



The Non-Consumers Digest
Presents

Non-Consumer Gardening

62 Frugal Garden Tips

Fight Global Warming

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NON-CONSUMERS PUBLICATIONS

We Proudly Present

NON-CONSUMER GARDENING:

Tips from The Non-Consumers Digest

The Non-Consumers Digest started life as a local newspaper column called "An Easier Way", back in 1990. It soon became "Another Way", which became an 8 page monthly subscription newsletter. I published the Digest from December, 1992 thru September 1994.

After learning to surf the net I decided to try my hand at doing an E-zine type newsletter. The Digest was then published weekly from May 1999 to April, 2006.

What you'll find in this e-Book are tidbits of folk wisdom and frugal tips that are related to gardening. There are ways to save money, to recycle things usefully, to re-use things creatively and to renew things without spending a lot of money.

Please feel free to share this with your friends.

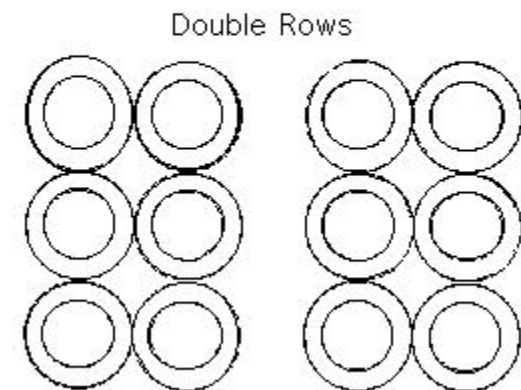
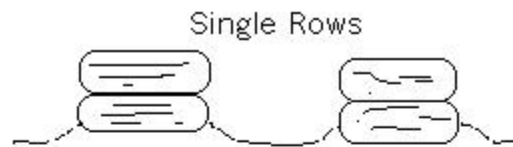
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Page 1: Forward
Page 2: Table of Contents
Page 3: SPRING PLANTING
Page 4: TIRED TIRE GARDEN, SPUD STACKER
Page 5: HUMMINGBIRD PLANTS, HOT CAPS, ROW MARKERS
Page 6: SMALL SEEDS, SEED TRAYS, STYROFOAM POTTING ROCKS, SEED STARTERS
Page 7: POTTING SOIL, POTTING SOIL RECIPE, MOON PLANTING, PLANT COLLARS
Page 8: BARREL IRRIGATOR
Page 10: RAISED BED RAKE/LEVELER
Page 11: PRE-GERMINATING SEEDS, REUSABLE SEED POTS
Page 12: HOMEMADE SEED TAPES, GEL SEEDS
Page 13: PLANTING AID, SEED FILES
Page 14: SMALL SEED PLANTING, STYRO-LITE, BLOCKS-O-WATER, THE 3R COMPOSTER
Page 18: ORGANIC PAPER SHREDDERS, LEAF BAG HOLDER, COMPOST SIFTER
Page 20: SAFETY STUFFER, TARP HANDLES, KNEELING PAD
Page 21: GARDEN HOSE, PESTICIDE HOT LINE, WHITE-TAILED DEER GUARD, ANOTHER PEST REPELLANT
Page 22: WASP REMOVER, SKUNK REPELLENT, STRAWBERRY TRIMMER, BEE CALLER
Page 23: BIRD REPELLENT, BUGS-AWAY, TIRED TIRE TERRACES
Page 25: TOAD PATROL
Page 26: SKEETER EATERS, ANT REPELLENT, ANT REPELLENT II, A WHOLE BUNCH MORE ON ANTS
Page 29: WASP TRAP, SEED FUNGI
Page 30: TREE PROTECTOR, WEED CONTROL, SUCKER STOPPER, STUMP BURNER, TERRARIUM
Page 31: HERB DRYER, INSECT BITE RELIEF, LIQUID FERTILIZER
Page 32: HOUSEHOLD FERTILIZER, ANT KILLER
Page 33: Resource List

SPRING PLANTING

With spring planting on the horizon keep in mind is that you can use plastic forks, spoons and knives as row markers. All you need is a permanent marker to label them with. So save any of the plastic utensils as it won't be long until it is time to start planting the first seeds of the year.

TIRED TIRE GARDEN



If you have an abundant supply of, or a source for, old tires, you can use them to make a raised bed in your garden. Stack the tires one or two high in rows with about 30 inches between the rows. Dig down between the rows of tires and use that dirt to fill the tires.

You can also stack two rows, side by side, which creates a diamond-shaped space in the center of each row which can also be utilized for growing space.

You can use a jig saw to cut the top out of the upper tire in each stack to increase your growing area. Take an old blade and sharpen the back side, and then put it in your saw with the knife edge to the front.

SPUD STACKER

Another use for old car tires is to grow potatoes in them. Start your spuds in a tire that has had the top cut out and then filled with mulch (straw, compost, leaves, etc.). When the leaves of the plant are about 8 inches tall, add another tire which has had both the top and bottom cut out. Start adding mulch around the bottom

of the plant, a couple of inches at a time. When the mulch reaches the top of the tire, add another. Keep this up for about two months, or until your stack is four or five tires high. When the plants die back in the fall, just topple the stack and pick up the potatoes that are on the ground.

HUMMINGBIRD PLANTS

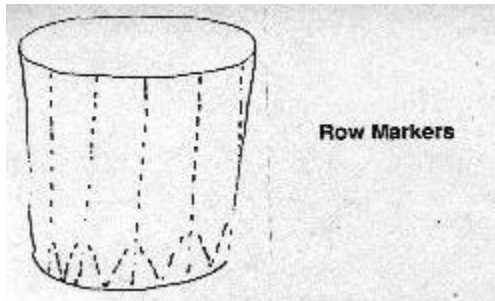
Something to keep in mind if you would like to attract hummingbirds to your yard next year, is that each of the following plants is a natural hummingbird feeder: Azalea, Dwarf Quince, Red Weigla, Clematis, Trumpet Vine, American Columbine, Day Lily, Coral Bells, BeeBalm, Red Salvia, Snap Dragon, Petunia, Nasturtium and Nicotinia.

HOT CAPS

With the garden planting season upon us, remember that milk jugs make better hot caps. By cutting the bottom out of the jug, it will sit over a plant with plenty of space. If it looks like a freeze, put the cap on; leave the cap off for ventilation during the day.

To store them, tie a stout string to the handle of one jug and then thread this up through the open top of the others. Since the bottom has been removed, they will sort of nest together and you can hang them from a rafter. You might even hang them from your fruit trees to maybe act as scarecrow?

ROW MARKERS



To make row markers, or plant identifiers, cut the bottom from a large container of cottage cheese (save the bottom) and then cut strips 1 ½ to 2 inches wide. These strips should be cut

from the bottom to the top and then pointed slightly at the bottom end. You can use a china marker or a grease pencil to write on them.

- Carole Macklin, Helena, MT
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SMALL SEEDS

Here's a method to plant small seeds, such as carrots. Place the seeds in a saucer and then pull a moist piece of cotton string, about twelve inches long, through the seeds. Do this just before planting, as the seeds will fall off as they dry. There will be an even coating of the seeds that adhere to the string and then all you do is plant the string. Being cotton, the string will decompose and the seeds will sprout in a straight line, evenly spaced.

