

A PEAVEY INDUSTRIES PUBLICATION | FALL 2022

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# GREETINGS

## A MESSAGE FROM PEAVEY INDUSTRIES LP PRESIDENT AND CEO, DOUG ANDERSON

**W**elcome to the Fall 2022 issue of Connected to the Land. Harvest is a great time of year to witness the stunning rural beauty of Canada – with the sun setting on fields of gold as far as the eye can see. At Peavey, and as Canadians, we are grateful for the hard work and life-long dedication of the ag. industry individuals, families and businesses that sustain us all. We are proud to be there for them and provide as much support as we can in our stores every day.

This issue includes articles for the outdoorsy type; though, overall we have endeavoured to provide a little something for everyone once again. Ever popular with our readers, we have again provided a couple of recipes for comfort foods with fall harvest ingredients!

I hope you enjoy the Fall 2022 issue as much as the last, and if this is your first, welcome to Connected to the Land. Please share any comments or suggestions by email to [feedback@peaveyindustries.com](mailto:feedback@peaveyindustries.com). We look forward to hearing from you.

I invite you to check out [connectedtotheland.info](http://connectedtotheland.info) for more great information, insights and how-tos. 🍁

*Doug Anderson*

Photo by Drew Kenworthy.

# DON'T MISS AN ISSUE!

Our most recent magazines are online at [connectedtotheland.info](http://connectedtotheland.info)



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# 2022 Recipients



## Community Agricultural Grant

### THE CAMPUS FOOD BANK COMMUNITY PANTRY



**Location:** Edmonton, Alberta

**Grant Amount:** \$10,000

**Scope of Project:** Located on the University of Alberta campus, demand for supplementary food hampers has increased by 150% over the course of the past year. The community pantry pilot program will allow them to double their on-campus footprint while also providing more accessible (24/7) and discrete options for people using their services.

### THE CONSERVATION LEARNING CENTRE'S COLD FRAME PROJECT

**Location:** Prince Albert, Saskatchewan **Grant Amount:** \$40,000

**Scope of Project:** Utilizing two large cold frames, the Conservation Learning Centre (CLC) aims to improve food security and agricultural awareness within their community. With this grant, they will purchase two 96' x 20' gothic cold frame greenhouses. The first will serve as a community garden and the second will be a devoted research and development space.



### THE KWESELTKEN PROJECT



**Location:** Kamloops, British Columbia

**Grant Amount:** \$40,000

**Scope of Project:** The Kweseltken Kitchen and Market, led by the Community Futures Development Fund of the Central Interior First Nations, helps to address barriers, encourage participation, and create an Indigenous agriculture sector that will increase community economic development, food sovereignty, and self-sufficiency.

### THE PROTECTING FARMLAND & NATURAL AREAS OF PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY PROJECT

**Location:** Prince Edward County, Ontario

**Grant Amount:** \$10,000

**Scope of Project:** Under the umbrella of the Ontario Farmland Trust, the goal of this project is to create a cluster of protected farms in Prince Edward County (PEC), Ontario to strengthen both the agricultural and natural land base within the region. With this grant, they will be securing protected status for the Bazett-Jones Family Farms, making it their second protected farm in PEC, and increasing their total protected acreage in the region from 208 up to 413 acres.





# SOLAR: Powering your world with the sun!

*Story by Peg Strankman.*

**F**rom garden sunflower stakes to livestock fencing and waterers, almost everything can be powered by solar these days. The solar-powered rechargeable batteries are becoming much more efficient and hold their charge longer.

Solar lighting is a favourite for gardeners. Very inexpensive to run, there are lights to fit on top of your fence posts and light stakes that can be stuck in the ground to light up your walkway.

Solar-powered lights can be easily and safely attached to your trees or show the way with a solar lamp post and planter. This 78-inch-high lamp post has three lanterns, with six bright white LEDs per head, that automatically turn on at dusk and off at dawn. You can plant flowers in the bottom planter or use the ground mount to make it a more permanent structure.

From elegant to kitschy, there is a solar-powered garden ornament for you. Lilies, butterflies, lighthouses, succulent glass jars and antique tractors can all be readily found in store.

Solar fencing has been a major boon to livestock farmers. Now it is possible to fence areas well away from conventional electricity. Solar-powered fencing is particularly useful in riparian areas to manage livestock movement near the water. Easily and quickly, the fencing can be set up to restrict livestock from spending too much time there during sensitive times such as spring when banks are soft, then remove it later in the season so livestock can graze the grasses to rejuvenate for wildlife and birds.

Gallagher S100 100-acre solar fencer energizer might be just what you need to power your electric fences. Ideal for managed rotational

grazing, the battery save technology extends usage up to three weeks without sun. It has a built-in solar panel to charge the battery and has a 360-degree mounting capability.

There are also various solar water pumping systems which include solar pump controller, 50-foot standard pump cable, safety rope, 1/2" fitting kit, "Quick-Connect" MC-4 wiring, solar panel module and a rack mount. It's a simple 'do-it-yourself' installation—no special tools needed.

Many people like to aerate their ponds to improve water quality and reduce algae and weed growth. Particularly important if you have fish in your pond but also to keep down the growth of blue-green algae. The Koenders Solar Aeration System DC300, which is designed for small pond aeration.

If electric or windmill aeration is not possible, this is an energy-efficient, cost-effective option to get oxygen into dugouts and ponds. If you are looking to minimize your environmental footprint and decrease your energy bills, this might be the option for you.

The Coleman Watt Solar Cabin Hybrid Kit is a unique system designed for off-grid living. It comes in a variety of sizes, with 850 watts being the largest. Works great for off-grid homes and for backup power for remote cabins. There is a 12 V battery charging and solar power stations providing clean, maintenance-free power utilizing solar and wind power for 24-hour charging capabilities. It's easy to set up this 12-volt off-grid hybrid system.

