

A PEAVEY INDUSTRIES PUBLICATION | FALL 2020

CONNECTED

To the Land

RURAL SPOTLIGHT

**FARM FAMILY
INNOVATION**

THE **GREAT
TOMATO
HARVEST**

**WINTER
BIRDING**

HOMEMADE
FOR THE
HOLIDAYS



Peavey Mart



Canadian Agri-Blend

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Calves: Agri-Melc 20-20-16 MF Calf Milk Replacer - A high quality 100% all milk protein and moderate fat milk replacer designed to be fed after 3 days of age to replacement calves

Lambs: Agri-Melc 23-23-30 Lamb Milk Replacer - A high quality 100% all milk protein, high fat, low lactose product to be fed after 3 days of age to orphan lambs, undernourished lambs, or lambs that refuse to suckle.

Kid Goats: Agri-Melc 22-22-20 Kid Goat Milk Replacer - A high quality 100% all milk high protein and high fat milk replacer for kid goats.



Equest™ 17% Horse Crunch 20 kg



Equest™ 8:8 Horse Mineral 25 kg: \$45.99



Equest™ 15% Horse Protein Tub 25 kg: \$54.99

For more information, please visit our web site at: www.canadianagriblend.com

or e-mail your questions to norm@canadianagriblend.com. 1-800-340-2311

Canadian Agri-Blend Inc. proudly Canadian, owned and operated. Our 58,000 sq. ft facility is 15 minutes north of Edmonton in Morinville.

GREETINGS

UP FRONT

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

Welcome to the Fall 2020 issue of *Connected to the Land*. The world has been put through the wringer so far this year, but I can't help but feel positive about the road ahead. Peavey Industries' retail banners have been fortunate to be able to remain open and serving your essential needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic – and we thank you for your loyalty and trust through it all. We are grateful.

I am also pleased to share that we have recently announced our TSC brand and stores will be converted to Peavey Mart and this process will begin immediately. TSC customers can expect to see a different look inside and outside of your local TSC stores by the time our next issue of *Connected to the Land* comes out in Spring of 2021 – with the same unique and relevant lineup of products and services remaining in store and online. For more information on this exciting conversion, please see page 5.

In this issue, we bring you a variety of Fall topics focusing on gardening, prepping your home for winter and backyard chickens, among others. In keeping with our magazine's 'rooted' theme of connection with the land, in this issue we also introduce a new *Rural Spotlight* series, which will profile a farming or ranching family, their valued lifestyle, and approach to their business.

I'm sure you will enjoy reading about the Williams family in this first installment – and if you would like to offer your family to be considered for the next in the series, please reach out using the contact info provided at the end of this issue's *Rural Spotlight*.

I hope you enjoy the Fall 2020 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. We look forward to hearing from you.

Doug Anderson

Photo by Drew Kenworthy.

DON'T MISS AN ISSUE!

Our most recent magazines are online at connectedtotheland.info



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We have exciting news!



Peavey Industries LP announces conversion to Peavey Mart for all TSC Stores

RED DEER, ALBERTA (SEPTEMBER 2020) - Peavey Industries LP is pleased to announce the repositioning of our two flagship retail banners into one, with the conversion of TSC Stores, all located solely in Ontario, into Peavey Mart stores.

Both TSC Stores and Peavey Mart have provided invaluable service and a unique blend of products to our equally unique and valued customer base for decades. The relationship between a farm and ranch retailer and their customer is a combination of business, home, hobby and leisure. With this change, we seek to provide a single hallmark for our customers across Canada to identify with as we strive to enhance our relationships, reinforcing and adjusting as we drive to assure a consistent, positive experience with each visit.

Converting TSC Stores to Peavey Mart stores fortifies our commitment to our loyal customers; we look forward to continuing to provide the same great products and services in store and online – and we are excited to introduce the Peavey Mart brand in Ontario.

Work will begin immediately on tangible modifications at our TSC Stores brick and mortar locations, with this and all additional facets of the process expected to be finalized in January 2021. By that time, the Peavey Mart brand will be fully represented in all stores and in all other aspects of our retail presence, including flyers and online. TSCStores.com will continue to be available and functioning as usual until January, when it will transition to peaveymart.com.

Doug Anderson, President and CEO of Peavey Industries LP is enthusiastic about the change. “We are eager to move forward with this conversion, strengthening our corporate brand while further streamlining our internal processes,” he says. “Peavey Industries first purchased controlling interest in 2016, and later fully acquired TSC Stores LP in 2018. Throughout this course, a vision was formed to create a focused, delineated organization – a ‘company of one’. Having recently achieved this with the completed integration of our programs, departments, products, services and operating systems, it makes sense for our next action to be the combining of these two major retail entities into a single national brand.”

With a nearly equal number of stores for each, combining the two banners will create an aggregate 89-store-strong Peavey Mart retail body. Peavey Industries is proud of the Peavey Mart brand’s integrity and strength in Canada and we realize this level of recognition has developed because of the bonds we have cultivated and are constantly striving to grow. “The marketing and communications benefits are immense,” Jest Sidloski, VP Marketing, Customer Experience and eCommerce says, “when considering the steps we will be able to take to streamline our marketing programs and resources. With a single, recognized and undiluted brand, our messaging can be refined, increasing our ability to reach, communicate and engage effectively with our customers on a more profound level across all mediums we employ – flyers, online, social media, radio as well as other proven channels.”

Peavey Industries LP is honoured to be designated “Canada’s Largest Farm & Ranch Retailer” and we recognize the vital role our customers play in our success. We are rooted in the communities we serve and value the relationships that our employees have built across the country. Our customer and community focus remains at the center of our core efforts while we implement this conversion; therefore, minimal disruption and inconvenience is expected at TSC Stores for our customers visiting instore or online, throughout this transition to Peavey Mart.

About Peavey Industries LP

Peavey Industries LP is the parent to three subsidiary corporate brands totaling 92 retail stores across five provinces. “Canada’s Largest Farm and Ranch Retailer” maintains 49 TSC Stores in Ontario, 40 Peavey Mart stores across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and 3 MainStreet Hardware stores in Alberta. Proudly 100% Canadian owned, Peavey Industries corporate retail outlets have been serving their loyal customers since 1967. In March 2020, it was announced that Peavey Industries had acquired the Ace Canada brand license and dealer agreements, adding 1 corporate store and 106 Canadian Ace-branded dealer stores to the PILP retail family. For further details about Peavey Industries LP and their brands, email marketing@peaveyindustries.com.

Holiday Gift G



BRACELET LOOM



(3-5-10942)



PUZZLES



(3-5-12243/3-5-12244)



ASSORTED WEIGHTED BLANKETS

(3-5-13204/3-5-13205)



ICE CREAM MAKER

(8-1-055)

PONY CLUB BARN



(3-5-06510)



BIRDHOUSE KIT

(3-9-0538)



SPRING HORSE

(3-5-06120)

iving Ideas

PRAIRIE SUNSET: A STORY OF CHANGE

Over 100 photographs by the author, Dion Manastyrski. 50 photographs from archives, going back over 100 years.

"I grew up on a small farm in the Canadian prairies, and witnessed the way of life that began a century earlier with the homesteaders. The small family farm was at the heart of the rural life on the prairies: neighbours within walking distance, a rich sense of community, and vibrant small towns.

In 2003, I began a project that took me back to this land to photograph and capture the story of change.

