

The Self-Sufficiency

Shoppe Newsletter



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Environmental Melt-down

It's now left to the might of 'people power'
and individual action

As the world's environmental problems continue to grow and millions of dollars spent on environmental conferences and the like trying to solve the problem - in reality little has changed to address the planet's environmental issues. The environment continues to degenerate, wild-life species fade into extinction and more humans move into unsustainable life-styles that drains heavily the remaining planet resources. Although much is being done by aware and concerned people all over the planet - not at the same speed and rate of planetary degeneration. Typical of governments and leaders who politicise and theorise (and procrastinate) much is said (and promised) but just as much remains undone or avoided. They function on a level dominated by self-motivated priorities and old world thinking. Little will be resolved and most definitely if we relied fully on the current world leadership nothing would get done. The bottom line is that when it comes to the environment and sustainability (for humanity into the future) nothing else really matters - for without a planet or a liveable human environment, life (as we know it), would cease to exist. For planetary healing to take place putting egos aside and working harmoniously together (as members of planet earth) are essential. There's little chance of that while political divisionary dominates the planet. So what can we do?

People Power versus Political Power

Never under-estimate the influence of group pressure! It has changed many things during the course of world history. Groups of like-minded people rallying to support a cause have been known to change the entire focus of governments and world leaders. The need for 'votes' and public support in politics can change politicians minds in an instant! Amazing. Supporting a cause close to our hearts linked to the environment - whether it be people, animal, plant or earth is both fulfilling and gratifying. Groups and organisations now abound doing their bit to rectify environmental problems of the planet. As one individual it may seem minor but the combined effort of many such groups has a huge impact on planetary change and progress. From adding our names to a petition, giving financial support, to attending meetings, rallies or events or spreading the word by informing family and friends to enlist their support - all are small but significant along the path to changing the course of planetary history. Every little bit counts - both personally, socially and universally.



Individual action is the way to change

Never under-estimate the power of individual action. Where the actions of one person may seem of little worth the combined efforts of many is huge. Consider the power of money and consumerism - the retail industry is powerfully influenced by the demands of the consumer and will willingly change its ways if it increased sales and customer appeal! If, for example, customers demanded more locally produced products and gave preference to businesses that offered such items it would not take long before the retail giants followed suit. Hail the mighty dollar!

In the home just a few simple household changes can greatly aid the environment and lessen the impact on planetary resources. Most household options bandied around for helping the environment involve a huge financial outlay (i.e. installing solar panels) which for many households is way out of their budget. Many require extra funds that are just not available. Immediate survival: schooling and feeding the children, the daily 'essentials', etc. are far more important than 'the plight of the planet' – and that's completely understandable. Some people may, therefore, feel financial constraints limit their contribution to environmental responsibility.

But there are many, many small changes householders can make to ease financial pressure while at the same time contribute to planetary responsibility. Here's some examples: One bar of soap can be transformed into 20 litres of soap jelly – a replacement for all detergent based cleaning products. Vinegar is a safe versatile alternative to numerous household items – disinfecting, deodoriser, cleaning, personal deodorant, skin cleanser – and more. Bi-carb soda – has innumerable uses – it's safe and cheap. Oatmeal is a safe, natural skin cleanser – it's both cheap and natural and very effective. I've covered all of these topics in past Shoppe Newsletters (download from website) and publications (see page 6) - you'll find them very useful resources.



On a Personal Level

Like most people my finances are limited so monetary contribution to causes close to my heart are not as much as I would like. However I have still managed to support, in other ways, areas that appeal to me personally and that could benefit from my skills/knowledge - ensuring that I enjoy what I do and, therefore, continue my involvement. Not only do I utilise practical alternatives in my home any way I can - through The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe I promote the

same use of alternatives to other people (willing to listen!). I also support other causes. The greatest satisfaction for me has been working with animals. I'm an absolute animal lover and consider one of humanity's prime responsibilities whilst on this planet to take responsibility and care for all levels below, including animals. Over many years I have financially covered the cost of caring for, desexing and re-homing numerous stray cats that have come into my care (to help stop the incessant breeding of strays) and taken others that are poorly or ill to the RSPCA. I also support many community organisations that care for animals in one way or another. I realise I cannot alleviate the neglect, pain and suffering of all animals, but at least my small contribution is a step toward that goal. Also in line with the welfare of animals I buy food that respects the rights of animals and support my local vegetarian group via not only membership, but helping with newsletter editing, catering and other activities.