Floodlights can be very useful in your house yard or a more remote location. The solar + LED floodlight 1600 has a built-in 9.5-watt solar panel. The lithium-ion battery powers the 1600 Lumen solar LED flood light for three nights on a single charge.

A slightly different twist on solar power is the Coleman 5-Gallon Solar Shower. It's made of a heat-locking material that warms up the water as the sun hits the bag. Take it out camping and always have warm water.

Maybe you are looking for electric netting to keep livestock in or predators out.

You can use electric poultry netting. It can be used as a permanent fence or temporary fencing. It can be connected to a solar energizer or any low-impedance energizer.

After all the work is done, you can even relax under a solar lighted umbrella that has a solar panel at the top, that powers lights along the umbrella ribs for many hours. The canopy is a durable polyester. The base requires weighted base stones.

Perhaps a solar-powered sprinkler is what you need to humanely repel animals from your yard. The motion sensor allows you to set the detection and spray range. Battery powered at night and solar powered by day, it's round-the-clock protection. 🍁

*Peg Strankman enjoys the challenge of using her communication skills to share agriculture's story to the general public and bringing consumer issues back to producers. She also became an auditor for Where Food Comes From. Her passion for the agricultural landscape resulted in a Masters exploring a land performance framework as a basis for sustainability. She grew up on a cattle and grain farm north of Oyen and currently lives just outside Airdrie.*



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- **Agri-Blok™ - 10:10 Range Cattle Mineral** - is designed to be fed free-choice, and would normally be fed when legume or legume-grass forages make up most of the diet. It is particularly useful when forage rations are used without grain feeding after calving. Additional Salt Not Required.

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- **Equest™ - 17% Horse Crunch** - Based on dehydrated alfalfa, oats, and peas, Contains B-Complex vitamins for stress, Available in 25 Kg & 1.5 Kg treat size

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# GOATS

## MORE THAN MANAGING VEGETATION

*Story by Peg Strankman.*

**G**oats are not as well-known in Canada as some other countries, but there are approximately 225,000 goats in Canada with about half raised in Ontario. Mallory Kaiser, president of the Alberta Goat Association says there are about 20 breeds of goats in Canada with about a dozen being commonly raised.

Kaiser says there are five different goat industries: meat, dairy, vegetation control, fibre, and recreation. Meat and dairy are the primary industries but use for vegetation control is growing.

Boer, Spanish and Kiko are popular meat breeds. Mallory, husband Shaun and boys Kaz and Zak have focused on raising the Kiko breed primarily for meat and selling breeding stock. The Kikos come from New Zealand and were developed from a mix of escaped breeds that had gone feral.

Goat meat (chevon) is similar to lean beef in cholesterol and fat. Kaiser says the demand for goat meat is increasing, driven primarily by demand from the growing ethic community. People are bringing their traditional recipes from across the world, and many include

cooking with goat meat. Currently Canada imports large amounts of goat meat from Australia and New Zealand to help meet the Canadian demand.

Alpine, Saanen, Toggenburg, Nubian, LaMancha, and Oberhasli are the main dairy breeds in Canada. The Nubians are known for high butterfat content in their milk. Saanens produce the highest volume of milk.

Goat milk is similar to cows' milk in protein, fat, and carbohydrates, but goat milk is easier to digest because the fat globules are much smaller. This means people with cow milk allergies can often tolerate goat milk. Kaiser says Alberta has several large goat dairy farms; the largest being near Rock Ridge Farms near Ponoka.

There are an increasing number of federally inspected goat dairies in Canada that are expanding into the lucrative export market.

Goat fibre is prized in both the cottage industry and commercial markets. "Demand for mohair and cashmere is growing and both come from goats. All goats have an undercoat they shed in spring. However, the most prized

fibre comes from Spanish goats and is brushed out from the outer guard hairs in the spring," says Kaiser.

Angora goats produce mohair. It's angora rabbits from the same region in Turkey that produce angora fur. The Angora goats are shorn twice a year. Angora is commonly used for soft and luxurious sweaters but sometimes also used for saddles cinches because it's such a strong fibre, says Kaiser. It's strong because it's hair, not wool.

Goats are also being used in many cities in Canada to combat invasive plants and manage vegetation that could otherwise be a wildfire risk. Goats are browsers not grazers, so they like to munch on woody brush. They prefer weeds like leafy spurge, absinthe and Canada thistle to grass, so can be herded through weed infested native grassland to selectively eat the weeds. They digest the weed seeds and invasive vegetation leaving behind amendments that enrich the soil increasing its potential to hold water.

Recreation is the fifth goat industry in Canada. You may have heard of goat yoga. It's usually the Nigerian and pigmy goats used for this.

Photo by Peg Strankman.



They are smaller and playful and often found in petting zoos.

Kaiser says that goats are quite adaptable to the Canadian environment, but they really don't like to get wet. Providing them with a shelter or brush and trees to get out of wind, rain or snow is a good idea.

Dairy goats need more attention than meat goats. They need more warmth so usually have access to barns rather than open shelters.

"Although they are browsers, goats do well on good grass hay or alfalfa/grass hay," says Kaiser, "alfalfa hay particularly when closer to end of gestation".

Goats coexist well with other livestock species. Kaiser says when pasture grazing, put the goats in first. They will eat the tops off the grasses and look for the weeds. Then species like sheep or cattle will graze the lower parts of the grasses.

"Goats enjoy browsing the discarded Christmas trees. The tannins in the conifers acts as an anti-parasitic," says Kaiser.

Adding goats to your agricultural operation can be positive for many reasons but fencing is perhaps the most challenging part. Goats are adventurous, curious and can be very athletic, doing a lot of climbing and jumping.