In my search for understanding as I roamed the homesteads of a vanishing era, I photographed the abandoned structures, and talked to people of the prairies. Collectively, they have a remarkable story to tell, and I would like to share this with you." - Dion Manastyrski



- Hardcover
- 240 Pages
- 11" x 11"
- (6-0-1883)

TRACTOR WITH GRAVITY WAGON (CASE IH & JD)



(3-5-06504/3-5-06505)



GROW LIGHT GARDEN

(3-6-9944)

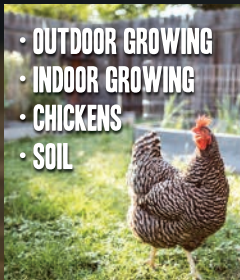
HOLIDAY SEASON!

CONNECTING TO THE LAND - TOGETHER

"Connected to the Land" embodies Peavey Industries and our retail brands – and has essentially become a brand of its own. The concept began with our original magazine and now includes a dedicated website showcasing e-versions of the magazine and more!

FEATURING

PODCASTS • BLOGS • RECIPES



CHECK IT OUT!

Visit www.connectedtotheland.info

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL GRANT

Recipients!



Peavey Industries Awards 2020 Community Agricultural Grant to Kamloops Food Policy Council

Red Deer, Alberta (August 10, 2020) – In March 2020 amidst a global pandemic, Peavey Industries LP announced the application period for its annual Community Agricultural Grant, designed to address the vast and varied needs of communities anywhere within a 300km radius of any Peavey Mart, TSC Store or MainStreet Hardware spanning from British Columbia to Ontario. For the 2020 grant period, Peavey Industries LP is pleased to announce that one of our the applicants, the Kamloops Food Policy Council, was successful in their request to support the Resiliency Gardening at the Butler Urban Farm project.

“In response to Covid-19, the Kamloops Food Policy Council has launched a ‘Resiliency Gardening’ campaign, which has already boosted local food production and improved community well-being. Our plan would not have been achievable without the Community Agriculture Grant, and our local Peavey Mart to better develop and animate the Butler Urban Farm property, including the installation of a teaching greenhouse, tool storage shed, produce washing station, and funding for a fall harvest manager.

We are thrilled that Peavey Industries is supporting the Butler Urban Farm Project. Their assistance will ensure a successful fall harvest and help grow the farm’s potential to feed our community for years to come.” Jesse Ritcey, director for the Kamloops Food Policy Council.

Doug Anderson, President and CEO of Peavey Industries LP commented, “Peavey Mart, TSC Stores and MainStreet Hardware are proud to support the Kamloops Food Policy Council. It allows us to connect with our customers on a more profound level and addresses topics like food insecurity, makes space for intergenerational learning opportunities and acknowledges the benefits to mental health through gardening and growing food, topics that we recognize are top-of-mind. We look forward to deepening our community ties and relationships in addition to helping foster understanding and prioritizing access to good, locally grown food, mental health and wellness in communities.”

- Resiliency Gardening at the Butler Urban Farm
- www.kamloopsfoodpolicycouncil.com
- Project Location: Kamloops, British Columbia
- Recipient: Kamloops Food Policy Council



Peavey Industries Awards Community Agricultural Grant to Kikino School

Red Deer, Alberta (August 10, 2020) – For the 2020 grant period, Peavey Industries LP is pleased to announce that one of the applicants, Kikino School, on the Kikino Metis Settlement was successful in their request to help with funding ‘Let’s Grow Together’, an initiative in support of a traditional medicines and healing garden for the school’s students, that will ultimately benefit the entire community.

School principal Laurie Thompson says, “Our children and families will learn that health does not come from a place that is broken. This wellness garden will teach us all that mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health is a continuous cycle of rejuvenation that requires ongoing care and action. Just like the plants that do not thrive alone, our garden will teach us the health that can be found in families.”

Doug Anderson, President and CEO of Peavey Industries LP commented, “Peavey Mart, TSC Stores and MainStreet Hardware are proud to support this project with Kikino School. It broadens our connection with our customers and addresses holistic health and reconciliation in meaningful ways, guided by educators and elders. We look forward to deepening our community ties with the Kikino Metis Settlement through this project, in addition to growing our understanding about Indigenous traditions, medicines and communities. Thank you once again to everyone who applied for this year’s grants.”

- Let’s Grow Together
- www.kikinoschool.ca
- Project Location: Kikino, AB
- Recipient: Kikino School



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA



Community Agricultural Grant

Peavey Industries is the parent company of; Peavey Mart, TSC Stores & MainStreet Hardware.



FARM FAMILY INNOVATION

MARKET CHALLENGES MEANT HARD WORK & NEW THINKING

Story by Lee Hart. Photos courtesy Mark Higgins, [@migginsphoto](#)

When the bottom fell out of the alfalfa seed market three years ago, it delivered a devastating one-two punch to Jed and Kathy Williams of Imperial, Saskatchewan. Two key sources of income for their central Saskatchewan farm — the alfalfa seed business itself and the leaf cutter bees (which are an important contributor to seed production) — were hit hard. The value of both of those products the Williams family marketed across North America tanked almost over night.

It placed them in a tough spot. They had invested so much time, money and energy over the previous 15 years into building an alfalfa seed business with the complimentary leaf cutter bee operation and suddenly the markets had either disappeared or were significantly reduced, and prices had hit rock bottom. What were they to do?

ROLLER COASTER RIDE

The past 20 years has definitely been a journey for Jed and Kathy Williams. Jed was born and raised on a sheep farm in Australia. In 2000, he met a Saskatchewan farm girl named Kathy at a church picnic during a visit she made to Australia. He followed her back to Canada. They got married in 2001, and started farming with partners in 2002, near Kathy's hometown of Imperial.

"I had some experience with seed production in Australia," says Jed. "And when I looked into alfalfa seed production they told me I had to learn about leaf cutter bees." So he did.

While building the seed business, he worked off-farm for a number of years. The farm and their experience grew and eventually they struck out on their own in 2012. In the midst of farming and off-farm jobs they also were raising a family that today includes two boys, Jody (age 14) and Miles (age 11) and a daughter, Juanita (age 9).

The super crop of 2017 delivered a setback to their farm business plans, but the Williams certainly weren't knocked out.

"It has been a roller coaster ride, particularly over the last three years," says Jed, choking up a bit as he considers the challenges the farm and family have faced. "But I was raised on a farm and being a farmer has been my life long passion ever since I was a kid. It might have been easier to give it up, but I wasn't really interested in working again in the corporate world, which sometimes doesn't treat people very well. And maybe my ego gets in the way a bit too, as I consider myself to be one of the best leafcutter bee producers in the world."

THE CHALLENGE

So when the market suddenly changed, they could have sold out at fire sale prices, at a significant economic loss with an accompanying emotional toll. Perhaps they could have scaled back, producing a fraction of previous crops until the market recovered, and worked off their farm. Or they could look for ways to restructure their alfalfa seed business, diversify, and develop value-added products. The latter was the gamble they chose. It meant a lot of hard work, but the Williamses weren't just going to quit.



A hopper full of baby bees after being extracted from the nesting blocks.

"I started working when I was 18 and I'm 48 years old now," says Jed Williams. "I didn't spend 30 years working just so I could go broke."

"We had invested everything we had — time, energy and money — into building this farm and this business," says Kathy. "We couldn't just walk away."

