coined by the U.S. Census of Agriculture in 2007 and the popularity of agritourism has been growing by leaps and bounds ever since. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, “28,575 farms offered agritourism and recreational services resulting in \$949 million in sales” in 2017 (<https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism>). Gen Xers and millennials especially are quick to spend their money on family experiences versus things, and agritourism is no exception.

Agritourism, while it sounds fancy, is not a new concept. Urban dwellers have been heading to the country to escape city life, weather, pollution, or a host of other things for a long time. Consider Marie Antoinette’s Hameau de la Reine, or Queen’s Hamlet, finished in 1786. This provincial village a short distance from the Palace of Versailles was built to be a small, rustic village and working farm where the queen could escape palace life, take rural walks, and enjoy a slower pace in a country setting. She also used it to teach her four children about farm life, according to the palace website (<https://en.chateauversailles.fr/discover/estate/estate-trianon/queen-hamlet#history-of-the-premises>).

While most of us today don’t have the means to construct an entire village for our pleasure, there are many ways to incorporate agritourism and potentially earn extra income on your own farm. Here are 10 different agritourism ideas that have become quite popular in recent years.

1. FARM STAYS

If you have extra space, turn it into a bed and breakfast, Airbnb, or VRBO. Farm stays are very popular,



AUDIO ARTICLE*

ACCORDING TO THE U.S. Census Bureau, roughly 80% of the people in the United States live in urban areas. Nostalgia for country life is alive and well though, thanks to a thriving agritourism industry that draws people from the city and helps them experience country life in a variety of ways: participating in farm life, staying overnight at farms, or helping their kids experience animals and food production.

and the more unique the setting the better. In Iowa, you can stay above a working milking parlor and watch the cows get milked from a second-story observation deck. In converted grain silos; in an old milk house converted into a boutique Airbnb on a working goat farm. Many farms around the United States offer popular farm stays in covered wagons, tree houses, rail cars, houseboats, and barns, too!

Even if you have land and no buildings, you can still offer farm stays by signing up to host campers or self-contained RVs through programs like HipCamp or Harvest Hosts. These programs allow people to stay on your property in return for a fee or an agreement to support your agricultural enterprises by purchasing goods.

2. PICK YOUR OWN

Picking your own fruit, vegetables, and flowers is a very popular seasonal activity. If you have a talent for growing produce or flowers, why not make extra income by offering a pick your own area? Blueberries, strawberries, pumpkins, and cut flowers make great “pick your own” opportunities.

3. PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

Flower farms are popular photo sites for senior photography, weddings, and families just wanting to take selfies. Sunflower farms have become iconic for photography. For a small fee, photographers can reserve private time to take photos to their hearts' content!

4. TEACH CLASSES

From goat yoga to flower arranging, workshops on making soap, growing food, raising animals, and keeping bees, the possibilities for classes and workshops are endless. Getting people out to the country and teaching them a few things about

If you have a talent for growing produce or flowers, why not make extra income by offering a pick your own area?



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Marie Antionette's Hamlet.



Marie Antionette's Hamlet.



Marie Antionette's Hamlet.



Marie Antionette's Hamlet.

how their food is raised is a big part of the agritourism concept.

5. PUMPKIN PATCH/CORN MAZES

Pumpkin patches are very popular in the fall and are a great way to teach city folk a bit about rural living. Some of the pumpkin patches we've been to recently have become very elaborate with petting zoos, corn mazes, corn mazes after dark, goat-pulled chariot rides, bouncy houses, food trucks, hayrack rides, and more!

6. RENT EVENT SPACE


If you have extra barns or outbuildings consider renting them out as event space for meetings, for other people to conduct workshops, or for corporate activities.

7. RURAL WEDDINGS

Small-scale rural weddings are all the rage right now. If you have a flair for event management and a beautiful setting, you can offer a variety of rural weddings packages. Ranging from simple to elaborate, rural wedding packages can even include catering with locally grown produce and flowers grown on-site.



Pumpkin patch fun in Winterset, Iowa.

If you're looking for ways to expose children to rural life or are curious about earning extra income on your farm, these different agritourism ideas are something to consider. As with any business venture, though, make sure to learn about local zoning, liability, biosecurity, and other risks involved before deciding to add agritourism to your farm. 

SOURCES

- <https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/agritourism>
- <https://en.chateauversailles.fr/discover/estate/estate-trianon/queen-hamlet#history-of-the-premises>

MICHELLE MARINE is an Eastern Iowa-based freelance writer, photographer, and digital content creator living on five acres with her husband, four teens, and a 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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8. OPERATE CAMPS FOR CHILDREN

If you like children, have a variety of farm animals, and a little space to garden, why not start summer camps for kids? Programs can include learning about and taking care of egg-laying chickens, milking goats and other animals, learning how to start seeds, and gardening! Children love to get their hands on animals and learn about farm life.

9. PETTING FARMS

Walk my llama, pet my goats, feed my sheep — there are all types of petting farms that families love to explore with their children.

10. FARM TOURS

Lots of different types of farms offer paid tours to curious people. Bison ranch tours and milking goat parlor tours are two types of farm tours I've been on as an agritourist.

*NEW! Listen to this audio article online at <https://www.iamcountryside.com/homesteading/10-agritourism-ideas-for-your-farm/>

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An event where lower-income families fund camps for children in need.

BY MARISSA AMES
ALL PHOTOS BY WENDY MCCARTY PHOTOGRAPHY

FUNDING SUMMER CAMPS takes money, but Turtle Island Preserve manages it by offering reduced-price tickets to their annual fundraiser.

Deep in Appalachia lies a verdant paradise of sustainability. The brainchild of Eustace Conway, mountain man and naturalist, now serves to teach forgotten skills back to the community while protecting a pristine environment that would have otherwise become a development for the wealthy.

Eustace grew up in Camp Sequoia, an elite boys' camp that his grandfather ran in the North Carolina mountains from the 1920s to 1970s. When he came of age, he wanted to follow the family

tradition and start a nature preserve and heritage farm that teaches self-sufficiency. He purchased his first 105 acres in 1986 then immediately started harvesting trees to build



primitive log structures. The preserve grew in rich Appalachian tradition, using materials sourced

from the land. Horses drew ploughs and log carts, and the first nine structures had hand-hewn wooden shingles. Eustace purchased as much land as he could, as fast as he could, in his efforts to save as much of the undeveloped Appalachia wilderness as possible from modern development. Currently, the preserve consists of 1,000+ acres, and though Eustace would like to purchase more, the current real estate boom has made this prohibitive.

"Turtle Island" gives homage to the Native American legend of the turtle rising out of the water to support life on its back.

Fueled by volunteers and the community, Turtle Island Preserve is a federally recognized nonprofit

that uses a small portion of the land to conduct camps, workshops, and educational programming to give first-hand experience with the natural world. Children use the remaining wilderness to roam across untouched forest and streams during the summer camp programs.

After a winter rest, volunteers gather around mid-March to work weekends. Official classes for adults begin in April, offering instruction in primitive and sustainability skills such as knife-making, fire-craft, and hide-tanning. Then Turtle Island opens up for larger events, starting with Families Learning Together.

On April 30th, Families Learning Together creates affordable, meaningful nature experiences for guests. The preserve focuses on limited-income populations and single-income families with many children. They offer 80% off normal pricing so these families can spend all day learning, at a reduced price.

Desere Anderson, office manager at Turtle Island Preserve, says, "People who are typically the recipients of charity are the ones who are creating charity for others with this event. These are the people asking for scholarships and support, and through this event, they are empowered to create sponsorships."

During Families Learning Together, hundreds of volunteers help conduct programs and guide people as they try out blacksmithing, take buggy rides with Eustace, learn how to can vegetables, and take forestry workshops. Earnings raised that one day — from the kitchen, vendor fees, and memorabilia sales — go into the scholarship fund for summer youth camp at Turtle Island Preserve.

Desere describes the youth camps, which are open to young people from ages seven to 17, as a non-digital experience. For two weeks, kids spend time away from screens to reset their natural rhythms in a



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safe, nurturing environment where they can learn skills while gaining a deeper appreciation for the things they have at home.

During the rest of the year, Turtle Island offers skills to anyone who wants a little more sustainability. Modern people, who may be intimidated by primitive skills, can walk away from classes with fresh ideas to make their lives more self-sufficient, no matter where they go in the world. Workshops for adults include blacksmithing, knife-making, spoon-carving, and hide-tanning. The “Building Skills” class teaches techniques for hand-hewn dwellings. “Woodswoman 101” allows women to build fires, explore herbs, use chainsaws, and try blacksmithing without the intimidation of topics that are typically geared toward males.

The preserve also offers work retreats, discovery visits, and university programs to build teamwork in a natural environment away from modern distractions.

Families Learning Together, and Turtle Island Preserve, rely on the volunteer program. From growing gardens and caring for animals, to preparing food in an outdoor fire-driven kitchen, the endeavors are possible because of those people who donate their work and plug in behind the scenes.

To inquire about volunteering, attending a class, or outreach services, visit their website: turtleislandpreserve.org. Learn more about Families Learning Together, see videos about the event, and purchase tickets at turtleislandpreserve.org/families-learning-together. 🌱



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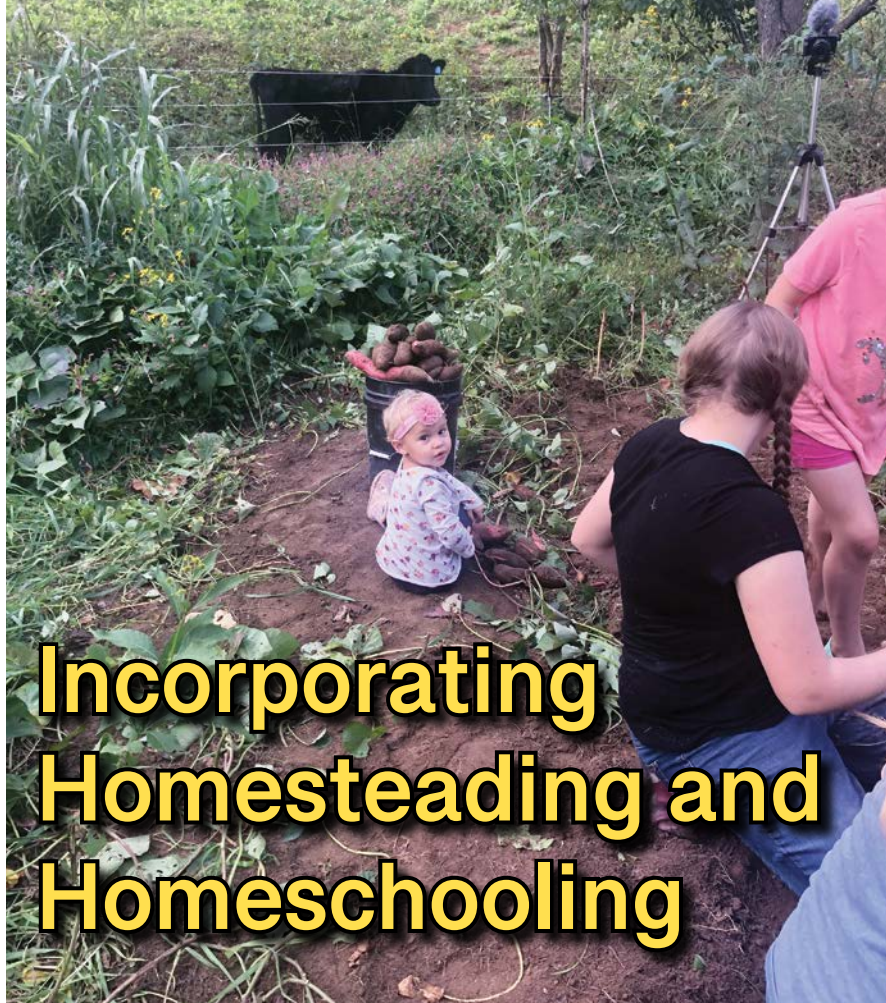
Senior Editor for Countryside Publications, **MARISSA AMES** runs a small homestead in Fallon, Nevada, where she focuses on saving and propagating rare poultry and goat breeds. She teaches homesteading skills for her local Grange chapter. Marissa and her husband, Russ, travel to Africa where they serve as agricultural advisors for the nonprofit I Am Zambia. She spends her free time eating lunch.

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Incorporating Homesteading and Homeschooling

BY JENNA DOOLEY

WE HOMESTEAD AND homeschool with our eight children. Incorporating the two lifestyles just comes naturally. I'm a huge proponent of life schooling. While book work is important and there is much to learn that way, I believe that much more is learned and retained through experiencing life.

There are plenty of chores to be done daily on the homestead. These chores offer constant learning opportunities for our children. Collecting eggs is a great example. This chore can be done by even very young children. Here we have the opportunity to teach counting, how to care for a fragile object, the value of items, how chickens develop and lay eggs, incubating eggs for hatching, the list just goes on and on.

Homesteading with a very busy

and full lifestyle is simpler and slower than modern day lifestyles. It is also a very seasonal lifestyle. Some seasons are busier than others.

There is the excitement of springtime with fresh green grass, plants beginning to sprout, seeds planted with so much hope for the future, babies being born, and the sun beginning to warm the earth. Summer is full of garden work, weeding, harvesting, preserving food, as well as putting up hay, and preparing for winter. All of these chores stretch into the autumn.

Fall time brings the final push to preserve everything you can and be stocked up for the winter months. It also ushers in the cooler weather and the beauty of the changing leaves.

While winter time does bring about rest and less busyness, there

is the cold and weather to deal with. This compounds the difficulty of simple everyday chores. You'll need lots of extra layers of clothing and there will always be frozen water buckets to deal with. Your children will also have the fun of sledding and snow days if you live in an area that receives snow.

All of the seasons and the work that comes along with changing seasons builds up children educationally. More importantly, it develops a lot of good character qualities. They learn the importance of living seasonally. In a world of instant gratification, living seasonally teaches patience, self-control, the natural rhythm of life, and that all good things are worth waiting for.

Lessons Learned on the Homestead

I like to look at each aspect of homesteading and what my children can learn with hands-on education. Experience can be the best way to learn and is invaluable.

In the garden there seems to be endless lessons. Because of her love of gardening and desire to learn more, my oldest daughter has ventured into botany curriculum and may pursue furthering her education in horticulture. She has developed a true passion not just for gardening but for learning as she gardens. That isn't something that can be accomplished from text books alone. The experience of growing up in the garden itself is what has inspired her.

A short list of lessons taught in the garden rather than through books are things like patience, caring for the needs of something, and the excitement of success. Working in the garden can also teach how to deal with failure. Inevitably, something in the garden will fail and disappointment will come. Learning how to cope with disappointment is great preparation for life.

On our homestead, we have both



milk cows and goats. So much about responsibility is learned through milking animals. This chore has to be done twice a day no matter what. The routine and schedule keep the animals healthy and our family in fresh milk.

Utilizing the milk in different ways offers all kinds of lessons in math and science as well as electives like culinary arts. Who doesn't love making butter? Yes, it's science but there is just something magical when that white liquid separates and makes a golden substance that tastes amazing.

We also raise grass-fed beef, bees, pastured pork, pastured poultry, and laying hens. We have pets as well; a horse, a dog, barn cats, peacocks, and bunnies.

All of these animals require food and water daily. The chore of caring for them offers a lot of

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Our children have told us over and over that math makes so much more sense to them when they learn through cooking.

learning experience. We learn about breeding, pregnancy, lactation, bottle feeding, basic animal husbandry, how to treat and care for sick animals, etc. These lessons will follow and benefit our children throughout their lives.

A harder lesson is death. When you raise livestock, you will inevitably have to face death. This is never easy and it always brings heartache. It is a sad part of existence and teaching children how to deal with death and the emotions that come with it will aid them in life.

When you homestead and raise and preserve the majority of your food, you spend a lot of time in the kitchen cooking and baking. We teach all of our children how to cook and bake. I feel that this is an essential life skill. Most of our children love cooking.

Our children have told us over and over that math makes so much more sense to them when they learn through cooking. The hands-on experience and seeing fractions with their own eyes make a bigger

impression on them than a piece of paper.

Language arts, handwriting, and spelling are other great subjects to teach in the kitchen by having your children write out recipes.

The homesteading and homeschooling lifestyle also often incorporates other skills like art, sewing, needle crafts, leatherworking, and woodworking just to name a few. All of these skills are valuable throughout life as well as full of educational opportunities. Lots of math with angles, division, fractions, multiplication, addition, subtraction, etc. are all used while developing and practicing these skills.

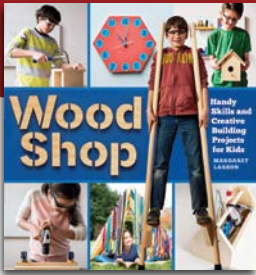
Other lessons like giving and generosity can be taught by having your children make gifts for others. They learn the enjoyment of making someone feel special with a handmade gift.

I cannot imagine raising and teaching my children in any other way. Homesteading and homeschooling truly is a very rich lifestyle. The lessons my children have learned over the years of living this way will follow them and help them for the rest of their lives. I hope they look back and appreciate all that this life offered them as they grow older. 🍷



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 and YouTube channel, The Flip Flop Barnyard.

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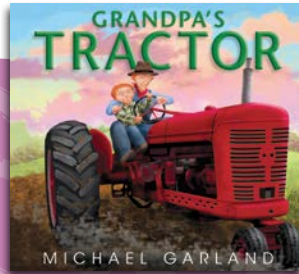
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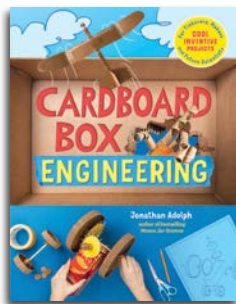
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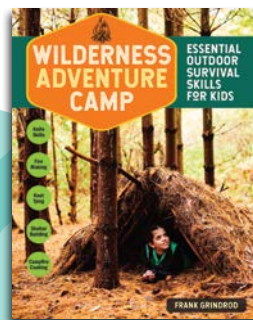
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SO, YOU WANT TO RAISE FARM KIDS.

Here Are a Few Things to Consider!



BY MICHELLE MARINE



WHEN MY HUSBAND and I decided to leave military life and move home to Iowa in 2006, we did so in large part because we wanted to raise our kids on a farm. Dan was raised on a family farm, and we wanted our kids to have that experience as well. For me, nostalgia played a large part in the desire to raise farm kids because I had no real understanding of the concept other than what I knew about my husband.

Growing up on a farm gave him a lot of opportunities that I wanted for our children. He got to play in the dirt, learn how to drive tractors and other big machinery, work with his father in the woodshop, learn about growing crops and animal husbandry. In our early married life, many people were

impressed with Dan's work ethic and his ability to fix everything from small appliances to cars to drywall. In fact, my bosses were so impressed with Dan being an "Iowa Farm Boy" that they hired us to live in and manage a small apartment complex in downtown Sacramento shortly after we got married. Dan was in heaven when they gave him a Home Depot credit card and free rein to fix as much as he could.

When we decided to leave suburbia and move to Iowa to raise our own farm kids, I only really thought about the benefits of rural life and didn't consider the potential drawbacks. Like most things in life, there are both good and bad things about raising farm kids. Just ask my teens!

Benefits of Raising Kids on the Farm

There are many things I appreciate about having kids on the farm. Our kids spent a lot of time in unstructured play outdoors when they were young. Studies show that unstructured play is critical for developing decision-making and critical-thinking skills, being empathic, learning how to problem solve, and more. Spending a lot of time outdoors taught them an appreciation for the weather, for their animals, and simple pleasures like clouds and sunsets.

Being outside a lot also helped our kids learn to amuse themselves with dirt and sticks. They built forts in trees and got to help their father in the woodshop. They had to play with each other because there weren't any other kids around. They were forced to be creative, problem solve from a young age, and be independent.

Other benefits of living on the farm include learning about food production from a very young age. Our kids took great pride in growing their own pumpkins and heading out to the garden for snacks when they got hungry. I don't have to worry about my kids thinking that potatoes grow in trees or that meat just magically appears at the grocery store. Farm kids often learn personal responsibility by keeping farm animals like rabbits, sheep, and goats. They take great pride in raising some of their own food and learning about the cycle of life as animals give birth and die. Our kids understand that the animals depend on them for care and (most of the time) that makes them more responsible.

Many farm kids also learn to drive sooner than other kids. Our children have driven our tractor from a relatively young age, plus grandpa's skid steer, ATVs, golf carts, and farm trucks. This is a big advantage if you ask my teens. As a worried mother, I'm not as convinced. Kids can be quite reckless and often think they are invincible.

Spending a lot of time outdoors taught them an appreciation for the weather, for their animals, and simple pleasures like clouds and sunsets.



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Drawbacks of Kids on the Farm

And that brings me to some of the drawbacks on raising farm kids. Farms can be dangerous. According to the National Ag Safety Database, a child dies in an ag related accident every three days (<https://nasdonline.org/6866/o000133/national-childrens-center-for-rural-and-agricultural-health-and-safety-nccrahs.html>). At first, I was skeptical of this statistic, but the farm can be a dangerous place. Driving accidents, drowning, getting lost in crops, being injured by animals: these are all things that can and do happen to children on farms. I certainly don't share this information to discourage anyone from raising farm kids, but it is something to take under advisement.

