

The Self-Sufficiency

Shoppe Newsletter

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What Goes Up Must Come Down

The current world financial situation is dominating the media at present. Politicians and world financiers seem particularly concerned and very eager to alley panic and fear. Maybe they have a better understanding of what's ahead for the world's

population than we do. But for rest of us, we are yet to feel the full affects of the crisis as it flows 'down' to the ordinary person. My heart goes out to the vulnerable in the community – low income earners, pensioners, part-time/casual workers, people over-committed financially (and 'just getting by') – people at the 'end' of the chain of order in society – just one small change in income (such as reduced working hours, lowering of income or increase in retail prices for everyday items) will have a devastating affect on their quality of life and financial survival. The reality is that the CEO's and high wage earners on the other end of the social scale will do whatever they can (perhaps callously) to keep afloat and maintain their lifestyle. It will be the 'ordinary person' that will pay the price for past actions in the world financial sector.

Most people are 'innocent victims' of very powerful tactics of big business. Consumers are exploited and misused for the purpose of 'profit and progress'. Often mislead into believing and acting upon decisions that sensible thinking would normally question or doubt. Advertising is based strongly on the 'emotional need' of people. Playing on the innate and subconscious desires of people has proven to be a very effective way to 'build business' and increase profit. So I feel a level of sympathy for the majority of the unsuspecting community having gotten themselves into such a position of vulnerability that even the smallest of changes in the economy will affect them greatly.



A couple of years ago I was in need for a newer updated computer (having had my previous one for some 7 years). I decided it would be a better choice to 'rent' instead of buying new (as technology so quickly becomes outdated and obsolete). So I signed a contract with a local well-known rental company for a new computer package – paying monthly for the privilege. It's been fantastic and well worth the monthly investment. However, having little recent experience with the world of renting it has been a complete 'eye-opener'. I am now bombarded on a regular basis with personal letters from the company coaxing me with 'discounts and special offers' (the latest one was half price for the first 6 months of renting!) into extending my credit and taking on more items for rent – pointing out to me that 'according to my credit rating/income level' I am eligible for many more \$'s worth of equipment (from them of course). It's very tempting and clever on their part. But unfortunately (for them – fortunately for me) I have no need or interest in a new

lasma TV, heating, cooling, home theatre system, furniture or whatever else I have been offered – so their efforts are wasted on me! But what concerns me is how many other people are unable to resist the temptation – and even though already well over-extended credit-wise – they cannot say ‘no’ (as it’s so easy to say ‘yes’) and in they go. It all seems wrong to me. The duty of governments is to protect people from themselves (to some extent) but allowing commercialism to run wild to unsuspecting consumers seems completely irresponsible. I’m not immune or perfect. I am as ‘naive’ as the next person. Although I’ve been fairly sheltered from the world of credit of late (as I rarely part-take in it) – I was well over-extended credit-wise some years ago – it scared the life out of me. It was difficult and embarrassing to have to admit to credit providers that I couldn’t keep up the payments (and they were completely unsympathetic). I did eventually painstakingly pay off the debts and have stayed clear since. It was a hard (but valuable) lesson that took years to sort out.



Managing Money is the Key

Managing money is a very important part of controlling it (and not allowing it to control us). To let it ‘run wild’ – as has been the case over the past decade or so in world financial markets - is asking for trouble. Over-extending credit, autonomy of the banks, volatile world financial markets, etc, have all contributed to the ‘out of control’ tumbling of the market. Putting it mildly: It was doomed to lead to trouble. Money needs to be managed on every level – personal, retail and on the world financial market. Getting deeper and deeper into debt without an end in sight has not been a wise situation to get into! Many of us could see it and asked: “How/where will this end” – now it has dire consequences for all. In the newspaper recently people of various generations were asked what it meant to them the current situation. A 73 year old-timer commented: ‘Its looks as if we’ll get back to the days when I was a youngster – when you went to the bank you had to show the bank manager you could repay the debt’! An interesting observation now considering the mess we are in!

No-one wants to accept a cut in living standards. But that’s what we are facing. Less money for daily expenses, less money for luxuries, less money for the kids, less money for everything. Most of us have become accustomed to our current lifestyle – we know no difference. The older generation (from the WW2 era) would perhaps have an inkling of understanding of what we are heading for – but for the latter generations we have no idea or comprehension of what is meant by ‘hard times’. Money has been available to us freely and easily for our ‘freedom of choice’. And as a result we have been living way, way beyond our means – to the detriment of the world’s finances and the precious environment.