SEED TRAYS

One use for empty milk cartons is to turn them into seed starting trays. Step one is to staple the top shut and then turn it on it's side. (That's step two). Now make a slit, length-wise, in the middle of the upper side, followed by cutting across each end so that the two halves will fold down inside the carton, where they are stapled. Once you have put some drain holes in the bottom of the tray, it is ready for some starting soil mix. You can place the tray on one of the styrofoam meat trays so that it doesn't leak on the table and it is ready for some seeds.

POTTING “ROCKS”

When you get ready to fill a pot with soil, instead of using rocks to aid drainage, break up a styrofoam tray and use pieces of it in the bottom of the pot.

SEED STARTERS

If you have any corn cobs left lying around your garden, doing nothing, now is the time to put them to work. By cutting the wide end from a cob, about 1 ½ to 2 inches long, and hollowing it out with a pocket knife, or a wide spade bit in your drill, you can create your own biodegradable seed starters. You will want to leave a very thin bottom in your bowl, which will be removed before you plant the seedling and pot in the garden. With the bottom removed, the seedling will continue to grow and the cob will slowly decompose, putting it's nutrients back into the ground.

POTTING SOIL

To sterilize some potting soil, place two or three inches of garden soil in a wheel barrow, or other flat container, and cover it with clear plastic. Place the covered soil out in the direct sun and let it cook for at least 8 hours, with an occasional stir. This solar sanitizer won't mess up your kitchen, either.

POTTING SOIL RECIPE

One recipe for potting soil is to mix equal parts of sterilized garden soil, peat moss and either sand or vermiculite.

MOON PLANTING

According to the *“Old Farmer's Almanac”* the best time to plant flowers and vegetable crops that bear above the ground is during the Light of the moon; that time from the day the moon is new until the day that it is full. For those crops that bear below the ground and for flowering bulbs, they should be planted during the Dark of

the moon; that period from the day after the full moon until the day before the new moon. So if you are going to 'plant by the light of the moon,' be sure to check your calendars and plan accordingly. You can go to

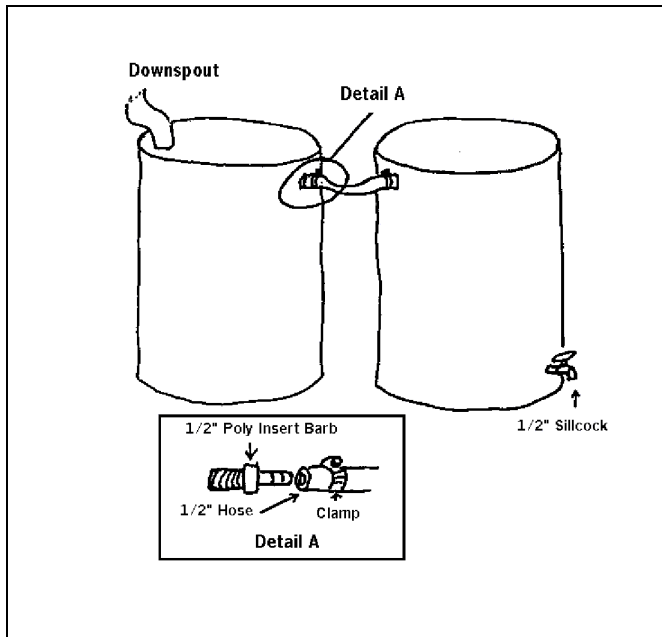
<http://aa.usno.navy.mil/AA/data/docs/MoonPhase.html> and pick your year to get a complete list of the phases for that year. This is information from the U.S. Naval Observatory.

PLANT COLLARS

Empty toilet paper rolls can be used as plant collars, to protect your seedlings from cut worms. Cut each roll in half and place it where you want to plant your seeds, then push it about an inch and a half into the ground. When the seed sprouts, it will be protected both above and below ground and you can just leave the collar there, as it is biodegradable.

BARREL IRRIGATOR

If you happen to have enough rainfall in your area to have need of a rain barrel, you can convert your rain barrel into an irrigator. If you don't have enough rain, you can always just fill the barrel from another source and then use it as an irrigator. To make a barrel into an irrigator, all you need to do is drill a 23/32 hole at the bottom.. (You could get away with a 3/4 inch hole for this application.) Now use a 1/2 inch pipe thread tap and tap the hole in order to screw in a 1/2 inch sillcock; a faucet. Now you can hook a garden hose up to the faucet and run your rainwater anywhere you want, as long as it's not uphill.