There are two popular types of fencing for goats: plank fences and electric fences. Woven wire fencing is not recommended since goats quickly learn to climb on it. 🍁

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# OUTDOOR WINTER FUN

## GET OUT AND MAKE TRACKS

*Story and photos by Myrna Pearman.*

**W**inter—fraught as it is with cold temperatures, blizzards, hazardous roads and deep snow—is a season to embrace and celebrate. Getting outdoors is essential for our physical, spiritual and mental well-being, so instead of viewing the season as a temporary curtailment of summer fun, consider how many unique opportunities winter can provide!

Winter transforms the earth into a new and exciting landscape. For children, a fresh snowfall is like a new white slate upon which they can joyously experience creative play. For adults who enjoy being outdoors, frozen lakes and rivers, and an earth blanketed by a quilt of beautiful snow, means that vast tracts of previously inaccessible habitats can be explored (mosquito-free!). Tracks and other signs of wildlife activity, which are difficult to detect during other seasons, add interest and wonder to winter rambles. And for photographers, winter wildlife and winter landscapes provide unique and exciting opportunities and challenges.

Urban centres and most municipal/provincial/national parks maintain trail systems for the benefit of winter use, including walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and winter cycling. Some municipalities add lighting to their trail systems, providing even

more opportunities for residents to spend time outdoors.

Hockey is a quintessential Canadian winter pastime for both participants and observers. Most communities support this sport, making participation available for all, including new Canadians and young children. Contact your local arena or recreation department for hockey programs in your area.

Downhill skiing and snowboarding are other classic winter sports. Skiing at large resorts in the mountains can be cost-prohibitive, so small local ski hills are a great way to learn to ski or snowboard and enjoy this sport closer to home.

Skating is another great winter solo or family activity. Check your local arena for public skating time slots or see what is available at local outdoor community rinks. Some towns and cities also create skating areas on local lakes or rivers, which provide fun ways for both young and old to socialize while enjoying fresh air and exercise. Occasionally, ponds and lakes freeze up before it snows. Once the ice thickens on these water bodies to a safe level, a unique and even surreal skating experience—gliding effortlessly while peering down into watery depths—can be savoured.

Tobogganing is another quintessential winter activity that can be enjoyed by the whole family. In both urban and rural areas, local hills are often a popular gathering spot for families to share the joy of this simple yet invigorating activity. And what better way to cap off a day of tobogganing than with an outdoor fire and hot dog roast!

For those who enjoy motorized winter sports, a snow-covered landscape opens up vast playgrounds to explore. In areas where access is allowed, farm fields, public lands and other designated areas become available for winter use.

Given the long hours of darkness, especially during the dead of winter, star gazing is another activity that can entertain and engage. With many apps now available which show the location of celestial bodies, it is easy to simply hold a cell phone up to the sky and be wowed by the universe. Many major centres also have astronomy clubs which host public events during the winter.

Winter can be isolating, so staying physically and mentally active and participating in group activities helps keep us engaged during the long dark months. Whether the shared activities are sedentary (e.g., card playing or book clubs), moderately active (e.g., curling,

bowling, walking), or more strenuous (e.g., running, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter cycling), being with others is important for our overall well-being.

Most communities host special carnivals and festivals during the winter months, providing a range of engaging and interesting events for their citizens. These events range from pond hockey competitions and ice sculpture demonstrations to polar dips and dog sledding. Whether joining in as a volunteer or participating, these festivals and events are a great way to have winter fun, meet your neighbours and support your local community.

Another popular winter hobby is bird feeding. Many overwintering bird species are attracted to backyard bird feeders, and watching the busy activity of chickadees, woodpeckers and other winter birds is a way to bring nature into our own yards and gardens. For keeners, documenting feeder bird species can contribute to science through Project FeederWatch (<https://feederwatch.org/>).

For those who enjoy bird watching beyond the kitchen window, winter also provides a great opportunity to get outside and enjoy winter bird watching. Birding provides a good reason to get outdoors, and it adds both purpose and interest to any outdoor ramble. Many communities have nature clubs which host regular meetings over the winter, offer field trips, and host an annual Christmas Bird



Count. Check with your local nature centre or Nature Canada's Nature Network for clubs and activities in your area: <https://naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/building-a-nature-community/nature-network/>.

Sometimes it is simply too cold or stormy, or the roads too dangerous, to venture outside. During these times, curling up with a good book, connecting with friends by phone or electronically, catching up on movies, learning new skills, musical instruments or crafts, and (maybe finally!) tackling long-awaited projects are all positive and productive ways to spend winter hours.

So, while we might tire of the snow, the cold and the dark—or whatever else a Canadian winter can throw our way—there are also many ways to have winter fun! 🍁

*Myrna Pearman is a retired biologist and an enthusiastic nature photographer, writer, kayaker and backroads rambler. She has authored and co-authored several books, and is a columnist for The Red Deer Advocate, Nature Alberta and The Gardener. She was recently recognized as a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS) and is an RCGS Travel Ambassador. She retired from Ellis Bird Farm in 2019, after spending 33 years spearheading several conservation, research and education programs. She is currently the Resident Naturalist at Mother Nature's Seeds, maintains a blog on her website ([www.myrnapearman.com](http://www.myrnapearman.com)), spearheads a program to document natural areas in Central Alberta ([www.naturecentral.org](http://www.naturecentral.org)) and regularly shares nature photos and commentary on social media.*



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# PREPARING FOR SPRING

## HOP TO IT, BEFORE WINTER COMES

Story by Dan Kerr

**W**hen my lovely wife suggested I construct a garden shed to clean out the garage, I thought it was a wonderful idea.

If your intention for the spring is to finish building a structure that requires a poured concrete footing, then those footings have to get done before the frost hits. Frost footings will require you to go down deeper than the frost level and should be built as per the building code. If blocks are used for the foundation, the top layer should be capped to prevent the accumulation of moisture inside the cells preventing freezing and cracking.