But if you asked my teens, they would say that biggest drawback to living on the farm is having friends too far away. Transportation is a challenge and it's not always easy for the kids to see their friends. It also means a lot of driving to and from town. As our kids get older and more involved in school activities, it's a burden to get kids to and from all of their obligations. With our four children, I'm often on the road for two to three hours every day after school taking kids to piano lessons, sports practices, and other after school activities. Some days, it is a lot of driving, but I understand that many other parents face similar challenges. So, I don't think this is an issue solely related to raising farm kids.

After being in Iowa for 15 years now, I have a much clearer picture of what it means to raise farm kids. While I had totally romanticized the idea all those years ago when we decided to move to the country, I wouldn't have it any other way. Most days, I think my kids agree. They will definitely thank me when they're grown and gone, and think back fondly on the all fun they had in their childhood! 🍷



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Natural Versus Grafted QUEEN REARING

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KRISTI COOK

Raising queens is one of the many joys of beekeeping.

QUEEN REARING CAN BE as simple or as complex as the beekeeper chooses. Each system varies in its level of time commitment, amount of work required, necessary equipment, and even the amount of bees needed. However, two of the more common methods for raising queens are grafting and natural queen rearing with both being suitable for beginners and experienced beekeepers alike. So here's a little primer detailing a few of the pros and cons of both to help you decide which version you may like to try.

GRAFTING

Grafting is the process by which a beekeeper scoops a tiny larva out of its cell and places it in a wax or plastic queen cup that is attached to a frame. This frame is then placed into a box of bees called a starter so the bees can draw out the queen cells. For many beekeepers, this ability to graft larvae and turn them into queens is nearly akin to having super powers. And this is the reason many beekeepers, regardless of years in beekeeping, stop their quest for raising their own queens.

But it shouldn't be so. Grafting is a fairly straightforward process that

only requires a little patience and practice to get the hang of it. Good eyesight, or the use of magnification and lighting, are necessary to ensure the correct size/aged larvae are grafted. However, less than ideal eyesight is easily remedied as all types of headlamps, desk lamps, and magnifiers are available to aid nearly any eyesight issue.

In addition to seeing the larvae, determining the correct size/aged larvae is also touted as a barrier by

many. Yes, bees need larvae that are no more than 24-36 hours old. But figuring out which size to select is no different from going to the farmer's market to select the best tomatoes — you learn from experience. To get started, check out queen rearing books, find a mentor, shadow a queen breeder, watch some reputable videos. Then get out there and graft. Your bees will tell you which size is correct when you pull that frame and see what they did with the cells. Empty cells usually mean wrong age or damaged larvae and should be noted for the next grafting.

The time commitment and physical labor involved in many grafted queen rearing systems do tend to run on the higher side which may be a downside to some and a non-issue for others. For example, some systems require the frame of grafts be left in the starter (the colony that starts the cells) as the starter also functions as a finisher (the colony that finishes drawing out the cells). Other systems move the frame from a starter to a separate finisher colony.

Regardless of which system is used, however, each of the cells must be relocated to individual queenless colonies where the



Emergency and swarm cells can produce high-quality queens if raised in the right conditions.

queen can emerge safely, free from competition from her sisters. The starter/finishers must then be reassembled or otherwise manipulated once the grafted cells are removed. This changing of boxes multiple times requires time that is not always necessary, depending on the system used. However, because those who graft are often in need of more than a handful of queens, this extra time is often worth the effort as many queens can be raised at once.

NATURAL QUEEN REARING

The most basic forms of natural queen rearing are when a colony swarms, supersedes a queen, or she dies/disappears and the bees incorporate the emergency queen rearing response. It is the swarming and emergency responses that are activated when beekeepers elect to raise their own queens naturally by either crowding the bees or removing the queen. Many articles, books, and videos detail how to purposely activate these systems for new queens and are very helpful. Yet, no grafting is needed so no videos on tiny bee larvae are required.

These natural responses allow the beekeeper to create heavily

crowded starters the size of a nucleus capable of starting several emergency cells (or swarm cells, depending on which response you activate) at a time. These cells are drawn out on one or more frames of brood that the beekeeper elects to place in the starter. Cells can be left in the starter until capped since only a small number of cells will be built, thus no separate finisher is required to finish the cells. And if said starter is the only colony needing a new queen, then no cells have to be moved to individual queen-less colonies as the bees can be left to their own devices to determine which queen will reign. However, the beekeeper has the option to move them or sell them. When moving these cells, it's a simple matter of placing them in any colony needing a queen or by making a handful of small splits.

Other advantages include no need for additional equipment such as queen cups, grafting tools, and frames for the grafts and no need to age the larvae. It is also easier to find homes for a few extra queen cells rather than a full frame of cells. So, if producing queens for yourself and maybe a few friends sounds appealing to you, then natural queen rearing is certainly worth exploring further.



Grafting queen cells is not as difficult as many believe.

Both grafting and natural queen rearing have their pros and cons, and both can benefit beekeepers of every skill level. The advantages to each are numerous and can make selecting one or the other a little difficult at times. But with a bit of practice, both types of queen rearing methods have the ability to produce high-quality queens that any beekeeper would be proud to call their own. So do a bit of research and jump right in. You may just find you like your own queens better than anyone else's. 🐝



Just as with grafting, cell quality will vary from batch to batch and from colony to colony. Select the best-looking cells for the greatest chance at a high-quality queen regardless of the queen rearing method selected.

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, and blog at tenderheartshomestead.com.

Are Queen Excluders a Good Idea?

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY KRISTI COOK

IF YOU ENJOY A GOOD debate, ask 10 beekeepers what they think about queen excluders. As is typical in the beekeeping community, within seconds you'll receive 10 different answers. But consider yourself warned. You may also find yourself thrust into a rather heated debate. I have personally witnessed raised voices emitted from the mouths of otherwise kind and gentle beekeepers over the use of this one piece of equipment on more than one occasion. Strange world, at times, that of the beekeepers. So to help ease the tension a bit, here's a quick rundown of not only why an excluder is traditionally used but also a brief look into a few less commonly known ways these handy contraptions may be utilized around the bee yard.

First, the WHY?

The purpose of the queen excluder is stated in its name — to exclude the queen. Queen excluders are designed to do nothing more than keep the queen from wandering into the honey supers to lay eggs during the nectar flow. If the queen is allowed to lay eggs, the resultant brood will darken the comb which in turn darkens the honey. This is a problem for many beekeepers who sell honey for a living because lighter honey often brings a higher retail value than darker types. (Forage type is also a significant contributor to honey color.) Therefore, the preference for lighter honey types is often a key motivator for utilizing a queen excluder.

In addition to darkening the honey, a queen running around the supers laying eggs creates a couple of additional dilemmas at harvest time. In the absence of an excluder, the queen may still be on those honey frames and must be accounted for before pulling frames for extraction. Therefore, each and every frame leaving the hive regardless of the presence or absence of brood must be inspected closely to ensure the queen does not go to the extractor. And while it is true that a bee brush may be used to brush off the bees, queens should not be subjected to the brush as injury and even death may occur.

So, to avoid damaging a queen and to save time regardless of the use of excluders, many incorporate bee removal sprays to push bees off of the supers and down into the brood chamber which usually works well to move the queen down as well. Pushing the bees down with these products helps to significantly reduce individual frame checks. However, when open brood is present, it can be difficult to convince the bees to leave the brood which increases the risk of the queen also still being present. When this occurs,



The hive on the far right had brood in both boxes, but I didn't want to take the time to find the queen. By placing the excluder between the boxes I was able to determine which box had the queen three days later. Turns out she was in the super so I was able to quickly move her down to the deep safely with little time invested.

any frame with bees hanging around will still require manual observation and bee removal which does take more time and further increases the risk of losing a queen.

Those frames with brood must then either be left in the hive to allow time for the brood to emerge or be spun in the extractor. When left on the hive, honey is lost to the bees. As such, every frame of honey lost is a fair amount of honey money lost as well. Alternatively, if honey is extracted from those frames, the brood will also be extracted and must then be filtered out. Depending on the filtering materials used, this filtering process also removes pieces of wax and potentially local pollen collected in the honey that many prefer to keep in their product for both nutritional purposes and increased market value. Still, other beekeepers get a bit squeamish at the idea of dead larvae and pupae hanging out in their honey regardless of how well it is filtered before consumption. So they use queen excluders.

But here's the thing.

Queen excluders are optional pieces of equipment. Excluders do not keep honey bee colonies alive. Therefore — it bears repeating — excluders are optional. So here's the flip side to using excluders.

Even though many argue that queens should never be allowed upstairs for the aforementioned reasons, just as many successful beekeepers argue that excluders reduce the amount of honey the bees collect. The reason for this counter-argument is that some honey bee colonies appear to resist moving upward through the excluder. This can cause bees to deposit more nectar in the brood chamber than is optimal which may, in turn, cause them to feel crowded regardless of the extra room provided via the now-inaccessible honey supers resting above the



Queen excluders provide the perfect drainage system for fresh cappings during the extraction process.

queen excluder. This buildup of honey in the brood chamber usually leads to swarming rather than moving up in these particular colonies. And swarmed colonies don't produce much honey.

To add to this argument, many also believe the bees resist plastic excluders more frequently than they do the metal excluders. And unlike obvious facts such as the potential for brood and queens to be in the honey supers, these counter-arguments aren't quite so easy to prove or disprove, because for some colonies it may be true. For others, not so much. So deciding whether or not to use an excluder is highly personal and should mesh well with your preferences and your management style.

Alternative Uses

While queen excluders are not necessary for keeping colonies alive nor for honey production, there are other ways they can be used that are often beneficial enough to justify keeping at least a few hanging around in the bee yard. For instance, a few queen rearing

Queen excluders are designed to do nothing more than keep the queen from wandering into the honey supers to lay eggs during the nectar flow.

methods utilize queen excluders to help create starter/finisher colonies for grafted queen cells. Excluders can also be used when making splits to isolate a queen without first locating her. Some beekeepers even use the excluder between the bottom board and the bottom deep to ensure a prized queen doesn't swarm. Even swarms may benefit from this setup as many beekeepers believe this gives a newly hived swarm a few days to settle in and begin building comb before allowing access to the exit. These alternative uses are only the tip of the iceberg, especially once non-bee-related uses are taken into account.

The merits of using queen excluders may very well continue to be a topic of much debate for decades to come. However, regardless of which side of that fence you keep bees on, know that queen excluders are not required to keep honey bees alive and thriving. Rather, the intent is to make the beekeeper's job easier by simply keeping the queen down in the brood chamber where she belongs. However, even if you prefer to allow your bees to move more freely, there are many more uses that make these simple contraptions well worth keeping around the bee yard, as you never know just what use you may find for it. So don't get caught up in this debate. Just grin, nod, and walk calmly away. 🍯

How To Build A Permanent Home Herb Garden

BY JENNY UNDERWOOD



HERB GARDENS ARE ONE of my very favorite things to have around our homestead. They serve so many purposes including beauty, pollinator attractors, herbal teas, medicine, and seasonings. Plus my whole family loves to graze on herbs as we walk through our garden or crush a leaf and smell the lovely essential oils released. So, building and maintaining a home herb garden is high on my list of priorities and I think when you see how simple and productive it is, you will want one also!

First, it's a good idea to plan ahead. Make the garden close enough to your home so that you can step out and snip some fresh herbs for supper at a moment's notice. I currently have mine in among my raised beds where they attract bees and butterflies to help with pollination. It takes me about 30 seconds to grab some herbs for flavoring my meals.

Our herb gardens face south and do extremely well. My lavender and rosemary have over-wintered for four years now with no interference from me. This past winter, our temperatures stayed in the single digits for about two weeks and I was amazed that it didn't harm the plants! If you do live in a very cold climate, you might consider planting against the south side of your home for extra warmth, or potting them where they can be brought inside during the winter.

Next, think about if you want an in-ground bed or a raised bed. We have mostly raised beds at this time

and they work excellent. The weeds are minimal and my herbs enjoy the drier conditions the raised beds produce. Even during excessively wet springs, my herb's roots don't sulk in standing water because it drains so quickly. Raised beds can be a bit more work at the onset, but are very easy to maintain.

We have both wood and metal (barn metal) raised beds. The barn metal ones are by far the most durable, though I have my herbs in untreated wooden beds that are nine years old and just now need replacement. A few other great options are stone or brick beds. After you decide on your bed structure, you will need to fill it with dirt. While potting soil is wonderful, it's also very expensive. Topsoil mixed with peat moss or compost is great soil. Just be sure your soil is loose and not hard clay or it can bake or waterlog the plants depending on weather conditions. I mulch my herbs with either chopped leaves or pine needles. Both last well and hold moisture while adding to the soil as they decompose.

An in-ground bed looks lovely with herbs and can be done in multiple ways. I do recommend a permanent bed because they do better. Some beautiful designs can be made with brick or rock or even just mulch around a split rail fence. It's a good idea to put down cardboard or another barrier so the weeds don't take over. Be watchful about planting mints and balms as they can become very invasive and take over your whole yard! A better option for these might be a border you don't

mind mowing over or planting in pots. I plant my mints and balms in my fencerow with my berries. They seem to do very well together and are easy to keep in control.

Some herbs will need to be planted each year and others (depending on climate) will last for years. My herb gardens have multiple lavender, rosemary, and sage plants along with thyme, oregano, summer savory, colonial mint, orange mint, lemon mint, and lemon balm. I also plant basil, cilantro, and chives.

It's very important to not overwater your herbs, as many of them prefer drier climates. Where I live, we get very wet springs often so the raised beds help eliminate this as a problem for my herbs. My herbs that are planted in-ground are on a slope so the water runs off.

I fertilize my herbs with a fish and seaweed emulsion fertilizer. I also add compost every year. As a result, my beds are loose and rich, and full of worms. This helps produce excellent growth and health in my herbs.

Clipping your herbs often will promote growth. If you let your herbs bloom, the foliage will start to deteriorate in quality so, for best results, clip frequently unless you only want the blooms or seeds. I do let a small percentage of mine flower for the pollinators. They especially like the oregano and lavender blossoms.

Preserving herbs is a rather simple process. One of the easiest ways is to clip herbs with a stem to four to six inches long and tie them in a bundle with twine or string by the ends of the stems. Hang upside down and allow to air dry thoroughly. Another option is to place them in paper bags and hang them to dry. This works well for less stemmy plants or ones with flower heads or seeds you wish to preserve. A dehydrator is an excellent way to dry herbs, too. After they are completely dried, you should store them whole for retaining the most potency. Grind just before using in food.

You can also preserve your herb harvest in alcohol for a tincture or vinegar for herbed vinegar. To make a tincture, place either fresh or dried herbs in a glass jar. If fresh, you can pack the jar pretty full. If dried, use between ¼-½ herbs and fill up the jar with vodka, rum, or brandy. Put a lid on and shake well. If you're using a metal lid, it's a good idea to place paper or plastic wrap between the alcohol and lid or it will rust. Reusable plastic lids are a good choice.

For vinegar, take good-quality vinegar (raw apple cider works well) and place dried herbs in a bottle with the vinegar. Cover tightly and shake well. For both options, let your brew sit in a dark cool place for six weeks. Decant and use or leave the herbs in for appearance.

It's also very easy to simmer the herbs in coconut or olive oil for use in salves, creams, lotions, or soap.



Using the lowest setting on your stove, melt or heat your oil and place enough herbs in it that you can still stir the mixture. Slowly simmer for an hour stirring frequently. Strain off the oil from the herbs and use in your desired recipe.

Herbs are such an enjoyable plant to cultivate. They are extremely versatile and can be used in everything from fresh or dried teas to bug sprays. Once you start your own, I'm sure it will become a favorite part of your garden! 🌿

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 5th generation homestead. She blogs at <http://www.inconvenientfamily.com>

10 BEST HERBS FOR STRESS RELIEF

Are you stressed? These are 10 of the best calming herbs for stress relief

BY RHONDA CRANK



THE WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC saw an unprecedented increase in stress-related health issues. More and more people discovered the holistic healing help of herbs for stress relief.

Using herbs for health has been a part of the apothecary arsenal for thousands of years. The oldest written record we have of plants being used as medicine dates back to 1500 BC in Egypt.

Herbs used for stress relief are part of the group known as adaptogens. They help balance the body and aid in relieving physical and psychological stress.

When taking any medicine, exercise caution and follow the guidelines you are given by your holistic health professional or other physicians. Any supplement, herbal or otherwise, may interact with the medications you are on.

Why Use Calming Herbs for Stress Relief?

Using herbs for stress relief, as

with other health issues, encourages and enables the body to heal itself. While herbs are not to be used without education and caution, they don't have the severe side effects of manmade drugs.

Whether your stress comes from work, financial issues, health issues, relationship problems, or nutritional deficiencies, the effects on the body are real and damaging. There is a reason stress is called, "The Silent Killer."

Growing herbs outdoors adds sensational sights and smells to your environment which can help relax the mind. They are even included in edible landscaping ideas.

How to Take Herbs for Stress Relief

Let's look at the ways herbs are taken or used, so when you do further study or talk to your physician, you'll be better informed.

1) INFUSION — creates a tea made by pouring boiling water over dehydrated flowers, leaves, or fruit

of the herb. Cold infusion takes longer and isn't as potent.

2) DECOCTION — more potent than an infusion. The bark, roots, woody stems, rhizomes, flowers, petals, and fruits are added to water and carefully simmered, never boiled, for 15-20 minutes. Not all herbs are suited for a decoction.

3) TINCTURE — made by soaking the bark, leaves, fruit, and roots of herbs in alcohol or apple cider vinegar for six to eight weeks. Tinctures are concentrated extracts usually taken by placing some of the liquid on the tongue.

4) ESSENTIAL OILS — best known of all herbal solutions. They are created by extracting the plant's oils from flowers, fruits, leaves, and stems. They're concentrated and aromatic. Used in aromatherapy, salves, balms, and creams.

5) CREAM — made by combining essential oils with an

emollient, such as mango butter and water or hydrosol, for quick absorption by the skin.

6) SALVE — similar to a cream but thicker and not as readily absorbed. Salves are made by infusing oil with whole or crushed herbs then combined with a wax and allowed to firm up.

10 Best Herbs for Stress Relief:

1) Ashwagandha

(*Withania somnifera*)

By calming the nervous system, it balances the body by reducing stress-related fatigue and helps the body sleep better. It has been shown to work effectively as an anti-anxiety and anti-depressant for those with stress-related issues. Helpful for menopause.

2) Asian Ginseng

(*Panax ginseng*)

Considered one of the most powerful herbs. It supports the nervous system to reduce and often alleviate mental fatigue, boost energy, relieve anxiety and depression, and remove inflammation from the body.

3) Chamomile

(*Matricaria chamomilla*)

It improves the quality of sleep by reducing or eliminating the number

of times we awaken at night. Helps reduce anxiety and emotional stress.

4) Holy Basil

(*Ocimum sanctum*)

— aka “the elixir of life”

Works to relieve both physical and mental stress by reducing cortisol levels which affect all body systems. It improves sleep (which helps every body system), elevates mood, increases memory function, and supports brain health.

Holy Basil also supports the immune system and has powerful antioxidant properties. It also helps reduce blood pressure. If you are considering planting herbs in pots, this is one you should try.

5) Lavender

(*Lavandula angustifolia*)

One of the best-known herbs. It improves depression, relieves travel stress for people and dogs, reduces anxiety, improves sleep, and reduces insomnia.

6) Lemon Balm

(*Melissa officinalis*)

By supporting the nervous system, it helps balance the body reducing its stress response. It improves mood and cognitive function, reduces symptoms of anxiety, improves sleep, increases a sense of calmness and wellbeing, and has anti-viral properties.



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7) Passionflower*(Passiflora incarnata)*

One of the most potent nervine herbs. It is an effective pain reliever, alleviates insomnia, calms nerves and nervous energy, relieves anxiety, lowers blood pressure, and relieves tension and migraine headaches by relaxing blood vessels.

Effectively relieves hot flashes, menstrual cramps, and mood swings in women.

8) Rhodiola*(Rhodiola rosea)*

Similar in function to Ashwagandha, it reduces the level of cortisol in the body affecting all systems. By producing a sense of calmness and relaxation, mental energy is restored allowing for better focus, clarity of thought, and improved memory.

9) St John's Wort*(Hypericum perforatum)*

Known for its use to relieve depression and symptoms of menopause. St. John's Wort works by affecting the uptake of the hormones produced by the body in response to stress. Also used to relieve anxiety, and lift moods.

10) Turmeric*(Curcuma longa)*

Used for millennia to lower the body's stress response. Its primary uses include pain relief, anxiety and depression relief, alleviation of inflammation, and reversal of damage caused by chronic stress. I use turmeric powder almost every day, mixed with ginger and black pepper to make *golden milk* for relief of joint pain and inflammation.

Proper Use of Herbs for Stress Relief

They are not instant fixes like most of us want. Because herbs have an accumulative effect, the best results come with a little time and consistency. Everyone has their preferred way of using herbs, but



Whether your stress comes from work, financial issues, health issues, relationship problems, or nutritional deficiencies, the effects on the body are real and damaging. There is a reason stress is called, “The Silent Killer.”

most prefer a liquid form for the quickest results.