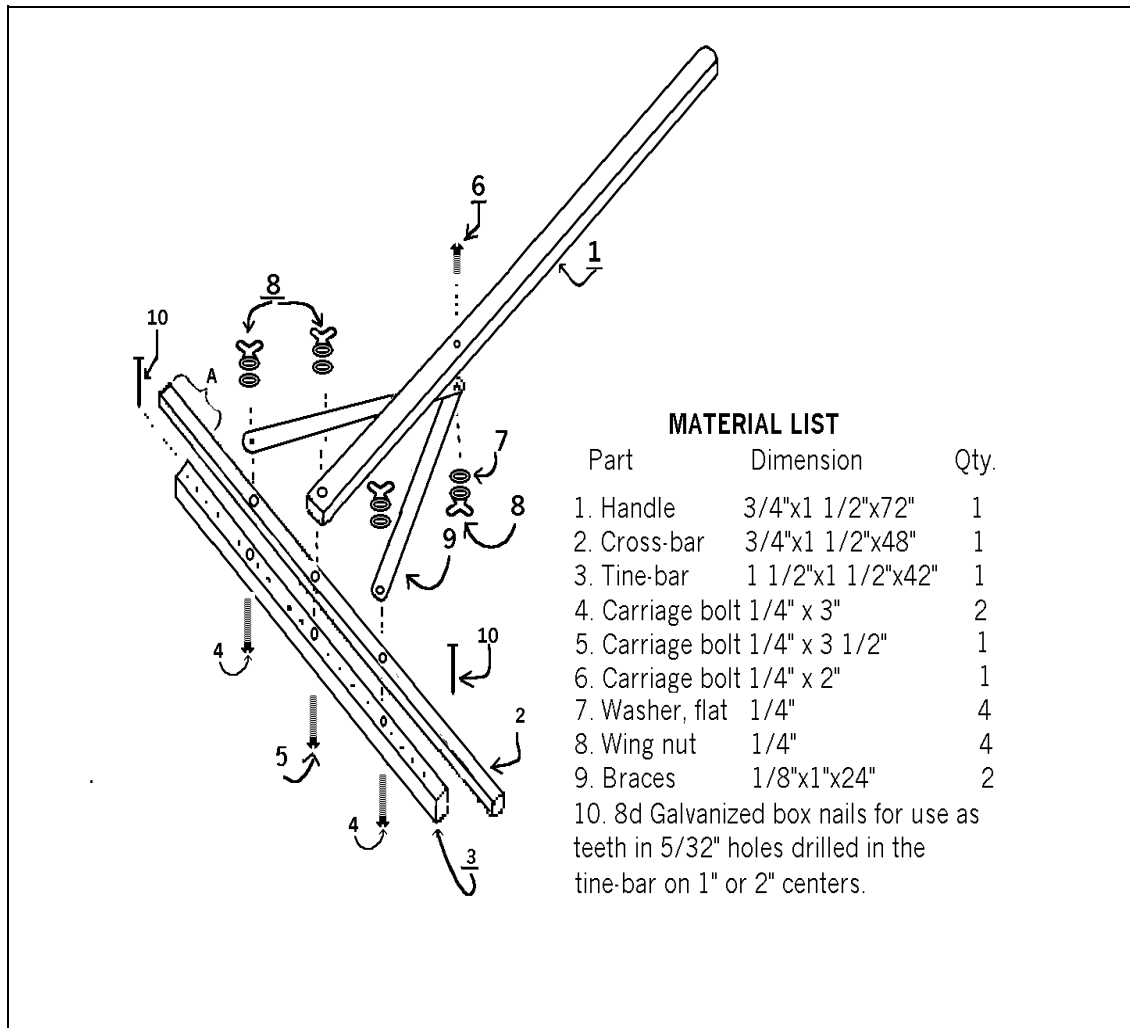


If you have a lot of rainfall and a lots of barrels, you can hook them together by simply running the overflow from one into the next. Using the same drill and tap, you can insert some 1/2 inch poly insert barbs (they are cheaper than setting up for screw-on attachments) and then run a section of 1/2 inch hose between the barbs on each barrel.

One of the advantages of using a barrel irrigator is that you can use it to feed your plants with home-grown liquid fertilizer. Sew together a large, heavy, cotton sack, with a drawstring top and simply fill it with any of the manures that you have available and then hang the full bag inside the barrel of water for a couple of hours before giving the “tea” to your plants. If you happen to have stinging nettle in your area, you can cut it up and use the same method to make a “nettle tea” which is a great plant tonic.

RAISED BED RAKE/LEVELER

It doesn't matter if you have raised beds or not, you will find that this rake/leveler has a couple of features that are slightly different from most rakes. The most obvious thing that stands out is the



width, which can be as wide as you want it. The second is the wing's cross-bar (2) being longer than the tine-bar (3).

The advantage to the extra width and the wings is in being able to let the wings ride on a solid surface, such as the sides of a raised bed, or a couple of 2 x 4's that are laid on edge on the ground.

The ground between the edges will be leveled 1 ½ inches below the upper surface if the rake is built to the dimensions shown in the parts list.

The leveling principle used by this rake is the same one that workers use when leveling the ground for a concrete sidewalk or driveway. The leveling board is moved back and forth over the area to be leveled, riding on the pre-set edges and the high spots are moved to the low spots until the surface is level.

By drilling the 5/32” holes on 1” or 2” centers in the tine-bar, and using 8d galvanized nails as teeth, you can set the distance between the teeth to suit the need. If you are going to use it as a wide rake, then put a nail in each hole. If you want to use it to mark parallel rows, then set the nails at the spacing you want.

If you have raised beds in your garden, you will want to construct your leveler/rake to fit and this is done by making the tine-bar (3) slightly smaller than the inside width of your narrowest bed and then make the cross-bar (2) so that it extends about 4 inches on each side. If there is a wide variation in the widths of your raised beds, you may want to make more than one rake, or maybe just more than one cross-bar.

PRE-GERMINATING SEEDS

Pre-germinating seeds is the same as growing sprouts, from what I can find in my books. So — let’s start by rinsing the seeds in a solution of one tbsp chlorine bleach to a quart of water for no more than two minutes, then rinse with clean tap water and drain (this prevents mold during germination). Put two layers of paper towels on a platter and moisten them, but don’t soak them.

Spread the seeds over the towels and then cover with a thin, plastic wrap. If the condensation on the plastic disappears, then remove it and mist the seeds. They must be kept moist, but not wet. They also must be kept warm, such as on top of the fridge.

REUSABLE SEED POTS

One way to help prevent transplant shock with your seedlings is to start them in a small yogurt or cottage cheese container. Cut the bottom from the container, put a couple of drain holes in the lid and then put the lid on the top. With the whole thing turned upside down, you can start your seedling, let it grow to transplant size, remove the lid from the bottom and slide the plant out into its permanent home in the garden. You can also leave the “pot” in place, maybe halfway removed, as a collar to protect against cutworms. And, of course, you can save each pot for the next season.

HOMEMADE SEED TAPES

(This is from the January 1991 *Organic Gardener*)

Cut 2 inch wide long strips of black and white (NOT colored) newsprint or tissue paper. Now make a paste with 1 tbsp of cornstarch or flour to 1 cup of water. Bring this mix to a boil and keep it there for about 2 minutes (until it is clear). Let this cool down and then place it in a squeeze dispenser, such as a mustard jar. Next, lay out the strips of paper and then place a dot of the paste at the recommended interval for whatever seed you are planting, and once the paste is in place, use a set of tweezers to transfer a seed to each spot and allow them to dry.

These tapes need to be used within two days, so don't get too far ahead of yourself. Also, when you do plant these tapes, make the row a little deeper than needed and put in a layer of peat moss or grass clippings and then place the tape on top and cover to the recommended depth. The moss or grass will help retain moisture right where it is needed.

GEL SEEDS

(This idea is from the September/October 1990 Organic Gardener)

An easy technique developed by Roger Kline, senior extension associate at Cornell University, provides an intermediate step between using transplants and direct seeding.

First, mix 1 tbsp of corn starch with 1 cup of water, boil and then allow to cool to a free-flowing gel. Second, add about one-eighth cup of pre-germinated seeds and pour the whole mix into a plastic sandwich bag. Seal the top and then cut a corner of the bag. Third, squeeze the gel and seeds into a shallow trench in the garden and cover. This works best with the small-seeded crops such as onions, mustard, spinach, lettuce and parsley. The larger-seeded crops, like peas, corn or squash, are harder to catch at the right stage of sprouting. Gel seeding allows neat planting of sprouts with less damage and stress than transplanting and produces better crop stands than bare seeding.

PLANTING AID

I found a sneaky way to improve the germination rate of things like carrots, radishes and lettuce: things that are direct seeded into the garden bed. I set some chopped-up mulch or peat moss into the row where I want my plants, a layer about half to three-quarters of an inch deep, wet it down good and then spread my seeds over the wet mulch. Next, I put a layer of sand, as thick as the recommended planting depth, right over the seeds and the mulch. The sand will allow the small seedlings to grow easily, the mulch keeps the seeds moist and since I have black sand, it keeps the soil warmer around the seeds

SEED FILES

They say that the first thing to go, with age, is the memory. I don't remember what goes next, but I did figure out a way to help me remember, from year to year, what I did and didn't like about that

particular strain of carrots that I planted two or three years ago. Instead of throwing out the empty seed package, I put a 3 x 5 file card inside the packet. I can write on the card the planting dates, germination rates, yield, taste, pest problems and so on. By sticking the card in the seed pack and the seed pack in a file box, I have an on-going reference to my successes and failures in the garden. For folks like us, who plant different strains each year, it is a help.

