

4 KEYS TO FOOD  
SECURITY AND  
HOMESTEAD ABUNDANCE

Christine J. Dalziel



# 4 keys to Food Security & Homestead Abundance

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*How to laugh at the time to come*

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**This book is dedicated to my daughter, Sarah and my daughter-in-love, Miranda, with the hope that you will always be able to “laugh at the time to come”.**

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# 4 Keys to Food Security & Homestead Abundance

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*How to laugh at the time to come*



## 4 keys to food security at home

*“You can’t predict, you can prepare. Experience the power of making decisions based on security instead of worry, readiness instead of reluctance, abundance instead of lack.”*

~ Kathy Gates

It’s becoming harder and harder to find safe, nutritious food for a Mom to feed her family. With cancer causing, herbicide laden, genetically modified foods (GMOs) contaminating the food supply, and food recalls dominating the news, Moms need to know that the food that they feed their family is not just nutritious but also safe. Food allergies are increasing every year. And grocery store shelves are more frequently sparse, as stores face the credit crunch that has dominated family finance in the past decade. But you still have to eat.

So what if I told you that you can still feed your family safe and nutritious food? What if I told you that you don’t need to be at the mercy of store policies, and macro-economics to keep your family fed and healthy? What if I gave you a plan that would give you safe, healthy, nutritious meals and actually save you money on your grocery bill? Would you be interested?

These 4 keys will help you feed your family nutritious meals, at a lower cost and also help you prepare for emergencies, and shortages. By applying all 4 of these keys to your own family food security you can stop worrying about tomorrow. You will be able to “laugh at the time to come.”

### **Homesteaders and Preppers, what’s the difference?**

First let me tell you who this book is for. While we all worry about food safety, there are two communities that are vocally concerned about food security – The Homesteading Community and the Prepping Community. Homesteading is different than prepping. Homesteaders look at the long term, and move toward a lifestyle change of self-reliance and sustainability. Homesteaders enjoy the self-reliant skills and don’t mind the work of growing their own food, storing up what they can’t grow themselves, and taking care of their own families, often away from the convenience of big box stores, and other cogs in the wheel of the supply chain.



Preppers, on the other hand, have a different mindset. They, too, are stocking up for tomorrow. But preppers are content to stock up on convenience food and certain barter items in order to ensure their own survival. Admittedly there is some cross-over between these two communities. If you are coming to this book from the perspective of a prepper, welcome. I hope I can convince you that food security is not just an “emergency preparedness” strategy, but rather necessary for day to day economics and peace of mind. If you come to this book from a homesteader mindset, welcome, too. I hope you’ll find

what you need to keep on with the journey toward greater self-reliance and more satisfying relationships with your neighbors and friends.

