

Useful_Items_2004.txt

A recent thread in misc.consumers.frugal-living got me thinking about things that can be purchased now for very little money which would prove invaluable for use/trading after TEOTWAKI.

This is one of those catagories that could be unlimited. I try to build up a supply based on what is difficult to make myself.

I have a different method. Every month I alocate \$20 to my stash. I ususally add a package of 10 sewing machine needles for \$2. It is the kind of thing that will be useful and nearly impossible to make on a home basis.

I usually add a brick of 22's each month. I watch at garage sales for combat/ work/ hiking boots for a couple bucks a pair. The boots get a good coating of neatsfoot oil before going in sealed bags. I also watch for gloves, it's hard to make good ones. Shirts and pants are not nearly as difficult as gloves. Cold weather gear is more essential than summer items. Work clothes, jeans and flannel shirts, are better than bright colored.

I watch for old radios with short wave bands for a couple bucks.

I figure after TEOTWAKI more time and labor will be spent supplying your own needs rather than buying items. This means tools are essential and watch for shovels, hoes,buckets, etc. Heat will be a wood stove most likely so add a buck saw for when the gas for the chainsaw runs out. I was buying some steel the other day and in the dumpster at the steel place was a band saw blade from one of their saws. I added it to my purchase and cut it into 5 - 30 inch sections with a chop saw. The teeth are large enough to make some buck saws.

I watch for Schwinn bikes and have a dozen in the rafters of the garage. I buy them for \$5 max that may need a tire or a cable. If you do not frequent garage sales and free markets watch for police auctions. They usually sell dozens of recovered but unclaimed bikes. I bought a group of 5 for \$10 once. By having a bunch of the same type, the parts interchange. I have extra inner tubes in ammo cans and patching kits. Buy spare tires and tubes in the fall when they are on sale.

I buy buckets of vegetable seeds in the late summer when they are closed out

Useful_Items_2004.txt

at 5 cents each. I put them in a glass jar with a dessicant. Store in cool and dark. The viability may drop over the years but some will work. I can fit a lot in a gallon glass jar and 100 packets were only \$5, some for me, some to trade.

I watch for sewing machines. I will pay up to \$5 for a Singer. White or Brother brands are good too. I especially like old straight stitch singers. They are strong enough to sew leather.

Canning jars are great. They don't deteriorate unless you smash them and you can put small stuff like your needles, thread, zippo lighters, fish hooks in them until you need em. If you think that your family would need one 2 jars of food per day then you need at least 700 jars. The latest issue of Backwoodsman has an article on building a vacuum packer that works with the jars. Handy for packing grain and rice. I pick them up at \$1 a dozen at garage sales frequently.

I have a big box of candles. I watch for the big 3 inch ones that often have maybe an inch burned off and sell for a nickle or quarter. You can buy candle wick at craft stores if you feel like melting them down or use them as is. Crock pot works good for melting wax. Candle making kits with molds are good and cheap too.

In the miscellanious pile I have slightly less practical stuff that may turn out to be needed at the time. I wouldn't grab it if I was forced to run but it was all picked up for next to nothing. I have things like a hand cranked ice cream maker, ice skates, decks of cards, board games, checkers and dice.

I have some future activities planned for recreation and spare time, or when the blizzard has you pinned inside. Like a juggling book and balls. Don't forget to add a few musical instruments or a harmonica.