SMALL SEED PLANTING

A method of planting small seeds, such as carrot seeds, is to place some finely pulverized soil into a coffee can, add a package of seeds, cover the can and shake well. By planting the soil/seed mix, you will end up with a nice, even distribution of seeds and no loss from dropping them. Dried coffee grounds will work just as well as soil for this trick, as well as adding to the soil.

STYRO-LITE

If you are in need of some perlite or vermiculite to mix with your potting soil and it is 9:30 on a Saturday night, don't despair — just put a styrofoam tray into your blender and turn it on. The ground up styrofoam then could be called styro-lite and will serve the same purpose of creating a light soil mix that drains well.

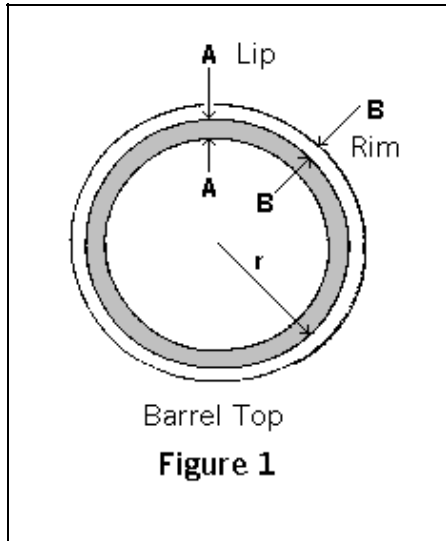
BLOCKS-O-WATER

A person could set four one-gallon milk jugs in a square and have a wall of water at far less than \$2 - \$2.50 each. A piece of old window plastic could be spread over them if there was a worry about frost.

THE 3R COMPOSTER

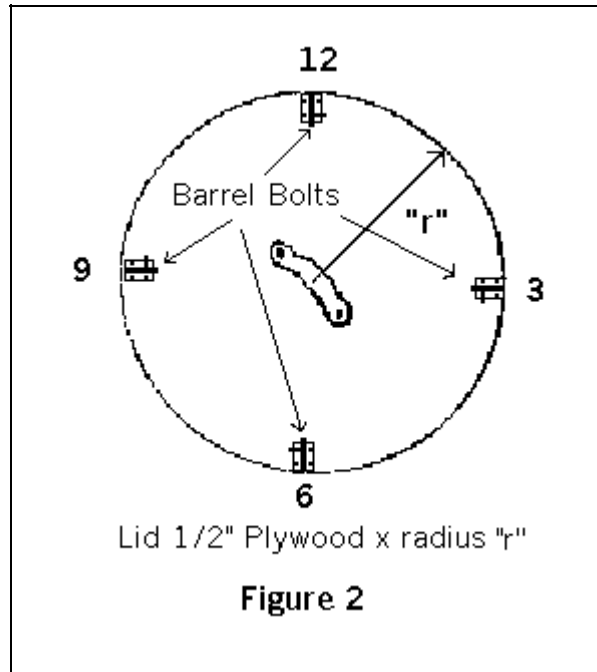
It has been said that the road to a well known hot spot is paved with good intentions. That sounds like the directions for finding my compost pile. I always have the good intentions of turning it on a

regular basis, checking the moisture content and all of that other stuff that's needed to be able to renew the soil, but I never seem to get it done.



Not any more! Besides being lazy, I'm cheap. So instead of spending \$129.95, plus freight to have a drum composter delivered, I built one of my own.

The first thing I did was to

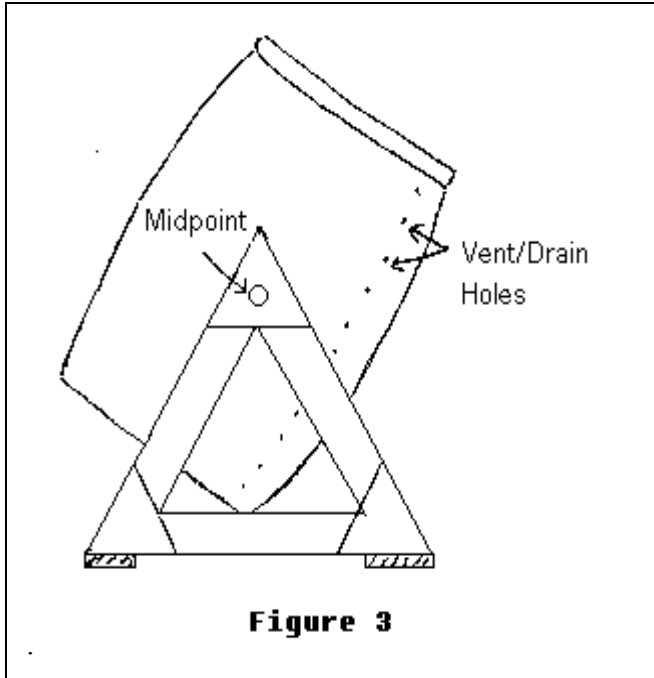


modify a 55 gallon, plastic barrel. (You need to be sure that whatever was inside barrel was non-toxic). The barrel had to be modified in such a manner that I could get a shovel inside of it and also be able to turn it

upside-down. I accomplished this by cutting out the top and leaving a lip (A-A, Figure 1) about one inch wide, inside the rim. (B-B, Figure 1.)

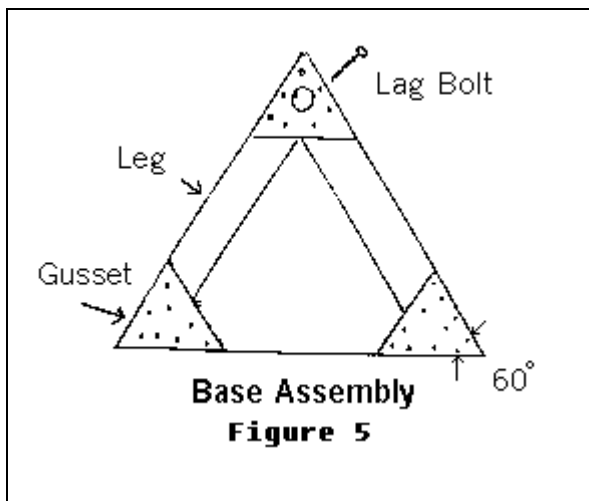
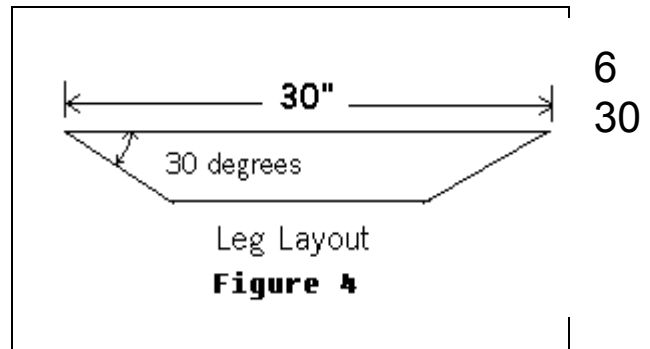
I then cut a piece of 1/2" plywood into a circle with a radius 'r' (Figure 2), that allowed it to fit inside the rim and sit on top of the lip. I mounted 4 barrel bolts on the plywood at 12,3,6 and 9 o'clock. (Fig. 2) These were mounted flush with the outside edge and then I drilled 4 holes in the rim for the bolts to fit into. The final touch was to add an old screen door handle.

your



The next step was to drill a hole on each side of the barrel, at mid-point. These holes were drilled with a hole saw and were large enough to allow a 1" pipe to be inserted through them. The final step on the barrel was to drill four sets of vent/drain holes, 5/16" in diameter, the length of the barrel. These sets were drilled at 12,5,6 and 7 o'clock, as viewed from the top of the barrel and the holes were set 2 inches apart.

