

The Self-Sufficiency

Shoppe

Newsletter

Issue 19



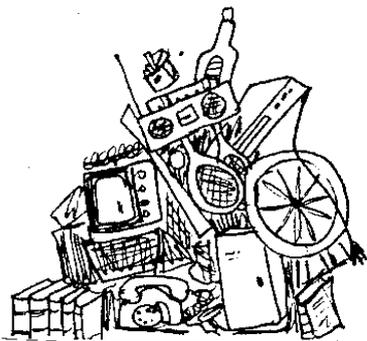
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Frugal times are upon us!



I am often viewed with cynicism by friends and family for my frugality. It used to bother me, but as time and wisdom have progressed I've realised that 'frugality' is the true purpose and meaning in life and it's the smartest and most appropriate way to survive on the planet!

I am one of the 'lucky ones' - born having this innate ability to save, reuse, recycle and 'not waste a thing' as opposed to having to 'learn' it later in life. Being frugal, for me, first began at an early age – in my youth as a nurse my work-mates would make jovial comments about 'excesses and left-overs' by saying: 'Give it to Pam – she'll know what to do with it!'. I became the proverbial 'human garbage bin'. But I am proud of my status – it's served me well over the years – during hard times it's saved me heaps of money and its done wonders for the planet and the environment (just one less resource taken from the planet and to be disposed of!). And now with the issue of environmental responsibility and 'global warming' on everyone's mind, being frugal and more conscious of resources is even considered fashionable.

The 'plenty for all' attitude is now outdated. In fact it's been this very attitude that has resulted in the current state of the planet. The reality is there isn't 'plenty for all' – resources are limited on many levels. We may take whatever we want when we want it and it may be available for us to use – but that's not the point – it's really about human responsibility and exercising restraint because there are consequences to pay for our actions. A huge planetary imbalance exists – many people live in poverty and starvation while others revel in wealth and abundance, animals suffer in neglect and mistreatment. It is our responsibility is to correct that imbalance by being frugal, considering ourselves as 'very lucky' and respecting the resources we do have – NOT put our hand out for more and more.

I save every morsel, rarely throw anything out - it's used instead to make other things - for example, compost. I even save all my used cooking oil – render it down (remove residue) and use it for making homemade soap. I can't bear to see anyone else wastefully throw anything out! I view everything in terms of 'How can I use it again (and again, and again) or 'If I buy this what can I do with it after its use has expired' or even 'Can I reuse the packaging it comes in'....what a waste! Sometimes it drives me crazy – but I wouldn't change it for anything.

Cont'd overleaf

Human existence – in particular our ‘western’ based lifestyle – is way, way beyond it’s (and the planet’s) means. The ‘good times’ are over – the ‘imbalance’ is about to be corrected - the times ahead will see costs, environmental problems and shortages increase. We will be expected to ‘tighten our belts’ ready for a rough ride – frugality and resource saving are the most practical way to approach the issue. So – let’s get down to business – all the talking in the world will not change a thing – it’s ‘doing it’ that really counts. There are thousands of little things we can do to save money and the planet’s resources. But to get started here’s my favourite frugal ways:



- I am a member of a local L.E.T.S. group (a type of bartering system) and find it a great way to reuse and recycle goods and buy cheap second-hand items.
- Buying in bulk saves money and time (as opposed to small amounts with excessive packaging). Make sure to bring your own containers and bags. Shopping at a local Food Co-operative (if you have one) will save money and resources.
- I always recycle gift wrapping paper – whether it be Christmas or birthday - by carefully removing sticky tape and ironing to make smooth again.
- I use all types of boxes and cartons (from cereal and tea-bag boxes to fruit cartons) as containers for various things – storage (boxes with lids are great), holders for magazines and other items, file boxes, etc. I recently came across the idea of using Styrofoam boxes for vegetable growing – which helps control water use in times of drought.
- I always read the weekly specials for good deals. I most often buy what’s on special in the stores and stockpile extra for later. Whichever store has the best specials gets my business for that week!
- I use the coupons on shopping docketts only if its feasible – travelling long distances to save a few cents is counter-productive.
- ‘Home brand’ products are obviously cheaper - many are of the same quality as generic brands.
- I make my own pet food – meat stewed with rice or pasta and store frozen for later use. It’s cheaper and healthier!
- I boil only as much kettle water as needed (I’m often surprised when friends visit for a cuppa and fill the kettle to the brim for just two people!).
- I cook extra quantity for meals and freeze or refrigerate for later.
- I find eating mostly vegetarian food saves me heaps on buying meat. I avoid take-away meals (that usually highly packaged – or I wash and recycle the packaging for later use). I grow my own vegetables, herbs, etc.
- I get stale bread from a local bakery (by ‘stale’ it’s usually bread baked that morning and left over after closing time). Usually it’s still quite fresh but if necessary I bring it back to life by brushing it with water, then putting in a hot oven wrapped in foil for a minute. (Or make bread crumbs).
- I fill up on petrol when prices are at their lowest early in the week and combine my trips to the shops, post office, bank, etc. in one day – usually once a week.
- I never buy detergent products – I use my own homemade soap jelly (made from a bar of soap or soap scraps – one bar makes 20L of soap jelly – see recipe on page fifteen of The Shoppe Catalogue or past issues of the Shoppe newsletter). This saves on buying: laundry detergent, shampoo, liquid soaps, dish detergent, etc. etc.
- I save all my washing until I have accumulated a full load and use only cold water or half hot/cold for really dirty items (homemade soap jelly still works effectively).
- I recycle my wash water – it’s easy to do particularly for the washing machine – just attach a grey water hose to the end of your washing machine outlet hose and run out onto the garden. Use homemade soap jelly instead of detergents - and it’s biodegradable and safe for the entire garden. Or, reuse water (such as

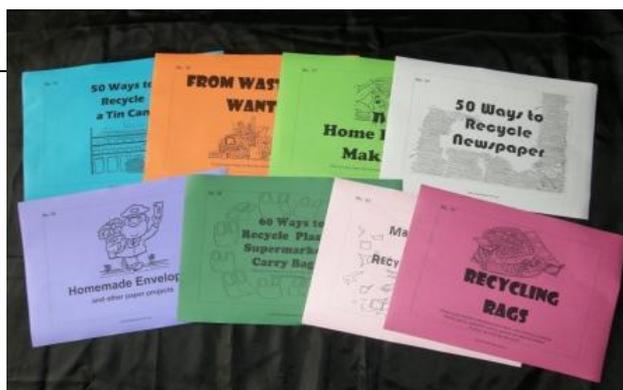
water for whites re-used for colours). I always hang washing in fresh air to avoid expensive clothes dryers (in fact I don't even own a clothes dryer!). On wet days I hang it in the verandah, carport or garage or in the heated lounge room before going to bed – by morning its dry!

- I've found that paying in cash will often attract a discount or lower price – particularly so for larger items such as electrical goods, furniture, etc. Don't be afraid to negotiate!
- Or, I buy second-hand furniture from second-hand stores, op or charity shops or garage sales - or though L.E.T.S.
- In the garden I use all my tree cuttings and prunings as mulch to save water and condition the soil. Of course, I compost, compost, compost – which is wonderful for the soil and saves on chemically-based commercial fertilisers!
- I never buy commercial plants in pots – I recycle cuttings and propagate everything. Its so annoying to see plants (such as geraniums and hydrangeas) sold commercially in plastic plant pots (that are probably thrown away after use) – when they can be grown so easily just from cuttings. Swap plants with friends and family.

And here's a great tip from a frugal reader!

- Save all your vegetable water from steaming and boiling vegetables. Use as a basis for homemade soups, stews, braises, pasta, gravy, etc.

These are just a few suggestions – I'm sure you have lots more. Please send to The Shoppe to share with others. One of the best ways to be frugal is to recycle – so you'll find lots more ideas in the 'recycling' range of booklets:



Recycling for the Planet Booklet Set

Packed full of lots of resourceful and clever ideas that will save \$\$\$'s and aid the planet!

Contains 8 e-booklets: No. 15 – 60 Ways to Recycle a Tin Can, No. 16 – Waste Not Want Not, No. 17 – Home Paper-Making, No. 31 – 50 Ways to Recycle Newspaper, No. 32 – Home-Made Envelopes & Other Paper Projects, No. 48 – 60 Ways to Recycle Plastic Supermarket Carry Bags, No. 63 – Making Play-toys from Recycled Materials, No. 77 – Recycling Rags.

Price: \$69.00

(Available for instant download from www.theshoppe.com.au) or send \$69.00 plus \$5.00 for postage and printing costs to:

The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe, P.O. Box 390, Park Holme, 5043 Sth Aust.