Most herbs will be more potent in synergy with other herbs producing a more well-rounded effect. Talk with your herbalist, holistic health professional, or other physicians to see what works best for you.

Another word of caution, not all herb sources are the same. Find a source for quality herbs and herbal supplements. It means a little

research, but we are talking about helping your body find stress relief.

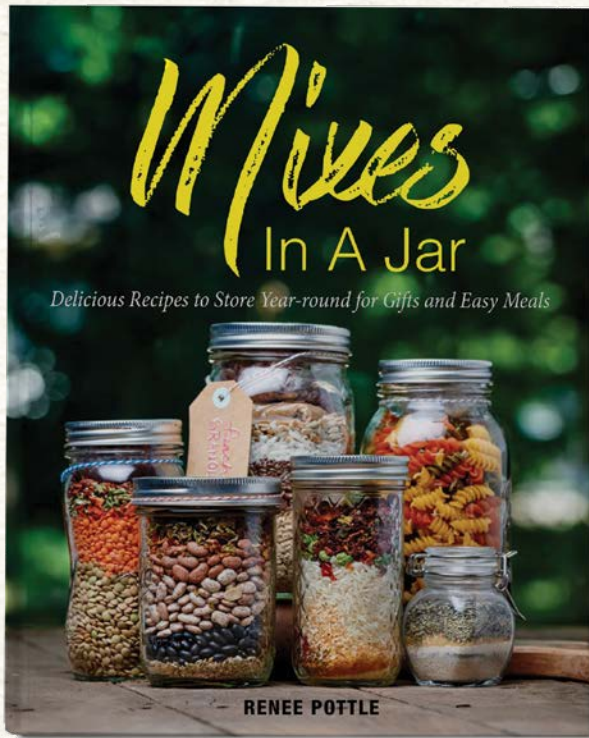
By growing herbs from seed at home, you can be sure of the quality. Most of these herbs are easily grown in containers or raised beds.

Life can be chaotic and stressful, give your body a helping hand by using some of these herbs for stress relief. 🌿

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.

Stock Your Shelves!



In our busy world, the value of a convenience meal cannot be overstated. Having any number of entrées, side dishes, soups, and desserts ready to eat in a matter of minutes is nothing short of miraculous in our harried and hurried lives. Commercially produced convenience foods often contain chemical additives, sugar, salt, and other preservatives, and while many of us struggle with food security and continue to search for self-sufficient methods of making our way in the world, what could be more simple than creating our own convenience meals instead? Homemade convenience meals are safe, nutritious, and delicious — and our families will enjoy and ask for them again!

Mixes in a Jar is a culmination of author Renee Pottle's years-long search for the perfect convenience food. She focused on recipes for flavorful foods made with wholesome ingredients that make colorful additions to any pantry shelf.

In Renee's collection of 106 mix recipes, you'll find the perfect spice blend for a pot of award-winning chili or a delicious minestrone; recipes for meals as diverse as Mulligatawny Soup and Creamy Raviolotti Salad; breakfast favorites such as Buckwheat Pancakes; breads for every meal, including Mulled Wine Muffins; and desserts for every sweet tooth.

Explore recipes for mixes that may need a few fresh ingredients added, as well as those that only need a bit of water. These recipes help us make great meals, offer wonderful and delightful gifts, and prepare for those days we're too tired or too overwhelmed to think about cooking. In *Mixes in a Jar*, you'll find recipes for every occasion and taste. Enjoy!



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Growing Sweet Corn

BY JENNY UNDERWOOD

WHEN I WAS A KID, it seemed like everyone in our rural community grew sweet corn. I can remember that we planted a field full of it and harvest time was rather busy. Fast forward 30 years and now I don't know another local family that plants sweet corn in their garden! What a shame, because the stuff you get from a grocery store pales in comparison to freshly picked corn on the cob. So, is sweet corn hard to grow? Not really and here's a primer for growing your own. You'll most likely never look back once you start.

First off, sweet corn needs to be planted after all danger of frost is gone, since it will die below 28 degrees F. In our area, that means April, but check your zone. We break our garden with a tractor, then disc it smooth. After that, we till it until there are no large dirt clods so the seed won't get compacted.

Corn wind-pollinates, so planting it in a block works better than planting it in rows, so it pollinates no matter which direction the wind blows. For example, our garden is 50 feet long. We planted six full rows. If you don't need quite that much corn (we're a family of

six) then you could plant six 20-foot rows.

We measure our row widths and mark them off. Then we use string to get our rows straight. This helps tremendously when it comes time to till your corn later. It's also easier to water and fence if your rows are uniform (and it's prettier!). After this, it's time to grab a hoe and dig a gentle furrow right under your string.

Fertilizer is very beneficial to corn. Though we try to garden organically, we do use some conventional fertilizers as we're building up our soil. This specific

garden spot has been used for over 50 years, so building back the soil takes time. We fertilize twice, once with a 21-21-21 fertilizer when we plant, then side-dressed with 14-14-14 when it's about knee-high. Organic fertilizer such as fish

and seaweed emulsion are excellent additives as is tilled-under cover crops. Corn does love fertilizer so whatever you use, make sure it's enough for the corn's needs or you'll have a disappointing crop.

Plant three kernels every eight to 12 inches. The rule of thumb is to plant them in the moisture, so if you have lots

Sweet corn needs to be planted after all danger of frost is gone, since it will die below 28 degrees F.

of moisture you can plant them shallower (such as ½ inch deep). But if the moisture is very deep in the soil, get those kernels on it so they germinate quickly! We plant our rows three feet apart. This is partly due to using a rear tine tiller but it also allows us room to walk and hoe between the rows without damaging our corn stalks.

I highly recommend a good watering system as corn should not dry out. A good soaking at least once a week will help ensure a bountiful crop. Get creative if need be. Last year we purchased food-grade recycled barrels, filled them with water from our home (our garden is not accessible to our well), then watered our corn by the bucketful. This year we are buying a small pump to go into the barrels and a water hose will attach to that.



Another option would be using a pump and hose to access any ponds, lakes, or streams nearby. If you have the availability, soaker hoses also do an excellent job of keeping your garden constantly watered.

As your corn grows, you will need to hoe, till, or pull weeds. After the corn gets about waist tall, it will generally shade out the competition.

In our part of the country, we deal with raccoon, opossum, and deer that like a delicious supper of green or ripe sweetcorn. The solution? Electric fencing! If you have these animals around, don't skimp on the fencing and make sure it's strong enough to completely deter them. We put up two strands of electric fencing around our entire corn patch. These stay plugged in all the time unless we are working in the garden. In our experience, it's only necessary to install this after the corn starts setting on ears. If you have deer problems, you will need multiple strands that go at least six feet high (because deer can jump!). A good idea is to take aluminum pans or foil and coat them in peanut butter then attach them to the fence at intervals around the entire patch. Once the animals try this, they most likely will leave your garden alone for the rest of the season.

Another pest we deal with is earworms. Because we do try to organically garden as much as possible, we have chosen not to use chemical pesticides. A wonderful alternative is *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt). This is a naturally occurring bacteria that attacks the earworm larvae. We had excellent success with this. Instead of having earworms in basically 100% of our crop, I would venture we only had them in 20% of it! This product is widely available and is effective on any worm (earworms, hornworms, cabbage worms, etc.). You simply mix it in a sprayer at the recommended concentration and spray at one to two-week intervals for treatment or prevention. A note: prevention is ALWAYS more effective than treating a current infestation so get on it early! You apply this to the ears when the silks have turned about 10% brown (showing it has been pollinated).

At harvest time, you will want to check your ears by gently pulling down some of the silks and husks. Don't pick until the juice spurts out when pierced with your fingernail. Sometimes you may pick only a portion then wait another few days for the rest to be ripe. To pick, grab an ear while supporting the rest of the stalk and snap it off. This will allow any other ears to continue to ripen.

After picking, husk very soon and place in a cool location (a refrigerator, cooler with ice, etc. work well). Many varieties keep well for a week or two in refrigeration, but if you're wanting to preserve it, do that as soon as possible to minimize enzyme activity which causes the corn to turn less sweet. Corn can be frozen, canned, dehydrated, pickled, or fermented.

So, remember, plant early, fertilize, water, and weed often and enjoy a bountiful harvest. Once you start growing corn, you'll never regret it! 🌽



Be Careful With Plants: They May Be Toxic!

BY DR. STEPHENIE SLAHOR, PH.D.



OUR TREKS OUTDOORS and inside our homes and gardens often feature plants we enjoy for their looks, flowers, fruits, quick growth, unusual characteristics, or other qualities. But some plants are poisonous to people or pets. So before handling plants afield, bringing home that new houseplant, or growing that new addition to the garden, do research about any dangers that might exist.

At a nursery or garden supply

shop, ask if the plant (or its parts) is poisonous, and read the labels or warnings on the plant's tag. Research online or at your library to learn about the plant before buying it. If the plant is poisonous, keep it out of reach of little children and away from pets, or just don't buy it. It's a good practice to teach your children not to eat, taste, or handle any house or garden plants without an adult present to supervise.

When camping or hiking, it might

be tempting to taste a berry, leaf, or plant part, but don't rely on the fact that the birds or wildlife have consumed a plant without apparent harm. Use a field guide to learn about the plants in the region — and the poisonous ones. Be especially wary of any mushrooms and ferns.

Remember that some plants used for firewood or to hold that marshmallow over the campfire might be toxic, producing poisonous smoke that can cause

nausea or irritate eyes and throats. Yes, cooking sometimes eliminates the poison in a few plants, but that is not true of all of them. A field guide will tell you which plants lose their poisonous character with certain types of cooking.


The signs of poisoning might appear quickly, but with some plants, it can take as long as 15 hours for the person to get sick after eating or tasting a poisonous plant. If the poisoning is not too serious, a physician or the Poison Control Center can probably tell you what to do at home for the care of the victim. In serious cases, get the person medical help.

Not all the toxicity is in the eating. Some plants cause a rash or skin irritation. The most common of these are poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac, but many plants can cause redness, itch, and discomfort. Use a field guide and avoid handling plants while you're afield.

Here are some common, but toxic, plants or plant parts: apricot seeds, avocado leaves, azalea, buttercup, wild cherry, Christmas rose, crocus, daffodil, holly berries, iris, ivy, star jasmine, Carolina jessamine, jimson weed, laurel, lily-of-the-valley, mistletoe, morning glory, nightshade, oleander, poinsettia, hemlock, poppy, rhubarb leaves, sweet pea, tomato vines, and yew.

Plants and plant parts harmful to pets include yeast for dough, coffee grounds, macadamia nuts, leaves and stems from tomato and potato plants, avocado fruit and peels, onions, grapes, raisins, chocolate, seeds from pears and peaches, mushrooms toxic to humans, rhubarb, wild cherry, almonds, and Japanese plum.

And one final, although unusual, note. There are about 12 known plant species that draw some or all of their nutrition from insects that they catch and use as food. The insects are attracted to the plant by color, aroma, or

nectar. Once attracted, a trap-like part of the plant catches the insect onto a sticky surface and snaps shut when an insect is caught. The plant can dissolve the insect into a form from which the plant gets nutrition. 

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!"



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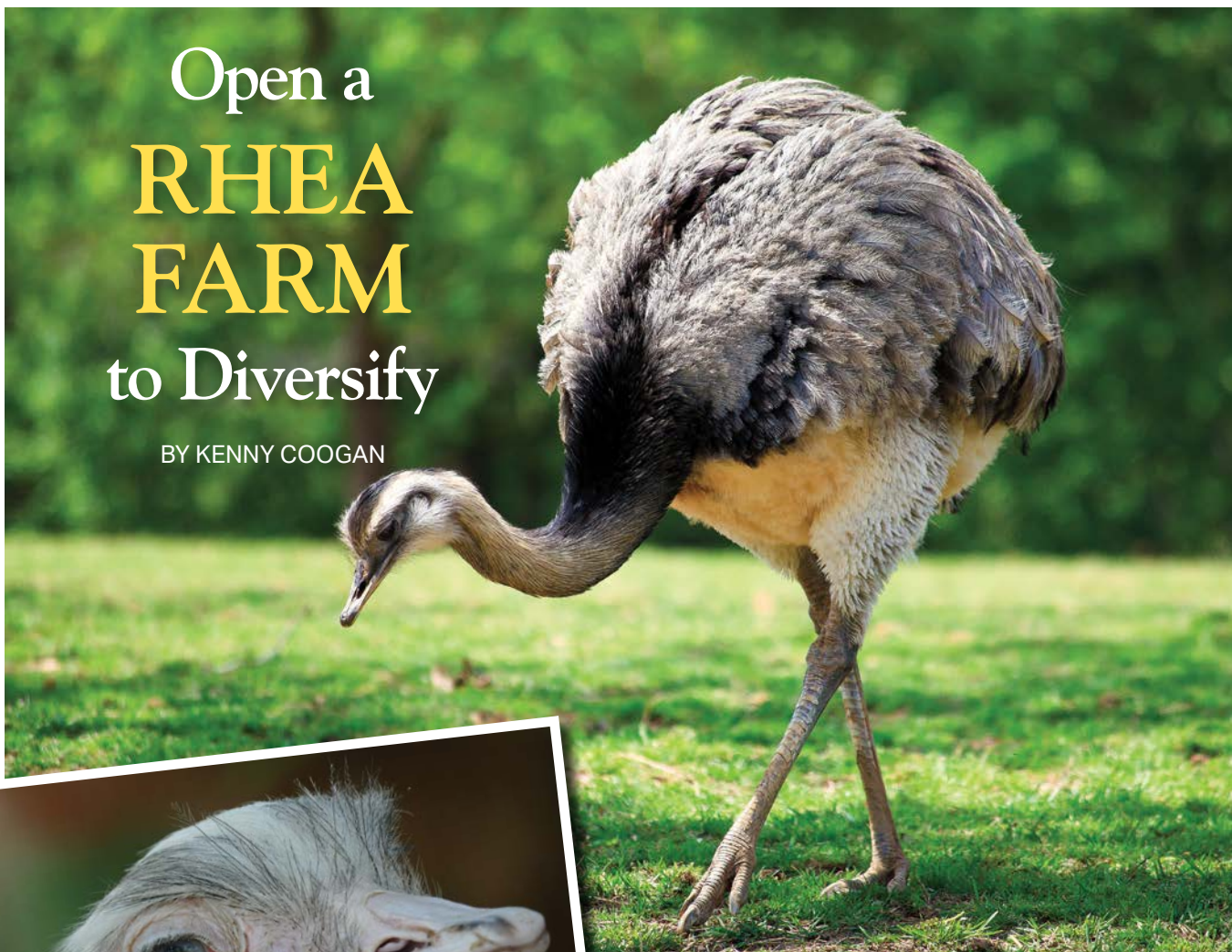
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Open a RHEA FARM to Diversify

BY KENNY COOGAN



IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR that size in between a turkey and an ostrich, opening a rhea farm might be for you. Aside from their gorgeous lashes and daffy faces, rheas have a lot to offer. Native to eastern South America's grasslands, these birds can be bred for their meat or kept as exotic animals. Rheas are in the ratite family of flightless birds, which includes the more popular ostrich and emu. The USDA classifies all ratite meat as red due to the pH similarity of beef. Once cooked, their meat resembles and tastes like beef but is sweeter.

Raising Rheas

Raising rheas is very similar to raising emu. The benefits are that rhea are smaller, leading to less food and space. However, these nearly five-foot-tall birds will still need quite a bit of room and tall fences.

"Things to consider before adding rheas to your flock is if you have enough space to accommodate them," Kayla Stuart from Stuarts Fallow Farm says. "We have successfully kept breeding trios on a little over an acre."

According to the USDA, all ratites need daily exercise to avoid leg and digestive problems. A 2,000 square foot enclosure is adequate for overall rhea health and keeps the enclosure from becoming bare.

Stuart, who has been raising rheas for over five years, adds that six to eight-foot is preferred while five-foot sturdy fencing would do.

"They have become one of my favorite animals for two reasons. It feels like you're going back to the time of the dinosaurs when you watch them run and play. And second, they keep down the fly population immensely."



Photos courtesy of Natural Bridge Zoological Park.



Rheas (*Rhea americana*) come in grey or white. Courtesy of Stuarts Fallow Farm.



Karl Mongensen, owner of Natural Bridge Zoological Park, Natural Bridge, Virginia, has raised rheas for 50 years.

Rheas Around the World



Germany

A rouge flock of rheas have been roaming Northern Germany for more than 20 years. Estimated current population is over 500.

Portugal

Ema is Portuguese for rhea and emu.

United Kingdom

In the UK, rhea meat is considered a delicacy. Someone tried to steal a rhea a few years ago, but the rhea escaped its captors and was found five miles away from home.

In addition to insects, rheas and emus are mostly grazers eating broad-leaf weeds, clover, and some grasses. While a ratite pellet is a preferable grain supplement on pasture, turkey pellets offered free choice is a popular alternative. Snacks that rheas include in their diet include dog food, eggs, insects, earthworms, and snakes. Rheas consume four cups of food a day. In the wild, 90% of their diet is greens, and close to 9% are seeds. The remaining 1% consists of fruits, insects, and vertebrates. Rheas require a wide-open pan or large container, as they drink with a forward sweeping motion.



A secure three-sided building will be sufficient for most of the country raising rheas. Courtesy of Stuarts Fallow Farm.

Rhea

(*Rhea Americana*)

Native to South America
 Adult height: five feet tall
 Adult weight: 60 to 100 pounds
 Egg incubation: 30-40 days
 Egg color: cream

Small wings and a breastbone with no keel
 95% usable as meat, feathers, oil, and leather
 Require daily exercise to avoid leg and digestive problems
 Slaughtered at 10 to 13 months
 Meat, classified as “red,” is sold as steaks, fillet, medallions, roasts, and ground meat
 Lay 20-50 eggs per year

Emu

(*Dromaius novaehollandiae*)

Native to Australia
 Adult height: six feet tall
 Adult weight: 125 to 140 pounds
 Egg incubation: 50-55 days
 Egg color: dark green



“As far as housing goes, in most states, a three-sided building would work as long as it stays dry and you're able to lock them in at night. We live in Ohio, and the only issue we've had is them trying to sleep outside in a blizzard. Overall, I highly recommend rhea's as a bird to add to your flock as long as you've prepared the proper housing requirements for them.”

Rheas start to breed around two years of age. The male will begin to walk with his wings extended and will start booming. He will mate with several females. The cock rhea will form a depression nest lined with grass. Females will lay their eggs near the male, and he will roll them into the nest. Male rheas, like other members of the ratite family, raise the chicks alone.

Incubation is 30-40 days, and the male will stay on the nest until all chicks have hatched. (Start practicing saying, “He is broody.”) The newly hatched chicks may pick

at the father's droppings. This has been documented before, and you should not be concerned. You can offer the new chicks a turkey starter. Use wide-mouthed water pans to allow their forward sweeping motion. A standard chick water fountain will not do.

If you want to use an incubator, set the temperature at 97.5 degrees F and humidity to 30 to 35%. If the chicks are reluctant to eat, offer live insects like crickets dusted in turkey starter. After spending time in a brooder, you can let the chicks out on warm days. Like keeping emu or chicken chicks, take care against predators.

If you are interested in obtaining rhea chicks, adolescents, or adults, there are many breeders all over the U.S. Look online for exotic animal breeders or auctions. With over 15,000 birds in the U.S., we are the number one country that has rhea farms. ©



Rheas offer a lot of personality.
 Courtesy of Stuarts Fallow Farm.

KENNY COOGAN is a food, farm, and flower national columnist. He has a master's degree in Global Sustainability and leads workshops about owning chickens, vegetable gardening, animal training, and corporate team building. His upcoming book, *Florida's Carnivorous Plants*, will be published in July 2022 and will be available at kennycogan.com.



Caring for Chicks With Pasty Butt

By Lisa Steele

If you are new to caring for baby chicks, be aware of a potentially life-threatening but easily treatable condition that is fairly common, affecting mainly shipped day-old chicks.

Pasty butt is a condition in which feces get stuck in the baby chick's vent and literally stop up the chick so it can't excrete its poop. It can kill the chick fairly quickly if not treated immediately, so knowing how to treat this condition is important.

Pasty butt is usually caused by stress or extreme temperature changes, such as those often endured by baby chicks during the rigorous travel from the hatchery to your post office. Shipped chicks are far more susceptible to pasty butt than those you purchase from a local farm or hatch yourself, but it's good practice

to check all your newly hatched or acquired chicks for it. Of all the sick chick symptoms you might encounter, pasty butt is one of the easiest to treat.

Pasty Butt Treatment – Once you get your chicks home, check each chick one by one for pasty butt and gently clean any poop stuck on their vents with a cotton swab moistened with warm water or warmed vegetable or olive oil and then smear a bit of oil around the vent area. Continue to check their little butts for the first few days for pasting up, several times a day if you have any chicks currently suffering from pasty butt, and continue to swab to keep the vent area nice and clean. Since chicks are not able to regulate their body temperature and can chill easily and die, don't wet any more

of the chick than necessary; just remove any stuck-on feces. That's why I recommend using a cotton swab which greatly reduces the area actually moistened.