Realizing they could no longer rely on prices offered by brokers to sell seed and bee larvae, the circumstances led the central Saskatchewan farmers to embark on a whole new marketing program to keep their farm business afloat. One part of the program involved Jed hitting the road and using online services to sell Grower Direct Alfalfa Seed directly to farmers.

Another part of that program involved partnering with and supplying products to a well-established, prairie-based retailer Peavey Mart. With its national market reach into eastern Canada it opened market opportunities to carry them through the storm.

Peavey Industries' 89 stores across five provinces carry Williams' alfalfa seed as an item in their Harvest Goodness private label product line. And in another creative marketing program, leaf cutter bees are available to hobby gardeners both online from the farm and in Peavey Mart stores, offering an attractive bee-rearing kit called the Backyard Pollinator.

Doing their own marketing hasn't put the Williams family on Easy Street, but it has hopefully got them over the hump. "We're still here and we are starting to see some profitability," says Kathy. "Producing alfalfa seed and leaf cutter bees is a niche market, but it's not something you can jump in and out of. We're hoping if we can keep operating through this downturn we will be in a good position when the market does recover."

HOW SEED AND BEES FIT

Alfalfa is a forage crop important to livestock producers around the world as a high quality feed source. It is either used as pasture for grazing animals or cut and put into some form of storage as a fall and winter feed supply for beef and dairy cattle, horses and other classes of livestock.

While the Williamses annually crop about 1,760 acres of grain, oilseeds and pulse crops at their Imperial farm, they also have a working partnership with another farmer about an hour further west at Kenaston to produce another 2,000 acres of alfalfa for seed — a higher value specialty crop.

The alfalfa seed market crash of 2017 was profound. Jed Williams says the market was hammered by a "super crop" which happens every so many years.

"It was a year when conditions aligned so that just about every alfalfa seed crop in the world produced double or triple the normal yield," he says. Crops that normally produced 700 pounds of seeds per acre, for example, yielded up to 2,200 pounds of seed. The niche alfalfa seed market was flooded with millions of pounds of excess seed. Seed brokers that once would have offered Williams \$2 per pound for seed were now offering 40 cents per pound or less, far below even his breakeven cost of production.

As the alfalfa seed market fell due to the glut of seed, so followed the leaf cutter bee market.

Leaf cutter bees are a specific strain of bees that have a symbiotic relationship with alfalfa. The bees don't produce honey; their simple goal in life is to reproduce themselves. The alfalfa crop needs to be pollinated to produce seed, and the leaf cutter bees need leaf material and pollen and nectar from the alfalfa plant so they can provide nesting material for their eggs, followed by food for the bee larvae after they hatch.

While alfalfa seed is the primary crop, seed growers must also provide the structures, equipment and management to culture the bees. It is a time sensitive and sometimes labour intensive operation over 10 months of the year. Through rearing facilities, they harvest leaf cutter bee larvae, not just to pollinate their own seed crop, but to also sell any surplus larvae directly (or through brokers) to other alfalfa seed producers.

With a tremendous over-supply of alfalfa seed in 2017, many seed producers simply went out of business or scaled back production acres. Along with that, the demand for leaf cutter bee larvae retracted as well. For example, bee larvae — which mature into adult bee pollinators that in 2016 traded for \$130 per



Alfalfa seed.

gallon — suddenly dropped to \$10 per gallon in late 2017. (A gallon or kilo represents about 10,000 bee larvae).

As production soared and markets collapsed in 2017, Jed and Kathy Williams had about 1,700 acres of alfalfa in seed production. With a slight improvement in the supply and demand situation by 2020, they have increased alfalfa seed production to about 2,000 acres, and have developed rearing equipment and facilities to harvest 100 million bee larvae.

While it is difficult to put absolute numbers on bee requirements, they'll need about 60 million or 6,000 gallons of bee larvae for their alfalfa crop during the 2021 growing season, with any surplus sold in to other markets.

While leaf cutter bees are particularly well suited for pollinating alfalfa seed crops, they are also effective on a number of horticultural crops and are also used widely to pollinate hybrid canola seed production.

Direct marketing alfalfa seed has been rewarding but it is also a great deal of work. Jed markets seed online through the website www.acceleratedseed.ca, as well as through social media outlets such as Facebook and Kijiji. He attends farm trade shows and gets the word out with free seed samples and business cards left at livestock auction marts.

Through a combination of personal contact and by offering a quality product, he has sold tonnes of alfalfa seed to producers from Prince George, B.C. to Quebec.

"I have a high yielding, high quality alfalfa variety that I sell as common seed," says Jed. "It's produced, pollinated and harvested here in central Saskatchewan. It is cleaned to foundation seed standard, has a very high germination rate and an ultra low-weed seed count."



Nests in fall.

It's a tap rooted alfalfa with good winter-hardiness, tolerates grazing well and is also well suited for hay and forage production.

The idea of marketing pollinator bees to the home gardener and hobbyist came after several sleepless nights in 2017 as the Williams' wondered what to do with surplus leaf cutter bees. Working with an organization in Humboldt, Sask. which manufactures the wooden houses ("like a bird house, except it is for bees"), the Williams cut styrofoam nesting blocks that fit inside the houses. Those blocks have tunnels cut into them that will hold bee larvae.

Tubes of leafcutter bee cocoons.



The home gardener can set the boxes outside as the gardening season starts, with anywhere from 200 to 400 ready-to-hatch leafcutter larvae inside. After the bees develop and hatch in warm weather, they begin pollinating plants around the yard, bringing nesting material to

the tunnels inside the bee box, and laying eggs that will turn into larvae. With proper care, those larvae can be overwintered and then produce a new batch of pollinator bees the following year.

The Backyard Pollinator boxes are marketed on line at backyardpollinator.ca. "And it has been a tremendous opportunity to be able to market them through the Peavey Mart retail chain, as well," says Kathy.

TOWARD THE FUTURE

Jed and Kathy are determined to make the farm work and also build something for the next generation, as well.

For the time being, 2,000 acres of alfalfa for seed production and raising 100 million bees is plenty to manage. Jed hopes over the next few years to establish his own seed cleaning facility and provide custom alfalfa seed cleaning services to other farmers. And while direct marketing seed demands a lot of time, often keeping him in the farm office until past midnight, he hopes to see that expand as well. He's also been approached by other farmers asking if he could market their seed too.

"We're doing something that we love and also working to build a sustainable and profitable farm business as well," says Kathy. "We are raising our family and who knows what their interests will be, but we want the farm to be a viable career option for them to consider."

As a journalist for more than 40 years, Lee Hart has focused on reporting on and commenting about the Canadian agriculture industry for the past 30 years. A former field editor for Country Guide Magazine, he has been a writer and editor for Grainews for the past 15 years — based in Calgary, AB.

Do you want to share your agricultural family's story? If so, we'd certainly be interested in considering you for the next issue's Rural Spotlight. Please contact Marketing@PeaveyIndustries.com with your information.





HANDY RANDY'S TIPS

RANDY WELCH'S SEVEN STEPS FOR GETTING YOUR HOME READY FOR WINTER

Story by Richard Nichols.

After retiring a decade ago from the Finance Department at the London Health Sciences Centre, Randy Welch decided to turn his extensive experience fixing things around the house into a part time handyman business.

"My first home had no plumbing and the wiring needed to be replaced," he said. "So, I got books on plumbing and wiring and did it all myself. I was 21 years old."