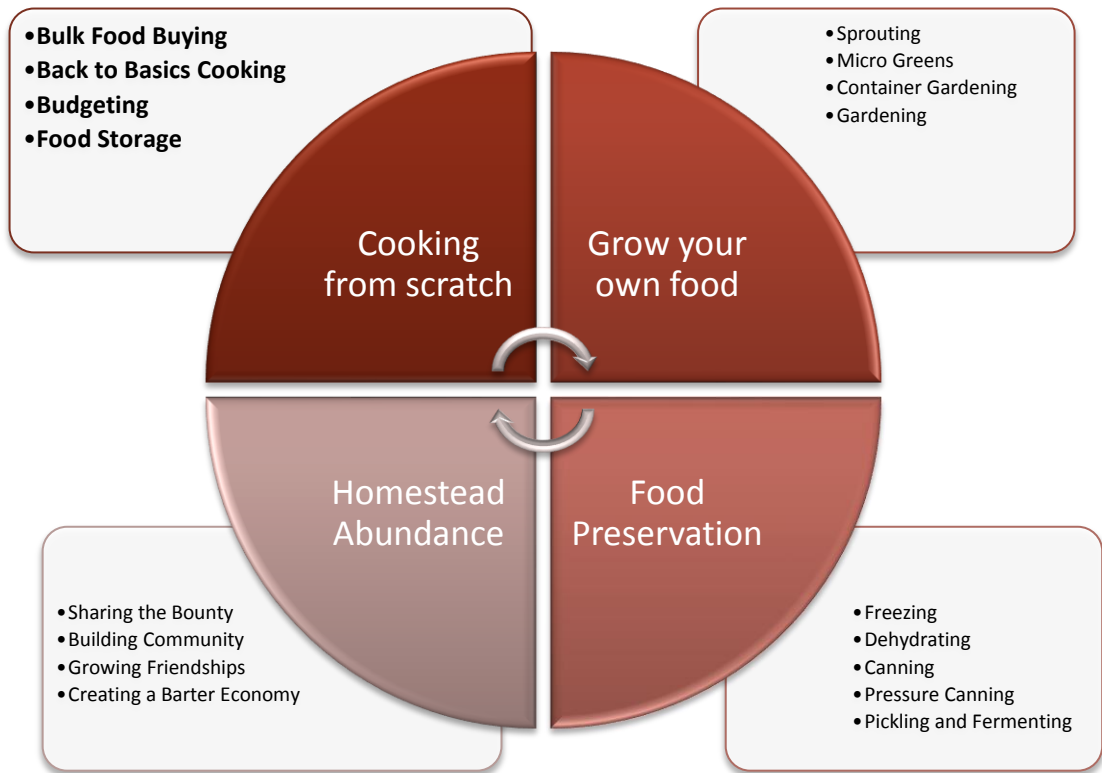
**Warning!**

But first I need to warn you, if you are the kind of person that prefers excuses to action, someone who would rather hang out on Facebook, complaining about the hand life has dealt you, rather than a person who puts on their gardening gloves to fight for change, you may want to stop reading now. This book isn't for you. If you prefer whining to work, this book can't help you. But if you are ready to put on your gardening gloves, and get a little dirty, these 4 keys will help you ensure that your family is well fed no matter what the future brings.

If that's you, let's get started.







## Cook from scratch

*“There is one thing more exasperating than a wife who can cook and won't, and that's a wife who can't cook and will.” – Robert Frost*

Maybe you already cook a few things from scratch, bake your own bread sometimes, and make cookies at home. For real food security, though, you will need to avoid the inside aisles of the grocery store and stick to the outside aisles where the fresh produce, fresh meat, and dairy products are. While these are not necessarily GMO-free, unless you buy organic, they will help you avoid some of the common genetically modified ingredients. Packaged cookies, breads, breakfast cereals, snack foods, frozen dinners, salad dressings, and sauces all contain GMOs, and rancid oils that will damage your health. By cooking from scratch you'll avoid these questionable ingredients, you'll be healthier, and you'll save money on your grocery bill, too, while you choose healthful ingredients to feed your own family.



But the baking aisle has staples that I need to cook from scratch, you protest. This is true. But I'm going to suggest a cheaper way to buy these staples in the next section. Keep reading and you'll find my secret to cheaper, more healthy cooking.

### A word about GMOs

Scientific studies show that genetically modified food causes cancerous tumours in animals, as well as DNA damage and sterility in the next generation. You don't want to eat GMOs or feed them to your kids. Further, GMOs are modified to allow them to be sprayed with poisonous herbicides, without harm. You don't want herbicide-poisons in your kitchen, either. Sadly, in North America, GMOs don't need to be labeled and over 80% of all packaged food contains them. But you can avoid bringing GMOs into your kitchen by reading labels and avoiding all foods that contain ingredients that have been genetically modified.



The most common genetically modified foods include sugar beets, soy, corn, canola (rape seed), cotton, and their derivatives. There are others, but this is a good place to start. Avoid these by making your food from scratch and substituting whole foods like local honey, quality olive oil, organic butter, and coconut oil where you would have used sugar, canola oil, or corn oil.

If you are new to scratch cooking, start by learning to cook the things your family already loves. Most cook books will help you learn how to cook simple foods, like breads, cookies, and waffles from scratch.

Once you become good at cooking from scratch your creativity will develop and you will find yourself substituting ingredients for those that you have on hand – for instance, using 3 tbsp. of cocoa and 1 tbsp. of butter instead of 1 oz. of unsweetened chocolate. Once you've mastered a few favorite recipes, you'll be ready to simplify a few meals or up the nutritional value of your family favorites.



Becoming an expert at cooking from scratch takes practice. You need to learn how your ingredients behave at your elevation and with your cooking situation. Electric ovens bake differently than gas ovens or even wood ovens. Be patient with yourself in the learning curve, while you learn new skills. It does take a few mistakes to grow in your knowledge of a new technique. Go with the flow.

Most mistakes are still edible. If you get an especially bad dinner bomb, there's always scrambled eggs and toast with a salad to fall back on. Dinner bombs are a good reason to get a few chickens – both for their eggs and to clean up the

evidence of any dinner bombs you may create.