Pasty Butt Prevention – Feeding the chicks a bit of cornmeal or ground raw oatmeal mixed into their regular chick feed can help prevent and/or clear up pasty butt. Provide chick-sized grit if you feed your chicks anything other than chick feed. Chicks are extremely susceptible to diarrhea, which can exacerbate pasty butt symptoms, so keep the bedding dry and change out wet litter that might be harboring *E. coli* or other bacteria. Probiotic powder mixed into their feed can help balance the good-to-bad bacteria ratio in their intestinal tracts and help prevent diarrhea.

BREED PROFILE:

LANGSHAN CHICKEN

The Perfect Dual-Purpose Breed for the Small Homestead

BY TAMSIN COOPER

BREED: The Langshan in China and America, and the Croad Langshan in Britain, is a heritage utility breed, which has given rise to show breeds in Australia (Australian Langshan), Germany (German Langshan), and the UK (Modern Langshan).

ORIGIN: Langshan means Wolf Hill and relates to a scenic area in eastern China, just south of Nantong on the Yangtze River. Wolf Hill is important in Buddhist culture, featuring a temple at its apex. Although only 350 feet high, it is prominent on the Jiangsu plain and the most beautiful in the

region. Langshan chickens have been bred here for centuries.

HISTORY: Major F. T. Croad first imported Langshan chickens to England in 1872. British breeders originally debated whether it was a unique breed. Some argued strongly that it was a “poor variety of Cochin.” Others bred them with Cochin to improve the latter’s black plumage. The major’s niece, Miss A. C. Croad, fought tirelessly to establish the breed against fierce opposition. The new breed proved to have exceptional utility properties and was finally accepted as a distinct breed. It became popular until the rise of commercial breeds after World War II.

In 1878, birds from the Croad flock were imported into the United States. During that century, they were highly favored in America. The APA recognized the original Black variety in 1883, and the American Langshan Club was formed in 1887.

Related breeds arose through breeders focusing on longer-legged strains for show purposes. In Britain, the Modern Langshan features tighter plumage and a slimmer breast. The German Langshan’s long legs are free of feathering. The Australian Langshan was developed from birds imported from China in 1905 with Croad and Modern Langshans, plus the original Black Orpingtons. They were found to have an excellent feed to egg ratio and became one of the most popular utility breeds. These days they are leggier and mainly bred for show.



Photo by ©
The Livestock
Conservancy.



Jiangsu province in China. Image credit: Das steinerne Herz and Uwe Dederich/commons.wikimedia.org CC BY-SA 3.0 (creativecommons.org).



Wolf Hill in Jiangsu, China, where Langshan chickens originated. Photo credit: Sun Liming/Pixabay. (CCO license).

Although specialist industrial breeds have overtaken productivity, the Chinese government has aided an initiative to preserve the original breed in China. Jifa Zhang, an undergraduate working at Langshan Chicken Farm in Nantong, reported the farm's efforts to preserve, breed, and improve the breed since 1959.

CONSERVATION STATUS: Watch on The Livestock Conservancy Priority List; the FAO reports 1389 head in four flocks in 2015, up to 1000 in the UK in 2002, while in China, there may still be many thousands. In Britain, the Rare Breeds Survival Trust and Croad Club support conservation efforts, although fertility issues have arisen due to small population size.

BIODIVERSITY: This unique heritage breed has a long history in its place of origin.

DESCRIPTION: A tall, large bird with a full breast, and deep body, although relatively small-boned. Tail feathers are carried as high as the head, giving a distinctive U shape. Eyes are dark brown. Legs are fairly long, with moderate feathering on the shank and outer toe. Shanks are blue-black with pink between the scales, pale pink soles, and white toenails.

VARIETIES: The original Black has a green sheen. The White was developed from the Black in England in 1885 and accepted by the APA in 1893, followed by the Blue in 1987. Bantams have been developed and recognized in all three colors.

SKIN COLOR: White.

COMB: Single.

POPULAR USE: An adaptable dual-purpose bird for the backyard and the foundation of many other breeds, such as Orpington, Plymouth Rock, and Jersey Giant.

EGG COLOR: Mid to dark brown, sometimes with a pale purple bloom.

EGG SIZE: Large.

PRODUCTIVITY: Averaging 150 eggs per year, birds lay during winter months, only declining after six years, although they may continue to 10. They start laying from six months and are slow-

growing. Their abundant white meat is juicy and flavorful.

WEIGHT: Rooster 9.5 lb.; hen 7.5 lb.; cockerel 8 lb.; pullet 6.5 lb. Bantam rooster: 36 oz.; hen: 32 oz.; cockerel: 32 oz.; pullet: 28 oz.

TEMPERAMENT: These intelligent and inquisitive birds are active, graceful, and easily tamed. Their calm and friendly disposition makes them great around children, and males are normally not aggressive.

ADAPTABILITY: Adaptability: Hardy foragers that can adapt to any soil type and extremes of temperature and humidity, even conditions far removed from their native land. They originated in a humid subtropical climate with damp, chilly winters and hot, humid summers prone to downpours and storms, making them the only Asiatic suited to the Southern States. However, they cope better on well-drained land and require shelter from the sun and rain. Hens become broody in April/May, setting well, but not over-persistently. They make attentive mothers but need space to avoid treading on chicks. Heavy birds require lower perches (six inches high) and bedding to cushion the jump. Some prefer to sleep in a well-padded nest. 🐣

SOURCE

- *The Livestock Conservancy | Croad Langshan Club | Heigl, L. 2010. Croad Langshan. Aviculture-Europe.*

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.

RAISING HERITAGE BREEDS

Are Heritage Livestock Breeds a Good Fit for My Farm?



BY CATHY R. PAYNE

HERITAGE LIVESTOCK BREEDS are facing extinction worldwide, and some in the United States are in critical danger. Heritage livestock breeders play a critical role in conservation, but raising them is not the best choice for everyone.

Heritage livestock breeds are those our forefathers raised before the implementation of factory farming and the development of corporate strains. Generally, these breeds were developed or imported and raised in the United States before the 20th century, by the mid-1900s. The Livestock Conservancy is a national organization with the mission "To protect endangered livestock and poultry breeds from extinction." They monitor over 180 different heritage breeds. This year, May 15-21 is International Heritage Breeds Week, a time to raise global awareness about these valuable breeds.

(livestockconservancy.org/aboutus/heritage-breeds-week)

The Role of Heritage Breeds in Biodiversity

Modern industrial breeds are genetically uniform and produce highly predictable outcomes. Artificial insemination, required for industrial turkey production, can have a single tom turkey producing genetics for hundreds or thousands of hens. Standardized heritage



breeds, in comparison, have more variability of genotype. The amount of variability depends on the breed standard requirements and the selection criteria of their owners.

This lack of biodiversity places our food security in peril. If disease wipes out huge populations of a commercial strain of pigs, for example, the result will reduce our supplies of pork, and prices will rise. However, if a particular heritage breed is resistant to that threat, pork can be saved for future generations.

Advantages of Heritage Breeds

Heritage breeds have unique advantages. Many of the breeds are multi-purpose. For example, cows can be raised for both meat and milk. In addition, if you want to contribute to the breed's future and select the very best offspring to move forward, you can sell breeding stock.

You will find that heritage breeds are typically smaller than modern "improved" breeds and commercial strains. This makes them easier



to handle and easier to process at home. They also tend to be docile and easy to train. They forage for some of their food and do well in a pasture setting. The exercise and diet coupled with slow growth make them both nutritious and delicious.

Heritage breeds have other reduced inputs. In mild climates, an outdoor moveable shelter is adequate for most species, so barns are not required. Their hardiness means fewer vet bills. They live long lives and reproduce for more years. They can bring in more income during their lifetime than larger, faster-growing breeds with shorter lives. Heritage breeds are national treasures and important genetic packages worth conserving for our descendants.

SUMMARY OF ADVANTAGES:

- Multipurpose
- Often smaller and easier to manage
- Hardy and easy to raise on pasture
- Able to forage for food
- Fewer inputs (feed, vet care, housing, etc.)
- Longer lived — will produce a higher yield over the animal’s or herd/flock’s lifetime
- Adapted to particular climate (heat tolerant, parasite resistant, easy birthing)
- Rare, niche market for breeding stock
- Preserves biodiversity and history
- Incomparable flavor profiles


Challenges and Critiques of Heritage Breeds

It’s best to go into new endeavors knowing any special challenges that they bring. While many homesteaders find smaller livestock easier to tend and manage, in many cases the yield will be smaller and take longer to achieve.

Once you’ve set your sights on a particular breed, you may find that you can find some nearby. However, in many cases, you will need to travel far and pay premium prices to get quality breeding stock. Breed associations usually provide listings for their members. To save critical breeds, there must be accurate record-keeping of their bloodlines. The associations make rules about standards and provide a registration service for members. Breeders need to use the required identification so that an animal matches its registration papers.

This could include ear notching, tattoos, DNA analysis, or other methods. Sometimes the procedures or bylaws about requirements will change. That can disgruntle some members.

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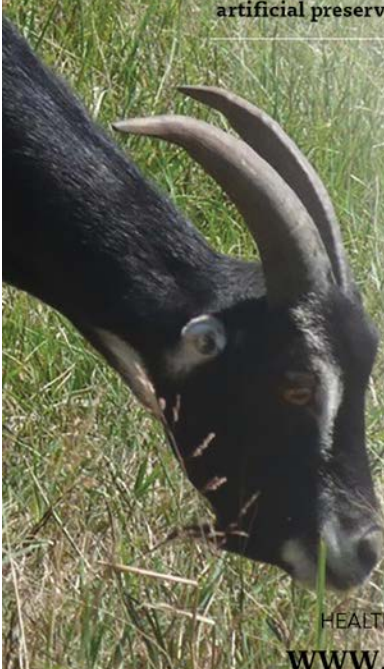
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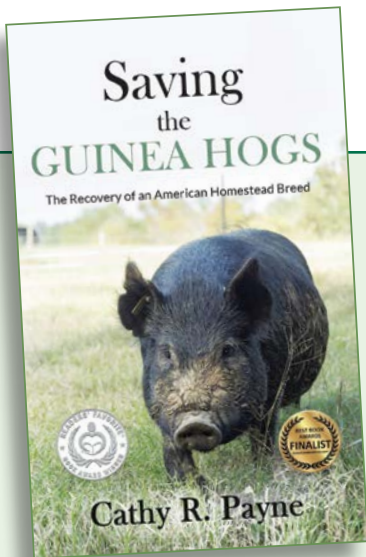
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SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND CRITIQUES:

- Yield of meat, wool, or milk per animal may be less than other breeds.
- Heritage breeds are often slow-growing and take longer to get to “market weight.”
- Difficulty finding breeding stock.
- Animals must be identified; keeping meticulous records is vital for registration.
- Fees for registration and association membership are required.
- Working with individuals in breed associations can be challenging.
- You need to have a good website presence and marketing skills.


Will Heritage Breeds Meet Your Needs?

Each farm and each farmer is unique. Think about your goals for livestock before deciding on heritage breeds. Let’s look at two hypothetical scenarios.

Farmer A wants to be a pork farmer. She has enough land to raise a small herd, has experience with hogs, and equipment to move them. Her goal is to sell cuts by the pound at one or two local farmers markets. She is familiar with two breeds that produce a nice hybrid cross for processing. She doesn’t like tagging ears or joining associations. She isn’t interested in technology. She believes that if she gets it to market, the pork will sell itself.

Farmer B wants to raise Pineywoods cattle because he has fenced land with pasture and woods suitable for them. He knows that they are an important American heritage breed. He also remembers seeing them at

a heritage farm and finds them intriguing. He lives in an area that was once dominated by the Pineywoods forests where this landrace breed developed. He understands the need to DNA test each animal, and he has financial resources to invest in his initial stock. He wants to sell his culls directly to customers and sell the best stock as breeding livestock.

Farmer A is a candidate for readily available breeds or for heritage pork cross-breeding. Farmer B is a candidate for heritage breed conservation. Although these are clear-cut examples of hypothetical cases, you can think about your own resources, goals, skills, and preferences. Those who choose to raise heritage breeds and do not have a strong passion for it are likely not going to be in it for the long haul. People who raise these breeds successfully will do whatever it takes to save them for future generations. Conservation is a calling. 

RESOURCES

- *For more information on heritage breeds and their priority for conservation, go to <https://livestockconservancy.org/>.*
- *D. Phillip Sponenberg, Jeannette Beranger, Alison Martin 2017. Managing Breeds for a Secure Future, Second Edition, 5M Publishing Ltd. This practical book offers a comprehensive examination of breeding practices aimed at livestock and dog breeders with all abilities and experience levels.*

CATHY R. PAYNE is a former homesteader who raised a variety of heritage livestock breeds. She now lives in Athens, Georgia, and does free-lance writing, speaking, and mentoring regarding heritage livestock. She is the award-winning author of *Saving the Guinea Hogs: The Recovery of an American Homestead Breed*, available at the *Countryside Bookstore* <https://shop.iamcountryside.com/>. She does contract work including census projects, research, and writing for The Livestock Conservancy. Her website is guineahogbooks.com and her email is guineahogbooks@gmail.com.



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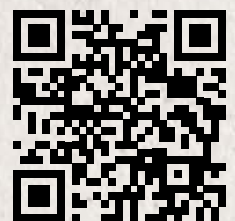
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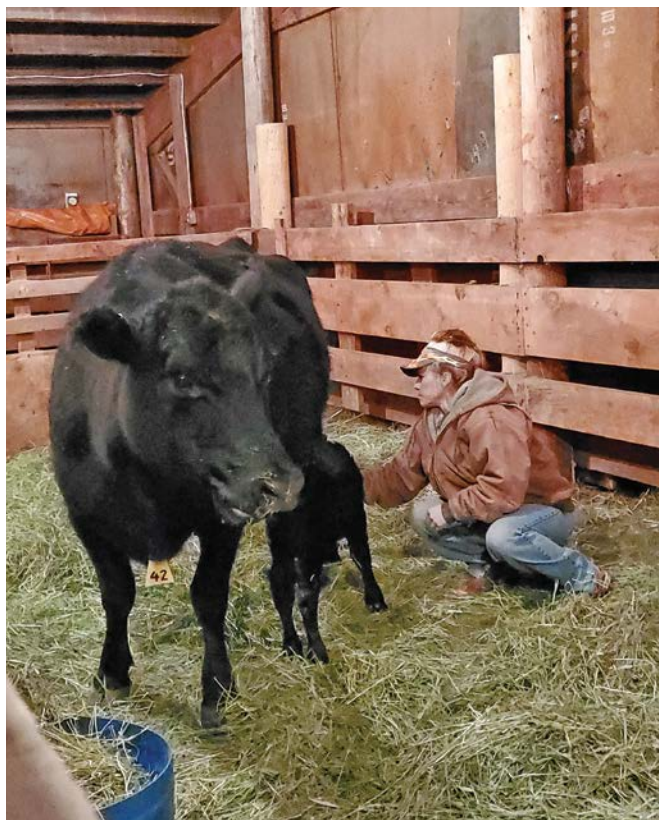
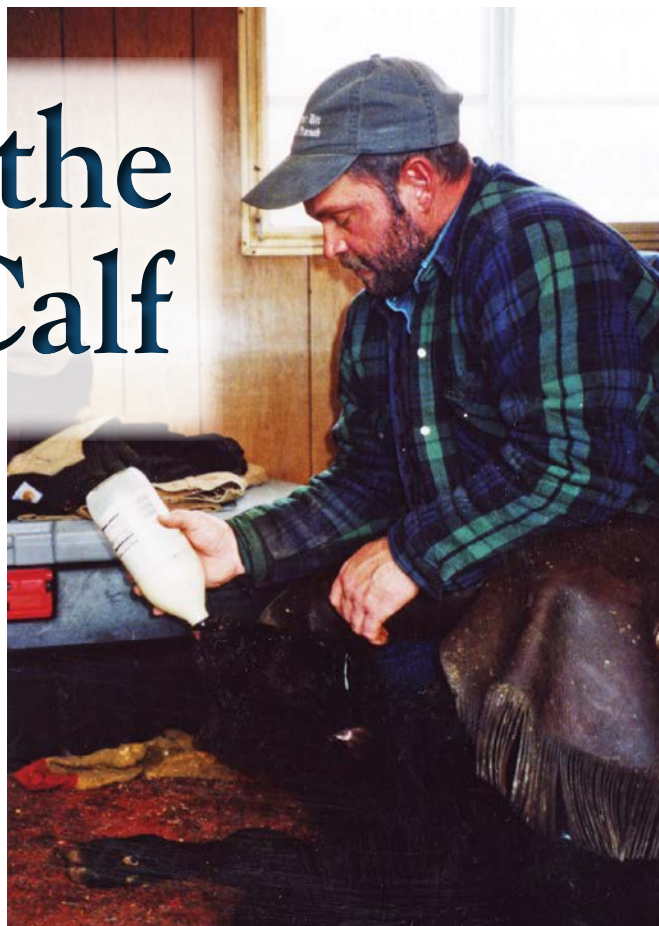


Care of the Newborn Calf

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS

AFTER A CALF IS BORN, especially if it was a hard birth or you had to pull him, make sure he's breathing. Then make sure he gets up and finds the udder. In most normal births, the calf will begin breathing within 30 to 60 seconds. If he doesn't, clear the membranes and fluid away from his nose (and if necessary, pull fluid out of his nostrils with a suction bulb if you have one in your pocket) and tickle the inside of one nostril with a clean piece of hay or straw. This usually makes him cough and start breathing. If that doesn't work, you may have to give him artificial respiration.

In the past, veterinarians often recommended holding a calf up by its hind legs to allow fluid to drain from the airways, but now they realize most of the fluid that drains out is from the stomach, and these fluids are important to the health of the calf. Holding the calf up by the hind legs is counterproductive, putting pressure on the diaphragm (from the abdominal organs), which may interfere with normal respiratory movements. It's better to use a suction bulb (or even a turkey baster) to suction the airways. Another way to help stimulate a calf to breathe is to rub him briskly with a towel.



If a calf was stressed during a hard birth and does not start breathing immediately, this may be a sign he's suffering from acidosis — a pH imbalance due to a shortage of oxygen — which can harm heart and lung function. It may take several hours or days for his body to correct this. One way to tell if the calf is normal or compromised is by how soon he lifts his head and positions himself upright rather than lying flat. After a normal birth, the calf should be looking around and trying to get up within two to five minutes. If he just lies there, stimulate him by rubbing him to get his circulation going better and position him upright. Lung function and ribcage movement are impeded when he's lying flat.

NAVEL CARE — After he starts breathing, disinfect the navel stump. If the cow calved on clean grass pasture, there's less chance for bacteria entering the navel and disinfecting the stump may not be necessary. But if she calves on dirt or mud/manure in a pen or dirty barn stall, there's a risk for infection. Dip the navel stump in a tincture of iodine or chlorhexidine. Iodine has the added benefit of killing pathogens and also acting as an astringent to help the stump dry quickly and seal off.

An easy way to apply iodine is to dip the entire stump in a small wide-mouth jar containing ½ inch of iodine, putting it up to the abdomen and swishing it around, making sure the entire stump is saturated. If the navel cord broke off long and might drag on the ground, break it shorter before you immerse it in iodine. Leave a three to four-inch stump. Do this with very clean hands and pull it between your hands. Never create a jerk on the calf's belly. Breaking it is better than cutting it; the stump is more apt to bleed if cut.

One application of iodine may not be enough to dry the stump quickly. You may have to repeat it a couple

of times during the first 24 hours to prevent navel infection. Bull calves take longer for the cord to dry since they often urinate while lying down — keeping the navel area wet.

On a rare occasion, you'll encounter a calf with an umbilical hernia. If the opening is large, it needs to be surgically repaired. Sometimes the intestines will start to come out through the hole, or a loop will fall into the umbilical

membrane. If intestines are falling out, take the calf to your vet, keeping the intestines clean by covering them with a towel. The vet may be able to replace them and stitch the hole.

If a loop of prolapsed intestine is encased in the navel cord, put the calf on his back and gently squeeze the intestine back up into the abdomen, then put an elastrator band over the umbilical

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A cow on your own place has better colostrum than a commercial product, however, because she creates the antibodies needed to protect a calf in your environment.



membranes, next to the belly, to keep the hole tightly closed. It will usually grow together and seal off and the calf will be fine.

Occasionally, a calf may bleed profusely when the navel cord breaks. Halt it with a clamp of some kind (like a hair clip) or tie it with string for a couple of hours to stop the bleeding.

COLOSTRUM — Make sure the calf nurses soon after birth. If he doesn't accomplish this on his own, guide him to the udder or feed him by bottle, stomach tube, or esophageal feeder if he can't nurse his mother. The cow's first milk is crucial to the health and survival of the calf. It contains a creamy fat that gives him energy (and helps him generate body warmth in cold weather) and acts as a laxative to pass his first bowel movements.