If not living frugally by now then it would be a wise choice to start! It’s the only way to the future. Striving for ‘more money’, getting further into debt in a hope to ‘hold over’ until things improve, or sponging off the backs of those already struggling through the situation are not wise options and will only lead to more pain and suffering. Mother Nature has her ways – by reducing the source of the problem (money) it’s one sure way to bring some balance and order into the frivolous ways of the human race.

e-Booklet Sets

Just a reminder about The Shoppe’s Booklet Sets. With over 100 individual titles it’s sometimes difficult to know what to select from the Information e-Booklet range. However to make things easier specific titles relevant to a topic have been grouped into sets of booklets to ensure you have all the information available. Here’s a list of all Booklet Sets available for download::

Green Cleaning (10 booklets) Price: \$69.00. **Natural Skin Care** (4 booklets) Price: \$39.00 **Soap-making** (4 booklets) Price: \$33.00. **Body & Hair-care** (5 booklets) Price:\$39.00 **Beeswax** (5 booklets) Price: \$39.00. **Backyard Self-Sufficiency** (6 booklets) Price: \$42.00. **Environmentally Friendly Basics** (6 books) Price: \$42.00. **Chemical-Free Options** (7 booklets) Price: \$59.00 **Practical Kitchen Skills** (4 booklets) Price: \$24.00 **Old Time Kitchen Skills - Preserving** (6 booklets) Price: \$42.00 **Old Time Kitchen Skills - Improvisation** (8 Booklets) Price: \$69.00. **Recycling for the Planet** (8 booklets) Price: \$69.00. **Air fresheners & Deodorisers** (5 books) Price: \$39.00 **Practical Plants** (3 booklets) Price: \$24.00 **Self-Sufficiency Skills** (6 booklets) Price: \$49.00 **Practical Gifts & Crafts** (6 booklets) Price: \$42.00 **Ways With Set** (10 booklets) Price: \$96.00 All booklet sets can be downloaded from www.theshoppe.com.au - go to 'Booklet Sets'



Kitchen Know-How

I'm often asked about alternatives (to chemicals) for colouring food – particularly for children. Here's an excerpt from Booklet No. 12.

Food Colouring Substitutes

Beetroot juice or water (the water remaining after boiling beetroot) will make a lovely rose or pink colouring. Saffron or turmeric (spice) will suffice as yellow colouring (or use a little egg yolk). For green colouring, pulverize some spinach leaves, boil in water, strain and use the water as colouring. To make brown colouring (most suited to gravies and similar dishes), put one cup of raw sugar in a saucepan. Heat gently until the sugar has become dark, leave to cool, then add one cup of water. Blend until sugar has melted. Pour into bottles and cork ready for use.

From e-Booklet No. 12 'Kitchen Improviser' (\$12.00) – e-Booklet No. 75 'Natural Dyes & Colours' also contains information about natural colourings (\$12.00). Download from www.theshoppe.com.au

In my workshops I'm often quite surprised to discover that 'everyone' buys frozen pastry believing that pastry-making is a complex task! Frozen pastry is very expensive and is high in fat (the wrong kinds of fats!). By making your own you have control over the amount of fat – AND, contrary to popular belief – it's not that difficult to make! Here's a simple recipe:

Homemade Shortcrust Pastry

Sift 1 cup each SR flour and plain flour into a bowl. Add pinch salt & 3 level tablespoons margarine or butter. With fingertips rub margarine into the flour to form fine 'bread crumb' consistency. Add 75 mls cold water to form a dough. Knead 'lightly'. (It's not like bread that contains yeast. Kneading pastry is only to blend the ingredients and provide some elasticity – so only knead about 30 seconds to a minute). Roll out when required.

For convenience I make up a double batch of pastry, divide it into 16 portions and freeze for later. All I need to do then is defrost and roll it out. Keeps up to 3 months in the freezer.

Handy Hint: Use mountain bread in place of frozen pastry – its healthier & cheaper!



Improvising in the Kitchen **Booklet Set**

Back to the days when food was unprocessed & uncomplicated!

8 Booklets: No. 12 Improvising in the Kitchen, No. 42 – Eggstatic!, No. 53 Homemade Spice Mixes, No. 54 – International Meals on a Budget, No. 70 Homemade Breakfast Cereals, No. 64 – Coffee Alternatives, No. 65 – Natural Sweeteners, No. 80 – Uses for Stale Bread

Price: \$69.00 download from www.theshoppe.com.au



Grandma's Simple Air-Freshener

When I visit aged care homes to talk about 'the old ways' a few of the wise ladies have advised me this is the best way to deodorize the house without using sprays or chemicals: Place a handful of rose petals (or fragrant flower-heads)* OR few drops of essential oil (such as eucalyptus) in a saucepan of steaming water. As the steam rises it will carry the subtle odour of the scent through the air.