SEVEN STEPS FOR FALL

Since it's getting along to the end of the year and the days are getting cooler, *Connected to the Land* decided to ask Randy what homeowners should do to get ready for winter. Here are seven things you'll want to do this Fall:

1. **Evaluate your roof, and do it soon.** Repaired shingles need heat to seal them, so you don't want to be calling Randy in January.

"Camera-equipped drones that check the shingles and flashing around the chimney make it easy to evaluate a roof," Randy said. "You can get within inches of a problem and take a picture of it."

2. **Clean your gutters.** It's critically important. Full gutters create other problems. "Icicles hanging from the soffit of your roof mean ice is building up under the eaves. When it thaws, the water will back up, lift your shingles and leak into your house," Randy said. "It can make an awful mess."
3. **Make sure your downspouts are clear.** And make sure you run an extension away from your home so water from melting snow doesn't flow back toward your basement. "Believe me," Randy said, "water in your basement is the last thing you want to wake up to on a cold January morning."
4. **Rake your leaves.** People who wait until spring to clean up their leaves are making a big mistake. "Water does not percolate through leaves," Randy said. "If they blow up against your house, water will pool there and possibly drain into your basement. Also, mice and other small critters like to shelter in piles of leaves and could end up scurrying into your home."
5. **Turn off your and drain your exterior faucets.** "A lot of people forget this," Randy said. "If the seal plate on the faucet isn't properly insulated, the pipes

could freeze and expand the ice inside. If they break, you've got a mess."

6. **Change your furnace filters every month.** They're relatively cheap and will save you big bucks. "It's like changing the oil in your car," Randy said, "and anyone can do it."
7. **Learn to do things yourself.** "You save money by doing simple household chores yourself," Randy says, "and any of them can be learned off the Internet."

Follow these tips and you likely won't have to call "Handy Randy" this winter. But you may run into him at the TSC store on Dundas Street in London.

If you do, thank him for the advice. 🍁

Top photo: "Handy Randy" Welch is a jack of all trades who lives in London, Ontario.

Richard A. Nichols (www.ansoncopy.com) is a farm writer from Okotoks, Alberta.



WINTERING CHICKENS



IT STARTS WITH A WELL-BUILT COOP

Story by Peg Strankman. Photos by Lisa Taylor Photography.

Now is a perfect time to make sure you have all the pieces in place to keep your chickens comfortable for the winter.

Cassandra Kirkpatrick says whether you have three chickens in town or 35 plus in the country, it's basically all the same principles, starting with a well-built coop.

Kirkpatrick is the facilitator of the Alberta Farm Animal Care Urban Hen workshops and an urban chicken keeper who took her coop to the country.

"The first thing people should think about is the breed of chickens they are getting. Some breeds are more winter hardy than others. Look for thick feathering and generally a bigger bird. Smaller combs and waddles reduce the risk of frost bite because there is less skin exposed," says Kirkpatrick.

"Your coop is really important to help your birds make it through the winter. Good insulation in the coop is important. Your coop should be draft free. That doesn't mean closed up, but it means no cold air coming in right on the birds," says Kirkpatrick.

"The other really, really, important thing is ventilation. The warm moist air needs to leave the coop. Moist cold air can cause frost bite. There needs to be windows that open or vents of some kind," says Kirkpatrick. She says adjustable vents high up on opposite sides of coop are work really well.

You can use a weather station to measure temperature and humidity, she says. Fifty percent humidity is the upper limit.

"If using 2 x 4 boards for roosts, place them so the wide side faces up. That way, the birds' feet lay flat on the roost and when they hunker down, their

feathers cover their feet,” says Kirkpatrick. Straw is a great insulator for the floor.

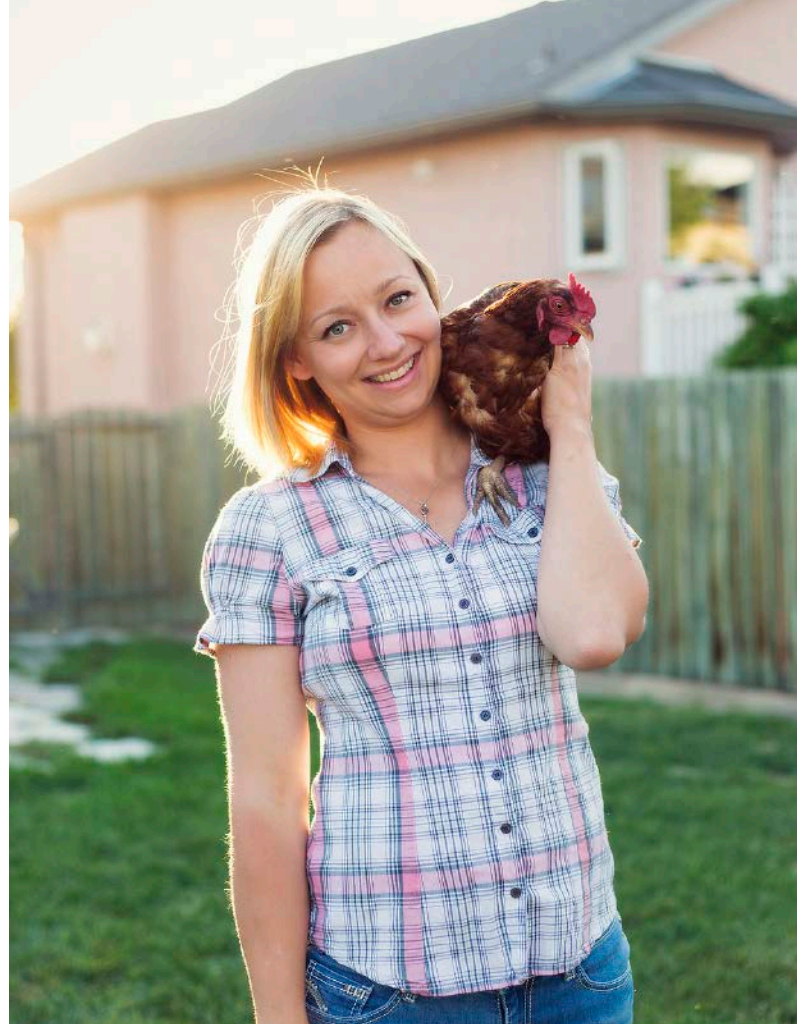
Birds need access to fresh, unfrozen water. You can provide them with scratch before they go to bed. Scratch is a grain mixture with corn. It's a treat, so don't feed too much – but as they digest it through the night, the process of digestion raises their body temperature by a couple of degrees. There's little things like that which help in the cold.

Kirkpatrick says, “Even if the coop is great and you have cold hardy breeds, you are probably looking at having some supplemental heat. I really like the Cozy Coop, from Peavey Mart. It's a flat panel radiant heater. It's wonderful. It costs basically nothing to run. Very safe to use. But don't keep your coop too warm. Birds will acclimatize and do okay in minus temperatures in the coop”.

She says that in the fall, you can prep your outdoor run for winter by putting tarps around the run to keep snow out. This encourages the birds to go out to wander around. Stuck inside chickens get bored and can develop bad behaviours like pecking each other or egg eating.

Kirkpatrick says chickens need enrichments in the winter. Add things like ladders or tree stumps. A straw bale or flock blocks that they can pick at will keep them busy. 🍁

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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WINTER BIRDING TIPS

HOW TO FIND THE HABITATS - OR CREATE THEM

Story by Myrna Pearman.