Colostrum also provides antibodies against disease. Some antibodies are absorbed directly into his blood and lymph systems (passing through the intestinal wall) if he nurses soon enough. The antibodies help fight systemic infections, attacking pathogens like *Pasteurella*, *Streptococcus*, or *Salmonella* that might cause septicemia. Other antibodies stay in the gut to attack scours-causing pathogens the calf might ingest.

If the cow was on a good vaccination program before calving, she'll have strong immunity and the antibodies in her colostrum will give her calf immediate protection from many diseases as soon as he nurses. It does no good to vaccinate the cow against scour-causing *E. coli*, rotavirus, or coronavirus, however, if the calf doesn't nurse within a few hours of birth. If he is unable to nurse, give him substitute colostrum from another cow, some thawed frozen colostrum (that you saved for emergencies), or a commercial product. A cow on your own place has better colostrum than a commercial product, however,

because she creates the antibodies needed to protect a calf in your environment.

A partial feeding of frozen or a commercial substitute can be used to “jump-start” a calf if you think it will stimulate him to nurse his dam right away. But a part feeding can be counterproductive if he doesn’t ingest a full meal soon. The little bit you fed him stimulates the “open” gut to close more quickly and he won’t be able to absorb any more antibodies. If he won’t be nursing his mother soon, give him a full feeding.

When he’s born, a calf can absorb large antibody molecules directly through the intestinal lining into the bloodstream and lump system, but pathogens can also slip through. It’s a race between pathogens and the antibodies, so make sure the antibodies get there first. Other ingredients in colostrum coat the gut and provide a different type of antibody to combat pathogens ingested during the calf’s first hours of life. If the “good guys” in colostrum get to the gut first, they close the door to pathogenic organisms, preventing the penetration of the intestinal lining by bacteria and their toxins.

Stress can shorten the window of opportunity for absorbing antibodies, however. Cold weather, hot weather, difficult birth, or any other stress makes it crucial to get colostrum into the calf immediately. Antibody levels obtained by calves at first nursing are significantly lower in calves that experienced a difficult birth, even when the cow is milked immediately after calving and the calf is force-fed. If he was short on oxygen during birth, he may suffer from temporary acidosis, which inhibits the gut from efficiently absorbing antibodies. The best thing you can do for the calf is to get the colostrum into him as soon as possible. 🐾

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.



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4-H Pig Breeds

Making the Right Choice

BY JANET GARMAN

IF ONLY CHOOSING A 4-H PIG breed was as easy as grabbing the first piglet you see and raising it to market weight! Wouldn't that be hilarious and interesting? Choosing the right 4-H pig breed takes quite a bit of thought, research, and preparation to get to auction day.

Looking ahead and choosing a breed that will work with a fair schedule is the first important factor. Typically, hogs are grown for four to five months before the 4-H shows start at fairs. The goals include taking a weanling piglet (around 30 pounds) and growing it to market weight of 270 pounds in the months leading up to the county, state, or national fairs.

In many cases, the pig is sold at auction after the last show.

The process teaches the 4-H member a multitude of valuable livestock skills. These include:

- ✓ Selection of breed and individual animal
- ✓ Nutrition and feed efficiency
- ✓ Daily feeding
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Reproduction
- ✓ Marketing

4-H pigs may be chosen based on what the family farm is already raising. Other students will choose from a local 4-H pig breeder, or branch out and experiment with a new breed that seems to have the

right rate of growth.

Health, vigor, rate of growth, and conforming to breed standards all must come together to produce a winning pig.

Conformation counts in shows and learning about the breed standards is important. Avoid choosing a piglet that has disqualifying traits.

In any breed choice for 4-H pigs, be prepared to pay considerably more than a feeder piglet.

Nutrition and Feed Efficiency

This component seems to be the trickiest for the inexperienced 4-H pig owner. The feed efficiency value is the amount of feed required for one pound of gain. The goal in

many timelines is 1.5 to 1.8 pounds of gain per day.

Of course, pigs, being pigs, will do their very best to enjoy more than the feed they require. This often results in separating individuals, who have a faster rate of gain, from the others.

Expert Advice From a 4-H Family

I spoke with a local family that has been involved in 4-H for many years. They repeatedly earned top marks at local fairs, and their hogs always earned top money at the auction. The Tice family of En-Tice-Ment Stables in Davidsonville, Maryland was eager to discuss how they raised and showed 4-H pigs.

Deana and Joe Tice and their children, Victoria, Josh, and Justin were brought up in 4-H. They were familiar faces at our local fairs and helped me cut through the fog of raising 4-H pigs. I spoke with Deanna and Josh. When they began showing pigs, they found a good local farmer who was raising show pigs.

Deana explained that timing the piglet purchase is a key point in being successful. If the fair you will compete in has an earlier calendar date, you will get piglets earlier. For the later fairs, you are looking for a sow who is due to farrow later in the spring.

They went on to explain that there is a science to it all. Your goal is to reach the market weight of 260 to 280 pounds by the fair. Josh and his siblings learned to manage the rate of gain so that the pigs didn't get too big for the market. The lessons included cost-effective feeding, taking extensive notes, and determining the rate of gain.

Deana added that the eventual separating of piglets, so that they didn't overeat from their neighbor's feed pan, added work to the whole process. It's not as simple as just feeding the pigs and walking away!

Josh Tice mainly raised Yorkshire

pigs for his 4-H pig projects. His sister, Victoria, holds a grand champion for her work with a Duroc, and their brother, Justin, raised both Duroc and Berkshire.

The Tices let me know that crossbreeds are also a good choice. One crossbreed is referred to as a blue butt. These are a result of Hampshire/Yorkshire or Hampshire/Chester White. These crosses result in a bluish marking over the rump which is how

Health, vigor, rate of growth, and conforming to breed standards all must come together to produce a winning pig.

The Answer

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Berkshire piglet.

Yorkshire sows are great at mothering, so if you plan to keep your pig and breed it, the Yorkshire would be a great choice.



It's show time!

the name came to be used. The blue butts make a good 4-H pig breed and are excellent for meat production.

Common Breeds of 4-H Pigs

- ✓ Hereford
- ✓ Yorkshire
- ✓ Duroc
- ✓ Berkshire
- ✓ Hampshire
- ✓ Chester White
- ✓ Tamworth
- ✓ Gloucestershire Old Spot
- ✓ Red Wattle

Characteristics

Each breed has at least one characteristic that makes it a good choice for 4-H pig shows. Yorkshire sows are great at mothering, so if you plan to keep your pig and breed it, the Yorkshire would be a great choice. Berkshire, Chester White, and Durocs are often chosen for their profitability.

Taste

Raising for taste? The Duroc and Tamworth are leaner meat breeds. Berkshire is considered in a class by itself by many pork producers. The taste is smooth and mellow. Duroc is a great meat hog with a good fat to lean ratio and marbling. The expected flavor profile for each breed is easily discovered on the Livestock Conservancy website and many breed associations as well.

What about the Smaller Heritage Breeds?

The reason you don't see many Kunekune and American Guinea Hogs in 4-H pig shows is that they can't fairly compete against the larger hog breeds. There is a push in some areas to add smaller pig breed competitions. The smaller breeds are enticing to the younger children wishing to compete in 4-H pig shows. The grow-out period can be lengthy. The longer time to reach market weight of 150 to 180 pounds can be a drawback to showing these pigs at 4-H shows.

Infrastructure

Before bringing home your piglet or piglets, have a fenced-in area in place. Piglets are easily trained to an electric wire fence. The lowest wire should be only a few inches off the ground for piglets. You don't want them to learn they can duck under the fence to obtain freedom!

A small hut or run-in shed, heavily bedded with hay, is all the pigs need to shelter from bad weather. Most pigs will burrow under a thick blanket of hay to stay toasty warm.

Water should be provided at all times. Your best bet is a shallow large container that cannot be easily tipped over. Pigs are playful and inquisitive.

Final Advice

Josh Tice has the following advice for future 4-H pig participants: If you aren't sure if showing pigs is the right thing for you, do your research first. Putting time into the homework on pig breeds, livestock management, and pigs, in general, is the first step. Learn what is needed for optimal pig health. Go to the local fairs and watch others showing their pigs. Listen to the feedback from the judges. Take lots of notes. 📝

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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BASIC HOOF CARE FOR THE HORSE OWNER

BY HEATHER SMITH THOMAS



trim and shoe the horse yourself), to keep your horse's feet within a healthy range of hoof growth. A certain horse might have feet that grow very fast and toes become too long (putting the feet out of balance) in just four to five weeks after being trimmed or shod. This creates more risk for stumbling (and cracking/chipping if the horse is barefoot and not wearing his feet enough). That horse needs more frequent attention.

By contrast, other horses have slow-growing feet and can go two months or longer — especially if the feet are well balanced by a proper trim before needing to be trimmed or shod again, unless the shoes wear out faster than that. If you ride your horse a lot in rocky terrain and shoes wear out before the feet have grown long enough to need trimming, your farrier can add hard-surfacing to the shoes so they last longer.

A good farrier will keep the feet balanced and functioning properly so the hoof will be elastic and resilient, keeping proper foot and pastern angles for optimum movement, agility, and hoof health. The farrier will clean out the foot, assess the frog and sole to trim away loose tags or excess material, then trim the hoof wall to proper length for that particular foot and the horse's needs. If the horse will be left barefoot, enough hoof wall is left at the ground surface to take most of the weight — so the horse won't be walking on his soles and bruising them. The edge of the wall is smoothed so it won't chip or split.

If the horse will be shod, the farrier trims the hoof wall more, to make a smooth, level seat for the shoe. The type of shoe chosen depends on the work the horse will be doing, whether it's winter (needing more traction on ice and frozen ground) or summer, and the type of footing/terrain your horse will be ridden over.

“NO FOOT, NO HORSE” is an old saying that is still true. A sound and healthy hoof is crucial to the health and function of the horse. Regular hoof care is one of the most important aspects of keeping a horse.

The hoof continually grows, like human fingernails, to compensate for normal wear and tear. Under natural conditions, horses' feet wear about the same rate that they grow, but the confined horse's feet may grow too long if he's not ridden much — and may split, chip, or break. At the other extreme, hooves may wear too fast if he's ridden a

lot. Proper trimming and shoeing can keep feet healthy and at the proper length.

A normal hoof wall grows about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch per month. The entire hoof wall may be replaced by new hoof horn every eight to 12 months. If the horse isn't wearing its feet as fast as they grow, the feet must be periodically trimmed to keep them from getting too long. If the horse is shod, his shoes need to be reset or replaced — after trimming the feet — every six to 10 weeks on average, depending on the rate of hoof growth for that horse.

This is why regular farrier visits are important (or learning how to

YOUR JOB AS HORSE OWNER

You are the person most responsible for the health and welfare of your horse and daily care. Even if your farrier may come to trim/shoe the horse, this animal depends on you to monitor and care for his feet between visits.

If you are riding, training, or handling the horse daily, this gives you a good opportunity to look at his feet. Regular hoof care is important. The feet should be picked up and examined each time you do anything with the horse. If you clean them out completely, you can assess the health of the frog and sole. A hoof continually packed with mud/manure is more likely to develop thrush, caused by microbes that thrive in a moist, dark, airless environment. If you detect the beginnings of thrush (black grime along the edges of the frog, with an unmistakable bad odor) you can treat it with a product recommended by your farrier — or tincture of iodine — and halt it early.

Picking up and cleaning the feet regularly is not only good for training and helps develop good manners — keeping the horse comfortable and cooperative about having his feet handled — but also gives you a chance to feel the feet and legs, to know if there is any heat in the foot or any heat and/or swelling above the hoof.

If the horse has a serious problem he will be lame. Sometimes, however, a problem starts mild and you won't detect it early unless you are paying attention to the feet. Feeling the feet to see if one hoof is hotter than the others or swollen can give an early warning clue. Morning is the best time to feel the hooves because they are generally cool at that time of day,



and it's easier to tell if one foot is warmer than the others.

If you pick up each foot, you'll also know if there are any rocks or sharp gravel stuck into the bottom of the hoof. Just as you would never saddle a horse without first brushing his back to remove any matted hair/mud or dirt/debris, you should remove any rocks and debris from the bottom of his feet before you ride him.

If you are monitoring the feet, you will also know if they are becoming dry and brittle and vulnerable to cracking, or too soft. Hooves in a dry climate may get brittle and crack, but this can also happen if you bathe a horse too often, with water running down over his feet. Being continually wet and dry can deplete the natural oils in the hoof wall and lead to dryness and cracking, just as a person gets cracked, chapped hands when they are in and out of water continually.

If you live in a wet climate and

the horse is standing in mud or walking around in a wet pasture, his feet may become too soft and weak. If the integrity of your horse's feet is compromised by environmental conditions, ask your farrier about hoof products you could use between farrier visits, to try to protect the feet from these extremes.

If you are riding the horse and he's shod, check each foot before you ride — not only to make sure the bottom of the foot is clean but also that the shoe is tight and no nails are working loose. At the end of every ride, before you put the horse away in his stall or pasture, check the feet and shoes again. A rock jammed into the shoe might not be obvious until you look. It might not make him lame immediately, but if he

has to walk on it for a few more hours (or days!) it might create a bruise.

Even if your horse is out at pasture and not being ridden, or has some days off, don't ignore him. It pays to do periodic checking to make sure he is healthy and sound — and this includes his feet. Unless you check, you won't know if he has an injury, a stone bruise, a rock or stick jammed into the bottom of the foot, a shoe coming loose, or feet that are beginning to crack and chip if he's barefoot. There is no substitute for "the eye of the master" when it comes to taking care of horses. If you notice a problem early, you can take care of it immediately if it's something you can handle, or be able to call your farrier and have him/her come sooner than the next scheduled appointment or call your veterinarian if it's some kind of injury that needs medical attention. 🐾

EASY BRUNCH PANINI

BY HANNAH MCCLURE



HANNAH 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.

SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER are times for many new beginnings and long-lived traditions. From flower bulbs and trees budding to seed planting and family dinners, you can be sure my palate for meals and desserts shift with the seasons. I go from wanting hearty comfort foods to quick and easy, filling, but light meals. Brunch is a meal that doesn't get enough acknowledgment. Especially when one is busy getting gardens and other spring cleaning and projects done, or around holidays when often we spend so much time cooking and preparing for the big dinner that breakfast and lunch kind of take a back burner. No pun intended. So here is my best kitchen trick to successfully manage your farm/homestead while enjoying brunch! My brunch panini are exactly what brunch should be. A little breakfast and a little lunch and I sure hope you enjoy them.

YOU WILL NEED:

- A waffle iron, panini press, or a skillet
- A loaf of French bread or sourdough bread
- 10 eggs, scrambled and cooked well (about 1 cup/panini)
- 1 lb. shaved black forest ham (or ham of your choice (½-¾ cup/panini))
- Mozzarella cheese (1-2 slices per sandwich)
- 1 red or orange sweet bell pepper slices into thin strips (3-4 strips/panini)
- Pesto (1 Tbsp per sandwich)

PANINI ASSEMBLY:

- Preheat waffle iron, panini press, or skillet to medium heat. While preheating, take one slice of French or sourdough bread and spread pesto evenly to cover one side.
- Next layer mozzarella cheese and 3-4 sliced bell pepper strips.
- Add a layer of cooked scrambled eggs (about 1 cup).
- Add shaved ham (about ½-¾ cup).
- Top with another slice of French or sourdough bread.
- Carefully place in waffle iron, panini press, or skillet to cook.
- If using a waffle iron or panini press, pull down top lid and press till toasted on the outside. About 4-5 minutes.
- If using a skillet, press down using a spatula and toast each side for 2-3 minutes.

Serve hot with a side salad or fresh fruit.

Note: This makes 6-8 panini depending on your preference with the number of eggs and amount of meat you use. Suggested amounts are listed per sandwich but can easily be adjusted to your liking. Additionally, in place of scrambled eggs, you can use over medium or hard-fried eggs. 🍳



FRIED FRUIT PIES

BY HANNAH MCCLURE

I think most folks can agree that pie is a crowd-pleasing dessert. Most holidays have at least one kind to serve up after the meal. Pie is such a crowd-pleaser that you can even make savory pies for dinner. Today I'm going to be focusing on perhaps my favorite pie of all. Fried pie! A sweet treat I learned to make from my Granny and an Amish friend. Both shared with me two similar and yet different ways to make them. To this day, I cannot choose which is my favorite. In my neck of the woods, when I ask what I can bring to cookouts and gatherings, I am quickly told one of two things. Pie or fried pies. I encourage you to take these delicious fried pies to your summer gatherings. They are sure to be the dessert that you and your loved ones didn't know you were missing! And while you can fill them with almost any sweet filling, I will be sharing my favorite fried pie filling. Enjoy!

DOUGH INGREDIENTS

- 4 ½ cups cake flour
- 1 tablespoon organic cane sugar or granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1 ½ cups shortening plus extra for frying
- 1 cup water
- 1 egg, beaten well for sealing pies.

GLAZE INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- ½ cup whole milk
- Pie filling of choice, homemade or store-bought. For this one, I'll be using lemon filling.

INSTRUCTIONS

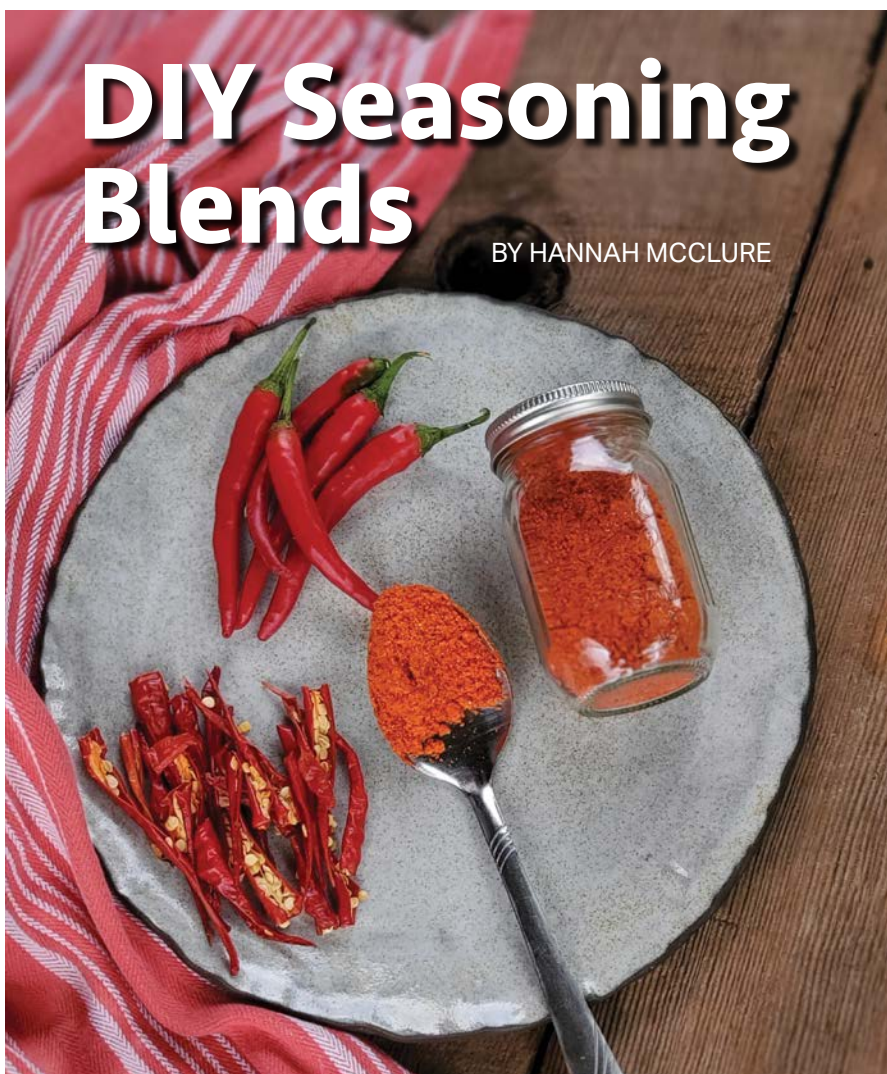
- In a large mixing bowl, mix flour, sugar, and salt.
- Add in 1 ½ cups shortening and work till mixture becomes pea-sized bits.
- Add in water a little at a time and work dough till blended well.
- Chill dough for 15 minutes.

- While dough chills, lightly flour a clean work surface and gather your rolling pin, egg wash, filling, and a fork for pressing edges shut.
- Roll out dough and cut out circles (size as desired, I use a 3-inch circle cookie cutter).
- Fill the middle with about 1 tablespoon of filling. This is a rough estimate. If you find your pies aren't sealing and the filling is spilling out, decrease the amount of filling. Wet only the inside edges of the dough with egg wash. Fold in half and press edges with a fork to seal shut.
- Once finished filling and sealing, fry in heated shortening till golden brown on both sides.
- In a small bowl, mix powdered sugar, cornstarch, vanilla and almond extracts, and milk.
- While pies are still warm but not hot from the frying oil, dip pie into glaze, being sure to cover all sides. Let drip dry on a cooling rack.

