

The Self-Sufficiency

Shoppe Newsletter

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'Mother Nature Knows Best'

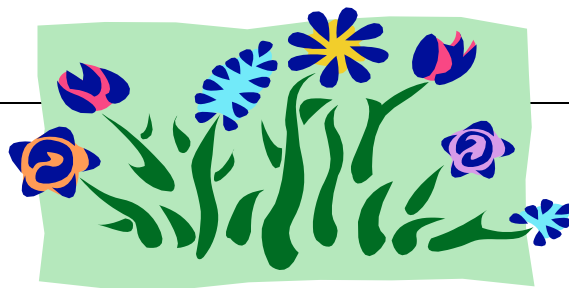
Over-exposure to Chemicals versus the Simplicity of Earth

Much has been said of late about the food we eat and that fresh, unprocessed foods are much better for our health than processed foods. This simple philosophy applies not only to food we consume but to everything else in our daily life: cleaners, cosmetics, personal care products, general household items and more. In a recent newspaper article about the 'over-cleanliness' of our society a leading environmental scientist pointed out that: *"Since WWII we have unleashed tens of thousands of chemicals into the environment. By the time we leave for work in the morning you have probably already exposed yourself to well over 200 chemicals."*

So how do we use less chemicals in our day-to-day activities? Although it is difficult in our work environment to lessen chemical contact. The home environment its a very different story. We have more control and can decide what to use and when. How? Many common garden plants have hidden properties and can he used to replace consumer chemically-laced products. Sure - they may not work as powerfully or effectively - BUT they still do the job: safely and sensibly.

Garden plants are 'untouched by commercialisation and over-processing' or human hands (as much as possible). They are better - not only for us - but for the planet. Less consumer products means less processing, less use of resources and less by-products (from manufacturing). Plus its cheaper and even in some cases, easier. Plants can also be very healing and offer a positive input into our daily lives. Grandma - before the time of 'commercialism and consumerism' - survived with the simplest of things straight from the garden. So it has been done before and proven to work!

If the concept of replacing all your consumer products with simple alternatives from the garden is just too overwhelming - then consider just one or two. It's always easier to revert to simple alternatives for 'non-personal' items (i.e. cleaning/general household products) than personal (i.e. deodorants). So start with the easiest then process to the more complex.



10 QUICK & EASY CHEMICAL-FREE THINGS TO DO WITH PLANTS FROM THE GARDEN

- 1. Infused Vinegar:** Place sprigs of your favourite fresh herb or flower into a bottle of vinegar. Leave to infuse one week before using (for culinary, cleaning, skin-care, etc.)
- 2. Gourmet Oil:** Place 2 garlic cloves and few sprigs of herbs (sage, rosemary, thyme) in a bottle of olive oil. Leave to infuse for 2 weeks. Use for cooking or culinary.
- 3. Rosemary Room Freshener:** Half fill a spray bottle with cider vinegar. Top up with rosemary infusion*. Spray as required to alleviate odours.
- 4. Cleansing Milk:** Place 50mls of milk and four tablespoons of herbs or flower petals of your choice (lavender, rosemary, violet, nasturtiums, chamomile - for example) in a covered saucepan. Gently warm the mixture, but do not boil. Turn off the heat. Strain and leave to cool. Apply to the skin with cotton wool (Milk is very nourishing for the skin and the flowers/herbs perfume, heal and rejuvenate). Store in fridge and use within 5-7 days.
- 5. Refreshing Skin Wash:** Use a cool herbal infusion* as a skin astringent to refresh and heal the skin after cleansing. Some suggested plants to use: LAVENDER (normal skin), ROSEMARY (oily, normal, dry skin), CHAMOMILE (sensitive - dry skin), GERANIUM (normal to dry skin).
- 6. Rose Body Spray:** Place one cup of scented rose petals in a shallow pan and cover with water. Simmer very gently for 30 minutes. Strain the liquid. When cool - pour into spray bottle ready for use. Repeat the process for stronger scent.
- 7. Floral Air-freshener:** A simple bunch of fragrant flowers placed in a room will naturally perfume the immediate environment as an alternative to chemical deodorisers.
- 8. Mint Flea Repellent:** Place fresh mint in pet's bedding to deter fleas and deodorise.
- 9. Lavender & Thyme Deodorant:** Pour into small spray bottle: 10 mls cider vinegar and 100 ml rosemary and lavender infusion*. Use as underarm spray deodorant twice daily.
- 10. Sage Mouth-wash:** Use a sage infusion* as a refreshing mouth-wash. Sage is good for both teeth and gums.

***How to Make an Infusion:** Place 3 teaspoons fresh herbs or plants in an earthenware cup. Add 250mls boiling water. Leave to steep for about 5 minutes or for a stronger infusion leave longer. Strain and use as required. Store in fridge and use within 5-7 days

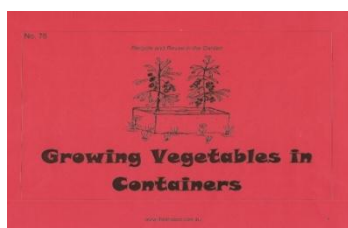


New Booklet Titles Now Available!