### **Take Action:**

Salad dressings and condiments hide GMOs in the form of oils, fats, and flavour enhancers like MSG. You can avoid these ingredients and save money by making your own from scratch. Dressings and condiments are easy to make and by making them from scratch you'll save a lot. The average household has 3 or 4 bottles of salad dressing, mayonnaise, and sandwich spread in the door of the fridge. So let's start with mayonnaise.

### ***Real Mayonnaise Recipe:*** (makes 2 cups)

You'll need farm fresh eggs, preferably organic or raised by you. You are just using the yolk for this recipe, so save the egg whites for making meringue or add them to your baking later.

2 egg yolks

2 tbsp. lemon juice

1 ½ cups of virgin olive oil

¼ tsp. Dijon mustard

½ tsp. celtic sea salt or Himalayan salt

Using your stand mixer with the whip beater on, begin beating the egg yolks until they lighten in colour. Add lemon juice and continue beating. Then, very slowly, drizzle ½ cup of the olive oil into the egg mixture, allowing it to incorporate while the beater continues beating. The mixture will begin to thicken. Add mustard and salt, and beat well. Add the remaining 1 cup of olive oil by drizzling it down the side of the bowl, very slowly, while continuing to beat. You are allowing the oil to incorporate into the thickening mayonnaise, while the beaters continue to beat. Your mayonnaise will be a pale yellow colour and be ready to use immediately. It will become thicker as it cools.

Store in a glass jar in the refrigerator. Mayonnaise will keep for 1 week in the refrigerator. Use it as a base for other salad dressings or dip, and as a sandwich spread.

### ***Ranch Dressing (makes 2 cups)***

1 cup of organic whole milk yoghurt

1 cup of homemade mayonnaise

½ tsp dried minced onion

1 tsp. dried parsley

¼ tsp. garlic powder

Mix all ingredients together. Put in pint jar. Allow to sit in the refrigerator for 1 hour before using. This will keep 2 weeks in the refrigerator. The yoghurt acts as a lacto-ferment preservative and extends the shelf life of the salad dressing.

### ***Basic Italian Dressing (makes 1 cup)***

½ cup of extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

1 tsp. oregano flakes

1 tbsp. fresh basil, finely chopped

½ tsp. dried rosemary

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

Put all ingredients in a blender jar and whirl on high until mixture thickens. Dijon mustard is an emulsifier and helps thicken salad dressings, as well as adding to the flavour.

Pour into a jar with a tight fitting lid. Shake before using.

## Buy staples in bulk and store to protect from spoilage and vermin

*“The pesto and angel hair are warm in the bowl on my lap, the fragrances of olive oil and basil blending the exotic and familiar, equal parts sunny Tuscan hillside and hometown dirt. A meal like this makes you want to live forever, if only for the scent of warm pesto in January.” — Michael Perry*

Buy your staples in bulk and store in glass, metal, or food safe plastic to protect them from pests. By buying in bulk you save money on the per-serving cost of your meals. You ensure that you always have your basic ingredients on hand for cooking from scratch. Bulk shopping reduces your weekly shopping trip, too, saving you time and gas. Some homesteaders only shop once a month or even once every 2 or 3 months because their food storage has everything they need to provide nutritious, home cooked meals for their active family.

When you buy in bulk for the first time you may want to join with another family and divide the bags of staples between families. Often when buying in bulk, the more you buy, the more you save. Our bulk store gives an added 5% discount when the bulk order exceeds \$500, so there are advantages to buying more at one time. But a small family is at a disadvantage unless they team up with other folks. So ask among your family and friends and go together on a big order.

Bulk buying saves you money in the per-serving size of your food bill. However, don't buy more than you can safely store and protect from vermin. Oily foods like nuts, and shelled seeds, like sunflower seeds, will go rancid if not kept cold. You can minimize spoilage by storing these foods in a cool place or even in the freezer. Don't buy large bags of these kinds of food unless you have a safe place to store them. Other foods keep better in the whole seed form – like grains -- so store these as whole wheat, or whole rye rather than buying the milled flours in bulk.

You will need a grain mill to grind grains and utilize whole grains as flour. Keep in mind that bread made from freshly ground flours has higher nutrition and better flavour than home baked bread made with commercial flours. If you are a family that uses grains, consider investing in a grain mill when you are ready. A quality grain mill, like the Wondermill Grain mill, will last you for decades. Without a grain mill, plan to freeze whole grain flour to keep it from going rancid.