Note: For fun with the littles, I have (and encourage you to as well) used different shapes to create unique pies. If using other shapes, you will have half as many pies as you will need a top shape and a bottom shape with filling in-between. This is not a necessity but sure makes it fun for little ones. ©

DIY Seasoning Blends

BY HANNAH MCCLURE



I'D LIKE TO SHARE a few of my favorite homemade seasoning blends, including ideas on what to grow yourself and where to source ingredients when you can't grow them yourself. With all that the last couple of years has brought to the surface, food security seems to be on a lot of folks' minds. Myself included. Even with growing seasonal produce and having livestock of our own, I began wondering what hard times may look like. Would it mean bland foods? Would it mean less variety? Would it mean living only on what we can grow and raise at home? I started to look at areas where I could better prepare myself if I couldn't rely on running to the store and still have a touch more

flavor. I'll start with seasonings that can be homegrown. Things like chili powder, crushed red peppers, ginger, garlic powder, celery seed, basil, thyme, oregano, fennel, and many more of your favorites can be grown at home. I started with cayenne peppers. As I harvested the summer's bounty, I rinsed them, cut the tops off, and flipped them onto dehydrator trays, processing them at 135 degrees F for three hours to start. When they were dry throughout and easy to snap, I threw them into a coffee grinder (that I only use for herbs) until the peppers were a fine powder. I sifted out any large pieces and ran the grinder again. I stored the powder in a small canning jar for use in many seasoning blends.

Here are a few of my favorites including fajita and chili seasoning. I hope that you find inspiration in making your own blends.

FAJITA SEASONING

½ cup chili powder
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons ground cumin
¼ cup smoked paprika
2 tablespoons ground coriander
1 ½ tablespoons sea salt
1 tablespoon black pepper

TACO SEASONING

1 cup dried minced onion
1 cup sea salt
1 cup ground cumin
2 cups chili powder
1 cup crushed red pepper
1 cup oregano
½ cup smoked paprika

RANCH DRY SEASONING

¾ cup dried parsley flakes
¼ cup dried dill weed
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons garlic powder
2 tablespoons onion powder
½ tablespoon sea salt
2 teaspoons black pepper

CHILI SEASONING

1 cup chili powder
½ cup ground cumin
2 tablespoons smoked paprika
2 tablespoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon sea salt
1 tablespoon crushed red pepper
2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Mix each ingredient in a small mixing bowl and pour into a canning jar to store. Each seasoning blend lasts up to two years in a cool, dry place. Enjoy! 🌱



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STARTING YOUR OWN SOAP MAKING BUSINESS

BY VIRGINIA MONTGOMERY



AUDIO ARTICLE*

I REMEMBER WHEN I first discovered I could make my own soap. I was intrigued and obsessed with the various scents and ingredients. Immediately, I purchased \$200 in supplies and made my first batch. That first batch turned into a small side-hustle when I was in high school.

Still, to this day, I make our own soap and occasionally use my bars as gifts or even sell them to my friends and family. It is a hobby that keeps on giving. Luscious ingredients give a feel of luxury and can lessen the bill for the majority of your expenses.

Getting Started

The first step is to learn how to make soap. Get your craft down before even thinking about selling. This is true for all businesses. The

next thing you need to consider is your brand. Things to consider are:

- ◆ What ingredients do you want to use?
- ◆ Who is your target consumer?
- ◆ What is your competition?
- ◆ Where will you sell your product?

Construct a business plan with these in mind and begin planning out what you would like to do. Research what companies you want to purchase your ingredients from. Figure out the cost it takes to make a single bar of soap. From there you can decide how high you want to mark up the cost.

Must-Have Tools and Ingredients

There is a bare minimum needed to make soap. The ingredients are water, lye, and fat. The fat can be lard or even basic olive oil. Different oils have various properties in your finished product, so be sure

to consider that when you calculate in a lye calculator for your specific recipe. However, there is a bare minimum to have. This includes:

- ◆ Lye
- ◆ Oil
- ◆ Containers (stainless steel is okay, but not optimal. Do not use aluminum.)
- ◆ Non-stainless steel or wood mixing utensils
- ◆ Molds
- ◆ Thermometer
- ◆ Online lye calculator

Anything else is extra. Keep in mind that most people want more additives in their soap.

Following Rules and Regulations

Double-check laws in your area to ensure you are following the rules. Making sure your label lists ingredients and everything required on a soap label is important.

Do not make any claims



ingredients and designs is the best part of soap making. There are so many colors, fragrances, and additives that you can use. Some of the favorites I have used are:

- ❖ Buttermilk
- ❖ Calendula
- ❖ Coffee
- ❖ Salt
- ❖ Honey

regarding your soap or ingredients. Legally, without certain licensing, the only thing you are allowed to say about your handmade soap is that it gets somebody clean. While some ingredients have medical properties or are good for certain conditions, claiming such on your product can get you into a heap of trouble.

Follow manufacturing guidelines and safety guidelines as well. Gloves and goggles are a must when working with lye. Hairnets are another good idea. Store all ingredients off the floor as well and keep a clean work area.

Marketing Your Soaps

Once you figure out your market, you need to grow clients. You can either sell online or locally at craft shows and farmers markets. Making social media pages and growing a following can be an excellent way of finding customers.

Another way to sell your soaps is by finding stores that will allow you to sell your products inside their store. Many local shops do this and it can be a wonderful way to start your own following. Having attractive labels that look professional is important to ensuring that your soaps catch the eye.

Word of mouth is another way that you can sell soaps. This can be unreliable as you are relying on others to talk about your product. Word of mouth can work if others share your work and tag you on social media or give your card to others. This makes having business cards and attractive logos important to market yourself.

Social media is the easiest way to build a customer base. Posting on online marketing boards and building a following on various sites such as Facebook and Instagram can help grow your target audience. These sites also help you run advertising for relatively little money.

Having nice branding is important to marketing your product. Packaging is everything since it is the first thing people see. Soapboxes, wrapped in plastic, or naked are amazing ways to package your soap.

Design a nice label that matches your brand and ensure it contains everything needed to meet regulations. A catchy name can go a long way when marketing, especially if it is easy to remember.

Have Fun Making Soap!

This is a hobby that for many can turn into a lucrative side hustle. However, finding love in the diversity of the craft is key. Enjoy what you do and the rest should be an afterthought. Learning about different

Researching the various properties is important because some need to be added a certain way. Sugars heat up the lye solution and create a mess. Milk can also scorch if added without being frozen first.

Knowing how, when, and how much to add to your soap is important for creating a safe and effective product. While soap making as a job is fun, ensuring a safe product is important.

Have fun learning ways to make money with this hobby! 🍯

*NEW! Listen to this audio article online at <https://www.iamcountryside.com/soapmaking/starting-your-own-soap-making-business/>

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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Bear Country? It Bears Watching!

BY DR. STEPHENIE SLAHOR, PH.D.

THEY'RE INTERESTING. They're unlike other animals. They're wild. And they're dangerous. Bears can inflict serious injury or even cause a fatality. They bear watching.

But you're on a camping or hiking trip to enjoy yourself and the scenery around you. So, what's your strategy for the bears that you might see? The obvious precautions are to keep a safe distance from bears, be sure you can be heard coming along a trail (wear a bell, make noise, etc.), and be sure your camp is made as safe as possible from bears.

ON THE TRAIL

Seeing a bear will likely put your adrenaline on full alert. Watch the bear and try to stay upwind of it

without moving rapidly or losing sight of it. If it approaches you, slowly wave your arms or a jacket above you so you look bigger than you are. As a top predator, a bear knows it can take the leisure to be curious, so it may come closer to you, lay back its ears, or even rear

If a bear approaches, clap, talk, or sing aloud, and stand your ground, but get your deterrent ready.

up on its hind legs to get a fuller look or sniff. It may grunt, growl, or snap its jaws, but don't imitate any of its sounds. Also, don't holler a high-pitched exclamation, scream, or a whistle because, to a bear, those sounds resemble an animal

in distress — and easy to attack.

Hopefully, you are in a group or have already gathered close any children with you. There is some strength in unity so keep your group close together.

The bear may give up on that curiosity about you and move along. But if you judge that your best chance is to move or even retreat to give the bear more space or to get yourself away from being between a female and her cub, keep your movements slow and keep your arms or jacket waving

slowly above you. Move sideways. If your only choice is to back up, do so slowly, moving in the opposite direction that the bear is taking. Don't seek shelter in a tree because bears climb very well, too.

You may not have much

choice about the trails you’re using, but try to avoid narrow or curved places where you don’t have an escape route.

A bear might give up and wander off, but it might also become curious again and return. Watch it as it leaves, but stand still and keep quiet until you are sure it’s gone.

While you can spot a bear any time of day, they tend to be most active during the hours around dawn and dusk.

AT CAMP

Bears have an excellent sense of smell. They also have big appetites. Food scraps and garbage certainly attract them, but so might toiletries including soap, dish soap, shampoo, lip protection, sunscreen, deodorant, shaving cream/after shave and, of course, cologne. Food, snacks, toiletries, and beverages should not be stowed in your tent or backpack. There are unscented/odorless toiletries available online or in stores (especially health

food stores). Leave your perfume or scented toiletries at home.

For your meals, choose food that is easy to tote (compact and compressible), but that has little odor when being cooked or eaten. Rice, jerky, tortillas, pasta, dried fruit, and protein bars can be good choices. In camp, whatever you open, be sure to put the leftovers or waste into a food locker or canister that keeps smells locked away from animals. Be sure the locker or canister is well away from your tent and living area, perhaps even suspended between trees, out of reach of a bear. Cook at least 75 to 100 yards away from your tent and camp.

When cooking, keep the food in a small area and don’t turn your back on it. After eating, wash the dishes immediately. Any leftovers (food, coffee grounds, tea bags, wrappers, paper plates, etc.) should be disposed of immediately or locked away. After cooking and clean up, change your clothes.

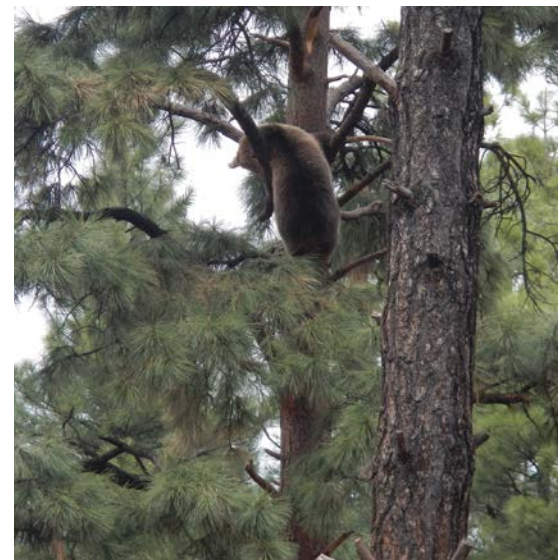
Cloth easily absorbs odors and bears will smell that. Stow your cooking clothes in a canister.

Keep the cooking grill/pit free of food scraps and maintain a fire or a lantern light through the night. If you have dogs on your hike, be sure their food gets the same precautions as your food — store it away from camp in a locker or canister. Keep your animals away from dense woods or other cover that could hide a bear until it’s too late to safeguard the animals.

Your tent and camp gear should be in neutral colors — not that fluorescent orange tent you like so much! You want to blend into the scenery, not easily mark out where you are.

DETERRENTS

If a bear approaches, clap, talk, or sing aloud, and stand your ground, but get your deterrent ready. A firearm is probably your best defense, so if you have one along, be sure it is on your person, not tucked away where you cannot reach it easily. (Before your trip, practice using the firearm.) Its report may be enough to get the bear away from you. But that same report might translate to “food” if the bear has learned that gunshots mean hunters, which



means animal carcasses. Keep the firearm handy at night, when you're in your tent. Be sure the firearm is a high enough caliber to kill a bear, if need be. The bullet(s) must penetrate the thick skull of the bear. Anything small caliber might just make the bear more aggressive.

If you, instead, choose to have bear spray along, keep it within easy reach, not inside your backpack or


hanging somewhere on your belt or in your tent where you cannot grab it quickly and smoothly. Practice (many times) retrieving the spray, activating it (removing the cap or safety), and using it. Generally, for maximum effectiveness, don't spray the deterrent until the bear is 20 or 30 feet away (and, yes, that is close). Aim downwind, if possible — you don't want it in your face!

Most sprays last nearly 10 seconds. For that reason, have along more than one can of bear spray.

IF ATTACKED

Your backpack may give some protection if you are confronted or struck by a bear. Hit the ground onto your stomach, go limp and lie as still as possible, placing your hands behind your head and neck. Spread your feet apart so you are not easy to turn over.

If you have to fight back, what's available for a weapon? A knife, rocks, binoculars, sticks, a backpack, or your own kicks? Fighting back is an option, but bears are powerful and a swipe of the paw could be serious.

Keep alert for bears, and definitely don't try to photograph or video what's happening! Focus on your own safety. 



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Ten Ways to SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

BY PATRICE LEWIS

IF YOU ASK A HUNDRED PEOPLE how to simplify their life, you're likely to receive a hundred different answers. But simple living is nothing more than the accumulation of making good choices. Ironically, simplifying isn't always easy; but it's always worthwhile.

Here are 10 ways making good choices can simplify your life. Some of these suggestions are relatively easy, some are unbelievably difficult, but all will contribute toward a simpler life.

1. Take control of your health.

The entire health industry — all the books and organizations and doctor's advice and medicines and everything else out there — that attempt to keep us healthy can largely be reduced to four major things:

1. Don't smoke
2. Keep to a healthy weight
3. Eat at least four portions of fruits and vegetables daily
4. Exercise regularly

That's it. Very simple. Doing these four magical things will reduce or solve the health problems of 90% of us. Studies have shown that people who do all these things live an average of 14 years longer than people who adopt none of these behaviors. Yet surveys have shown that only 3% of us do all four. And the nice thing is that these four major things are within our control. Not all health issues can be solved by adopting these four things, but it certainly can't hurt.

2. Control your debt.

Few things make us feel less in control of our lives than owing

too much money to too many institutions.

There are many recommended techniques for eradicating debt, including not acquiring it in the first place. Think carefully before taking out student loans or a hefty mortgage. Try living an all-cash lifestyle. Stop giving in to instant gratification.

Sometimes addressing debt means making unpleasant or unpopular decisions — living with roommates or selling an expensive home — but often these short-term sacrifices result in long-term benefits.

3. Avoid toxic people.

Whether its friendships gone sour, difficult coworkers, or (heaven forbid) an impossible marital situation, jettisoning toxic people goes a long way toward simplifying one's life.

There are various techniques (ranging from mild to extreme) to minimize contact with toxic people, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. But consider how avoiding toxic people might simplify your life, and take steps to make that a reality.

4. Declutter.

This is probably the most common advice on simplifying, with good reason. Let's face it, the vast majority of us simply have too many possessions. Do we own our stuff, or does our stuff own us?

Decluttering goes beyond just cleaning out one's closet or organizing the pantry. It can include selling unneeded or seldom-used big-ticket items (boat? second home? RV?) that take up both mental and physical space. Decluttering might permit us to downsize to a smaller and less expensive living space. If nothing else, decluttering possessions means less maintenance for things we don't use, and being less overwhelmed with stuff. Decluttering can be done in one massive purge, but it takes constant monitoring afterward to maintain. Try it and see if it doesn't simplify your life.

5. Discipline your kids.

The concept of discipline for children has become watered down in recent decades. As a result, many children run amuck, wreaking havoc in parents' lives.

The fact of the matter is that children need strict, loving, consistent discipline. They need to learn the parameters of acceptable behavior in our society. By teaching your children acceptable behavior — and yes, this includes discipline — your kids will be a source of pride, not stress.

6. Keep your personal relationships clean.

Don't cheat on your significant other; don't behave in toxic ways; don't pick

fights over silly things. Even if your home life is less-than-ideal (in which case other measures may be needed), your life will not be simplified by cheating on your significant other.

7. Limit media consumption.

Some people watch too much television. Others are glued to their smart phones for 18 hours a day. Others are news junkies. Yet others are addicted to video games to the point of excluding or alienating family members.

Too much media consumption doesn't just waste time, it clutters your mind. Whatever your vice, limiting media means not just having more time for the important things — spouse, kids, pets, home — but also it means less intrusion from a crazy world that we can't control. Put away your media device and spend time doing something less “connected” and more fulfilling.



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By being kind, you not only impact others in ways you may never know or appreciate, but it will impact your own life as well.

8. Learn to be content with less.

Here's a paraphrase of an ancient story from approximately 400 B.C.: The Greek philosopher Diogenes had a conversation with a fellow sage. This other man had won himself a comfortable position at court by toadying to the tyrant king. One day the sage observed Diogenes preparing a meager meal of lentils and said, "If you would only learn to compliment the king, you wouldn't have to live on lentils." Diogenes replied, "If you would learn to live on lentils, you wouldn't have to flatter the king."

There will always be something new, flashy, exciting, or ego-enhancing to strive for, but it's a never-ending chase. Instead, learn to live on lentils (so to speak) and be content with less.

9. Be kind.

Kindness is such an underrated trait that its power is often overlooked. Kindness to spouse, kindness to children, kindness to self, kindness to strangers ... the opportunities are limitless. As the saying goes, "You

can judge someone's character by how he treats those who can do nothing for him."

By being kind, you not only impact others in ways you may never know or appreciate, but it will impact your own life as well. Rather than losing your temper at the overworked waiter, you'll make both your day and his by understanding the pressure he's under and the grumpy customers he must serve. He'll feel better, and you'll feel better.

10. Assess your "complexifiers."

We all have something that causes stress in our life. Is it debt? An

abusive relationship? A long commute? An addiction? An unhealthy lifestyle?

Whatever the issue, your task is to identify what causes the most grief for you. Then seek help to mitigate whatever is "complexifying" your life and keeping you from a peaceful, happy existence.

They say life is only as complicated as you make it. This may sound like a cliché, but the key is to listen to your intuition and then act on it. Everyone's journey is different. Find what works for you.

Don't give up. A simple life is within almost everyone's grasp. ©

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 <http://www.patricelewis.com/> or blog <http://www.rural-revolution.com/>.

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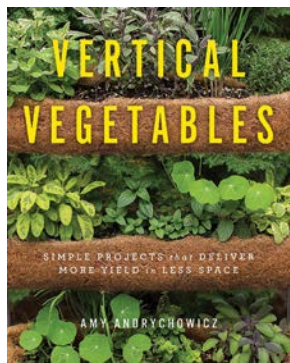
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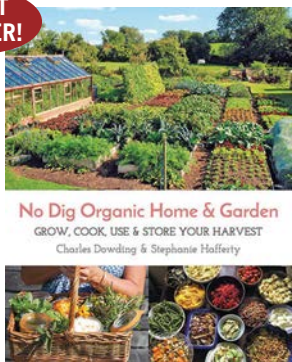


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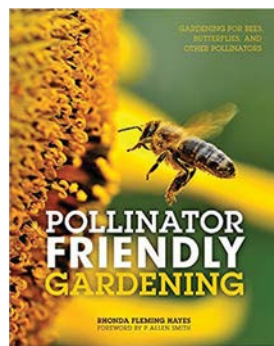
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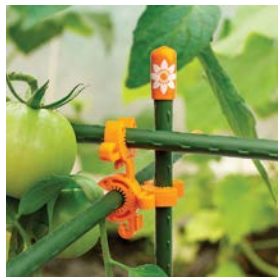
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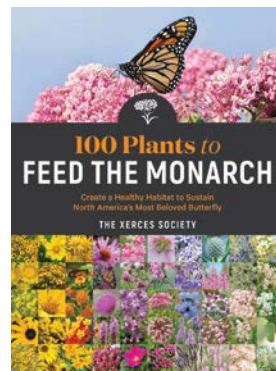


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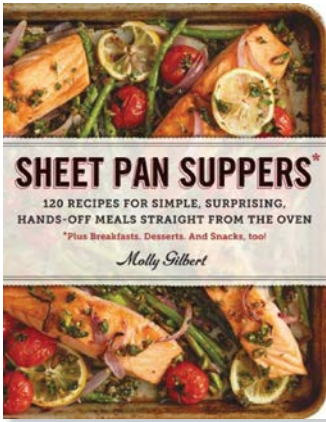
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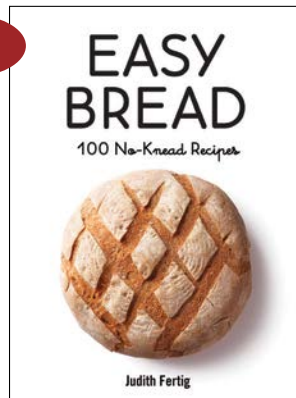
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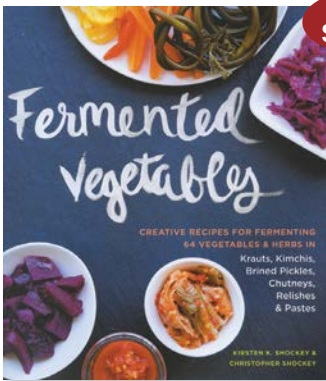
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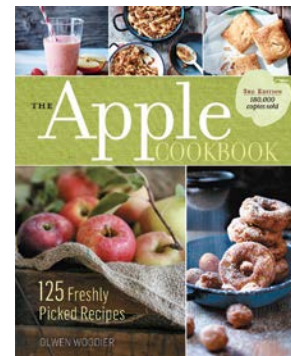
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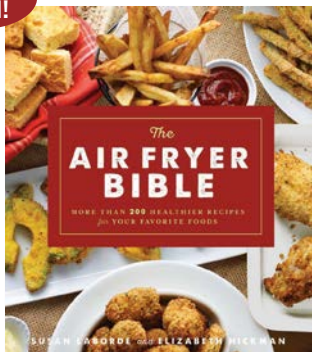
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The Air Fryer Bible cookbook shows you how to make the most of this hugely popular appliance to create more than 200 amazing dishes. These recipes will save you time, promote heart health, and can even help with weight loss. They're easy enough for a beginner, and your whole family will love them.