Once the barrel was finished, I started on the base by cutting 2x4's to 30 inches long with a degree angle on each end (Figure 4). I also cut 6 triangular gussets, 8 inches on each side. Once the legs were positioned into two triangles, I screwed the gussets on each point with 1 1/4" drywall screws.



The next step was to use the hole saw and cut a hole in one point of each triangle, centered in a gusset, and large enough to take a 1" pipe. Now put two 28" 1x6's on the side opposite the point with the hole. These 1x6's were used to hold the bases in place while a 1" pipe was placed through one base, the barrel and then the

other base. I then drilled a ¼” hole through the edge of the base and through the pipe so that I could screw in a long lag bolt to hold the whole thing together.

Once the barrel was filled about 80% full, with shredded leaves, chicken manure, soil, etc., I added some water, closed the lid and spun the barrel around a few times. For the first three or four days, I would turn the barrel a couple of times, check the moisture level (add some water if it still felt dry) and then go feed the chickens.

Once the material felt evenly moistened, not wet, I just turned the barrel a couple of times each day and in about three weeks I had about 5 cubic feet of beautiful compost.

The first one worked so well, I built a second one and will probably put together a couple more of them if I get some extra time, or energy.

Oh — the reason I call them a “3R Composter” is because they are recycled, reusable and renewing (and my good intentions are a lot easier to follow through and complete).

ORGANIC PAPER SHREDDERS

If you like small, furry pets and would like some organic paper shredders to help with your recycling efforts — get some gerbils. Several gerbils can do a fine job of shredding the daily paper to the point that it is ready to go to the composter, on it's way to the garden as fertilizer.

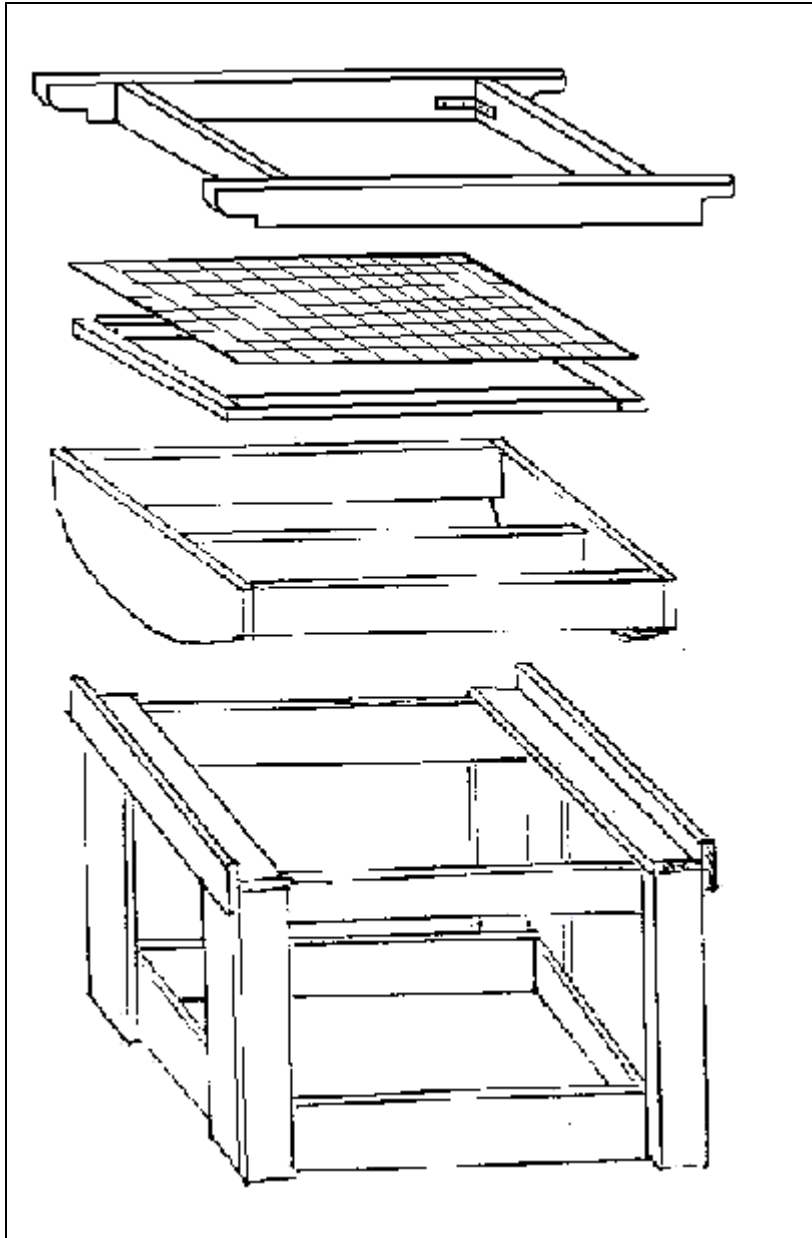
LEAF BAG HOLDER

If you have an old folding lawn chair that is in need of re-webbing, use it to hold your leaf bags first. Remove the old webbing, place the bag down through the seat and use the back and arms to hold the bag open. After all of the leaves are raked for the winter, then you can re-web the chair. Maybe you could time it out so that a different chair needs re-webbed each fall.

COMPOST SIFTER

Since I've included plans for a barrel composter, I thought that I should also show you an easy way to sift the compost that comes out of the barrel every three weeks or so. I use a screen like this when I empty my barrels and the stuff that doesn't go through the sifter goes on a tarp for putting back into the barrel when I refill it for the next batch.

You'll notice that I haven't put any sizes on the drawings. That is because this screen set-up can be built to accommodate whatever size is best for you. The size that I have is based on the fact that I have a recycled nylon chemical tank that once held 100 gallons of liquids, but not since I cut the bottom out of it. The inside measurements of this tank are 26" high by 24" x 30", with a lip that is 2" wide. I made my rocker to fit between the edges of the 34" lip, and then made the screen to fit inside the rocker. I ended up with a screen that is 20" x 30" inside, which will hold several shovels of compost at a time.