Booklets may also be purchased/downloaded individually

Little green woman on Mars



MYSTERY FIGURE: A photo taken on the surface of Mars of what looks like a woman with her arm extended and, right, an artist's impression of Spirit, NASA's Mars explorer vehicle.

BETH HALE

PERCHED on a rock, she could be waiting for a bus.

But if so, she will be in for an awfully long wait.

This photo of what looks remarkably like a female figure with her arm outstretched, was taken on Mars. Not surprisingly, it has set the internet abuzz.

The image was among

many sent back to Earth by Spirit, NASA's Mars explorer vehicle, which landed there four years ago.

Initial inspections revealed nothing unusual but closer examination by amateur astronomers has thrown up this intriguing picture.

As one enthusiast put it on a website: "These pictures are amazing. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw

what appears to be a naked alien running around on Mars."

Another wrote: "If you show me another rock in another photo from Mars, or Earth, that naturally looks like that, I will reconsider."

A third contributor, who might have come closer to the majority view, said: "Ah, the human eye can be tricked so easily."



'The Advertiser' 16/1/08

The Wonders of MARS: In the 1980's when the first pictures of Mars became available from the 'Voyager' spacecraft there was much ado about what appeared to be a 'pyramid' on the surface of Mars – some considered it a 'dire message from a lost ancient civilization'. Last week the local newspaper reported what appears to be a rock formation of a women sitting upon the surface of Mars – a dry desolate uninhabitable place. Our preoccupation with what we see on the surface of Mars is maybe a reflection of what the future holds for our own planet. Will it also become a 'dry desolate uninhabitable' place or will we be able to preserve what precious resources are remaining to maintain its beauty and splendour?



Natural Skin Care **Workshop @ Home**

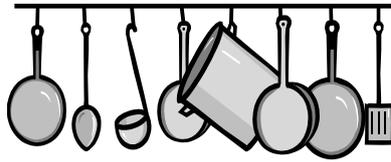
Make your own facial skin care products using ingredients from the home and garden! Complete natural facial skin care regime (cleanser, astringent, moisturiser) using affordable, safe and environmentally friendly ingredients

Recipes and procedures for making: Facial cleansers, Facial scrub, Oatmeal bag, Herbal astringent, Antibacterial astringent, Herbal moisturiser, Lip salve, Lipstick, Lavender Hand cream, Bath-salts

Price: \$25.00 To order download from www.theshoppe.com.au or OR send \$25.00 (plus \$3 postage) to: The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe, P.O. Box 390 Park Holme 5043

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Your Favourite Recipes

Dealing with Fruit Glut: *With most backyard fruit trees producing an abundance of luscious ripe fruit a few ideas on making use of the over-flow are very appropriate!*

Microwave Bottling

Kindly contributed by a WA reader

This method is most helpful for staying ahead of your home grown glut (which is a blessing!) or to use small amounts shared with another or swapped, etc.

Firstly, sterilize the jars – I use jars purchased at local Op Shops for 5c each. They last for years – if treated carefully. Jars which hold ‘Chicken Tonight’, pasta sauce or other foods (which I never buy) are also useful. Put the lids in a basin of boiling water.

Next, pack carefully into the jars the halved apricots, plums, cut peaches or apples, etc. When approximately half-way through packing I put in $\frac{3}{4}$ dessertspoon of sugar (this takes away any bitterness and I feel improves the colour). Have a kettle of boiling water ready on stove. Place the jar in a casserole dish and microwave for 2 to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes (high) – remove from microwave (the casserole dish is easier to handle than a single jar). Then fill the jar to overflowing with boiling water and slap on the lid. Leave to cool – the pop top with ‘pop’ to form a vacuum seal as it cools (takes approximately 20 minutes). Carefully label and store. (I use rubber gloves to do the micro-waving part as things can get very hot).

To open jar later – I carefully place under the lid a blunt handle of a teaspoon to release the vacuum seal before unscrewing.

Other Ideas:

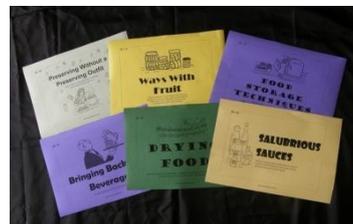
- Use a mincer for mincing home-grown (or left-over) vegetables that

look less than perfect. Add to pasta, soup, etc.