Blue Jay.
Photo by
Myrna
Pearman.

Typical Canadian winters are snowy, long, dark, cold and dreary—conditions that can make it a challenge to get outside and enjoy the natural world. However, this time of year actually provides unique opportunities, not only for bird watching, but also for general nature appreciation as well as wildlife photography. Whether you are watching birds at feeders from the comfort of your home or trekking out into the woods to observe the hardy species that can endure this harsh season, winter provides its own bird watching rewards.

With so many excellent birding apps now available (e.g., eBird [ebird.org] and iNaturalist [inaturalist.org]) it is easy to find out which bird species have been sighted in your area or in a region you would like to visit. I encourage all bird watchers to join the legions of other citizen scientists who are contributing to our understanding of bird populations by

uploading all bird sightings, during all seasons, to one or more of these apps.

Social media is another excellent way to keep apprised of birding hot spots, recent sightings, rarities etc. There are myriad Instagram pages, Twitter feeds and Facebook groups across the country dedicated to birds or special topics related to birds and bird watching, from bird feeding groups to those that specialize in bird photography. The contributors to these pages are as enthused about birding in the winter as they are during any other season.

Additional information about birds and winter bird watching can be obtained from various nature and birding organizations. Some organizations reach an international audience (e.g., Cornell Lab of Ornithology, at birds.cornell.edu) while others are national in scope (e.g., Nature Canada at naturecanada.ca, and the Canadian Wildlife Federation at



Blue Jay.

cwf-fcf.org). There are also organizations in each Canadian province that focus on nature / bird conservation. Easily found through online searches, these provincial organizations are linked with and support regional nature and birding clubs, most of which have their own websites, social media feeds, regional bird checklists and even field guides. Most clubs also offer year-round field trips, providing beginners with excellent opportunities to learn from knowledgeable naturalists and become more familiar with local birding hot spots. Over the Christmas season, most nature groups across Canada sponsor a local Christmas Bird Count. This count is another excellent way to both learn about winter birds and contribute to citizen science.

BRINGING THE BIRDS TO YOU

Interestingly, it is not the harsh temperatures that determine which bird species stay behind for the winters and which must migrate south to warmer climes. Rather, it is food availability. Birds that rely on insects and nectar/sap or need to find their food in or around water or on the ground must migrate if their food sources disappear with the onset of cold temperatures and arrival of snow. The species that can reduce their winter menu to a paltry diet of frozen insects, live prey, carrion, seeds and berries are able to remain behind. Not surprisingly, our avian neighbours spend most of their waking hours during the short winter days in a ceaseless quest for food.

You can offer food to winter birds in two ways: in the short term by setting out bird feeding stations, and in the longer term by planting trees and shrubs that retain their seeds and berries into the fall and winter.

Bird feeding is a popular hobby because it brings the birds into your yard and thus up close for observation and enjoyment. During periods of extreme winter weather, supplemental feed will also help increase the survival rate of chickadees and other small birds.

I recommend three bird feeding staples: sunflower seeds, peanuts and suet. Both sunflowers and peanuts can be offered in the shell or shelled. Shelled seeds are more expensive but prevent a messy buildup of



Northern Shrike.

discarded husks. Commercial suet cakes are now widely used, but suet can also be offered raw, or melted and then mixed with peanut butter and other ingredients.

Seeds and peanuts can be spread on snow-free areas (such as under spruce trees) but are more efficiently dispensed from hopper, tube or covered tray feeders. A wide variety of excellent bird food and seed/suet dispensers are available at your local Peavey Mart store.

Not only do bird feeding stations attract resident species such as chickadees, jays and woodpeckers, but they may also entice in the species, such as Common and Hoary Redpolls, that migrate south for the winter from their Arctic nesting grounds. Feeding stations are also known to attract rarities or the odd individual bird that, usually due to injury, neglects to migrate.

Winter feeding stations may also be visited some years by species such as Evening Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks, and Red and White-winged Crossbills. These “winter wanderers” move about in search of abundant spruce and pinecone crops and – when they are in the neighbourhood – will avail themselves of feeder food. During the shoulder seasons of spring and fall, especially during stormy weather, feeding stations might also attract birds that are migrating through. Finally, feeding stations, with all their busyness and activity, will inevitably attract birds of prey, such as Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s Hawks that rocket through to snap up an unsuspecting feeder bird.

For more information about feeding birds, the feeder birds in your area, and to contribute your winter bird feeding observations to a nation-wide database, check out Project Feederwatch, at feederwatch.org.

Naturescaping: Creating habitat in your yard by “naturescaping” (eschewing pesticides and offering food, water and shelter) is an important and gratifying way to increase biodiversity throughout the year. Planting trees and shrubs (especially those with persistent berries) is a long-term endeavour,



Two Redpolls on an upside-down feeder. Photo by Myrna Pearman.

Purple Finch.



but your efforts will be rewarded, because a wider variety of species will be attracted into your yard, not only to the food offered, but also because of the shelter these plantings provide.

Although overwintering bird species are not dependent on fresh water for drinking during the winter (they are well adapted to eat snow), some birds will use a heated bird bath as a water source.

OUT IN THE FIELD

Many keen birdwatchers and bird photographers spend winter days driving the backroads looking for highly visible species such as eagles, overwintering owls and flocks of winter visitors (e.g., redpolls, Snow Buntings and Bohemian Waxwings). Not only do vehicles offer comfort and warmth during cold weather, they are excellent mobile bird blinds.

Winter birding can also be done on foot. Weather-appropriate attire (including cleats for your boots) and good binoculars make for pleasant and interesting walks through local neighbourhoods, parks and natural areas. Even big city parks support a surprising diversity of winter birds. Walking has the distinct advantage over driving because the birds that vocalize can be heard, and species not likely seen from a vehicle can be spotted. Walking is the best way to find the smaller, more elusive and less common winter birds. An added bonus of walking is that the tracks and signs of other wildlife await discovery.

Areas of open water are also good places to check out during the winter. Those living in coastal areas or near large ice-free lakes are fortunate to be able to watch a wide variety of seabirds and overwintering species, while those of us living in land-locked areas can scout out smaller patches of open water, such as fast-moving rivers, water treatment plant outlets, hydroelectric dams, etc. Many of these open waters support overwintering

Song Sparrow.





*Pileated
Woodpecker.
Photo by Myrna
Pearman.*

populations of waterfowl, which in turn attract dramatic predators such as Peregrine Falcons and Gyrfalcons.

Finally, it is important to remember that winter birds are often on the edge of survival. It is imperative that you observe responsibly: do not cause these vulnerable creatures to waste valuable energy by flushing or chasing them.

Hopefully these tips will get you out birding this winter! 🍁

Myrna Pearman is the Biologist and Site Services Manager at Ellis Bird Farm (ellisbirdfarm.ca). She is the author of several books, including NatureSape Alberta: Creating and Caring for Wildlife Habitat at Home and Backyard Bird Feeding: An Alberta Guide. She can be reached at myrna@myrnapearman.com.



Redpoll.

Northern Cardinal.



“

... winter birds are often on the edge of survival. It is imperative that you observe responsibly...


”



THE GREAT TOMATO HARVEST

**DEALING WITH A
BUMPER CROP**

Story by Karen Christensen.