It was in 1985 that I began researching and writing information on practical self-sufficient skills. Since then I have accumulated a mass of recipes, information, writings and resources on many, many topics. Some published (into little booklets) and some not yet published (or never will be because there is just too much collected information!). Some of it is recycling, some lost skills of past times, some money saving, some environmentally friendly living - but most definitely all of it will benefit both people and planet. Much of the collected information is no longer available or in publication and definitely not the type of stuff that is available on the internet. In fact I find the internet more of an 'advertising highway' than 'information highway'. I am particular about having practised and tried most of what I have written - because 'speaking from experience' is the best way to get the point across. Although a difficult task - and some of what I have practised I may have forgotten over the years - at least it is documented in the publications.

When I first began writing I submitted my material to a couple of publishers (back in the early 1990's). It was rejected on the basis that in our 'modern' world such information was no longer popular or viable for publication. So I set about self-publishing what I had written into little booklets. Now that concept in conjunction with my workshops has worked particularly well - with people being able to purchase the relevant information in booklet form instead of investing in expensive publication which may only contain a small amount of useful information.

I am still researching, writing and collecting information. I mostly get inspiration to write new titles from people I meet at my workshops and events.. Plans are to reach up to 100 booklet titles. Here's the latest selection now available for purchase:



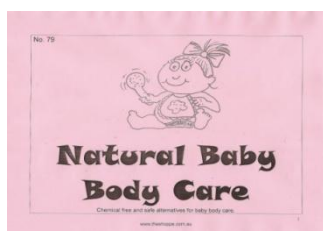
No. 76: Growing Tomatoes in Containers – Step by step guide for growing tomatoes cheaply and easily in recycled containers. It's a 'fool-proof' way to help you get started in producing a successful first crop of tomatoes. **Price:** \$8.00



No. 77: Recycling Rags – Covers simple recycling techniques to the more complex. Suited to the craft person and non-craft person. Topics include: General recycling, New clothing from old, Sewing techniques, Non-sewing techniques, Ideas for children, Special techniques (weaving, plaiting, hooking, pegging, patch-work, quilting, appliqué). Contains instructions for making clutch-bags, bandana, hair scrunchy, draught-stopper, carry bag from old jeans, bath-bags and more. **Price:** \$12.00



No. 78: Companion Planting in the Garden: Useful table covering common garden vegetables, fruit and herbs/plants and recommended companion plants (for insect deterring and growth enhancement). Useful information for planning and planting your garden to get the utmost from plant placement. **Price:** \$8.00



No. 79: Natural Baby Body Care: Chemical free and safe alternatives for baby body care. Covers: body powders, baby oils, oatmeal (skin-care), plants and herbs for baby. Includes recipes for baby healing oil, milk and lavender bath powder, chamomile baby powder, herbal infusion, honey & milk moisturiser, natural soap-based products, make-your-own baby wipes and homemade rusks. **Price:** \$12.00

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HOW TO ORDER BOOKLETS

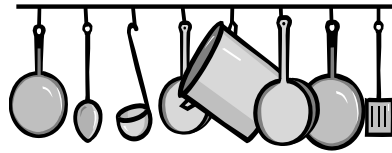
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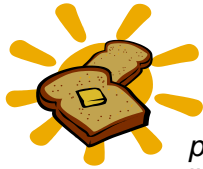
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Your Favourite Recipes

Uses for Stale Bread:



I'm currently working on a new booklet title: No. 80 'Uses for Stale Bread' (available soon). It's turned out being a very interesting venture with lots of fascinating and unusual uses for bread - including as a filler, thickener, pastry cases, ornaments, jewellery and more! In the process I've been asking people for their 'bread' ideas. I doubt I'll get all the collected information in one small booklet so here's some of it ahead of time!

Quick Bread Biscuits:

Ingredients:

2 eggs

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup dessicated coconut

1 cup dry bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 180C. Beat eggs until frothy. Add sugar, coconut and crumbs. Stir well. Drop teaspoonfuls onto a greased baking tray. Bake 10 to 15 minutes, until they just begin to brown.



Bread Crumbs & Pasta

Ingredients:

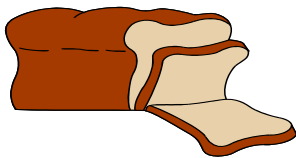
250g pasta

3 tablespoons butter

clove of garlic (minced) - optional

1 cup bread crumbs

Cook pasta in the usual way. Drain. Melt butter. Saute garlic. Add bread crumbs. Mix well. Add to hot pasta and toss to coat. Add grated parmesan and/or chopped parsley if desired.