An alternative to a frost foundation is a floating pad. I built a backyard garden shed without a permit under the township restrictions of only 100 square feet. I started with a good 12 inches of gravel base and then used reinforcing rebar in the pad. I then laid a single course of blocks around the pad parameter for the structure to stand on to keep the wood away from the elements. As there was no height restriction, I used 10-foot studs and then stick-built the rafters. The rafters extended out past the walls on both sides 12 feet and nested to a ledger attached to three poles (each side) set in the ground. The result was a 12' x 8' shed with a carport on either side

for my box trailer, ladders, kayaks and other knickknacks that needed a roof. As the lean twos or carports only had gravel floors, they are not considered part of the square footage of the building, just like roofing.

Both of these are great choices, but the concrete must be poured before the frost gets here, allowing enough time for a good cure. Time after pour: 48 hours you can remove the forms, seven days you can run vehicles over it and 28 days for a full cure, all with no frost. Now is the time to put on surface protection, such as paint or acrylic.

If you are going to build a pole-type structure, you want to get the poles in before the ground freezes. It can be done during the frost but will be hard on the equipment and workers. Even if you are going to set up a fence or trellis, if it requires drilling the earth to make it happen, it's best to plan ahead and do it before the frost.

Surprisingly, driving 'T' bar fence posts in the winter does not pose any real problem. Using either an electric or manual driver isn't really noticeable despite the time of year, except that after the frost, you don't have to stop every fourth stroke to swat mosquitoes.

If you are going to build a stationary chicken coop or a rabbit hutch, you might want to go for a floating pad for rodent protection. Again, using the parameter concrete block base. An excellent alternative for the chickens is a mobile unit which, if built correctly, will allow them a secure fresh range every time it is moved.

Beehives are best on a concrete pad again for rodents. The fence posts should be installed outside of the pad so they can be easily changed off when the bear smashes them. Even with electric fencing, an ornery bear can be very destructive. Here again, the 'T' bar fence post could be of great value, easy to install at any time of year and cheap to replace.

Trellises for vineyards usually use small-diameter wooden fence posts set with an auger or driver. Depending on the type of trellis you choose, the tensioning ends can require some interesting work that does not go well when the ground is frozen. Installed well ahead of time also allows for the ground to settle around the posts adding a fortification to the installation. Producing vines can top 50 pounds per plant, which is a considerable amount of weight to the end tensioners, so they have to be right.

Greenhouses come in many configurations. Some require a frost foundation; others just sit on the ground on patio stones. If you have glass for glazing, you want a frost foundation or floating pad to prevent movement. If you use acrylic glazing, you can get away with stones on the ground to an extent. Too much flex, and the attachments will just pop out.

Ponds are a totally different thing. Unless you are putting in a frog pond where you dig a hole with a shovel, drop in a liner, add water, goldfish and stir, you may want to phone your insurance broker and ask their opinion first. If digging a large pond, there are pros and cons to the time of year you dig. Some pros to frost are areas that are mushy will get a little firmer with frost, and because the moisture is frozen, there is less clumping of material removed. You will also be able to seed down just before the thaw. The biggest con is the wear and tear on the equipment and workers doing the job. If it's a deep frost, the equipment needed to dig will have to be robust, which starts to add to the cost factor.

One of my neighbours had a beautiful natural pond with an adjustable overflow and the works. His insurance broker advised him that because he could not see the pond from the house and its close proximity to the road, they were going to void his insurance unless he filled it in. He filled it in with the earth he removed from the pond he dug three times the size within eyesight of the house.



You can probably tell my rule of thumb here. If you use poured concrete footings or a floating concrete pad, pour it before the frost and with the pad, always use a parameter block base. It will keep the wood walls off of the ground and prevent degression.

*Dan Kerr learned photography in his dad's darkroom, then progressed to providing photos and articles for magazines, and crime scene photographs for the Ontario Provincial Police, as a forensic identification officer. Dan is the author of K.I.S.S. My Maintenance.*

With all the space in my garage, I now had somewhere to build my airplane kit; thank you, dear. 🍁



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\* Test Lab: Fred Dumeo (3rd Party) Nail Climbing Test; Test date: 03/2021.  
 \*\* Test Lab: WD-40 Co. Technical Center (Pine Brook, NJ) ASTM B117; Test date: 02/2021.



# FALL HUNTING SEASON TIPS

## PREPARATION IS KEY

*Story by Dan Kerr.*

**A**s I try to keep cool in the sweltering heat, my friend phones and says he's been getting ready for the fall hunt. I don't think this guy prepared for his own wedding, but two months to get ready for the hunt?

Preparation for the hunt is a great idea and it starts out by creating a list. Record everything you can imagine about going hunting for the game you are after in point form.

Here is a short list:

**LICENCE:** This one is pretty obvious. Some of these fines are worse than criminal offences. Mortgaging the house to bail you out of jail will ensure your next hobby isn't hunting if you're spouse has anything to do with it.

**WEAPON CONDITION:** When was the last time you cleaned your weapon? Take time now, and rate it for condition. Use a good gun cleaner like Birchwood from Casey. Do you have spare parts such as a magazine or bowstring along with a small cleaning kit? Check the projectiles, are the arrows or bolts bent? Do they have the proper head? How old are your bullets? I know, you're not going to eat them, but when you pull the trigger at a charging black bear will it go bang or poof?

**SURVIVAL GEAR:** Start with a topographical map of where you intend to hunt. They're cheap and easy to stow with the backup compass in a zip lock bag in your pocket. You will also need a compass and to know how to use it.