**I have found that jasmine or honeysuckle are wonderfully fragrant and lend very well to this technique.*

Another technique that I often hear: Dampen a tea towel in vinegar and swirl it around above your head. It acts as an instant air-freshener. Vinegar is a natural deodorising agent.

(More information and air-freshening ideas in e-Booklet No. 22 - Air-Freshener & Deodoriser Substitutes 15 pages Price: \$8.00 - download from www.theshoppe.com.au)

MOISTURISERS

Skin cancer warning raised

A CONTROVERSIAL study has suggested some moisturising creams can increase the risk of skin cancer in people who were heavily exposed to sun as youngsters.

But Australian disease experts say the study, which relied on tests performed only on hairless rats, are inconclusive and unnecessarily alarming, with no proof they apply to humans.

The U.S. study found moisturisers containing known irritants like sodium lauryl sulphate or mineral oil seemed to increase the rate of tumours in mice pre-exposed to high levels of UV rays.

The Cancer Council Australia has called for further studies to better inform the public on the real risk.

The Advertiser 28/8/08

Obesity: 'No link to TV ads'

THE communications watchdog says it has found little evidence of an association between the advertising of junk food on TV and obesity levels in children.

The Australian Communications and Media Authority yesterday said it would not recommend any general restrictions be imposed on food and beverage advertising targeting children.

While there was a relationship between advertising and food and beverage preferences among children, ACMA chairman Chris Chapman yesterday said there was insufficient evidence to support a link with obesity levels.

ACMA would consider reviewing its position if evidence of an identifiably stronger association between advertising and obesity, and the benefits of advertising restric-

The Advertiser 15.8.08



Sensible and Cruelty Free Skin-Care

It seems a huge contradiction in terms to use toxic products in an effort to achieve healthy, ageless & beautiful skin! And worse still to test these commercial concoctions on innocent animals in the name of beauty and vainness!

Natural skin care options are not toxic, work particularly well PLUS not tested on animals.

Here's a set of very useful booklets that tell you all that you need to know about safe, natural (and cheap) skin care techniques:



Natural Skin Care Booklet Set

5 booklets - No. 30 Natural Skin Care, No. 13 Making Simple Salves and Creams, No. 26 Beautiful Hands, No. 58 Old-time Oatmeal, No. 37 Beautiful Baths
Price: \$39.00 (Download from www.theshoppe.com.au)

Advertising has no influence on Children?

As incredible as it may seem – the Australian Communications and Media Authority has stated that “there is little evidence of an association between advertising junk food on TV and obesity in children”. Advertising is a very powerful and influential medium – its difficult enough for mature adults to overcome the temptations of the commercial world – I can't imagine the affect it would have on small children with limited discernment of right from wrong – reality and fantasy. I'm inclined to think this decision is more about yielding to the power and influence of the big companies and commercialism then commonsense!

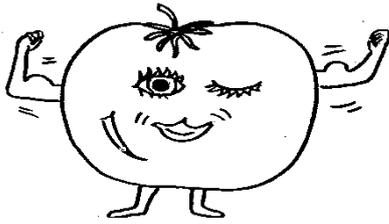


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'Recycle and Reuse in the Garden'



Quick, Easy & Cheap Way for Growing Tomatoes in Containers

(Beginner's Guide)

By running the 'Green Fingers' workshop I've discovered that many people would like to grow their own vegetables but either feel overwhelmed by 'where to start' or have attempted to grow vegies but without success – which has discouraged them from any future attempts. So I have put together this information for such people in hope that it may make the job easier and with some success they may be encouraged to grow more!

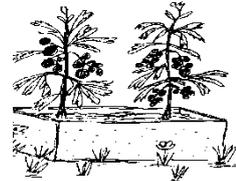
1. The Container. Recycled containers are best as they are cheap and practical. Square polystyrene vegetable tubs are ideal and often discarded by supermarkets or fruit and vegetable shops. Polystyrene is also a 'non-recyclable material' and ends up in land-fill – so reusing it (just once) is very practical for the environment. Other container suggestions: large plastic pots, large buckets/containers (plastic or tin), square plastic storage tubs or similar containers (e.g. baby's bath), etc. However ALL containers must have drainage holes – so punch holes in base of the container (using scissors, metal punch of similar). Make at least 15 small holes or 8-10 larger holes for polystyrene pots – make less holes for small containers.

2. The Soil. Use a mix of half mushroom compost and half potting mix or three-quarter mushroom compost to one-quarter common garden soil. If you have your own compost substitute half the mushroom compost with your own homemade compost. (See Information Booklet No. 19

'Composting for Beginners'). Mushroom compost is an ideal high nutrient base for growing vegetables and is cheap (available in bags from hardware stores or garden centres for about \$6). Saturate the soil in the container with water and check that water moves easily through the drainage holes (you may need to increase the number/size of the holes – as good drainage is important).