Hopefully you have been enjoying some of your tomatoes by now, especially if you started with large plants in the spring. You may be overstocked in green tomatoes or rolling in ripe tomatoes. I have grown tomatoes for decades and have a few hacks under my gardener's belt but this time I wanted to challenge myself to up my game. I want to know what I am eating so food security is the new concern and also I don't like the excess sugar that is added to most tomato products. Really good tomatoes make really tasty sauce and soup and your own salsa for corn chip dipping is sooo good.

I love to garden! It is a thrill and a spiritual experience to watch those tiny seeds burst open and grow into vibrant plants loaded with food and flowers not just for us but for the bees. When faced with a flat full of robust tomato seedlings... how could I toss the extras? How many times had I done this before? There I was at harvest time with a dozen mature plants in the greenhouse all leaning heavily on their supports. I ended up with 86 pounds of tomatoes! How was I going to save them all? I had really done it this time.

PLAN

What would I make with all those tomatoes? I thought that since tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, whole and sundried tomatoes always seemed to be on the grocery list perhaps this was the year I really needed to double down and get some serious stock in the cold storage closet and deep freezer for winter.

PICK

Let's get down to harvest. You may be trying to ignore the large number of green tomatoes hanging there on your plants. Overnight temperatures of less than 10°C can affect ripening so once the cold weather starts you must get those green and under ripe tomatoes into warmth or they will not ripen properly. Decide what method of preserving is most appropriate for you. If you want nice sealed jars of your wonderful sauce, be sure to prepare ahead so that you are ready to proceed while the sauce is hot and ready. I cannot stress enough to follow instructions on the processing of the jars. If you have a deep freeze you can portion out cooled sauce into freezable containers and keep them that way. Let's face it, canning and preserving is time and energy consuming but the rewards in winter far outweigh the heavy lifting in the fall.

TRAPEZE TOMATOES

One method I have used in the past when I was short on time was to dig up the entire tomato plant, clean off the roots and hang

the plant upside down in a warm and well ventilated place. Lay an old sheet under the plant to catch the drying leaves and falling tomatoes. The tomatoes left on the vine are able to still get nutrients from the plant and will ripen gradually.

PROCESS

To skin or not to skin? Seeds in or seeds out? There is lots of information and opinions on the subject, there are cultural differences and personal tastes to consider too. Most recently the subject of lectins and inflammation in the body suggests that removing the skins and seeds is the key in lowering the lectin levels in tomatoes. There are some aesthetic reasons to remove both, and sometimes the seeds impart bitterness to the preparation. A Tex Mex cookbook I have brushes aside the need to remove the peel as they find it adds texture and if you are running your sauce through a sieve or food mill, food processor or using a hand blender it seems a moot point.

ROASTED TOMATO SAUCE

Roasting your seeded tomatoes adds flavor and the peels will lift off after coming out of the oven. To one rimmed baking sheet of halved tomatoes that have had the seeds scooped out, Romas are nice and fleshy and they hold up to roasting well. Stainless steel or glass pans are a must, never use cast iron as the tomatoes will react with the metal. Assemble a second tray with an onion cut into eights, one red bell pepper halved, if you like garlic peel up to ten cloves and add them. Drizzle each pan with a couple tablespoons olive oil and roast at 400 degrees F for about fifteen minutes or until things look slightly browned and wrinkled, the tomatoes and peppers should be soft. Remove from oven, cover to lightly steam the peppers and tomatoes as this helps loosen the skins more. It is not tragic to have some skins left on for a sauce but to achieve a smooth soup; you would need to strain the concoction. To

finish the sauce, heat half a cup of red wine or balsamic vinegar with one third cup brown sugar and one tablespoon sea salt. After that the herbs and spices you want to add are up to you, think basil, parsley, nutmeg, get creative. Bring to a boil and then cool to simmer for ten minutes before adding the skinned roasted vegetables that have been roughly chopped, collect the juice that collects along the process and add that to the mix. Boil for a minute or so and then package hot into jars to be canned, cooled for freezer packaging. This recipe is based on Pat Crocker's "Roasted tomato, fennel and basil relish" in her fabulous book, *Preserving: The Canning and Freezing Guide for all Seasons*. We used this relish textured sauce for pasta, as a pizza sauce, with eggs, and for baguette slices topped with grated cheese and broiled in the oven.

CRUSHED TOMATOES

This method is a very easy way to put up tomatoes that is useful for winter cooking.

SALSA

Oh, Salsa how I love thee..... You can whip up the tastiest Salsa right from the garden and you can use any type tomato you like. Imagine yellow pear tomatoes, brown or striped Heritage tomatoes and of course Romas. Did you also grow Basil, Cilantro, onions, thyme oregano or parsley? Fresh salsa can be frozen or canned in hot water bath but the texture

will be more like the jarred salsa found in the chip aisle. Remember, find a great recipe and follow the instructions if you are canning.

DEHYDRATED OR SUN DRIED TOMATOES

Here's a pricey tomato product that you can make yourself and really enjoy. There are lots of great articles online on how to do this in the oven, in the sun, or in the dehydrator. As I write this in July I am planning to try this method as soon as I have tomatoes coming.

FREEZE

I was so stoked to hear I could simply freeze the tomatoes raw and whole to deal with later. 🍁

Karen Christensen has been gardening since childhood, her parents found her tiny fingers excellent for planting small seeds, and along the way she learned from them time honoured permaculture techniques that she still uses. Karen lives and gardens in the Alberta foothills, a very challenging climate but nevertheless produces enough produce to get her and her husband through the to the next harvest.



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HOMEMADE FOR THE HOLIDAY

HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN HOLIDAY WREATH

Story and photos by Doreen Pendgracs.

There's nothing more beautiful than a festively creative and fragrant wreath to adorn your door or wall during the holiday season. But just how difficult and time consuming is it to make one of these beauties?

To answer that, I tapped into the expertise of florist Lenore Chartrand, owner of Heaven Scent Flowers & Gifts in Gimli, Manitoba, to walk us through the process. Lenore is well known throughout Manitoba's Interlake Region for creating breathtaking works of art in her bouquets and floral arrangements. And she loves making wreaths.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I got to the florist shop, as I'm not the craftiest person (writing is more my bag). But Lenore made it easy for us to follow along and see how fast and simple it can be to create your own Christmas wreath in about an hour.

Wreath-making allows for a lot of flexibility. You can mix live and plastic items. You can add extra touches according to your colour preferences or style. Have fun with it!

You begin by cutting the evergreen fronds into 4- to 6-inch stubs. Longer stubs are recommended for larger wreaths. Shorter four-inch stubs work best for smaller wreaths. Just remember that the larger you make your clusters, the more space you lose in the centre of your wreath, so it's preferable to keep them small.

Place the fronds in a basket for easy access. Take a twig of the berries and a piece of the dogwood, and wind them together with an evergreen frond, using waxed string or paddle wire to create tiny bundles or clusters. Wrap the end of the bundle around the frame of the wreath three or four times to ensure it is securely fastened.

You can make an entire basket of these clusters ahead of time. It then makes it easier to complete the wreath and works especially well if you're making several wreaths or have a helper or two at the table for a collaborative wreath-making gathering.



As you attach the clusters to the frame, remember to face one inward towards the frame and the next one outward, away from the frame. That way, they fit tightly in an overlapping way and you don't have any of the frame showing. You can fill in any bald spots on the wreath with pan glue.