I also very much enjoy gardening and tending the earth. I maintain a large backyard with an abundance of home-grown produce which I share with friends and sell by barter at my local LETS market. In line with this I also co-ordinate my local LETS group for bartering goods and services, recycling and general community support. Along the gardening theme I grow trees for 'Trees for Life' - I enjoy the task of motherly nurturing seeds into young seedlings and have been known - when too busy to attend to them during the day - to be outside at night with head-lamp on tending to my garden and Trees for Life seedlings!

These are examples of my personal contribution to a better planet and community. All are activities I greatly enjoy making fulfilling and rewarding.

Pam



Making Soap

I am often asked about 'soap'. One of my most popular workshops is soap-making. During the workshop people are surprised at how easy soap is to make (using just three basic ingredients: animal or vegetable fat/lard, caustic soda - the essential cleaning ingredient in soap - and water). That's it! Other ingredients may then be added to

create specific types of soap: oatmeal, disinfectant, honey, coloured and perfumed soaps, etc.

I'm also often asked about the use of 'lye water' in soap - lye water is an American term referring to caustic soda mixed with water. It is not available in Australia - we have available instead dry powder caustic soda (most commonly available from hardware stores and some supermarkets). It is, therefore, important to find soap recipes that are Australian based - most recipes on the internet are of American origin.

Interestingly what started me on this journey of writing about self-sufficiency, making things from the basics and old time skills is watching my grandmother make soap on the family farm. She would use wood ash (from an outdoor fire), water and sheep lard (which she rendered down from the sheep carcass). The soap would be made outdoors in an old kerosene tin over an open fire. Being very experienced at making soap this way she would boil it for some time until it reached just the right consistency to set (when cold) to form hard bars of soap (that lasted much longer than the commercial counterpart!).

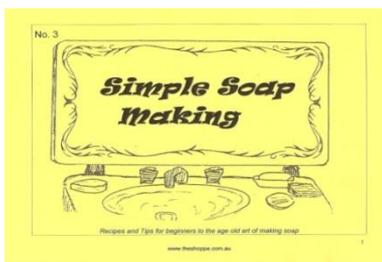
Caustic Soda in Soap

The other point about making soap is that many people are concerned about the 'caustic' component of soap – however for soap to 'clean' it needs to contain some type of cleaning agent – caustic soda being the most appropriate. Only about 2-3% of the soap is caustic soda – once it is diluted with the other ingredients its potency is no longer an issue. If using caustic soda concerns you then soap can be made from a grated soap base using commercial soap (bars or scraps) - that way the process of handling caustic soda is avoided.

Soap v. Detergents.

The other thing about soap is that - even though it contains caustic soda - it is more environmentally friendly than detergents. Soap breaks down readily in the environment because it does not contain harsh or alien chemicals (like detergents). It is, therefore, wise to use soap whenever possible in place of detergents. One bar of soap will suffice as a simple alternative to a range of detergent based commercial products - laundry powder, dish detergent, hair shampoo, body washes, shower gels, etc. The whole issue about the consumerism (and commercialism) is that the more products available to the customer the more money made - as a result there is now a separate cleaning product on offer for a myriad of cleaning jobs - whereas in grandma's day she did everything with just a simple bar of soap. The power of advertising!