3. The Sun. In southern areas spring and summer are the best (and most successful) time to plant and grow tomatoes (winter months are too cold). Place the containers in the sunniest location in the garden. This is a good spot to start – you may like to move the pots in the heat of summer to protect them from the sun and help conserve water.

4. The Plants. Tomatoes are the best and most successful plants to grow in containers for the beginner. Buy seedlings from the garden shop or centre – that's the best way to start. In fact the types of seedlings in stock at the garden shop will give you an idea of what's 'in season' and recommended for planting at that time of the year. The recommended varieties to grow for the beginner are: 'grosse lisse', 'mighty red', 'roma' or one of the cherry tomato varieties. **To plant:** Follow instructions on the seedling container or: Wet the soil in seedling holder. Gently pinch the roots to loosen and remove seedlings from the holder. If necessary gently pry apart the roots of seedlings that have inter-grown. If using rectangular polystyrene vegetable tubs plant two seedlings per tub (as illustrated). Make an indentation in the **damp** soil. Insert the seedling and cover with soil – press gently. Water thoroughly.



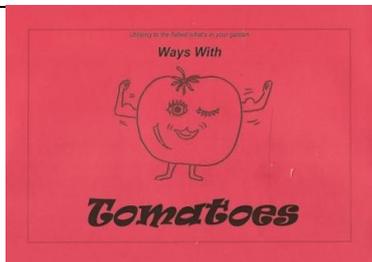
5. Fertilizer. There will be sufficient fertilizer in the mushroom compost to 'feed' the seedling until first stage of fruit/vegetable production. Then add more nutrient by sprinkling mushroom compost onto the container soil (and watering in) OR use your own compost OR use a commercial preparation, such as 'Thrive' or similar (follow instructions on packet – too much fertilizer will damage the plant).

6. Watering. Always keep the soil damp – but not soaking wet (which causes the roots to rot). Check the soil on hot days or when the plant has been in direct sun-light – if the top of the plant is beginning to wilt it's a good indication it needs watering. Move the plant to a shadier area if the soil is becoming dry to the point that the plant wilts on a daily basis. Another solution to maintaining damp soil is to sit the container in a water filled base OR add mulch (to help conserve water) – recycled materials are good for this (such as dry lawn clippings, wads of newspaper, shredded or torn newspaper, straw, etc.).

7. Plant Care. Staking/pruning – for beginners pruning or staking are not essential at this stage. However plants that are falling over (when in fruit) and obviously need support should be tied to a stake or similar. Insects/pests and diseases will not usually be a problem – but Information Booklet No. 21 'Safe & Organic Sprays' has recipes for cheap organic sprays if required.

8. How Long?. Flowers are the first stage to tomato formation. If your plant is flowering you are well on the way to obtaining your first tomatoes. Ripe tomatoes will be ready for picking in 6-8 weeks.

Other Vegetables: Other 'easy-to-grow' container plants are: capsicum (much slower than tomatoes), eggplant, strawberries, spinach. Root vegetables (carrots, beetroot, etc.) & runners/climbers (pumpkin, cucumber, zucchini, etc.) may be grown in containers but require a little more expertise and management.



(e-Booklet) **Ways With:
Tomatoes**

Growing tips, recipes, storing techniques, tomato hints and tips, plus other (unusual uses) for tomatoes – including skin-care!
24 pages Price: \$12.00

(download from www.theshoppe.com.au)



**Backyard Self-sufficiency
Booklet Set**

Safe Organic Economical Gardening
6 Booklets: Recycling and Improving in the Garden (No. 36), Composting for Beginners (No. 19) and Safe & Organic Sprays (No. 21), 'Growing Vegetables in Containers' (No. 76), Keeping Hens (No. 41), Companion Planting Guide (No. 78)

Price: \$42.00

(download from www.theshoppe.com.au)



'Ways With' Booklet Set

Utilizing what's in your garden to the absolute fullest!

10 Booklets: Ways With MINT, Ways With PARSLEY, Ways With TOMATOES,

Ways with LAVENDER, Ways with ROSES, Ways with ZUCCHINI, Ways With ROSEMARY, Ways With THYME, Ways With NASTURTIUMS, Ways With SAGE:

You'll be surprised at the many hidden uses for garden plants, flowers & produce growing right near your back door!

ALL \$12.00 each or FULL SET (all 10 titles): \$96.00 download from www.theshoppe.com.au

Did You Know?

- Boiled tomato leaves & stems (prunings) when sprayed onto vegetable plants will deter whitefly, aphids & grasshoppers.
- Slices of tomatoes placed over sun burnt skin will immediately relieve soreness.
- Placing green tomatoes in a warm, dark place along with a ripe tomato or apple will hasten ripening.

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