Buy the food that your family actually eats and likes. Don't buy 100 lbs. of kidney beans if your family hates beans. Don't buy whole wheat berries if your family is gluten-free. You already knew that right? Customize your bulk food shopping to your own family's dietary preferences. Do buy cocoa in bulk if your family drinks hot chocolate and loves chocolate cake. And then store it safely to protect it from spoilage, and from pests. Mice like chocolate, too.

Most bulk food stores and health food stores will give you the option of buying in small amounts from the bulk bin or investing in full bags or boxes at a reduced rate – often 30 to 40% less per pound than buying smaller amounts. If you know that your family enjoys a certain food that you can buy in bulk, get the full bag if it's one of the safe-to-store foods. But if it's a new food that you haven't yet tried, buy the smaller amount to try before you invest in a full bag. Always make your decisions of whether to buy a lot or a little based on your own family's preferences, rather than shop from a generic "emergency preparedness" shopping list, that you downloaded from the web.

In the Y2K crisis of 1999, many families invested in buckets and buckets of dried beans, pasta, flour, and rice. Many of these families had never cooked from scratch or even used bulk food before. They bought according to a generic list of what a family of 4 needed for survival for one year. After January 1<sup>st</sup> 2000, much of that bulk food was donated to charity kitchens and food banks. Some was tossed in a dumpster, being past its best before date. Don't let your food investment go to waste. Only buy food in bulk that you know your family likes to eat. If you aren't sure, test a few recipes using a new ingredient before you invest in a full bag or box.



On the next page are a few charts to help you make a wise decision about where you should store your staple foods and for how long. You'll notice that foods that are dry and in storage, in general, last longer than foods that are in the freezer. The exception to this rule is foods that are high in polyunsaturated oils like shelled nuts and oil seeds. The oil in these foods is unstable and goes rancid quickly after shelling. Shelled nuts and oil seeds (except whole flax) need to be stored in the freezer, and only in small amounts, that can be used up in a few months. If you get a price break on raw cashews, team up with a few other families to share a 50 lb. box, rather than trying to store the whole box in your freezer and use it up before it goes rancid, unless your family is large enough to go through it in the safe storage time frame.

**Food that is safe for storage in a cool, dry place:**

Dried Beans	4 years	
Home canned food—fruit, juices, vegetables	1 year, 2 years with some loss of quality	
Sugar, white or brown	Indefinitely, keep brown tightly sealed	
White and Brown Rice	1 year brown rice, 3 years white	
Whole, unmilled grains	4 years	
Garden seeds	Varies – 1 year corn to 7 years cabbage	
<b>Unshelled</b> nuts and seeds	1 year	
Flax seed, whole and unmilled	1 to 2 years	
Dried pasta	1 year	
Dried vegetables	1 year	
Dried fruit	2 years	
Olive oil	2 years	
Coconut oil	3 years	
Tallow	2 years	
Lard	2 years	
Canned foods	1 year	
Vinegar	Indefinitely	
Wine	Indefinitely	
Relishes	2 years	
Chutneys	2 years	
Jams and Jellies	2 years	
Maple syrup, molasses	1 to 2 years	
Honey	Indefinitely, but it will solidify	
Salt, Sea Salt, Himalayan Salt	Indefinitely	

**Foods that should be stored in the freezer or a refrigerated:**

Shelled nuts	6 months to 1 year	
Shelled seeds, like sunflower and pumpkin seeds	6 months to 1 year	
Milled flours	3 to 6 months	
Ground flax	1 month	
Liquid oils, except olive oil (refrigerate)	1 to 3 months	
Dried meats/jerky	1 year	
Eggs	3 to 6 months (shelled in the freezer)	
All frozen foods	6 months	
All frozen meat	3 to 6 months	

Buying in bulk will save you money in the long term by costing you less per serving size and therefore per meal. Initially the cost of bulk buying is high, so introduce your budget to bulk buying a little at a time. By not purchasing packaged foods, you will free up your budget to begin purchasing in larger quantities, beginning with food that you eat regularly. A 25 lb. bag of rice instead of 5 - 5 lb. boxes of Minute Rice™ will save you money over the long haul. Use the savings to buy another item in bulk the next month or the next week. If you do this regularly, over the course of a year, you will realize



significant savings on your food budget and also build your food storage, and your family's food security, while staying within your food budget.