Here is a hint: before you go into a bush, set your compass on the map and orient it to read the opposite degrees that you are entering. That way, when you get lost, or nothing else works and panic sets in, all you have to do is look at it and follow the direction out. Electronic gizmos, GPS, two-way radios, and smart phones only work when there are batteries and reception.

Waterproof matches or some other sort of fire starter is essential. Pick up a reflective survival blanket as well; you can last a long time without food, a shorter time without water, but go hypothermic and your time is limited. If you do happen to get lost, you would want to be found easily. Make sure you have some projectile flares and a pealess safety whistle. They are cheap and will fit in your other pocket. Depending on your intentions this topic alone could occupy this entire column and more, so these are just some high points.

**CLOTHING:** Waterproof clothing is a very good choice. It allows the air in but keeps the moisture out. Good insulated leather boots are a must. I prefer light boot height cotton/wool blend dress socks. They keep my feet warm but prevent overheating and sweating. Mitts with a trigger slot are nice, collectively your hands stay warm if your fingers touch. Garments with lots of big pockets help. I have an oversize fanny pack that I stuff my survival knick-knacks in. If I'm hood winked by my wife into a short walk in the bush, I just strap it on and go. Another great item is a small first aid kit. Treating a small wound or blister when it shows up can prevent a crisis from developing and ruining your hunt.

**LOCATION:** Do you have written permission to trespass? Wherever you show up to hunt, treat your presence as if you are not alone. If you meet someone, approach and discuss your double occupancy. If you do have permission, ask what rules go with it and operate within those rules.

**PHYSICAL CONDITION:** Are you physically capable of hunting what you want to, while being alone? Age is only one limitation. Health issues can strike any of us at any time, limiting our functionality from a simple sprain to debilitating injuries. Along with comradery, there's extending your hand towards assistance. And let's remember, whatever game you drop, you have to haul it out.

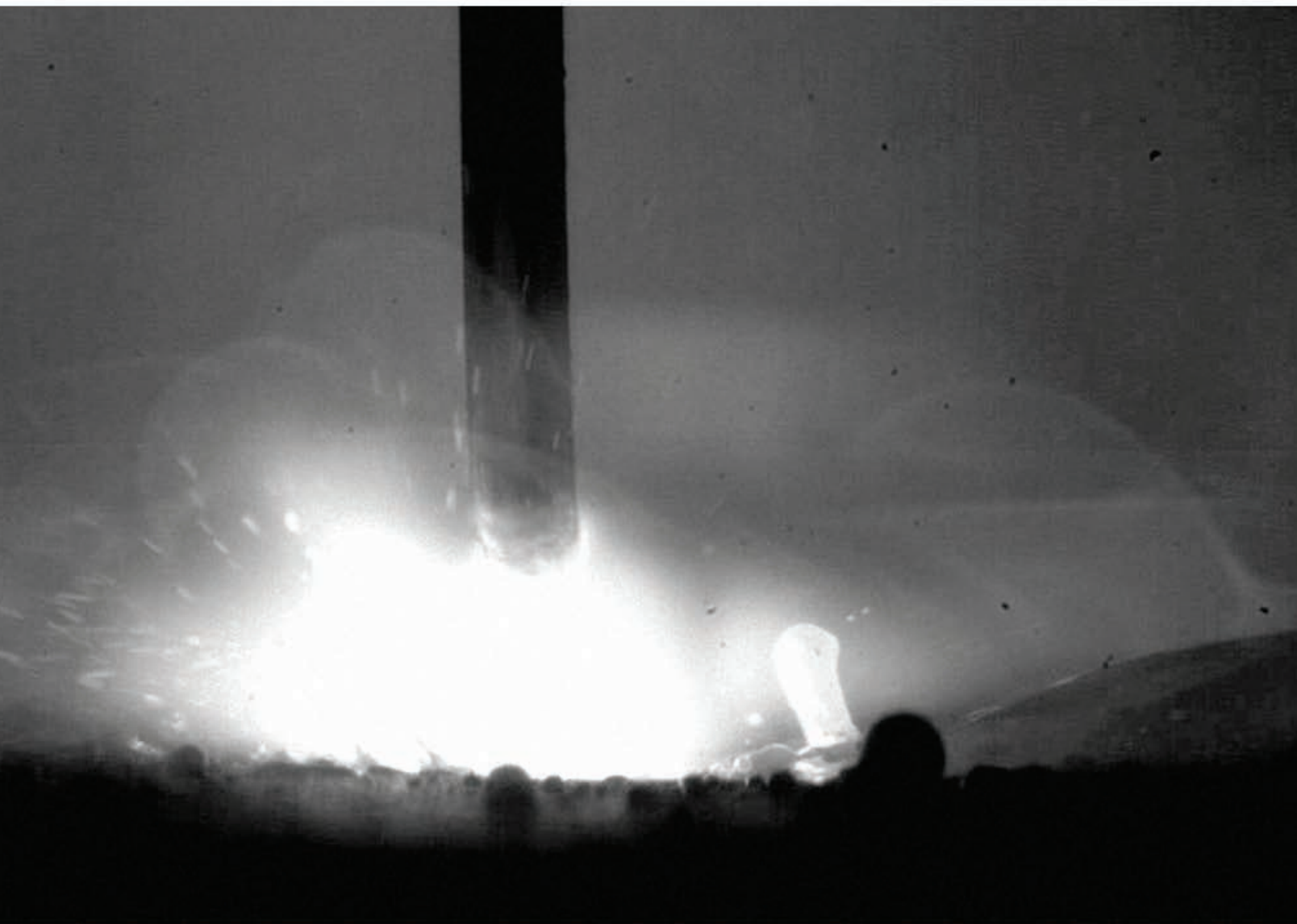
Hunting is an enjoyable time, even when the elements turn on you, if you're prepared. I once followed a guy with his partial scout troop for a short walk into the Jack pine forest of northern Ontario. He thought survival meant carrying a big knife. After being lost for several hours I resorted back to my survival techniques of always carrying my own basic stuff—hence my oversize fanny pack. Being a stage one Scout leader who taught winter survival training to youth, I knew better.

