

The Self-Sufficiency

Shoppe

Newsletter

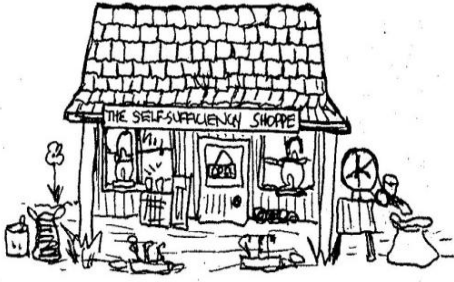
Issue 25

P.O. Box 390 Park Holme 5043 Sth Aust.

www.theshoppe.com.au

Editor/Author//Proprietor: Pam Marshall

email: theshoppe@tpg.com.au



Loosing the Battle to Save Energy

I read recently that for all the effort being put into educating people about saving energy to deal with the problem of global warming the reality is that we are using more energy – not less. Electricity consumption is **increasing** – not **decreasing**. In fact energy usage records are being broken – not because of less usage but because of more. On hot days or during a heatwave **more** people are running air-conditioners for longer periods of time – breaking all records. In fact it is so much of a problem that electricity suppliers struggle to keep up with demand – such has been the case here in South Australia where ‘power sharing’ is practised to distribute usage. Power is cut to some homes for a period of time – usually ½ to 1 hour to ease the pressure and avert the possibility of the grid breaking down.

It's human nature to aspire to greater things – greater comfort, greater choice and more convenience, etc. In a technological sense it means more modern or upgraded equipment, more gadgets, more machines that use more energy over a greater period of time or for a greater expanse of area/people. All of which drain precious energy resources. When air-conditioning first became available, for example, it was in the form of small units in windows which cooled just one room (and before that it was no air-conditioning at all!). Now people expect full house air-conditioning 24 hours a day. Most new homes have full house air-conditioning. People expect nothing less. I have a brick home with a small window-type air-conditioner in the dining room only. My personal policy is to only turn it on if temperatures reach 36 degrees or more for two days in a row. And I most definitely do not run it overnight when sleeping. As I live alone I think that's being extravagant or inconsiderate toward the planet – I like to think other people practise the same rules or better.

The projected forecast for energy usage in the world if current trends continue is far beyond what the planet can sustain – that's the reality. This is just for developed countries – as more of the developing world comes on board and races toward modernisation the statistics for the planet are phenomenal! Even with the current effort toward finding and using alternative energy sources – those resources are limited - demand is just moving too fast to keep up – we are not going to make it in time. By ‘we’ I mean humanity and its current indulgent lifestyle.

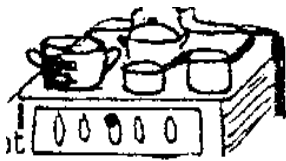
Unfortunately ‘being green’ has become more ‘trendy’ than realistic. It seems to me that on the surface people grasp new ‘green’ ideas or products with vigour believing they are doing the right thing (plus it makes them feel good!). But **real change** toward saving the planet (and ourselves) is about huge personal sacrifice: a whole less energy use, less air-



conditioning (or no air-conditioning), going without or feeling uncomfortable (at least for a period of time), being 'untrendy' by not updating to the newest and latest when it hits the retail shelves.

Consumerism plays a big part in keeping things the way they are. 'Profit and progress' are the life-blood of our society. People are encouraged to buy, buy, buy and educated about how important it is to buy, buy, buy for the sake of our continuing 'financial security'. Advertising is very powerful and overwhelming for most people. Maintaining big company profits rely on people increasing their energy usage by purchasing more technological equipment, bigger equipment (that uses more energy) or upgrading to 'something better'. New high energy technological equipment is designed or developed to meet sophisticated consumer tastes: stainless steel refrigerators complete with an LCD television (built into the door) and a water cooler and crushed ice maker (built into the other door!) – for example.

We need to wake up and face reality – stop fooling ourselves that 'all is right' and that 'everything possible' is being done to deal with the current environmental problems or there will be dire consequences for us all.