### **Take Action:**

Locate a bulk food store in your area. You may find a bulk food section in your regular grocery store, or it may be in a health food store. In Canada there are stores that specialize in bulk food. If there are no bulk food stores within driving distance of you, you may find what you are looking for online.

### **Your Price Book:**

Start a price book and write down the common staples that you use regularly. Use one page per staple item. My price book has page headings like organic coffee, brown sugar, dried kidney beans, whole almonds, etc. I buy some staples from my neighborhood farms, like honey, and whole rye berries. I don't put these in my price book, as regardless of price, I will support my local growers in these staple products. You may want to add the things you buy locally to your price book, so that you can keep track of price increases. It's up to you.

Record the date, price, weight and unit price (aka, price per lb.) under the staple item and keep track of when you bought it, where you bought it and how long the package lasts. This will alert you to price increases, as well as warning you when the manufacturer reduces package size. This is a common trick of the food industry to increase prices on unsuspecting shoppers.

Sometimes during a sale, the per pound price of smaller packages may end up less expensive than buying a bulk bag. Your price book will alert you to these savings, too, and allow you to take advantage of a store's loss leader.

### ***Don't let Math intimidate you!***

Does this sound like too much math? Don't be intimidated by numbers. Here's the easy formula to use to convert the size of the package to the per lb. price.

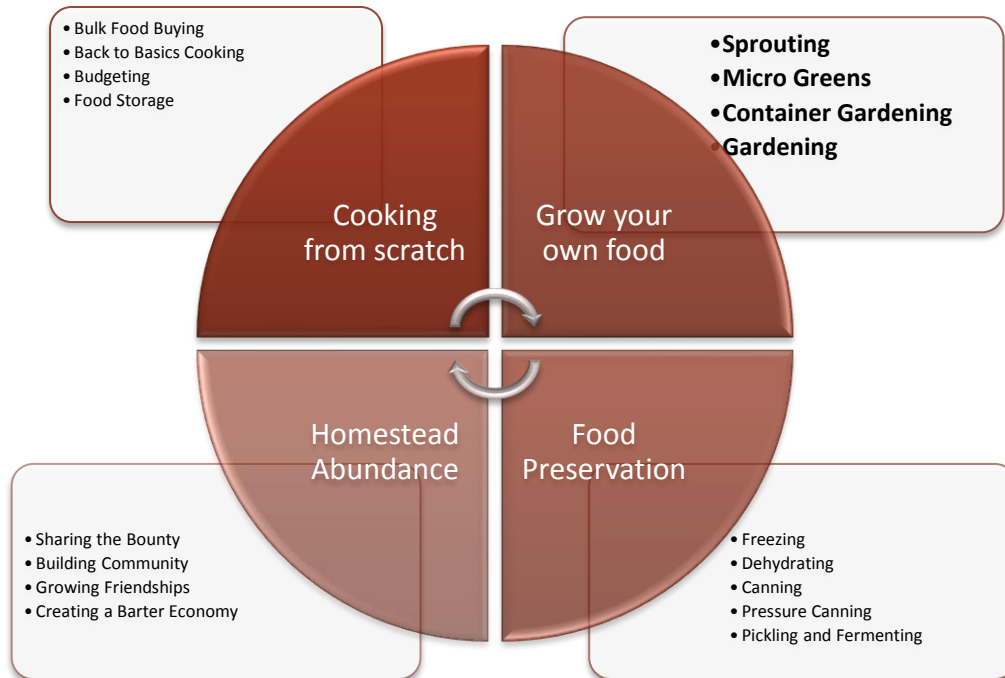
$$\text{Price} \div \text{weight} = \text{unit price}$$

You buy a bag of 15 lbs of medium grain white rice for \$24.

Take the price and divide by the number of lbs and this will give you the price per lb. So in this case, \$24.00 divide by 15. The rice costs \$1.60 per lb.

If the price is for an uneven weight, say 12.5 lbs. then you first multiply the weight by 16, the number of ounces in a lb. And then use that number to divide into the price. This gives you the price per ounce. Then multiply by 16 to get the exact price per lb.

If you've avoided comparing prices because you go crazy when someone asks you to do a math problem, get an easy to read solar calculator and keep it with your price book. You only need the functions of +, -,  $\div$ , x and =. Don't forget to take a pen to the store with you. Again keep it with your price book to make it easy to use this tool to save money on your groceries.