Once you've created the wreath by completely covering the frame with your clusters, it's time to add some personal touches. If you've got a colour theme happening with your Christmas lights, you may wish to choose a large velvet or silk bow of the same colour as your lights. If there are certain types of birds that frequent your yard during the winter, you may wish to include a felt one (like a cedar waxwing, chickadee or a blue jay) on your wreath. Use your imagination and your creativity to put your own individual personality or the signature of your property into the creation of your wreath. And keep those things in mind if you are making a wreath as a gift for someone else. Use their favourite colour for the bow or sash, their favourite type of bird, or something that will make them realize that wreath was made with them in mind. Above all, put your own personality into the mix and have fun with it!

TIPS ON CARE:

- Evergreen wreaths love the cold, so they are easy to maintain. You just hang them up and don't have to do anything else to them.
- Once you've hung your wreath outdoors, leave it out. Lenore says they don't like a change in temperature, so don't bring it in and then take it back out.
- Don't make your wreath too early in the season, as if the temperature warms up again outdoors as it often does during fall, the greenery will dry out and the needles will begin to fall off the evergreen fronds.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A 16 or 18 inch base or circular frame on which to build your wreath. (It can be made of firm metal wire or grapevine for greater flexibility.)
- Snippers/gardener's clippers to cut your fronds into pieces.
- Spruce, pine or cedar evergreen fronds (the green part of the branches.) These can be purchased through a florist or greenhouse if you don't have your own.
- Dogwood branches
- Eucalyptus leaves
- Hypericum berries (You can substitute with any colourful artificial or dried berries.)
- Waxed string or paddle wire
- Personal touches you'd like to add, like a coloured silk bow, pine cones, felt bird figurines, etc.
- You'll need pan glue to adhere pine cones and other decorations to the wreath.
- Gloves, if you have sensitive skin, as evergreens are filled with sap and your

hands may get sticky or sensitive skin may be easily pierced by the sharp needles.

- If you choose to make a centerpiece rather than a wreath, the process is slightly different. You'll need a piece of firm foam to insert your greens into, and you don't make the clusters. You insert each piece individually into the foam.

The history of when and where head wreaths, and (much later) Christmas wreaths were created and made popular is a fascinating one. The origin of the head wreath dates back to ancient Greece, where the god Apollo is said to have made himself a crown of laurel to wear as an ode to his beloved Daphne. Later, the Romans adapted the symbol of the head wreath to represent victory and power. The meaning of the wreath has evolved over time to represent eternal life in our contemporary world. And to Christians, it can also be a symbol of faith.

Just as the Germans are credited with being the first to incorporate evergreen trees as a symbol of Christmas, they were also the first European culture to take the cuttings from the Christmas tree they were trying to fit into their homes and turn them into a holiday wreath. It was a way of truly being green (far before it was necessary or fashionable to reuse and repurpose) by not wasting those cuttings and instead, weaving them into wreaths that have become a symbol of the Christmas spirit.

Doreen Pendgracs is a Manitoba-based freelance writer and award-winning author who specializes in writing about chocolate travel at chocolatour.net. She currently serves as President of the Professional Writers Association of Canada and Co-Chair of the Canadian Freelance Guild.



Lenore Chartrand of Heaven Scent Flowers & Gifts in Gimli, Manitoba, with the wreath she made during the demonstration.

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6772	290981	939/6	14.5	12.5	39	330
6773	291859	1047/6	14.5	12.5	47	330



Barbed Wire High Tensile Class 3

Deacero Code	Peavey Code	Gauge	Barb Style	Barb Spacing	Length
					(")
7203	298202	15.5	4 PTS	5	1320



Horse Fence Class 1

Deacero Code	Peavey Code	Filler Gauge	Top/Bottom Gauge	Mesh Spacing	Fence Height	Roll Length
					(")	(")
6793	296364	12.5	10	2x4	60	100
6795	296365	12.5	10	2x4	48	100



Barbed Wire Commercial Class

Deacero Code	Peavey Code	Gauge	Barb Style	Barb Spacing	Length
					(")
7128	200305	13	4 PTS	6	1320



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BBQ HONEY CRUNCH MEATLOAF

A COMFORT FOOD MEAL FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Recipe by Meg Tucker, Cook With Meg - megtucker.com

This recipe is guaranteed to bring you back to a time when families gathered around the table, to share a comfort food meal with great company. It's not fussy, clean up is a breeze and you're likely to have most of these ingredients already in the house!

Peavey Industries hosted Meg Tucker on our social media network on Friday, April 3, 2020 for an interactive cooking experience featuring this recipe. To watch the video, visit connectedtotheland.info/recipes.

MEATLOAF

- 1lb ground beef (any ground meat will do, plant based substitute works too)
- ½ c panko or plain bread crumbs
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard (any mustard will do)
- 4 tbsp bbq sauce
- 2 tbsp honey
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- Optional spices: pinch of cayenne, maple bbq rub, get creative!
- Non-stick spray

ROASTED VEGGIES

- 2-3 large potatoes (white, sweet, pick your fave)
- 2 cups root veggies
- 1 small onion
- Olive / cooking oil
- Salt and pepper

MAKING THE DINNER

Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment. Spritz with non-stick spray if using tin foil. Preheat your oven to 375°C.

In a large bowl, lightly mix together your ground beef, bread crumbs, 3 tablespoons of the barbecue sauce, ½ tablespoon of the Worcestershire sauce, mustard, 1 tablespoon of the honey, salt, pepper, garlic and any optional spices you've added! Do not overmix, you do not want your meatloaf to be too tightly packed, or it will be tough. Set bowl aside. In another small bowl mix together the remaining Worcestershire, honey and barbecue sauce and stir to combine: this will be your "topping."

Peel the potatoes and root veggies, cutting them into bite sized, 1-1.5" chunks. In a bowl, toss your root veg and potatoes and onion

with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and a generous pinch of salt and pepper.

Give your tin foil sheet pan a spritz of non-stick spray. If you're using parchment you can skip this step. We are now going to take our meatloaf mixture out of the bowl and freeform it into a "log" down the middle of the sheet pan covered in foil. Think about the log being rectangular in shape, and you'll want to cut it into about 6 pieces. The length is up to you, just know the longer and skinnier you form it, the quicker it will cook.

Once you have the log freeformed, pour the rest of the sauce over the top. Scatter the veggies around the meatloaf and bake for 35-45 minutes*. You want your meatloaf to be cooked to 155-160 F on the inside, until the juices run clear. Remember it will still cook for a couple minutes after you take it out of the oven. You also want your veggies to be cooked through.

**All oven temps vary so check at about the 30 min mark!*

Enjoy! 🍀

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FARMHOUSE BREAD

BAKING FRESH MULTIGRAIN LOAVES

Recipe and photos by Kathleen Raines.

When I was a kid, the best days were when we raced home from the school bus to enter a house filled with the aroma of freshly baked bread. Sometimes, Mom made cinnamon buns; other days it was plain white bread, and with generous additions of butter and Roger's Golden syrup it made the best after school snack – hard to stop at one slice, no matter how thickly cut!

My own children have those same memories as I made most of our bread when they were young, and they too learned the butter and syrup trick. I was fortunate to have a mother and a grandmother who baked and taught me their bread-making secrets. While I apprenticed with my paternal grandmother, I inherited an enamel bread-rising pan from my maternal grandmother and number it among my most cherished possessions.