#10680 \$22.95 Member: \$21.95



NEW
ITEM!



2.1 LITER AIR FRYER

The 2.1 Liter Air Fryer is the perfect appliance for the at-home cook looking to make great tasting fried foods, but in smaller quantities. Get the same mouthwatering flavor of traditional fried foods, but without all the greasy oil. And thanks to the nonstick food basket, cleanup is a breeze! The convenient cooking guide eliminates the guesswork, while the powerful airflow quickly heats up the air fryer and provides fast cooking. Perfect for a variety of vegetables, chicken, steak, and fish.

#10638 \$49.99 Member: \$42.99

Mention Promo Code: MCSPAMZ1 SALES ENDS 06/09/22

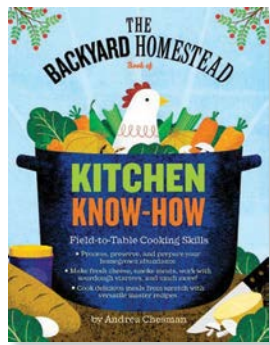


BEST SELLER!



MASON JARS SPRAYER CAP, REGULAR MOUTH
 Transform your regular mouth mason jars into reusable spray dispensers with this sprayer cap! It features a variable sprayer that goes from high output to mist. *Jar not included.*

#9703 \$8.99 Member: \$7.99



THE BACKYARD HOMESTEAD BOOK OF KITCHEN KNOW-HOW
 Growing vegetables and raising livestock is only the beginning of a successful homestead – that fresh food goes to waste unless you can properly prepare, cook, and preserve it. Covering everything from curing meats to canning fruits and vegetables, milling flour, baking no-knead breads, making braises and stews, rendering lard and tallow, pickling, making butter and cheese, blanching vegetables for the freezer, making jams and jellies, and more. You'll learn all the techniques you need to get the most from your harvest, along with dozens of simple and delicious recipes.

#7604 \$19.95 Member: \$16.96

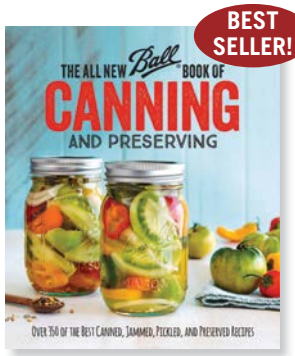


FREE SHIPPING!

7 1/2-INCH MEAT SLICER
 This 7½-inch Meat Slicer is small but mighty. With the powerful 200-watt motor, you can precisely slice deli meats, steaks, and everything in between. Featuring adjustable thickness settings, a stainless steel rotary blade, a smooth gliding carriage, and a countertop footprint of 14½ inches across and only 9 inches deep, the

slicer can easily be stored in any home kitchen! *Please allow two weeks for delivery. Available for shipment to continental U.S. addresses only.*

#9776 \$89.99
 Member: FREE SHIPPING



THE ALL NEW BALL BOOK OF CANNING AND PRESERVING
 Organized by technique, *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving* covers water bath and pressure canning, pickling, fermenting, freezing, dehydrating, and smoking. Straightforward instructions and step-by-step photos ensure success for beginners, while practiced home canners will find more advanced methods and inspiring ingredient twists.

#8030 \$24.99 Member: \$21.24



BUILD YOUR OWN BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT
 Beekeeping equipment is expensive, but it's easy to make your own! The step-by-step illustrated instructions in this book show you how to build everything you need, including hive bodies, supers, covers, hive stands, frames, swarm catchers, feeders, and more. You can choose among different hive styles, and many of the 35 projects can be made using hand tools.

#6730 \$19.95 Member: \$16.96

NEW ITEM!



Removes VIRUS

AQUABRICK WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM
 The AquaBrick Water Purification System purifies any source of non-salt water and makes it safe, clean, potable drinking water. The water filtration method safely purifies up to 700 gallons of the most contaminated water. Easily attach the tube and filter, spigot, and hand pump to the cap. Fill the container, as designated, with water. Insert the filter and straw down into container. Screw on the lid and squeeze the hand pump a few times to pressurize the container. Press the spigot and pour it into a glass or water bottle. It's really that simple!

#11133 \$184.99 Member: \$175.74

MOCKMILL 100 STONE GRAIN MILL
 Based on more than 40 years of experience developing stone grain and flour mills, the Mockmill 100 provides the ideal solution for anyone wanting to make delicious foods from freshly milled flour.

Free Shipping!
 #8909 \$310.00 Member: \$299.00



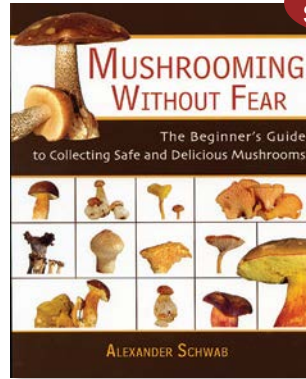
TO ORDER, CALL 970-392-4419 OR VISIT: Shop.IAmCountrySide.com



**MODERN HOMESTEADING:
REDISCOVERING THE AMERICAN DREAM**
In 2010, Cody and his Wranglerstar family decided to turn their backs on comfortable city life and become modern-day homesteaders. Their adventure starts in the rugged mountains of the Pacific Northwest. They are now popular pioneers in a growing movement of people seeking independence from debt, freedom to raise their family with values and faith, and the peace of a simpler, more meaningful approach to life.

#7776 \$19.99 Member: \$16.99

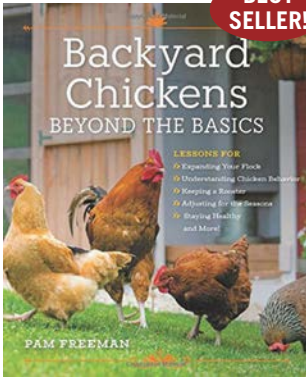
**BEST
SELLER!**



MUSHROOMING WITHOUT FEAR
Mushrooming Without Fear focuses only on the mushrooms that are both safe to eat and delicious. Each mushroom covered is identified with several color photographs and an identification checklist. Plus, there's also information on mushroom season, handling, storage, and cooking, complete with recipes.

#4722 \$14.95 Member: \$13.95

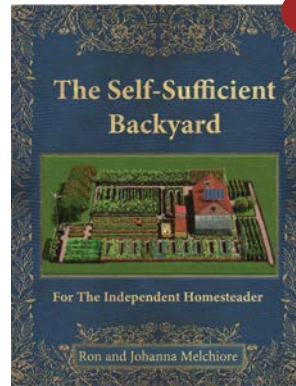
**BEST
SELLER!**



**BACKYARD CHICKENS:
BEYOND THE BASICS**
A must-have for every backyard chicken keeper, *Backyard Chickens Beyond the Basics* goes beyond introductory lessons and explores the realities of raising a flock for eggs — and entertainment, of course! From odd eggs and molting to feeding and preparing for the seasons, this book covers the subjects beginner books don't adequately address and re-examines common knowledge that may not actually hold true.

#8313 \$21.99 Member: \$18.69

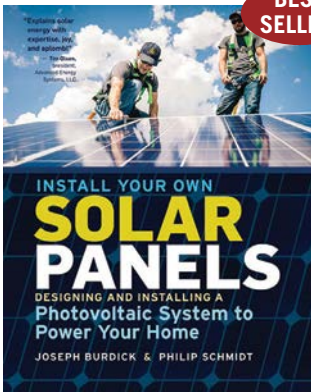
**NEW
ITEM!**



THE SELF-SUFFICIENT BACKYARD
From growing your own food year-round to generating electricity from solar and wind, *The Self-Sufficient Backyard* shares over 100 practical DIY projects for your land whether it's an acre or just a small backyard! This book is a must-have for anyone interested in going off-the grid or just saving and making some money on their own property.

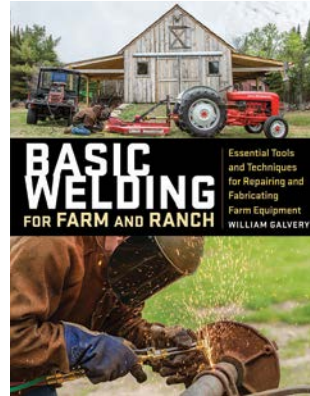
#10544 \$39.99 Member: \$36.99

**BEST
SELLER!**



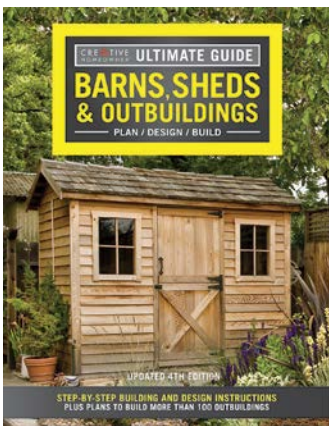
INSTALL YOUR OWN SOLAR PANELS
Through detailed directions and step-by-step photos, veteran solar installer Joseph Burdick and seasoned builder Philip Schmidt teach you how to determine the size, placement, and type of installation you'll need. This comprehensive DIY guide covers everything from assembling rooftop racking or building a ground-mount structure to setting up the electrical connections and making a battery bank for off-grid systems.

#8284 \$19.95 Member: \$16.96



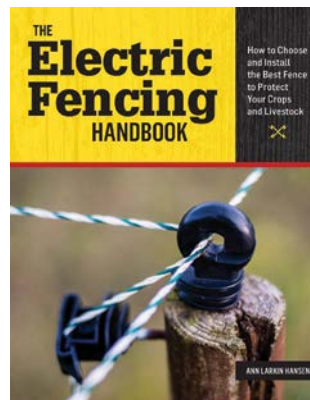
**BASIC WELDING FOR
FARM AND RANCH**
Your equipment is valuable, knowing how to repair and fabricate essential hardware will help make it last. Master the fundamentals of welding, brazing, and soldering so you can repair equipment both big and small, from a garden rake to a mower.

#9562 \$24.95 Member: \$21.21



BARN, SHED & OUTBUILDINGS
This guide contains step-by-step instructions for constructing and designing more than 100 barns, sheds, and other types of outbuildings in a variety of shapes and sizes. Providing an overview on safety, planning, tools, and materials, it also teaches readers everything they need to know about foundations, framing, roofing, wiring, and more.

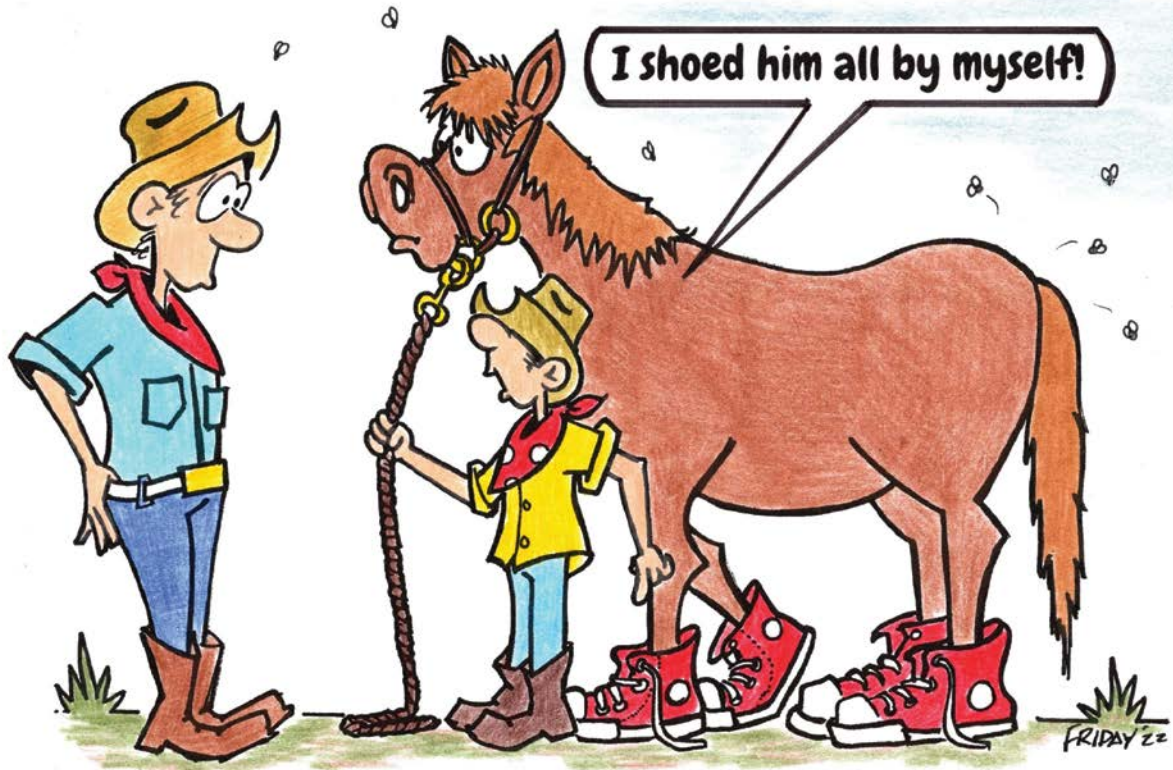
#9922 \$24.99 Member: \$22.99



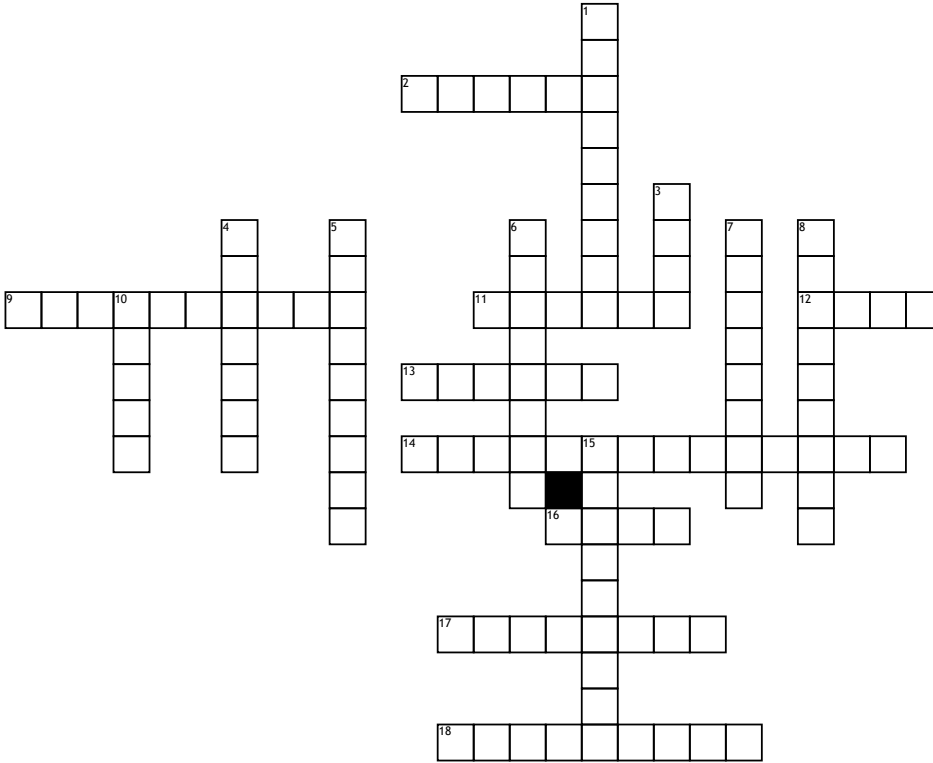
THE ELECTRIC FENCING HANDBOOK
Portable electric fencing is key to successful rotational grazing, while permanent electric fencing effectively protects gardens and orchards and secures large pastures. Through clear instructions accessible to everyone, this guide will show you when to use these methods or a combination of the two, plus how to plan for, build, and maintain your electric fencing.

#10634 \$14.95 Member: \$13.95

Mention Promo Code: MCSPAMZ1 SALES ENDS 06/09/22



MAY/JUNE READER CONTEST



ACROSS

- 2. Rheas and emus eat broad-leaf weeds, _____, and some grasses.
- 9. This is very beneficial to corn.
- 11. _____ beds work excellent for growing herbs.
- 12. _____ makes more sense to children when they learn it through cooking.
- 13. If a bear approaches you, slowly wave your arms or a _____ above you so you look bigger than you are.
- 14. This is one drawback of raising farm kids.
- 16. The cow's first _____ is crucial to the health and survival of the calf.
- 17. _____ is said to improve depression, relieve travel stress, reduce anxiety, and improve sleep.
- 18. Check each chick for _____ once you get them home.

DOWN

- 1. _____ are just one of many agritourism ideas.
- 3. The safer way of reseating a _____ is with a ratchet strap around the tire.
- 4. You can use a waffle iron, panini press, or _____ for making panini.
- 5. 4-H members learn a multitude of valuable skills including _____.
- 6. Being continually wet and dry can cause _____ in a horse hoof.
- 7. The _____ is a tall, large bird with a full breast, and deep body.
- 8. This is a common 4-H pig breed.
- 10. Avoiding _____ people is one way to simplify your life.
- 15. This is a common wild plant that causes skin irritations when touched.

Name: _____ Address: _____
 Email: _____ Phone: _____

The winner will be chosen randomly from all of the submissions returned by June 1, 2022. The winner of the January/February Reader Contest was David Wruck, Minnesota. Congratulations to you, David! Enjoy your new camp mug.



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

Print, fill out, and mail to:
 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

Poor Will's COUNTRYSIDE almanack

FOR LATE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER OF 2022

BY W. L. FELKER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Mother's Day on May 8 brings an increase in bedding plant and herb sales at your roadside stands. Cut flowers are also in demand.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">1</p>	<p>If you have lambs or kids, explore the halal meat market. Ramadan ends today, the best time to sell to this niche. And don't forget Cinco de Mayo!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>	<p>Poisonous flowers left over from April bloom can harm your sheep and goats: bleeding hearts, azaleas, daffodils, ragwort, rhododendrons, and wisteria.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p>	<p>After Mother's Day sales are over, get ready for the next opportunity for marketing bouquets and bedding plants: Memorial Day, May 30.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4</p>	<p>Pasture recipe: Mix sheep and cows; add a donkey for protection from coyotes; blend in chickens to eat the worm eggs of the parasites.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5</p>	<p>Plant fruit trees as a step toward self-sufficiency. Consider digging or expanding your fish pond before the Dog Days.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">6</p>	<p>Increase the water supply to your livestock as pastures dry out and feed contains less liquid. Plan ahead to supplement late fall grazing when quality of forage declines.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">7</p>
<p>Poison hemlock, one of the most dangerous wildflowers in low-lying areas, blossoms now.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">8</p>	<p>Bring your rabbits indoors to air conditioning or provide deep shade. Place plastic bottles filled with frozen water in their pens. Of course, provide liquid water, too!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">9</p>	<p>Excitement or stress caused by traffic or predators can increase feed requirements in your livestock and/or promote weight loss.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">10</p>	<p>Let sunlight into the barn and outbuildings when the weather is clear. Give your chicken coops a thorough spring cleaning, too!</p> <p style="text-align: right;">11</p>	<p>Think about selective breeding for the production of sheep and goat milk and cheese. Premium milk can sell for considerably more than cow milk.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">12</p>	<p>Morel season peaks in Appalachia but is just beginning at higher elevations in the West. Bass move to shallows. Termites swarm. Cabbage butterflies visit cabbage sets.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13</p>	<p>Use silage and hay supplements to take up the feeding slack if pasture plants have an unusually high water content.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14</p>
<p>The Strawberry Rains (a late-May rainy period) can increase the risk of internal parasites. Check stool for worms.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">15</p>	<p>When the clovers bloom, flea season intensifies for pets and livestock. Flea beetles come feeding in vegetable gardens, too.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">16</p>	<p>Consider self-sufficiency in easy things like garlic, wild black raspberries, horseradish, asparagus, chives, rosemary, thyme, and rhubarb.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">17</p>	<p>In Western states, begin shearing when the winter rains end. Treat your whole flock for ticks when you're done.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">18</p>	<p>Most pond fish spawn when the water temperature reaches 65 degrees F. Add tilapia or koi to increase options for sales.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">19</p>	<p>Potato leafhoppers, leaf miners, cucumber beetles, corn borers, mites, alfalfa weevils, and bean-leaf beetles reach economic levels on the farmstead.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">20</p>	<p>Gradually rising temperatures may have an effect on the amount of food your livestock (and children) need. Metabolic rate rises with the thermometer.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">21</p>
<p>Around the time that locust flowers fall, look for powdery mildew in wheat. Check straw bedding of your livestock. Keep it clean and dry.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">22</p>	<p>Cucumber beetles reach the economic threshold in the garden. Chinch bugs begin to hatch in lawns. Whiteflies attack azaleas.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">23</p>	<p>When you see cottonwood cotton in the wind, watch out for the first chiggers to bite in the woods and garden.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">24</p>	<p>Feeding fleece-sheep alfalfa pellets, rather than hay, typically results in cleaner wool.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">25</p>	<p>Finish clipping your goats' hair and feet for summer before June's first heat wave.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">26</p>	<p>Heat stress can slow weight gain in your livestock. Protection from weather and adding supplements may reduce weight loss.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">27</p>	<p>After flowering, prune forsythia, quince, mock orange, and lilac. Mulberry season is beginning and it typically lasts through early summer.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">28</p>
<p>Gather eggs frequently to reduce spoilage. Don't forget to refrigerate eggs. Keep your chickens' water fresh and cool.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">29</p>	<p>Plan to plant the last of hot-weather vegetables (tomatoes, squash, eggplant, peppers). Don't forget pumpkins for Halloween.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">30</p>	<p>If you're getting a pig, consider digging a shallow pond for it to cool off. Increase availability of loose salt to animals as heat increases.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">31</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 4em; color: #4682B4;">May</h1>			

The heaven is now broad and open to the earth in these longest days. The world can never be more beautiful than now.