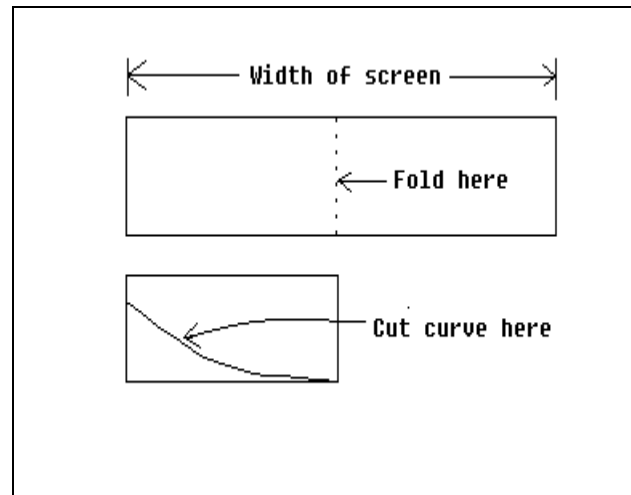


No matter what size you choose, here are some recommendations on construction techniques. Use $\frac{1}{2}$ " hardware cloth in the screen, since that is a good size for finished compost. I used "L" brackets on the inside corners of the screen and I made mine from 1 x 4"s and set the handles to a 2" width. On the rocker, you want the center brace to be set below the top edge the same distance as the amount cut out to make the handles on the screen. This allows the screen to

set into the rocker and not slide around on top of it. The end pieces on my rocker are 8" deep, with the curve starting $3\frac{1}{2}$ " down on each end. One way to duplicate the curves is to cut a piece of lightweight cardboard the same size as your end, fold it in half, lengthwise and then mark the open end $3\frac{1}{2}$ " down and then draw a curve from there to the bottom corner of the fold. When it is cut and opened out, you will have a template for each end of the rocker.

No matter what you make the base from, 1 x 4, 2 x 4, etc., I recommend that you definitely put a lip on the top to keep the rocker from walking off the edge. It wouldn't hurt to have a lip on the front and back also.

If you happen to have a chrome plating business in your neighborhood, you might check to see if they have any old tanks that you could recycle for them and then build your screen and rocker to fit whatever size tank you acquire.



SAFETY STUFFER

Anybody who has ever used a chipper/shredder knows that you have to push the leaves and grass into the hopper so that they can be chipped and shredded. One drawback is in finding something to push with that won't be hurt by being pushed too far, or that won't hurt the blades if that happens. The owner's manual that came with mine recommended rolled up cardboard, which works okay, but I found something else that works just as well and that is the dried stalks from last years sunflowers. Since they are difficult to dispose of, it is nice to find a use for them that will eventually have them disposed of in a useful way; both as a stuffer and then as mulch for the garden when you stuff too hard.

TARP HANDLES

If you use a tarp when you rake grass clippings, leaves and other lawn debris, and have trouble grasping it in order to move it, try using some of the heavy rubber tie-down straps that have the hook on the ends. They can be used to hold everything in the tarp as well as providing a handle for dragging it to your dumping site.

KNEELING PAD

If you are doing a lot of working your knees, such as gardening or putting new tile on the floor, you can make yourself a handy kneeling pad from an old hot water bottle. Fill it with some fine sand or sawdust and it will really be a friend to your knees.

GARDEN HOSE

Here are a couple of uses for old garden hose, such as splitting it length-wise and placing it on the top wire of your fence, right where you lean to gossip with the neighbor. It will protect your arms and clothes. You can use short sections, also split length-wise, to protect the edges on saws, axes, hoes and any other sharp instrument, like a scythe blade.

PESTICIDE HOT LINE

Although I am not in favor of using pesticides in my garden, I know there are people who do, and who will have questions that the label doesn't answer. If you are one of those questioning souls, file away this number, which is to the EPA's National Pesticide Telecommunications Network Hotline. 1-800-858-PEST. This number is good 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Pacific Time. (*I wonder if they take a day off on February 29th?*).

WHITE-TAILED DEER GUARD

Remember the bottom of the cottage cheese container that I told you to save when you were making your row markers? Well, now is the time to retrieve them for another application. If you will punch a hole by the edge, tie a string there for hanging purposes and then hang them around your garden, they will keep the deer away. Since white is a danger signal to the deer, It makes them very nervous to see danger signals all around the garden.

- Carole Mackin, Helena, MT

ANOTHER PEST REPELLANT

Another possible way to keep critters out of the garden is to hang up all of those old CDs that you get in the mail from the likes of AOL. Use monofilament line which is almost invisible, and they should just sort of hang there and spin and flash in the sunlight. You could also use them up under your eaves to keep birds away.

Remember that this is theoretical, as I haven't tried it, yet. When somebody does, please share your results with me and I'll pass them along.

WASP REMOVER

If you have some wasp nests hanging from your rafters, you can place some scented flypaper up-wind from the nests and the wasps will find themselves in a sticky situation.

SKUNK REPELLENT

If skunks start sleeping under your house during the daytime, try slipping a trouble light (turned on) under the house at night, while the skunks are out foraging through your garden. Since they prefer to sleep in the dark, they will pull up stakes and move elsewhere when they start to retire for the day and find their bedroom all lit up.

STRAWBERRY TRIMMER

Another use for a screen door handle is to place it on the bottom of a coffee can. Mark and drill the holes (or punch a hole with a nail) and use sheetmetal screws to hold it in place. Then remove the raised ring from the other end with some tin snips and you have a handy-dandy strawberry-runner trimmer. Just place the can over the parent plant, push down and twist. All of the runners will be trimmed.

BEE CALLER

Folklore says that if you bang a heavy spoon on a kettle, it will cause bees to swarm to a single tree for easy recovery of a disturbed hive. I haven't tried this one myself.

BIRD REPELLENT

The next time you are at the carnival, or the practical joke store, pick up a couple of rubber snakes. If you place them in your fruit trees, it will discourage the birds. You would probably want to move them every couple of days.

BUGS-AWAY

Here are a few tips to keep the bugs away so you can play: Don't wear perfume or use scented soaps or shampoos when you know you will be outside. The bugs are attracted to the sweet scents. They are also attracted to bright colors like red and yellow. White vinegar rubbed on the skin will help keep the pests at bay. Gnats don't like baby oil, so rubbing some on the exposed areas will help. If you have to use a fly swatter on a bee or wasp, spray him first with some water. This weights his wings down and he can't fly, thereby making him an easier target.