Over the years my recipe and technique have evolved, and I have become confident enough to play with ingredients and celebrate even the less-than-ideal loaves, those occasional flops

that don't rise well or get slightly overbaked. Following is my "standard" recipe for a tasty multigrain loaf.

MEASURE:

- 1/3 cup each oatmeal, cornmeal, wheat germ and wheat bran
- 2 tablespoons each poppy seeds, sesame seeds and coarsely ground flax seed

Pour 1 cup boiling water over top and mix. Cool to lukewarm, half an hour.

MEASURE:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons oil

Heat to lukewarm in microwave, 2-3 minutes

MEASURE:

While the liquids are heating, in large mixing bowl measure:

- 4 cups white flour
- 1 heaping tablespoon instant yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt

Add heated liquids and beat with a wooden spoon for several minutes, until smooth and glossy. Beat in three eggs, one at a time. Add the cooled grain / seed mixture, followed by 2 cups whole wheat or barley flour. Continue to add white flour, ½ a cup at a time, switching to hand kneading when the mixture becomes too heavy to handle with the spoon – generally I find this occurs at about the 7 cup stage. Knead, adding flour gradually, until the sponge is fine-textured and doesn't stick to the bowl. Keep track of the total amount of flour added: the 10 cup mark is my guideline but can vary by up to a cup depending on weather, moisture content of the ingredients and household environment.

Cover with a tea towel and let rise for about an hour, until doubled in size. Punch down, divide into 4 loaves and cover with the tea towel to rest for 10 minutes. Prepare pans by greasing lightly and sprinkling with cornmeal. If you don't have loaf pans, baking sheets can be used for round or oblong loaves. Shape loaves and cover with the tea towel to rise another 45 – 60 minutes. Bake at 375 degrees for about half an hour, until the loaves are brown and sound hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Now comes the hard part: let cool for at least an hour before you cut and taste your delicious bread!

SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions and tricks learned over the years:

- 1/3 cup cooked brown rice can be added to the grain mixture if you have some in the fridge. Grandma used 2 cups of Sunny Boy cereal for a four loaf batch
- sugar can be fully or partially replaced by honey or molasses; the latter gives a wonderful colour and “nose” to the loaf
- try bacon grease in place of the oil, another trick both my grandmother and mother employed
- eggs are optional but I prefer the texture of what is technically known as an “enriched” loaf
- block off three hours for bread making, broken down as follows:
 - half an hour assembling ingredients, mixing and kneading
 - two rising sessions, each 45 minutes to an hour
 - 15 minutes to rest the sponge and shape the loaves
 - 30 – 40 minutes in the oven
- bread is very forgiving; even the less-than-ideal loaf will make a great sandwich or toast
- home made bread is best eaten within a couple of days. Freeze as soon as cooled to ensure that the fresh-baked flavour is preserved.



Happy baking! 🍁

Kathleen Raines raises sheep and works with a committed group of volunteers as project coordinator for Taste of Markerville.



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BEFORE THE SNOW FLIES

GETTING YOUR YARD READY

Story by Lee Hart.

Is your yard and garden ready for winter yet? Have you done any planning for the 2021 gardening season?

With often warm days in early September, it might seem pretty early to be thinking too hard about shutting down the current gardening season — flowerbeds, vegetable gardens, and yards can still look very colorful, green and productive. But, gardening experts across Western Canada say from then on and over the next few weeks until the snow flies, there are plenty of chores ahead preparing the yard for winter and even getting a head start on the 2021 season.

Anyone planning to establish or expand their perennial flower garden with tulips, lilies, daffodils, crocus, or any of a wide range of plants that grow from bulbs should get those bulbs planted right away, says Hugh Skinner of Roblin, MB, president of the Manitoba Horticultural Association and a commercial lily grower.

“New bulbs are dormant this time of year,” says Skinner. “They should be planted anytime now, which allows time for bulb roots to begin to establish in the soil.” Skinner says there is

no risk of bulbs beginning to push new shoots above ground as the bulbs need a cold cycle (winter) to break their dormancy.

And Skinner says one area of fall work that sometimes gets overlooked is pest control. “Particularly if there are gophers (ground squirrels) in the yard, fall is a good time to look at pest control options to hopefully reduce numbers and reduce the risk of them damaging plants and the garden next year.”

Near Saskatoon, SK, Sara Williams a mostly retired horticultural specialist from the University of Saskatchewan, who has authored and co-authored several gardening books, says there is plenty of yard projects particularly after a killing frost, as leaves fall and green material dies back ahead of the approaching winter.

Once raspberry patches have stopped producing fruit, she says it is a good time to clean out the spent raspberry canes. Raspberry plant roots are perennial but the canes are biennial, which means that only the new canes that grew this year will produce fruit next year.

“So any canes that produced fruit this year are done so they should be cut out and removed,” says Williams. “That leaves the new canes that grew this year. And if the new canes are growing close together and some are thicker than others, cut out the thinner ones, leaving the more robust canes to produce fruit next year.”

Also, with apple trees, if any fruit has fallen to the ground and is unusable it should be removed to the compost pile. Rotting fruit is a good place for insect pests to lay eggs that will overwinter and hatch next year. And depending on how hearty the variety of strawberry growing in the garden, Williams says it may be wise to cover plants with mulch or layer of straw to protect them from severe winter temperatures.

In Alberta, Rob Spencer, of Stettler, president of the Alberta Horticultural Association, and the principal of Spencer Horticultural Solutions consulting services says early fall days are a good time to get garden crops prepped for storage.

“Cure vegetables such as onions and winter squash prior to long term storage,” he says.

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“... there are plenty of chores ahead preparing the yard for winter and even getting a head start on the 2021 season...”

“This involves a couple weeks of warmer temperatures, followed by gradually bringing the temperature down. For other vegetables, harvest them cool and then get them into storage as soon as possible.”

For root vegetables, dig plants prior to the ground freezing, or prior to a heavy / hard frost, says Spencer. If they get frozen or damaged in some way, it can be a challenge to store them properly.

All three specialists emphasized the importance of cleaning up dead plant material around the yard prior to winter setting in.

- Take the time to clean up debris, either placing it in the compost, or another suitable disposal site. If vegetable crops or flowers had disease such as powdery mildew or other plant health issues, you should consider whether there might be some carryover potential in the debris. When in doubt, bury or burn it, or ideally remove it to the compost pile.
- For some trees and shrubs, get them hydrated prior to freeze up. This includes conifers and deciduous ornamental species. Fruiting plants should be left to dry down a bit, to encourage them to shut down for the winter.
- For tender plants, consider putting an insulating layer over them once they've had a few frosts, unless you are confident that they'll have a good layer of snow.
- When cleaning up perennial flower beds remove most of the dead plant material, although leave about four to six inches of stubble above the plant crowns as it will help to trap snow and insulate the plant over winter.
- Give the lawn a last cut at a slightly higher height than normal. Make sure there aren't piles of leaves left on the ground. Once covered with snow, the trash piles can often develop snow mould, leading to dead patches of grass next year.
- Fall is also a good time to add manure or compost to the garden soil, or use those nutrient rich materials to top dress a perennial flowerbed as well.

All three specialists noted some gardeners opt to seed a few of next year's vegetable crops in late fall. Garlic is actually best planted in the fall, just before the ground freezes, and spinach seeds will also successfully over winter in the soil for an early start next spring. The

key is to seed late enough so plants do not start growing before winter freeze up. 🍁

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