Henry David Thoreau

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>June</h1>			Check for foot rot in your livestock, especially if it has been rainy and the pastures and runs are muddy. 1	Don't let rams and bucks get overheated (which can affect sperm count) when temps rise into the 80s and 90s. Be sure shade is available. 2	Be alert for sunburn in recently shorn sheep. Goats get sunburn, too. Don't let your newly shorn Angora rabbits be in the sun. 3	Exceptionally high temps may inhibit your bees' ability to make honey. Heat can also contribute to temporary sterility in male livestock. 4
Every-three-week pasture rotation could be effective in eliminating worms early in summer. 5	The second week of June often brings a heat wave. Extra attention to a clean barn and yard will pay off in fewer flies. 6	Consider keeping bees for honey, a supplement associated with fertility in livestock and people. 7	Plan ahead to supplement fall and winter grazing when quality/ quantity of forage declines. Sell chicken, lamb, and chevon for Father's Day cookouts. 8	If the ventilation system in your outbuildings is inadequate, add a fan. It will give you improved air quality control throughout the year. 9	Mix medicinal herb seeds when you are seeding the pasture. Some favorites are borage, chicory, horehound, marjoram, rosemary, sage, tansy, and yarrow. 10	To help control insects, plant or purchase flowers to increase the bird population. Flowers are also great in your roadside stand! 11
When you shear, worm, or clip hooves, keep animals together. If one's alone in a pen, it can be hard to catch, may panic, and get hurt. 12	Consider growing dill (to increase milk yields), fennel (for fevers, constipation, eye ailments), anise (for digestive ailments). 13	Today's Supermoon is likely to bring storms and chilly weather. Be ready for skittish animals and crabby relatives. 14	Adolescent coyotes are out hunting now. Check fences, have guard animals in place, and install bright night lighting. 15	Continue to check lambs for constipation. Castor oil and milk of magnesia are old standby remedies. 16	Pasture rotation, regular testing, are among the very best ways to fight worms in livestock. 17	Placing raspberries along your hedgerows offers a simple way to offer healthful browsing material for your livestock. 18
The high noon of the year has arrived, marked by the opening of goose molting season and the commencement of corn borer season. 19	When elderberry flowers turn to fruit, dig garlic before the heads break apart. Clear and reseed the early spring garden area. 20	Many people now plant turnips and beets for fall harvest and grazing. 21	Don't let your pig get too warm. Hose him/her down to head off heat exhaustion. 22	Heat can contribute to split hooves in your horses. Check their feet regularly and be sure a salt block is available. 23	If your animals have been out in the sun for a long period of time, are starting to pant, and are unsteady on their feet, they could have sunstroke. 24	When yucca plants flower, plant the vegetable garden for August and September harvests. 25
See if you can combine forces with other homesteaders in order to buy larger quantities of hay at lower prices. 26	Plants in your garden pond can provide sales as well as beauty. However, be sure to protect them from your hungry fish. 27	Timely clipping, shearing, and dipping can help keep your animals from blowfly eggs as well as ticks, lice, and scab mites. 28	The final weather system of June is often followed by the Corn Tassel Rains. 29	Consider trimming the hooves of your pigs. Untrimmed feet can breed infections. 30		

THE SUN The Sun enters Gemini on May 20, reaching about 85% of its solstice declination, at which point sunrise and sunset are only about a quarter of an hour each from their earliest and latest times.

Solstice occurs on June 21 at 4:14 a.m. The Sun enters Cancer at the same time. The Sun holds steady at its highest noontime height above the horizon (a declination of +23.26) for four days, June 19-23, after which it descends gradually throughout the rest of June and well into July, staying at least at 85% of its solstice height (and with similar sunrise and sunset times) until around July 22.

The Sun's apparent descent toward autumn picks up speed in late July, and the night starts to lengthen at twice and then three times the rate than it did during midsummer. The transformation of the fields, gardens, and woodlands accelerates, as well. And then everything seems to fall apart.

THE PLANETS Saturn in Capricorn is the earliest of the major planets to rise from the east, followed by

Mars in Aquarius. Then, together in Pisces (and later in Aries), Venus and Jupiter emerge to dominate the pre-dawn sky (Venus always the brighter of the two) as Saturn and Mars disappear into the sunlight.

THE STARS Orion is the easy gauge of winter, rising with the Milky Way on November evenings, filling the southern sky throughout the night all winter, finally disappearing late in April. As Orion waxes, all of the pieces of summer recede; as that constellation wanes, each piece returns.

The Summer Triangle is the stellar gauge of summer. It is a parallel marker to Orion that clocks the unfolding of the leaves and flowers. Accompanied by the opposite end of the Milky Way, it appears on the evenings of May. Its triple constellations, Lyra, Cygnus, and Aquila, contain three prominent capstone stars, Vega, Deneb, and Altair, which form a giant triangle.

When all these stars come up after dark, the canopy of leaves is complete all along the 40th Parallel. Mock orange, peony, and iris blossom in the gardens, morning birdsong swells, strawberries ripen, sweet clover is open by the roadsides, and goslings enter adolescence.

When Vega, Deneb and Altair are positioned overhead at midnight, then the birds are quiet, ragweed pollen is in the air, blackberries are sweet, hickory nuts and black

walnuts are falling, katydids, cicadas, and late crickets are singing, rose of Sharon colors the garden.

When leaves are turning throughout the nation and the last wildflowers have completed their cycles, then Lyra, Cygnus, and Aquila set in the west after sundown, leading the Milky Way through Cassiopeia and Perseus, dividing the heavens into equal halves, for an instant holding in balance summer and winter, linking the Summer Triangle with Orion rising again in the east.

THE SHOOTING STARS The Eta Aquarid meteor shower began in the third week of April and runs through May 28. Its peak will be on the night of May 6-7, when you may be able to see up to 30 shooting stars in an hour low in the eastern sky after midnight. The Moon should not interfere with your viewing.

THE MAY WEATHER OUTLOOK The cold fronts of late spring and early summer usually cross the Mississippi on or about May 2, 7, 12, 15, 21, 24, and 29, and June 2, 6, 10, 15, 23, and 29.

The last days of May and the first week of June are often soaked by the Strawberry Rains, and climate change is expected to increase the chances of precipitation.

A Near-Supermoon on May 15-17 will bring frost to the northern tier of states and threaten the country to the 40th Parallel. The new moon on May 30 is likely to spread frost across the northern states. It could also trigger showers to delay late planting, and lunar perigee with the Supermoon of June 14 and the June 15 cool front are most likely to cause storms with hail and heavy rain. It is also likely that this Supermoon could contribute to the formation of a very early tropical disturbance in the Atlantic. The new moon of June 28 will chill the last days of the month and contribute to conditions which also could encourage hurricane formation.

Lunar lore suggests that the moon's weakest position as it enters its second and fourth quarters (May 8, 22, June 7, 20) are the best days for herd and flock foot care, for worming, disbudding, clipping wattles, castrating, spraying for external parasites, giving vaccinations, and for taking your animals to the vet or to the fair.

PEAK ACTIVITY TIMES FOR CREATURES

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. Fish and game 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	BEST	SECOND-BEST
May 1 - 7	Afternoons	Midnight to Dawn
May 8 - 14	Evenings	Mornings
May 15 - 21	Midnight to Dawn	Afternoons
May 22 - 31	Mornings	Evenings
June 1 - 6	Afternoons	Midnight to Dawn
June 7 - 13	Evenings	Mornings
June 14 - 19	Midnight to Dawn	Afternoons
June 20 - 27	Mornings	Evenings
June 28 - 30	Afternoons	Midnight to Dawn

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

May 2, 2022: Eid 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.

May 5, 2022: Cinco de Mayo: Mexican holiday commemorating the defeat of the French by Mexican forces at the battle of Puebla in 1862. Suckling lambs and kids are in demand for cabrito.

May 8, 2022: Mother's Day: The best sale period for bedding plants and vegetable flats begins this week.

May 30, 2022: Memorial Day: Continue to market flowers throughout the month.

June 19, 2022: Father's Day

PHASES OF THE WARBLER MIGRATION, THE HUMMINGBIRD MOON, AND THE FLEDGLING MOON

Late spring brings the great warbler migration throughout much of the nation, and almost simultaneously, hummingbirds arrive to explore the new blossoms. Not long after the hummingbirds are settled in, fledglings are pestering their parents for insects. When all that occurs, then box turtles are laying eggs, fireflies mate in the night, and daylilies flower in the waysides.

May 5: Lunar Apogee (the Moon is farthest from Earth): 8:00 a.m.

May 8: The Warbler Migration Moon enters its second quarter: 7:21 p.m.

May 15: Full Moon: 11:14 p.m. Near-Supermoon (Full moon and lunar perigee very close together). TOTAL ECLIPSE at moonrise.

May 17: Lunar perigee (when the Moon is closest to Earth): 10:00 a.m.

May 22: The Moon enters its last quarter: 1:43 p.m.

May 30: The Hummingbird Moon is new at 6:30 a.m.

June 1: Lunar Apogee (the Moon farthest from Earth): 8:00 p.m.

June 7: The Moon enters its second Quarter: 9:48 a.m.

June 14: Full moon: 6:52 a.m. and lunar perigee (when the Moon is closest to Earth) at 6:00 p.m. This is a Supermoon (full moon plus perigee).

June 20: The Moon enters its last quarter at 10:11 p.m.

June 28: The Fledgling Moon is new at 9:52 p.m.

June 29: Lunar Apogee (the Moon farthest from Earth): 1:00 a.m.

THE SCKRAMBLER MAY/JUNE

Perennial vegetables and fruits can be the backbone of a successful homestead. Add them one by one to your land.

PASARASUG	PESGRA
MARPS	MELASUREJ
PSARRRREBSEI	TRAICHEKOREAP
BBARRHU	BLBRRSUEEIE
PALEP	BLUMSEIIRR
WTRCRSSAEE	RSRNTUAC
HSIDARERSROH	SRRBKCLBAEIE
CLRGIA	TRAWSSERRIEB
ECAHP	IHCSEV
RORSLE	OAOMBB

The 5th, 9th, 26th, and 34th correct answers will earn five dollars! Send your answers to:

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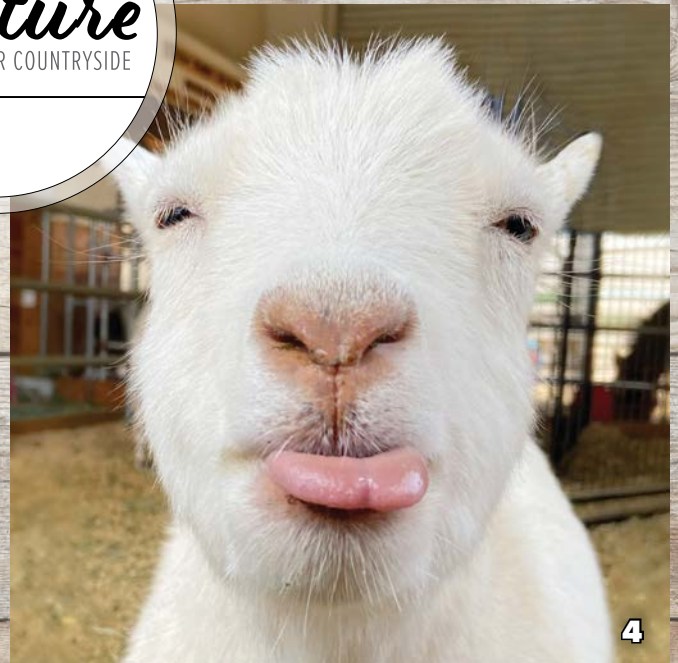
There should be no typos in this puzzle, and no typo prize will be awarded. If you happen to find a typo, however, you may simply skip that word without penalty.

WINNERS & ANSWERS OF THE JAN/FEB SCKRAMBLER

Poor Will promised a prize of five dollars to the 3rd, 7th, 24th and 40th persons who unscrambled the Sckrambler words before the answers appeared in Countryside. The 3rd solution was submitted Ralph Beabout, Robinson, IL. The 7th solution belonged to Richard Henry of Mountainburg, AR. The 24th was Jere Kleinbach, Fort Bragg, CA., and the 40th was Shirley Weirick of Loudonville, OH.

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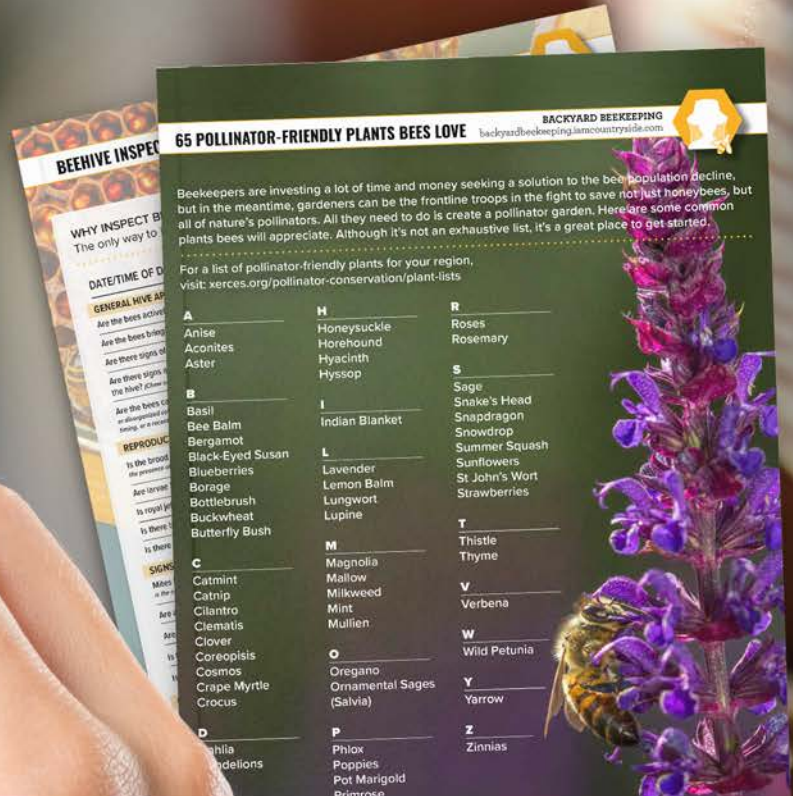


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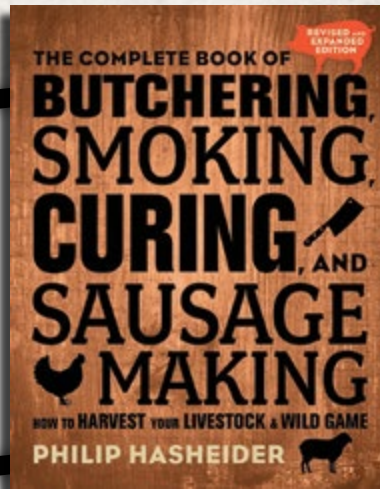
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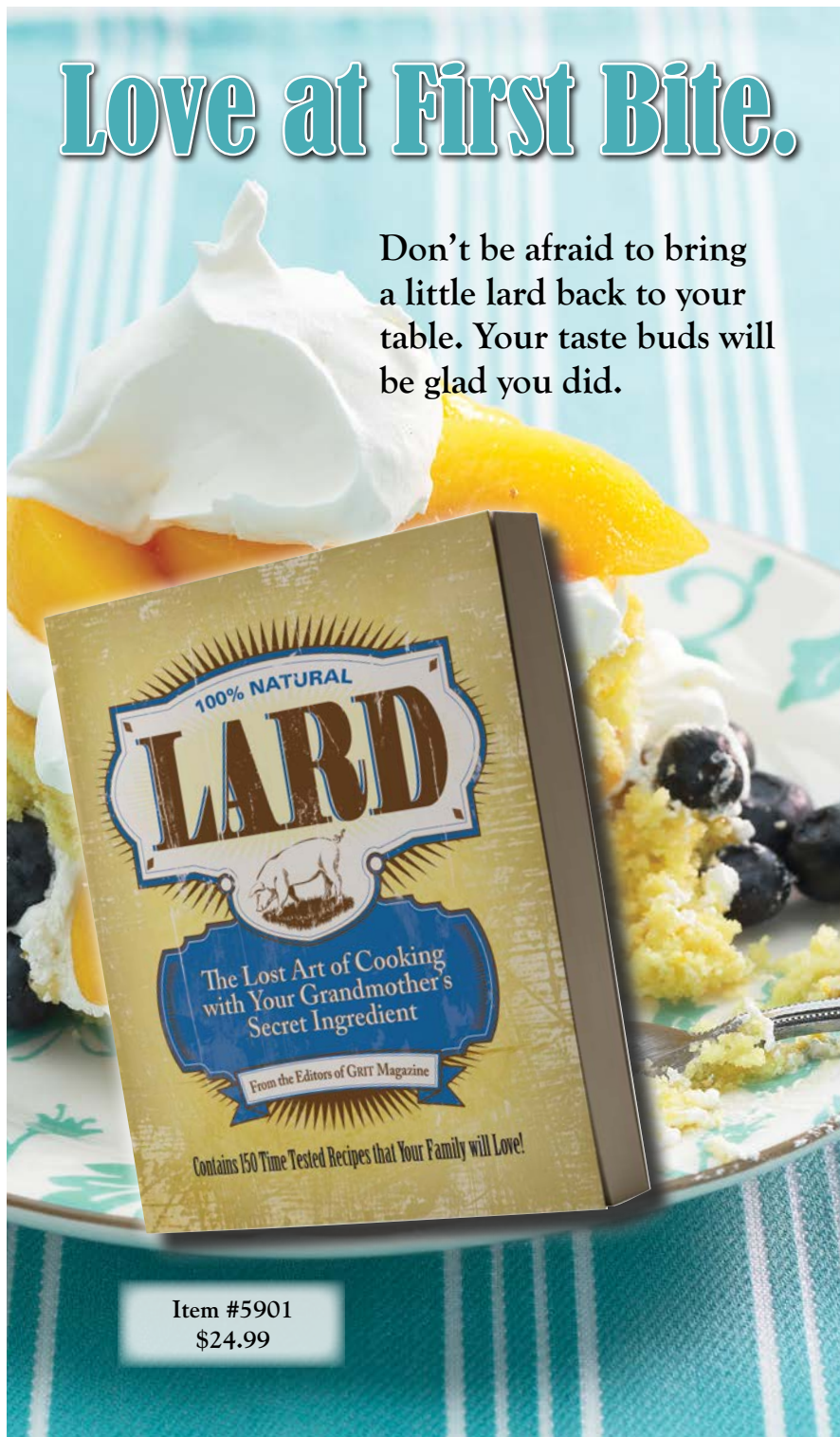
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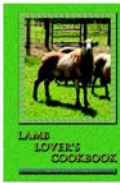
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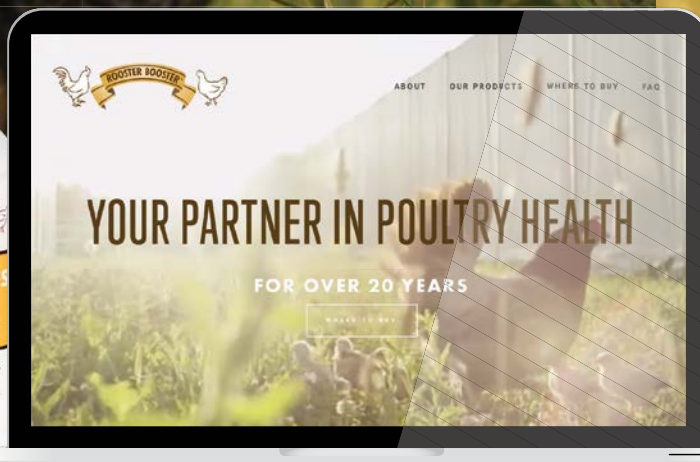
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