Two last points to ponder. There has been more than one case of an orange deer being shot during hunting season, so colour doesn't totally protect you. And don't forget, tell someone where you are going and when to expect you back! 🍁



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# SMALL SCALE FARMS

## INCREASING YOUR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Story by Pat Kerr.

**O**ne of my neighbours grows and grinds her own grain for homemade bread. She has hundreds of acres and a Massey Ferguson. I don't, but I grow and process a lot of food including grains in a limited space. Whether you have a balcony, deck or an urban yard, you can increase your self-sufficiency and lower your grocery bills.

First make a plan. Large acreage is flexible. Small spaces need a design.

Second, small lots mean neighbours. Play nice. Recognize community standards and acceptability. Your efforts will be wasted if your municipal clerk lays charges.

Look beyond your own driveway. Increasing your harvest is as easy as picking a neighbour's apples. A Toronto program matched fruit tree owners to gardeners. An agreement was made including what care the tree would receive with things like when to spray, with what, or not to spray at all, and how the harvest would be divided.

A friend of mine has a simpler concept. When she sees a tree or a bush loaded with fruit and nuts, she knocks on the door and asks for permission to harvest. In most cases, they are

happy to have what they consider a "mess" cleaned up. She returns later with a jar of jam or jelly and is welcomed back for the next bumper crop.

Grains are often ignored by small land owners. Breadseed poppy seeds, quinoa, flax and amaranth are all easy to harvest and grow with few pests. A 4' x 10' plot will supplement most family grocery bills. Watch for the length of growing season required for your crops; some need 120 frost free days other cultivars are 90 days.

Harvest grains when they are almost dry. Tie and hang them in a spot protected from pests and dust. I invert pillow cases, hang them from a clothes line and bring them in at night. When completely dry, beat them inside a pail to release the seed. This is called "threshing." Next is "winnowing." On a moderately windy day or in front of a fan, slowly pour the seed into a second bucket. The chaff will blow away and the heavier seed falls into the bucket. (Make sure it isn't too windy or you lose all your seed.) Quinoa needs to be washed before it is used.

When choosing your vegetables, your priority is what you eat. If you want strawberries—

plant them. If you want radishes...you get the idea. Don't plant tomatoes if you want peppers. If you want tomatoes to can or preserve, plant a lot of one variety. If you want eating tomatoes, plant one each of several types with varying ripening times.

Every type of garden produce has good and bad years, so expect failures and don't be discouraged. Chances are the problem was the weather.

House plants can clean air, are decorative and inspiring, and can be fruitful. You have light in your home, make them plant lights. Test out low light edibles like salad greens and celery.

Figs need dormancy. They lose their leaves but will leaf out in winter and then bearing fruit in summer. The citrus family can be grown from seed but may be sterile. It is worth the money to purchase citrus plants bred for in-home growing. Move these outside for summer using a roller cart or buy few wheels and fastened them to a board.

Don't forget *Aloe vera* for first aid. I gave a friend an extra plant one year, she called back and asked for a second. "I had an accident and used the whole thing!"

Succulents are the new pets. Consider the native Canadian edible succulent oyster leaf, hardy to zone 2, with delightful blue flowers. It's a challenge to get started as it is susceptible to fungi and is a slug magnet so make sure it is protected and has excellent drainage.

Read seed packages. All beans are not created equal. The same is true for tomatoes and everything else that grows. If you want a fresh tomato sandwich in March, you need a tomato variety that is both a short season and tolerates root confinement in a pot or buy a heated green house. Trellising beans, cucumbers, grapes and squash add privacy and dimension to a small space.

Spend some time this winter reading seed catalogues and researching seeds. You will save countless hours of frustration. Seeds start appearing in stores in January. Get there early and plan to spend time browsing.

The final word is soil. Urban yards are almost always stripped at the time of construction with a minimal of topsoil returned. This must be corrected in your garden space. Mulch, compost and consider manure. Again, when your neighbours are raking, volunteer to haul it away to your compost pile. Do a soil test. Food plants are prima donnas. They need spacing and nutrients to produce.

Small space gardening isn't likely to make you self-sufficient, but it can improve your well-being. Adding one vegetable serving a day to your diet has positive health effects. Plus, the stretching you do checking to see if your seedling has emerged counts as exercise. 🍁

*Pat Kerr is a Master Gardener and author of two books promoting native diversity; My Tree, My Forest, and We are Planting a Forest for children. She writes garden articles for Small Farm Canada from her home in Northern Ontario.*