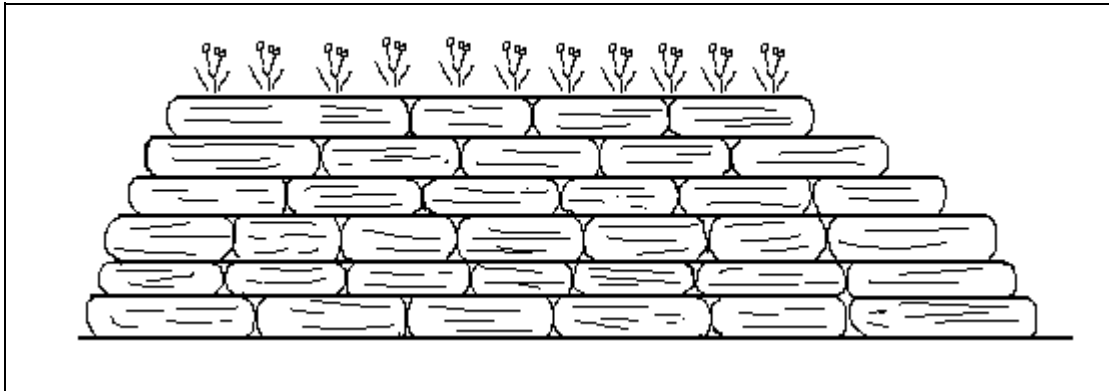
If you have any toads or bats around, let them do their own thing of eating bugs. The same goes for spiders: leave a *few* webs just to catch the flying critters that you don't want.

TIRED TIRE TERRACES

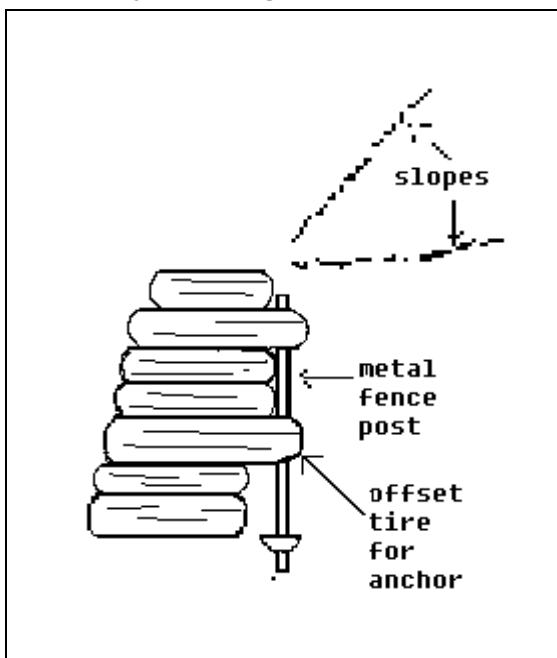
One way to recycle tired tires is to turn them into tasteful terraces by tidily tiering them. (Whew!)

Now I've got that out of my system, let's take a look at what I'm talking about. A tier is a layer, of course, and can be made of almost anything that can be stacked, and tires can be stacked.

When you get ready to start building a retaining wall, or a series of terraces, the first thing you will want to do is prepare the ground for the base of your wall. You need to dig out a trench that is about 8 - 12" deep and as wide as the tires that you are going to use at the bottom of your wall. Keep in mind that you will want to start the bottom with the largest tires and end at the top with the smallest, if you have a choice.



After you have laid out the base course, fill in each tire with the dirt that you dug out of the trench and then water it down good to help it settle.



Using different size tires, if possible, start your next course so that there is some overlap of the tires, so they don't go up in columns. If your design is such that you can just start the second tier with the outside, or end tires, pulled in by about half a tires diameter, then each tire will have a good overlap. Once the tier is in place, then fill it with dirt and rocks and again, water it down good. Continue building additional tiers until you have

reached the height you want, being sure to water and pack the soil in each layer.

If you are just going to build some shallow terraces, say three or four courses high, all you need to do is stack and fill the tires: gravity and friction will hold them in place. However, if you are going to build a fairly high retaining wall and there is a fairly steep slope above it, then you will want to set in some anchor tires at different intervals. An anchor tire is just one that is larger and is set so that it extends back into the hillside as much as possible. You can even drive a metal fence post into the ground, through the anchor tire(s), if you feel the need for a little more peace of mind. One rule that you will want to observe on any height wall is to 'batter' it (slope it to the rear) at a rate of 2" for every 1 foot of rise. Another trick that can be used to help insure a stable wall is to place rocks in the tires as you put in the fill dirt. If they are placed in such a manner as to extend between two courses, they will add to the strength of the wall.

One thing about building a wall with tires, you are going to have some areas of soil that will be exposed on each tier. These areas of soil can be planted with any variety of plants, from strawberries to ivy. One of the plants that we are looking at, to go along the top of our terraces, is *Microbiota decussata*. A neat, sprawling, shrub that resembles a trailing arborvitae. It only grows about 18" tall, but spreads to 7 or 8 feet. What I plan on doing is to keep the uphill side trimmed and let it spread down over the tires. I may have to weight the branches to get them to drop, but maybe not, as this shrub makes a good bank cover.

TOAD PATROL

If you are lucky, you have a toad that lives in your garden. If not, then maybe one of the neighborhood boys can find one for you. A toad is excellent at eating insects, such as cutworms, caterpillars, beetles, sow bugs, slugs, grasshoppers, grubs and moths, to name a few. Provide him with some shade and water and he'll eat all year long. We've got one that moves under the house in the

winter and we can hear him croaking from underneath the woodstove hearth almost every night.

SKEETER EATERS

If you have any ponds, puddles or stock tanks that the mosquitoes like to use for immoral purposes, like uncontrolled breeding, then add some goldfish as proctors. They love to eat the larvae and will also help control the algae. You can dip them out and bring them inside for the winter, if the need arises.

ANT REPELLENT

A couple of suggestions for controlling the annual invasion of your castle by the ant armies: sprinkle dry, crumbled bay leaves on the windowsills, around the doors and other places of entry or you can try putting some ground cinnamon on the ant trails themselves. Both methods are non-toxic to little ones (kids) and they also smell nice.

ANT REPELLENT II

Another remedy for the annual ant invasion is to wash the counter tops, cabinets and floors with a 50/50 mix of vinegar and water.

A WHOLE BUNCH MORE ON ANTS

From “Mike Webb”

I’ve always used Terro ant killer for sugar ants and it’s worked pretty well (as well as very cheap). It’s a thick arsenic solution that you put on a small square of cardboard. Once the ants find it, they’re around that drop of Terro like spokes on a wheel. You can probably find it in a hardware store like your local Ace Hardware or True Value.

Obviously, **EXTREME** caution should be used in a home with small children.

From Karen Wheless

I had trouble with Terro. The ants would never carry it away (how are they supposed to carry a syrup, anyway?). They would just stand at the edge of the drop and eat the syrup until they died. Then another ant would come, and another, but they'd never go back

and feed it to the queen. I had better luck with something more portable. I mixed the terro with bread crumbs or cake crumbs, so the pieces were about the size for an ant to carry away. This worked great, the ants picked up the crumb pieces and took them to

the queen, I presume, because after 2-3 days they stopped coming back.

From Susanne koenig

I had an ant problem when I lived in Tulsa. I notice they all died after crawling over some Comet I didn't get while cleaning up. So I made a Comet paste (spray the area with water and cover with Comet, then spritz again) and they all died. I put it where it would plug up the crack they were marching through. Comet runs .65 cents a can. I don't know how much boric acid runs.