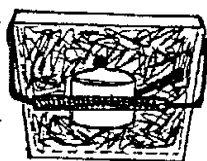
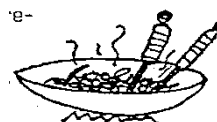


Energy Efficiency in the Kitchen

I collected this information way back in the 70's when being environmentally responsible (and energy efficient) wasn't so trendy. Amongst all the modern-day information available about 'saving the planet' I have not yet seen much of the information below about energy efficient cooking methods – maybe it's because takeaway is the preferred method for meals to cooking at home! I thought you might find it useful:

- Use a minimum amount of high heat when cooking - when the food has reached boiling point turn the heat source down.
- Cook vegetables in the least possible amount of water. The more water used the more energy required to heat the food. When boiling water for hot drinks only heat sufficient water for your requirements.
- Cook as much food as possible in one pot instead of numerous energy consuming pots. Leave the lid on tightly while heating the food - this will lessen the time it takes to heat the food by preventing the escape of heat.
- Turn off the heat a few minutes before the food is fully cooked. This particularity applies to electric stoves as hot plates stay hot for quite a while after being turned off .
- Use pans and pots which fully cover the burner or hot plate. If using gas turn the burner down so that the flame is no greater than the bottom of the pan or pot.
- Good quality saucepans and frying pans have heavy bases that heat up quickly and retain that heat (requiring less energy consumption).
- Check the oven door seals. If a piece of paper remains in the oven door when closed - the seals are working effectively. If not then new oven door seals are recommended.
- Keep the oven door closed as much as possible when baking - opening the door causes wasteful escape of heat.
- Pressure cookers reduce cooking time by nearly two thirds saving both heat and energy. Pressure cooking also retains the flavour and nutritional value of food more so than conventional cooking techniques.
- Use the oven to full capacity by cooking as many dishes as possible while the oven is in use.
- If your gas oven has a pilot light turn it off. It is consuming unnecessary energy.
- Use small appliances for small jobs. For example: a covered frypan can be just as effective as the oven for some dishes or use the electric toaster in preference to the stove griller.

- It is more energy efficient to slow cook some food (i.e. that requires lengthy cooking – such as legumes, stews) in the oven in comparison with the stove burner or hot plate.
- When cooking in the oven use glass, cast iron or ceramic cooking pots. Cookware made of these materials conduct heat more effectively.
- If possible turn the oven off 15 minutes before cooking has finished. The stored oven heat will be sufficient to complete the cooking process.
- Keep the stove clean - particularly the burners and hot plate reflectors.
- Use 'hand-power' whenever possible to save on energy consuming appliances. For example: whisk, mash, grind, whip, open cans, grate, slice, etc. – by hand.
- A microwave uses less energy for reheating food than the stove top or oven. Or a simple vacuum flask (thermos) will keep food hot in preference to consuming extra energy by reheating the food.
- Try different more energy efficient cooking methods – such as, steaming, wok cooking, bamboo steamer, barbeque, etc.



HAYBOX COOKING

Haybox or 'fireless cooking' (as it is sometimes called) uses insulation to retain heat for continued cooking. It's a very practical old-fashioned method popular in times past. The food is heated to boiling point and then placed in an insulated box or container

where it continues to steadily cook for several hours (if required) without consuming any further energy. The food cannot over-cook, burn or dry and may be left quite safely to cook all day or over-night in the haybox. Haybox meals are nutritious because only minimum of food quality is lost during the cooking process. Haybox cooking is particularly suited to soups, stews, grains and other food items which require lengthy cooking times.

To make a haybox obtain a suitable box which has a well fitting lid (a foam picnic hamper or eski are ideal, but a clean garbage bin, drum, bucket, cardboard box lined with newspaper, etc. will also suffice). The food, sealed in a lidded container (such as a saucepan or casserole dish) is placed inside the box. The bottom, sides and top of the haybox are then tightly packed with insulating material (preferably uncut hay – hence the term 'haybox' - but shredded paper, polystyrene packaging, cotton or wool fabric, sawdust, steel wool, old blankets, duna, etc. are all quite suitable). There should be at least 15cms of packing material around the food for the technique to be effective. Place the lid on the haybox and leave for the appropriate time. Examples of cooking times are: porridge - boil 5 minutes on the stove and then place in the haybox overnight (ready for breakfast in the morning); stews - boil 20 to 30 minutes then place in haybox for at least 6 hours; legumes - such as soy beans, haricot beans, etc. - boil 20 minutes then 2 hours continued cooking in the haybox; potatoes - 5 minutes on the stove and 1 to 2 hours in the haybox (depending on potato size).