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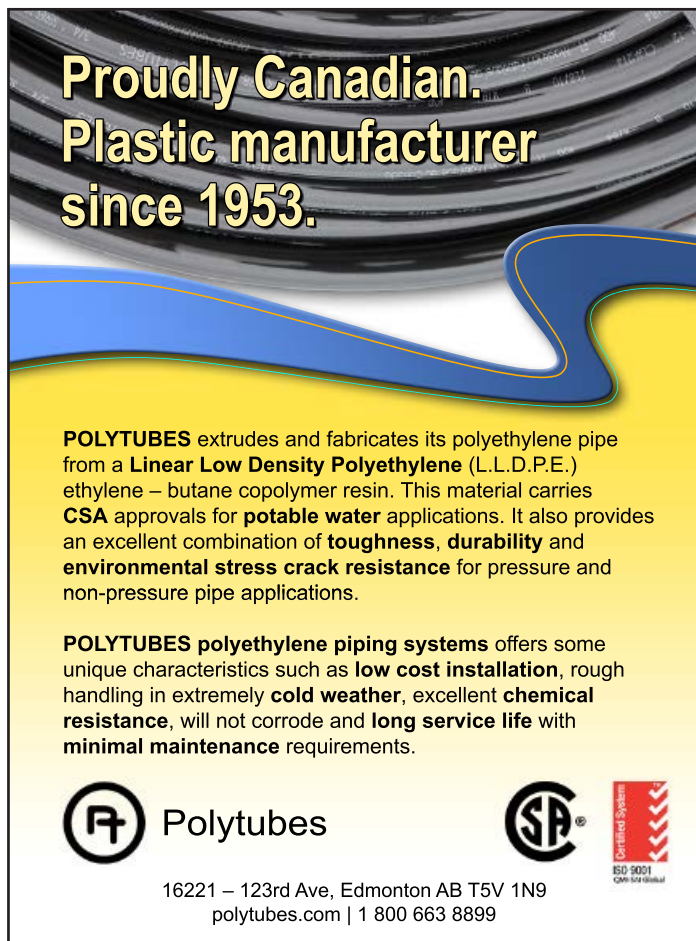
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# BEEF AND BUTTERNUT SQUASH STEW

HUMBLE AND HEARTY

Recipe by Angie Rodgers.

## RECIPE

### INGREDIENTS

- Beef inside round roast  
2.2 lb/1 kg
- Butternut squash, medium  
1 squash, about 2.2 lb/1 kg
- Carrots, medium: 3
- Parsnips, medium: 2
- Celery stalks: 3
- White onion, small: 1
- Mushrooms, fresh: 6

### BROWNING

- Butter: 3 tbsp. + 1 tsp.
- Bacon fat: 2 tbsp.
- White flour: 2 tbsp.
- Instant coffee powder: 1 tbsp.

### SAUCE

- Tomato paste: 1/2 of 5.5 oz can
- Bouillon cube: 1 (any flavour)
- Water: 3 cups
- Balsamic vinegar: 1/3 cup
- Thyme leaves or powder: 2 tbsp.
- Ground black pepper: 2 tbsp.
- Bay leaves: 6
- Garlic, strong: 6 cloves, peeled and crushed
- Salt: to taste

### DIRECTIONS

This is a hearty fall stew that is rich and satisfying. The instant coffee and balsamic vinegar are my secret ingredients that add depth to the flavour profile without being obvious. Most of the squash dissolves and adds body to the sauce. I recommend leaving the salt out until the very end; you'll need less than you think.

Set up a 5-quart crock pot, or a stock pot of comparable size. You will be loading the ingredients into the pot in the order you process them.

If you have a large cast iron pan, set it on your burner and turn the burner to medium high. Let the pan warm up while you prepare the ingredients. If you don't have cast iron, use your favourite pan however you normally use it.

### VEGETABLES

#### Squash:

1. Cut squash open lengthwise. Scoop seeds out, peel, and cut the squash into 1" cubes.

2. Melt 1 Tablespoon of butter in pan. Add squash. Let it brown, stirring occasionally, while you do the next step.

#### Carrots and Parsnips:

4. Peel carrots and parsnips. Slice carrots into thick rounds and cut parsnips into small rectangles.
5. Remove squash from pan and place along the bottom of your pot.
6. Melt 1 Tablespoon of butter in the pan. Add carrots and parsnips. Let them brown, stirring occasionally, while you do the next step.

#### Celery and Onion:

8. Cut celery into thick slices.
9. Peel and cut onion into large chunks.
10. Remove carrots and parsnips from pan and place on top of squash in your pot.
11. Melt 1 Tablespoon of butter in pan. Add onions and celery. Let them brown, stirring occasionally, while you do the next step.

#### Mushrooms:

12. Wipe mushrooms. Cut into thick slices.

**SERVINGS: 6\***

**PREP TIME: 45 MINUTES**

**COOK TIME: 2+ HOURS**

\* or 8, with sides of salad and bread.

13. Remove onions and celery from pan and place on top of vegetables in your pot.
14. Melt 1 teaspoon of butter in the pan. Add mushrooms. Let them brown thoroughly. Add them to the vegetables in your pot.

## MEAT

16. Cut meat into 1" cubes.
17. Turn pan heat to high and melt bacon fat.
19. Place meat into pan and turn frequently to brown the outsides.
20. Lower heat to medium. Add instant coffee powder. Stir so all meat is coated.
20. Add flour. Stir so all meat is coated.
23. Remove meat from pan and place on top of vegetables in the pot.

## SAUCE

24. Add tomato paste to the flour and fat remaining in the pan and mix well.
25. Add bouillon cube. Break it up and stir into sauce.
26. Add vinegar, thyme, crushed garlic, and pepper. Stir.
27. Add water and stir.
28. Pour liquid over all the ingredients in the pot. Do NOT stir.

## ASSEMBLE

29. Stick bay leaves in among the meat cubes.

30. Cover and cook.
  - Crock pot: Turn on to desired setting. Stir anytime after 2 hours.
  - Stove top: Turn to medium low. Cook at least 2 hours, stirring occasionally.
31. Add salt to taste after stew is cooked.
  - ✳

*Angie has been a glass artist since 2008, and was lucky to land a position as an editor and writer for the American publisher Glass Patterns Quarterly. She is the copy editor/associate editor for The Flow®, proofreader for Glass Art® and Glass Patterns Quarterly®, and contributing writer for Glass Art® and The Flow®. She also works as a freelance writer and editor specializing primarily in the arts and non-fiction publications She has too many pets and needs a lot of naps.*



<b>CALORIES*</b>		1071 kcal
<b>PROTEIN*</b>		47 g
<b>FAT*</b>		33 g
<b>NET CARBS*</b>		38.4 g
<b>FIBER*</b>		8.4 g
<b>SUGAR*</b>		9.2 g
<b>SODIUM*</b>		971 mg

\* may vary depending on specific ingredients & brands used.