From Tom Bach

I've heard of Boric acid & baking soda being effective for cockroaches, but never could prove it. I tried a recipe of baking soda + peanut butter without any takers. Boric acid (powder) was supposed to clog their little pores or something and baking powder

to cause their bellies to inflate (and explode?).

From Cindy

There is a cleaning product called Simple Green. It is really mild, but it kills ants. Just spray where they are coming in. Somebody told me sprinkling baking soda will work too. You're lucky. At least you know where they are entering. I just find them milling around aimlessly on my bathroom floor. I don't have a clue where they are coming in.

From OLSMARIE

I use Cayenne red pepper - it works - worked at my daughter's house also.

From JLynnOne

Try using instant cream of wheat....make sure the ground is dry of course, sprinkle the instant cream of wheat on the ground around the mound, the worker ants will bring it in and feed it to the queen, when they eat it, it expands, killing them We have horses and have to be careful what we put on the ground, and believe me this works. I'm not sure about sugar ants....we use the cream of wheat when we find fire ant mounds.

"Elaine Gallant"

then asked: Does the cream of wheat really work on the fire ant mound?

(answer)It's working for us.... I am very pleased with it and will never buy poison again :-)

I also use it in my plants too.....fire ants were making homes in my potted plants on the deck, I live in Texas and fire ants are all over the place here, except in my yard, so it must be working :=)

It might work on those sugar ants too if you try mixing a little powdered sugar in the cream of wheat

From Penny

Have had the sugar ant problem from time to time over the years. The most effective stuff we've found is called Terro. It's basically a thick sugar syrup with boric acid in it. You pour a little blob of Terro onto a small piece of cardboard and leave it somewhere where the ants are likely to find it—but not on the floor where pets could get it, nor in the middle of a workspace where it'll be in your way. (We tended to use a remote corner of the kitchen counter.) First an ant or two will come and sample the stuff... then he'll tell his buddies. After a day or so, you'll see ants swarming around the syrup like office workers

around a box of free donuts. They'll keep coming back for more, and then, hauntingly, after a day or two no more ants will come. Chant a sutra for the ants, because they Are No More.

On Being Frugal: I had corn syrup and boric acid powder on hand so I tried making my own Terro equivalent, but it was messy and not as thick and blobby. Terro was cheap enough, and effective enough, that I felt okay spending money to buy it.

WASP TRAP

My neighbor Ethyl Cutting told me about this today when I stopped by for a short visit. Take an empty one gallon milk jug or liter soda bottle and cut a hole (about 3 inches across) in two sides. Now take a heavy string, run it down through the mouth of the jug and tie it to a chicken leg, or wing (scraps) and then pull it up inside the jug. Use the string to hang the jug up outside, and then put about an inch of water with a couple of tablespoons of vegetable oil in the bottom of the jug. When the wasps drop of their dinner, they will land in the oil/water before they can fly away thus becoming stuck in the oil.

SEED FUNGI

If you are one of the many seed savers and have problems with fungi on your seeds, try soaking them in a solution of one part chlorine bleach to nine parts water. If you will do this for 10 to 15 minutes, right before you plant the seeds, there should be no live fungi left on the seeds.

TREE PROTECTOR

To protect your young trees and other plants from being damaged by a "line edger," place some 4 inch PVC drainpipe around the base. Slit a 6 inch piece length-wise and then duct tape it back together over whatever you want to protect.

WEED CONTROL

Now that spring is here, you may have noticed that there doesn't seem to be any weeds growing in the cracks of your sidewalk where you salted it down last winter. If you take a pan of boiling salt water, 1 cup per gallon, and pour it over any weeds or grass that are growing in the sidewalk cracks and they, too, will disappear.

SUCKER STOPPER

The next time you cut down a tree and want to put a stop to the suckers that invariably crop up, pour about a half-gallon of Purex onto the stump. It should kill it dead and prevent any suckers from sticking their noses up in the air.

STUMP BURNER

An empty 55 gallon barrel (metal) that has both the top and bottom removed can be an effective stump remover. Cut a six inch hole in the side, next to the bottom. Place the barrel over the stump to be removed and then start a fire inside the barrel. The hole in the side will act as a draft and you can burn out a stump in

about 24 hours. Just keep the fire going all day and then let it smolder all night.

TERRARIUM

To make a small terrarium, cut the bottom from a two liter soda bottle, about two inches above the colored base. Now remove the colored base; soaking in hot water helps loosen the glue that holds them together. Once they are separated, make four cuts in the edge of the clear piece, equidistant from each other; about one inch deep. The colored base already has drain holes, so just fill it with potting soil and then place the clear cover over the seeds or the plant that you have planted. The four cuts allow for opposing sides to be either inside or outside the base to help secure the top in place.

HERB DRYER

Two window screens that are hinged together can be suspended over the kitchen stove and used for drying herbs. You want to be sure that the bottom screen, at least, has nylon screen instead of metal screening.

INSECT BITE RELIEF

One of my friends, Joe Leonard of Bliss, ID told me about this one yesterday. He said that he is allergic to horsefly bites. He usually swells up extensively when he gets bit. Well, a couple of days ago, he got bit and for some reason grabbed a leaf from a close-by stinging nettle plant and rubbed it over the bite area. No Swelling!!!

LIQUID FERTILIZER

One of the advantages of using a barrel irrigator is that you can use it to feed your plants with home-grown liquid fertilizer. Sew together a large (12" x 24"), heavy, cotton sack, with a drawstring top and then simply fill it with any dried manure (chicken, rabbit, etc) that you have available. Hang it inside the barrel and let it brew up a tea for a couple of hours before watering your plants. If you happen to have stinging nettle in your area, you can cut it up and use it to make a "nettle tea", which is a great plant tonic

HOUSEHOLD FERTILIZER

One of the many chemicals that farmers spread around on their crops is ammonia. This is the same basic stuff as the ammonia that is used in the house for cleaning. As long as you have just ammonia, with no additives, you can use it as a fertilizer. Mix two teaspoons to a gallon of water and then use it to feed your plants every month or so. Like any fertilizer, be careful not to give the plants too much of a good thing.

ANT KILLER

An ecologically sound ant killer can be made by mixing equal parts of borax and powdered sugar. Just set it out on a rock or board by the ant nest.

If you just want to keep them out of the house, you can sprinkle dry, crumbled Bay Leaves or Cinnamon on the window sills, around doors, and on the ant trails themselves.

Well that's it. I hope you enjoyed this reprint of The Non-Consumers Digest, Volume II. If you did please feel free to share it with your friends and if you have any feedback or comments I'd love to receive them: Just drop me an email to knight@nonconsumers.ws



Besides publishing the Non-Consumers Digest, I also carve jewelry from elk antlers. (The above is a 1 1/2"x1 1/2" pin)

[My Antler Carvings](#)

You can see details of my other Non-Consumer Publications here:

[Non-Consumers Digest, Volume 1](#)

[Non-Consumers Digest, Volume 2](#)

[Non-Consumers Digest, Volume 3](#)

[The Forever Strawberry Bed](#)

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[Super Market Savings 101](#)

[Making Dollars out of Cents](#)

[Frugal RV Travel](#)
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