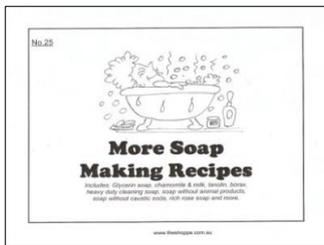
More information:



e-Booklet download **No. 3 'Simple Soap-Making'**

Using just 3 ingredients: lard, caustic soda and water, soap is surprisingly easy to make. This simple method for making soap is similar to Grandma's approach to soap-making. Instructions are step-by-step covering moulds, possible problems, maturation, colouring, scenting, utensils, precautions, history of soap. Information includes variations to basic recipe for: almond oil soap, oatmeal, honey, herbal,

scented, cucumber, sand-soap, antiseptic soap. **17 pages \$12.00** (download info - see page 6)



e-Booklet **No. 25 'More Soap-Making Recipes'**

Follow-on booklet from No. 3 - Simple Soap-Making - containing more recipes and ideas for making soap. Covers: glycerin soap, chamomile & milk, lanolin, borax, heavy duty cleaning soap, soap without animal products, soap options without caustic soda, rich rose soap and more. **23 pages \$12.00** (download info - see page 6)

For information about make soap-based products from grated soap:



e-Booklet **No. 50 'Recycling Soap'**

Transforming a simple bar of soap into a array of safe, environmentally friendly products - either in the form of grated soap or soap jelly. Contains recipes for: rose liquid hand soap, lemon dish-washing soap, rosemary & lavender hair shampoo, soap-based garden spray, wash-balls, heavy-duty cleansing powder, soap-bags, old English wash-balls, 'gourmet soaps' (pet soap, honey soap, etc.), beeswax polish (containing soap) and other interesting uses. You'll be amazed at the things that can be done with a simple bar of soap - including making putty, poultices and as a drawer (runner) liner. **26 pages \$12.00** (download from www.theshoppe.com.au - see page 6)



Soap-Making Booklet Set

Contains: No. 3 - Simple Soap-Making, No. 25 -More Soap-Making Recipes, No. 50 - Recycling Soap and No. 47 - Making the Most of your Soap-Saver. **Price: \$33.00** (download from www.theshoppe.com.au - see page 6)

Specific information, recipes and steps for making soap (from basic soap to grated soap products) the best source is the Soap Making Workshop at Home format:



Soap Making Workshop@Home

Making plain soap simply and quickly. Easy to follow basic recipe with numerous variations. Transforming a bar of soap into a range of alternative soap-based products (detergent alternatives). All safe & environmentally friendly. **Recipes and procedures for making:** Basic soap (like Grandma used to make) with 10 variations, Soap bag, English wash balls, Soap Crayons (for the children), Pressed Soap Shapes, Herbal wash-balls, Rose Liquid Hand Soap **For this workshop you will need:** cooking lard or fat (from the supermarket), olive oil, caustic soda, washing soda (or bicarb soda), bar of soap (or left-over soap scraps), recycled containers, oatmeal. **Price: \$25.00** To order/download - see page 6



Recipe: **Grated Soap Wash-balls**

Mix together in a bowl: 2 tablespoons grated soap, 1 teaspoon oatmeal and 1/2 teaspoon dried herbs/pot pourri or spice powder and 1/2 to 1 teaspoon cold water. Using fingers blend the mixture well – you may need to add more water or dry ingredients to achieve the right consistency. Roll dessertspoonfuls of the mixture into small balls (Or press into biscuit cutters). Place on tray and leave one week to dry.



Parsley, Parsley, Parsley!

I have an abundance of parsley in my garden at present - both types: curl and flat leaf. Being mostly used as a garnish or flavouring for dishes it's a difficult to fully utilize all that the garden produces. I'm not one to waste anything so I've been busily making parsley-based recipes which you might, also, find useful.....



Tabbouli - Cracked Wheat Salad

If an abundance or over-supply of parsley in the garden is a problem it can be used to make 'tabbouli' salad (a Greek-Lebanese dish incorporating cracked wheat and lots of freshly chopped parsley).

Soak 1/2 cup **crushed wheat** (burghul - available from most supermarkets and specialty food shops) in warm water for 30 mins. Drain well - squeezing to remove as much moisture as possible. Place

in bowl - add 4 **spring onions** (chopped), 2 chopped **tomatoes**, chopped **mint** (optional) and a bunch of **freshly chopped parsley**. Add juice of a **lemon**, 1/4 cup **olive oil**, **salt**, **pepper** to taste.

