

Gardening for Survival - By Lynn Grail

Have you ever thought about where you are going to get your food when the emergency supplies you have stored away are depleted? Will you forage for wild edibles? How much of that will you be able to do if you are hungry and weakened by having to defend yourself? or doing everything by hand. . . Foraging for foods takes a lot of time knowledge and energy.

Bartering is good.

Game hunting might be feasible, if you have a weapon and the skill.

Stealing food is another possibility but you could get dead.

Maybe you figure that the emergency will only last a few years, you will then be able to waltz into your favorite supermarket for food and pick up what ever you need. Ha ha ha . It will take a few years for the farmers to get their farms back into production, that is assuming that they still have them, the fuel to run their equipment, the fuel to get produce to market. If perchance the markets do reopen; what will we purchase the goods with?

I think by now you have the direction that I am hinting at. If you guessed gardening you are definately on the right track.

BUT, Do you really want to put together a garden that looks like something straight out of a garden magazine? Do you really want to advertise that you have a garden overflowing with food? You might as well put a sign advertising FREE FOOD FOR THE TAKING, out by the street.

I think I may have at least a partial answer, part of it involves container planting, and the other part involves planting lots of the

green or root crop vegetables on the southern side of buildings, tree stands, or even trying to create a naturalistic type of free growing, untouched by a survivor type of garden.

Naturally the bright eye catching types of vegetables, like tomatoes, pumpkins, ect., will have to be either camouflaged while still getting plenty of sunshine. Or they will have to be planted in movable containers, potatoes can be grown in garbage cans with holes in the bottom. Take a look at Burpee's, or Parks, ect. seed catalogs; they have a few container growing idea's. (Look at Burpee's Patio Tower Garden, maybe you could come up with other ideas too) You might think this is more trouble than necessary; but I would rather put in some extra time, than to have my children go hungry for even one day.

I also feel that storing an unknown quantity of commercial fertilizer and pesticides is not only monetarily unwise but who wants to put more chemicals into contaminated soil, water and air?

Pick up some good books on organic gardening and check out some of the natural pesticides and fertilizers. Look at some of the books that talk about growing your garden in squares rather than rows, (this type ought to burst some of your preconceived ideas about gardening)

Start a compost pile, throw all organic materials; food scraps, weeds, hay, manure, garden surplus or rotten food in a pile, ((DO NOT ADD meats, bones or petroleum based products)) add dirt, stir once or twice a week and you'll get some organic fertilizer, to enrich your garden soil.

Try using onion tea as a spray pesticide. Also use some liquid soap mixed with water and spray that on your plants. Don't forget to use companion planting. Plant marigolds, zinnias and nasturniums in your garden to control other pests. I read somewhere recently, that you could hang those perfumed hotel bars of soap (I think it said

deodorant bars) in your orchard trees, to discourage deer from eating the trees. Hang the small bars with copper wire, still in the wrapper, from a branch about 4 - 6 feet high. There are many other natural pesticides that only add to the good soil.

Mulching around your plants with hay, compost, shredded paper, or other organic mulches, should help to reduce the amount of watering that you have to do. Some people will tell you to use black plastic as a mulch, but I would watch that there is no rotting since the air can't get to the soil. There is a new plastic on the market that has "microscopic holes" punched in it.

The best suggestion that I can give any would be gardener is to DO IT NOW. There are plenty of people out there that will gladly give you free advice on how to garden. Some of it will come while you are digging up the soil. Some of it will come when you put in your first plants. Some advice will be given while you are weeding (check those weeds they might be edible). I got almost as much advice on gardening, as when I brought home my first child. But I remembered the best advice I was given then, "Listen to all of the advice you were given; but only use what you think is good advice".

Lynn Grail