- Save left-over fruit juice from your bottles of homemade preserves. It makes a lovely base for a fruit jelly or add a little of your favourite fruit wine (homemade if you have it) and pour over steamed pudding, ice-cream, etc. Or make fruit juice ice blocks for the children.

(N.B. Juice remaining from canned commercial fruit could be used in the same way)

- Pack your glut of apples into Styrofoam boxes in two layers after first individually wrapping each apple in newspaper (put the fold downwards). I packed 7 boxes in this way in March/April and they kept (mostly) very well until November December (by which time I’d nearly used them all). They also keep well in the fridge crisper.



Useful Publications

While on the topic of using excess fruit and produce here are some suggestions:

No. 46 - Preserving Without a Preserving Outfit Using recycled jars – quick & easy. Price: \$8.00

No. 52 – Salubrious Sauces Recipes for different numerous easy to make sauces \$8.00

No. 72 – Drying Food Old time techniques to modern. Price: \$12.00

No. 73 – Food Storage Techniques Long-term storage of fresh produce \$8,00

No. 74 – Ways With Fruit Jams, chutneys, cordials, conserves, etc. \$12.00

No. 65 - Natural Sweeteners Includes information on ‘making jams without sugar’ and various natural low GI sources or sweeteners. Price \$12.00

Download from www.theshoppe.com.au or send payment plus \$2 (postage and printing) to The Shoppe address (page 1)



Your Questions & Comments

Hi there

*I was wondering if you have any remedies for keeping clothes from being eaten by **moths and silver fish**? Also wondering if you know how to **keep mosquitoes away** and once bitten how to stop the itch from itching?!*

Thank you and regards - Katrina

Hi Katrina - Booklet No. 20 contains lots of natural remedies for all types of common insects – ants, cockroaches, fleas, mites, flies, mice, mosquitoes, moths, silverfish, weevils and recipes for personal insect repellents.

Pam

Hi Pam,

I just wanted to let you know how much I look forward to your magazine and comments. I agree with you 100%, I recently retired from the pharmacy I worked at for 25 years, mainly because I could no longer reconcile handing out all of those dangerous drugs to people who had been duped into thinking that this was the only way to be 'healthy'. I am studying Naturopathy and other healing modalities. Your magazine has been a great inspiration to me I make my own laundry liquid and cleaning products and am working towards self sufficiency in the garden, we have planted more fruit trees this year and plan to put in more using espalier method. Bit by bit I am reducing the size of the lawn (my husbands pride and joy) and adding extra garden beds. This year while he was in Bathurst at the car racing, I created a berry garden digging up a large patch of lawn. The environment is the cause of so much frustration to me. Your comments are so true. Why aren't governments in developed countries actively encouraging sustainable development? We need more Al Gores and Tim Flannery's talking to governments and big business and convincing the people that we have the ultimate power.

Cheers Pat

Dear Pam,

*I've made the **soap jelly** in the buckets and the **rich soap jelly** (Booklet No. 50). I'm very pleased - at last!. I did find the soap a little hard to entirely dissolve in the buckets (a few bits rose to the surface so I scooped them off) even though I used boiling water and had grated it finely, but it is OK. I have a question - what about **front loaders**? I am really hoping I can use the jelly in my front loader washing machine. I do not want to keep buying powder.*

Alison, SA

Hi Alison,

I too sometimes have problems with the grated soap not melting - if I am making it for a workshop and want it to 'look good' I put the grated soap in a saucepan with water and softener (usually bicarb. soda) and bring it to the boil whisking occasionally to make sure all the soap dissolves. But watch out as it boils over really quickly. Then I put the melted mix into 2 buckets and top up with water (if doing that way). If the soap jelly is for my personal use I don't worry too much about tiny bits of soap in it as they usually dissolve in the hot water (before I put my soap jelly in the washing machine I whisk it in some hot water). I find the soap jelly does a fantastic job when washing clothes. I don't see a problem using it in both front and top loaders - I know that the 'manufacturers' recommend not using soap but powdered detergents (probably because they have shares in the detergent companies!) but I haven't had any problems with soap jelly in my top loader in the 7 years since purchasing it. As top loaders are different from front loaders you might have to work out a way to get the soap jelly into the machine - can you pour it in somewhere or maybe pour it in when you put the clothing in?

Pam



Send your recipes, comments and questions to:

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email: theshoppe@tpg.com.au