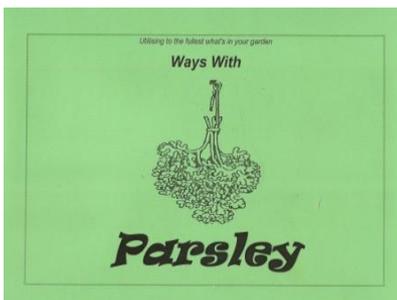


Parsley Potato Soup

Wash a **large bunch of parsley**. Remove stalks and chop roughly. Place in saucepan with **500g peeled potatoes**, one chopped **onion**, 2 litres **water and salt**. Simmer 45 minutes. Puree in a blender. Return to saucepan and reheat or serve chilled. A dollop of cream or yoghurt and chopped parsley on top will enhance its serving appeal.

Other ideas:

- Parsley pesto (use parsley in place of basil)
- Parsley mashed potatoes (add chopped parsley to hot mashed potatoes)
- Parsley dumpling (to accompany stews, soups, curries, etc.)
- Parsley white sauce
- Add chopped parsley to fritters, scones or damper
- Prolonged storage: Cut sprigs of parsley into a jar or plastic container, add a tablespoon or two of water, seal and store in the fridge for up to 4 weeks (or longer)
- Freeze chopped parsley in ice-cubes for flavouring cooked dishes (stews and soups) Drying parsley is another way to preserve parsley for the months ahead (when not so abundant)
- Parsley is wonderfully healing for the skin - apply a parsley face astringent by splashing cool parsley infusion directly to the face (leave to dry on the face for best results). (Make a parsley infusion by steeping a handful of freshly chopped parsley in 500mls hot water).



More ideas in e-Booklet download:

Ways With – Parsley - Past cultures believed that 'chewing parsley kept the devil at bay!' But of course there are many other uses for parsley - including: therapeutic (urinary, iron deficiency), breath freshener, hair rinse, skin-care, general tonic, growing parsley as well as culinary - over 40 recipes. Includes instructions for making parsley seed tea. **26 pages Price \$12.00**

(download from www.theshoppe.com.au - see page 6)

For more information about topics mentioned in this newsletter:

'The Shoppe' Publication Downloads

90 booklet titles available for download in readable e-book format

Green cleaning, Natural skin care, environmental and frugal living, chemical free, recycling, old time kitchen skills. Numbered 1 to 80 for easy reference.

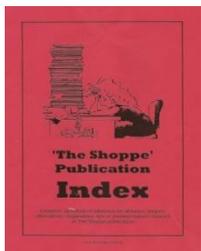
Price: \$12.00/\$8.00

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There are 3 ways to purchase publications:

Method 1. From the website:

All information is available for **immediate download**. This is the quickest way to access information.

1. Go to www.theshoppe.com.au
2. Click on 'Shoppe Publications' or 'Workshop@Home'
3. Scroll down to find your chosen title
4. Click 'ADD TO CART'
5. Click 'Continue shopping with The Shoppe' to order more booklets or
6. Follow the prompts: 'Proceed to Check-out' to pay. (You do not need to have a Paypal account to order via this method. You can pay by debit or credit card, Mastercard, Visa, American Express or Paypal)
7. When payment has been processed your Booklet or Workshop@Home format will appear immediately for download in PDF (Acrobat) format on the screen.
8. Save to your computer for printing (full booklet or just relevant recipe pages) or use ebook reader.

Method 2. Internet Banking or Direct Payment:

Electronic funds transfer into The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe account. Booklets can then be emailed or posted* to you. Email: pam@theshoppe.com.au for The Shoppe's bank account details for payment transfer. *Please add \$3 to the price of each booklet to cover printing and postage costs.

Method 3. By Mail

Send cheque/money order to The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe - P.O. Box 390, Park Holme, 5043 (add \$3 per booklet for printing & postage). Your booklets will be downloaded and printed for you and sent to your address. Please add \$3 per booklet for postage and printing costs.

If you have any problems or queries contact: pam@theshoppe.com.au - ph: (08) 8374 2531

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