Energy-saving No-Bake Recipes

Quick Lemon Slice: 250g crushed plain sweet biscuits, 1 cup desiccated coconut, 125 melted butter, ½ tin sweetened condensed milk, juice and grated rind of ½ lemon.

Method: Mix all ingredients together. Press into a greased slice tin. Slice when set.

Healthy Fruit Slice: (no added sugar, fats, dairy or wheat): 1 cup dates, 1 cup sultanas, ½ cup almonds, 2 cups rolled oats, 1 tspn vanilla essence, 2 tablespoons cocoa or carob

Method: Combine all ingredients in food processor. Process until mix begins to stick together (if too dry add more dates and/or sultanas). Press into a lightly greased slice tin. Refrigerate until set. (Alternatively mix can be rolled into balls and coated in coconut).



Improvising in the Kitchen Booklet Set

Back to the days when food was unprocessed & uncomplicated!

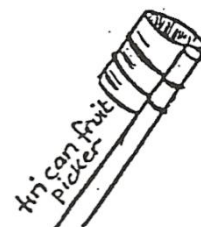
8 Booklets: No. 12 Improvising in the Kitchen, No. 42 – Eggstatic!, No. 53 - Homemade Spice Mixes, No. 54 – International Meals on a Budget, No. 70 Homemade Breakfast Cereals, No. 64 –

Coffee Alternatives, No. 65 – Natural Sweeteners, No. 80 – Uses for Stale Bread

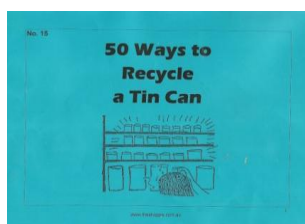
Price: \$69.00 (download from www.theshoppe.com.au)

Tin Can Fruit Picker

Whilst collecting home-grown fruit a recent visitor to my home was intrigued at my home-made fruit picker. I've been making and using them for years and was just as intrigued that she had paid \$15 to purchase something similar – when it can as easily and cheaply be made using a simple tin can and broom stick!



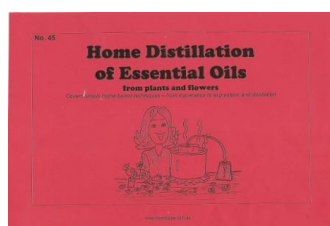
How? Simply attach with wire (or, I use packaging tape) a large tin can to a long pole (old broom handle will do) as illustrated above. It helps to sharpen the top edge of the can by removing the curled edge with tin snips – this enables the fruit stem to be severed from the tree more easily. The fruit then falls conveniently into the tin! Great for soft fruits that bruise if dropped to the ground. (From Booklet No. 15 - 50 Ways to Recycle a Tin Can)



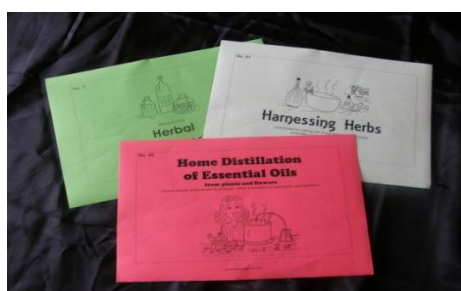
e-Booklet No. 15 – 50 Ways to Recycle a Tin Can. Contains many interesting options for utilising the humble tin can: such as canisters and containers, candle-holders, plant containers, fruit picker, musical instruments, child toys, Christmas decorations, make-shift camping and kitchen equipment, seed collector, soap-saver, utensil holder, drip watering system and many more money saving ideas. **21 pages - Price \$12.00** (download from www.theshoppe.com.au)