## INGREDIENTS

- Puff pastry 1 sheet
- Sweet potato, mashed 2-1/2 cups  
(2 medium potatoes)
- White sugar 3/4 cup
- Dark brown sugar 1/4 cup
- Cream, 18% milk fat 3/4 cup
- Salted butter 1/2 cup
- Eggs, large 2
- Ground cinnamon 1 tbsp.
- Ground nutmeg 3/4 tsp.
- Ground ginger 1/4 tsp.
- Vanilla extract 1-1/2 tsp.

**O**pinions on the correct texture and flavour of sweet potato pie vary as much as the versions of the pies themselves. This version is light and fluffy, with a slight sugary crust on top. Fewer eggs contribute to a softer, less custard-y texture than traditional recipes. This pie is best when made a day ahead of time and served straight from the fridge. Store it in the back of the fridge so you aren't tempted to eat it right away.

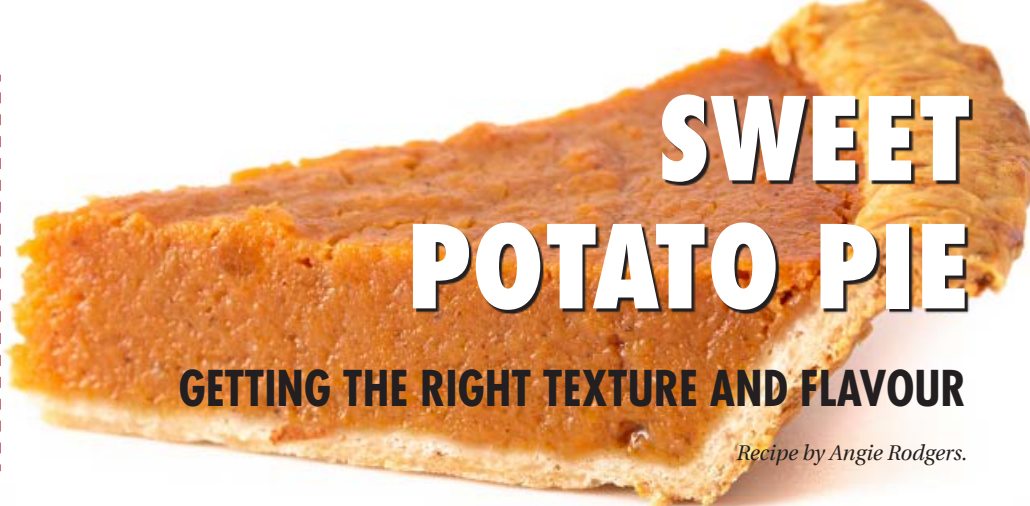
While sweet potato pie is reminiscent of pumpkin pie, care must be taken when adding sugar; sweet potatoes are very sweet on their own, and it's easy to overdo it. This recipe has just the right amount of sugar, and if more is required when serving, simply add some sweetened whipped cream or vanilla ice cream on top.

## NOTES

- If you don't have 18% cream on hand, use 3/4 cup regular 2% milk and add 1 Tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons butter to the butter step.
- You will need a deep-dish pie pan for this recipe. The pan should be 9" diameter and 1-1/2" deep. A shallow casserole dish works well too.

## THE DAY BEFORE:

- Pierce skins of potatoes. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 45 minutes, or until potato feels soft when poked with a knife. Refrigerate when cool.
- Remove one sheet of puff pastry from freezer and thaw it in the fridge.



# SWEET POTATO PIE

## GETTING THE RIGHT TEXTURE AND FLAVOUR

Recipe by Angie Rodgers.

## BAKING DAY:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Lightly grease deep-dish pie pan.
3. Remove eggs from fridge so they come to room temperature.

## CRUST:

4. Remove puff pastry from wrapping.
5. Unroll carefully with paper side down on the counter.
6. Place a sheet of parchment paper or waxed paper on top.
7. Press pastry gently with a rolling pin, stretching it out until it is about 2" bigger on all sides.
8. Place in pie pan.
9. Trim corners and press extra dough to areas where there is less dough. It doesn't have to look good.
10. Bake for 10 minutes. The crust might shrink below the edge of the pan. It won't affect the pie at all. Prevent possible shrinkage by placing pie weights in the bottom before putting it in the oven.

## FILLING:

11. Peel baked sweet potatoes and mash thoroughly.
12. Measure 2-1/2 cups of potato. Press into cups for a packed measure.
13. Add to medium bowl.
14. Add cream, sugar, spices, and vanilla and mix well with electric mixer.
15. Melt butter in frying pan at medium high heat until lightly browned.

16. Add butter slowly to sweet potato mixture, beating well.
17. Separate egg yolks from whites.
18. Add yolks to potato mixture and mix well with electric mixer.
19. Beat whites with electric mixer in separate bowl until soft peaks form.
20. Fold whites into sweet potato mixture with spoon or spatula until fully mixed in.
21. Pour mixture over crust.
22. Bake for 1 hour. Test for doneness by sliding a knife into the centre. Add more time in 10-minute increments as needed.

<b>CALORIES*</b>		315 kcal.
<b>PROTEIN*</b>		3.2 g
<b>FAT*</b>		19.4 g
<b>NET CARBS*</b>		33.9 g
<b>FIBER*</b>		1.6 g
<b>SUGAR*</b>		25.4 g
<b>SODIUM*</b>		133 mg

\* may vary depending on specific ingredients and brands used.

**SERVINGS: 8**  
**PREP TIME (POTATOES): 1 HR. 45 MIN.**  
**PREP TIME (PIE): 1 HR. 35 MIN.**  
**COOLING TIME: OVERNIGHT +**

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