Homemade Breadcrumbs

Place pieces of bread (including crusts) in a slow oven. Leave to become dry and pale straw in colour. Place on a board and crush with rolling pin or put through a food processor. Store in screw top jar ready for use. If kept dry homemade breadcrumbs will keep for some months.

(From Booklet No. 80 Uses for Stale Bread)

Dear Pam,

My Grandma was a very frugal person. She would often make this 'Stale Bread Bake' when I was a small child. Surprisingly it is very tasty! She also made bread dumplings to add to dishes to bulk them out to feed more. And during really hard times she would make a simple stew of water and flavoured dumplings - Paupers Dumpling Stew. Here's her recipes.

Veronika - Seaton SA

Stale Bread Bake

Arrange approx. 6 slices of bread in a greased baking pan. Cover with 1 cup grated cheese. Arrange another 6 slices of bread on top. Blend 2 cups milk with 4 eggs, 1 tspn mustard, chopped onion, salt and pepper. Pour over the bread and leave to stand for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with more cheese and bake 45 minutes (until puffed and brown).

Bread Dumplings

10 slices day-old bread, 125ml warm milk, 2 eggs, 1 tbsp flour, salt & pepper to taste. Cut bread into 1cm cubes. Pour over milk and soak the bread. Add eggs, flour and seasoning to bread mix. Stir until the mixture forms a sticky dough-like consistency (it is best to use hands for this). Drop spoonfuls into soup or stew mix. Cover - simmer for about 20 minutes.

Paupers Dumpling Stew

Place a large pot of water on to boil. Add a stock cube. Make dumplings as outlined earlier. Add cooked onion or bacon for extra flavour if desired. Drop teaspoonfuls into the water and cook 20 minutes or until dumplings rise to the surface. (Leftover dumplings can be sliced and fried in butter for a tasty side-dish to roasts, grills, etc.)



Your Questions & Comments

Hi Pam, Thanks so much for the newsletter. I've used borax in my dishwasher. Is this safe or is it a toxic chemical? I also recently bought ammonia but have since read that its a bad chemical to have in the home .. is this true?

Regards. Sarah

Hi Sarah,

I think the best thing is to do your own research and work out what best suits you.

From my research I decided: Cloudy Ammonia can be a 'dangerous chemical' if used in large amounts in the home or inhaled. I recommend using Cloudy Ammonia only for extra cleaning jobs (but not general cleaning). I use it only as an ingredient in the 'All Purpose Spray' (1/3 each of cloudy ammonia, water and bio-degradable detergent + eucalyptus oil) for extra spot cleaning and stain removal. I do not use it on its own or in large amounts. But I guess some people may be a bit over the top and over-use it or use it in enclosed areas (like the shower alcove) - which then makes it 'dangerous'. Cloudy ammonia also breaks down readily in the environment - which was another factor I considered when making my decision - in fact it is more 'environmentally friendly' than many other cleaning products.

Borax - I choose not to use. It is toxic to animals and children (in "large quantities" - but was unable to find out exactly what amount is considered a 'large quantity'). As I have pets I did not want to take the chance - so decided against using it. Borax is often recommended for eradicating ants - i.e. by sprinkling it on their nest - but as cats tend to lick their paws I would rather not take the risk of harming them. And the same would apply if children frequent the backyard. I also notice that borax is often recommended as a additive in personal cleaning products, skin creams and cosmetics. But I do not agree with using it and have omitted it from my recipes. There are safer products that do just the same as borax that can be used - i.e. bicarb soda, lemon juice, vinegar. Also borax is mined and utilizes precious Earth resources - which is another factor that sways my decision. Pam

Hi Pam,

I just wanted to say how much my girls and I enjoyed your skincare workshop recently. It was a great introduction to show them they can create natural skincare from a few simple ingredients. Just wanted to let you know what happened to us today while making lip salves in the hope of preventing it happening to someone else. We had made 2 successful batches of lip salve using essential oils however our third batch was a disaster. We melted the beeswax, coconut oil and almond oil in a saucepan and then added a few drops of vanilla essence. The whole thing then starting spewing out hot liquid like a volcano but luckily I turned off the flame before I added the essence or we could have had a fire. Please let your readers know that it is very unsafe to put vanilla essence in the lip salve mixture.

Kind Regards, Jo, Jess and Hannah Day x

Hi Jo,

It's not recommended to combine water with hot oil/wax - having done so myself in the past it caused a violent reaction. I think that it is mentioned in various booklets (No's 4,13 and 30) to be very careful when working with hot oils and waxes. When making my products I usually make sure that the oil and/or wax are just hot enough to melt the ingredients but not so hot that it reacts with water based additives. Pam



*Your letters, recipes, comments are always welcome - including recipes using bread!
Send to: The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe: P.O. Box 390 Park Holme 5043 or email:*

pam@theshoppe.com.au