Extracting Natural Oils from Plants

A most frequent question during my workshops is a method for extracting essential oils from garden flowers and plants. Although its difficult to create large quantities of the very pure of oil available commercially without complex distilling equipment or chemical extraction there are a few simple techniques outlined in Information Booklet No. 45.



e-Booklet No. 45 – Home Distillation of Essential Oils Essential oils purchased commercially are expensive. This booklet covers simple home-based techniques for extracting essential oils from your own garden using herbs and flowers. Covers: basic techniques, suitable flowers & plants, special blends, recipes for homemade eau-de-cologne, perfumed water. **27 pages Price: \$12.00** (download from ww.theshoppe.com.au)



Practical Plants Booklet Set
Resourceful and practical ways to utilise common garden plants - such as distillation of essential oils, making perfumes and fragrant oils, floral waters, herbal vinegars and much more.
Contains 3 Booklets: No. 7 – Herbal Vinegar, No. 45 – Home Distillation of Flowers and Plants, No. 61 – Harnessing Herbs. **Price: \$24.00** (Available for download from www.theshoppe.com.au)

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Cooking with Nuts!



I love nuts – any kind – they are all yummy! Nuts are high in protein and fibre; have a unique flavour; are a great vegetarian food and are useful in all types of foods (desserts, savouries, snacks, entrees, breakfast, etc.). They do have a down-fall however - being high in calories (due to their oil content) so use your discretion when adding to food – particularly oily food. There are many different types of nuts: cashews, peanuts, chestnuts, walnuts, macadamia, hazel nuts, brazil nuts, almonds, pine nuts - are just a few. Take your pick. Here's a few recipes I've collected over the years from contacts & friends:

Bean, Rice & Nut Casserole

Ingredients: 150g cooked brown rice, 50g cooked kidney beans, 150g ground hazelnuts, 1 tspn dried mixed herbs (or fresh if you have them), 1 medium onion (chopped), 2 medium carrots (grated), 110g fresh breadcrumbs, 2 eggs (beaten), seasoning to taste.

Method: Mix all ingredients - adding the eggs last. Bake in a moderate oven either whole (in a loaf tin for 45 minutes) or roll into rissoles (bake 30 minutes). *(Felicity – Kensington SA)*

Cashew Nut Rissoles

Ingredients: 1 medium onion (chopped), 2 tspn soy sauce, 3 rounded tabsps plain flour, 150mls milk, 150gms ground cashew nuts, 25gms chopped cashew nuts, 2 tspns lemon juice, seasoning to taste, flour (or bran or breadcrumbs) for coating.

Method: Lightly fry onion in little butter or oil. Add a small amount the flour to form a paste. Add the remaining milk and onions. Stir mixture over low heat to thicken. Add the cashews, lemon, soy sauce and seasoning. Cook for 3 minutes. Allow to cool. Divide into eight patties and coat with flour (or bran or breadcrumbs). Grill or fry in a little oil and serve hot with salad. *(Lorraine B.- Woodside SA)*

Apple Nut Treat

Ingredients: 4 medium apples (or pears), lemon juice, 100gms cottage cheese, 25gms raisins, 25gms roasted hazelnuts (finely chopped), 2 tspns honey.

Method: Scoop out the core of the apple. Coat the inside of the apple with the lemon juice. Mix the remaining ingredients together and place into the centre of the apple. Chill before serving. *(Lorraine B - Woodside SA)*

Nutty Cheese Balls

Ingredients: ¾ cup cottage cheese, ½ cup finely chopped celery, ¼ cup chopped nuts, 3 tspns olives (seeded & chopped finely)

Method: Mix together cheese, celery and olives. Shape into either one large knob or smaller balls – then roll in the nuts.

Refrigerate before serving. *(Lucy via email)*

Healthy Spiced Nuts

Ingredients: 375gms raw mixed nuts (or other nuts of your choice), 2 tspns oil, 2 tspns sugar, 2 tspns curry powder, 1 tspn each of coriander & cumin, ¼ tspn cayenne pepper, 1 egg white.

Method: Heat oil in pan. Add sugar, spices, curry powder and cook 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in nuts. Beat egg white to soft peaks. Mix with the nuts. Spread onto greased baking tray. Bake 10-15 minutes in moderate oven. (Nuts can be sprinkled with salt to taste).

(One of my favourite recipes! Pam)

Nutty Hints:

- Sprinkle nuts on salads or add to brown rice.
- Add to packed lunches for healthy snack
- Add to a fruit salad or sandwich fillings
- Decorate cakes and biscuits as a substitute for sugary decorations
- Add to stuffing for roasts or stuffed vegetables for extra flavour
- Add to crumb bases (cheesecakes)
- Sprinkle on top of mornay, casseroles,
- Use as puree base for rissoles, patties or loaves (meat or legumes)

Roasted raw nuts contain less fat/oil than commercially roasted nuts (which are usually cooked in oil). Purchase your nuts raw and roast in a hot oven for 5-10 minutes at home before eating or adding to recipe.



Your Questions

Hi Pam,

Love your newsletter! My only complaint is that it isn't long enough. What's the difference between baking powder and bicarbonate of soda? What is bicarbonate of soda? I've been told it's in SR Flour – so can I make SR Flour?

Helen

Hi Helen, Baking powder is a rising agent used in cooking. It contains a mix of bicarbonate soda (alkaline) and cream of tartar (acid). When combined in 'wet' recipes it triggers a reaction and air formation.

Bicarbonate of soda is a naturally occurring chemical. It is completely safe. Humans produce it in their body in small amounts to balance their electrolyte system. It is derived commercially as a bi-product when making industrial cleaning chemicals. Bicarbonate of Soda can be a leavening/raising agent in itself when used in recipes containing acid, such as lemon juice, chocolate, honey, banana, etc. – you'll often find it included in recipes containing such ingredients.

(I might add here that I've found a lot of people are confused about baking soda and bicarb soda most probably because in USA the term 'baking soda' is used to describe bicarbonate soda. But this is not the case in Australia). Here's a couple of useful recipes:

Self Raising Flour: Mix 4 kilograms of plain flour with 125grams cream of tartar and 60 grams bi-carbonate of soda. Sift a few times to blend.

(From Information Booklet No. 12 'How to Make Do').

Homemade Baking Powder: Mix together two parts cream of tartar with one part bicarbonate soda.

(Bicarb Soda is a very versatile product with lots of uses. See Information Booklet No. 9 'Amazing Bicarb' for more ideas).

Pam, You often mention Cloudy Ammonia for cleaning. Isn't it dangerous – it hurts to breath it in?

(via 'Green Cleaning' Workshop)

Answer: I am often asked this at my workshops so I thought other people might be interested also. Cloudy Ammonia is safe to use in small quantities – but make sure not to inhale it. I recommend it be used only for extra cleaning or spot cleaning if you require it – which is what I use it for. It is not essential for cleaning (you can still clean effectively without it) so exercise your freedom of choice and not use it if preferred.

Hi there, I am making the liquid soap in your recycling soap pamphlet and it says you need washing soda. What is it and where can I purchase some? I have made liquid soap without it but I think it needs it.

Julie (via email)

Hi Julie,

Washing soda is in the laundry section of the supermarket (usually down the bottom shelf). Only one brand is available (that I have seen) - called 'Lectric' Washing Soda. It's cheap - about \$2 or \$3 a 1 kg bag. Here in Adelaide Woolworths seem to be the most reliable stockists. But it's often at Coles or Foodland (IGA). It's labelled as a 'water softener, household cleaner that is environmentally friendly'. It has the affect of 'naturally' softening water so that soap froths more effectively - whereas detergents contain chemicals that mimic frothing (the 'dreaded' Sodium Laurel Sulphate).

If you cannot find it bicarb. soda can be used as a water softener. Oatmeal will also soften water. A water softener added to the liquid soap recipe is not essential - but will make the soap froth more effectively and improve its feel and use. The Shoppe sells washing soda - (if you found it impossible to buy elsewhere – see page 26 of Shoppe Catalogue).

It's always lovely to hear your suggestions, recipes, comments and ideas. Send them to: The Self-Sufficiency Shoppe, P.O. Box 390, Park Holme, 5043 or email:
pam@theshoppe.com.au

Pam