## Grow your own food

### Eat what you can grow and grow what your family likes to eat

*"It is like the seed put in the soil - the more one sows,  
the greater the harvest."  
Orison Swett Marden*

In order to stretch your food dollar and provide your family with the freshest possible, organic fruits and vegetables, you will want to grow your own food, as much as you are able in your present location. You will need to understand the limitations of your current housing situation to determine what you can easily grow.



Gardeners are limited by 3 main factors when planning their summer gardens.

- Climate zone and length of frost-free season
- Available sunlight
- Water

By far the most significant limiting factor is climate and growing zone. The climate of your area is determined by the number of frost free days in your area, and in your particular micro-climate. **Joybilee Farm** is in a valley, in the shadow of Phoenix Mountain, our local ski hill. The surrounding cities generally can count on frost free days from May 20<sup>th</sup> to Labour Day and sometimes as late as Canadian Thanksgiving, around the end of the first week in October. However, at Joybilee Farm, frost can greet us any morning of the year. The ski hill above us drops cold air on the farm, even in the middle of July. This makes the farm a great place to raise livestock, but not so wonderful for growing squash, beans, tomatoes, and corn. If I want to grow these, or other heat loving plants, I need to mitigate the natural micro-climate of the farm, by using row covers, cold frames, or a greenhouse to protect my plants from frost. It's easier, though, to work with what I have and grow fruits and vegetables that are frost hardy. I do a little of both in my garden.



Another limiting factor when planning your summer garden is the amount of light available to you, where you want to garden. Vegetables and fruit have differing needs for the amount of light required to produce fruit. Without adequate light squash won't blossom, and set fruit. Fruit trees won't flower.

If you live in an apartment and have only a North facing balcony, you will be more limited in what you can grow to feed your family. However, you can still provide some food self-reliance and food security by growing a portion of your food, in containers. For those with only a Northern exposure, consider supplementing your plants with grow lights, if you are limited to growing in the shade of a building or on a balcony. Mirrors, strategically placed on the soil surface, can increase the amount of light getting to plants and allow you to grow food, where you might not otherwise have success.

Some communities offer community garden spots for those with limited growing space. Check to see if your community offers these amenities. Community gardens offer a space to gather as well as a space to grow. You may find a barter arrangement set up in the community garden, where you can trade excess produce, too.

Water is another limiting factor to plant growth. In most places you will need to plan some irrigation into your garden plans, whether that is in the peak of the summer heat or the weekly watering of your pots. **If your water is metered**, this need not increase your household expenses. Washing water/ gray water can be used for watering plants, provided that there are no chemical additives in it. Rain water can also be collected and used for watering. (Check with your county to see if rainwater collection is allowed for watering plants.)

### **Choosing your garden site:**

#### ***Available light:***

One of the most important criteria, when selecting a new garden spot, is available light. Most vegetables need 6 to 8 hours of full, direct sunlight every day, during the growing season, to grow well and produce food. While some cooler season crops like peas, lettuce, carrots, and cabbages will tolerate light shade, no vegetables really like it.

#### ***Wind:***

Another consideration is the amount of wind your site gets. If your site gets a lot of wind, the plants will give off water through their leaves, called **transpiration**, bare top soil will erode, and the soil surface will dry-out, damaging plants.

Windy sites can be made more favourable to gardening by adding wind breaks and heat sinks to the garden space to catch moisture and break the strength of the wind. In cooler areas – especially in





the Northern US and Canada, consider adding row covers and wind breaks to increase soil warmth. This will increase your yields and give you a longer growing season.

### **Making do for an apartment garden:**

If you have an apartment and are limited to growing on a balcony or even indoors, you can still produce a substantial amount of your own food. You will be growing in containers. Choose plants that do well in containers. Plants labeled as “determinant” in the seed catalogue, are less vigorous and grow in a more controlled way than their “indeterminate” siblings. These are the ideal varieties to choose for container growing. If you are growing on a Northern exposure or completely indoors, you will want to supplement your plants with a few grow lights, to mimic what they would get out of doors in full sun. Further, potted plants tend to dry out faster than plants in the ground. Use watering aids to ensure that pots don’t dry out, especially if you have them outside in a windy location. Potted plants that dry out may not flower and produce fruit.

### **Microgreens and sprouts**

A lot of food can be grown indoors using just the space that you have and a few seeds. Sprouts only require a glass jar, a strainer, sieve or screen, and untreated seeds of fast growing vegetables like beans, peas, radish, sprouting broccoli, brown mustard, lentils, winter wheat, clover, or alfalfa. Use only untreated, organic seeds for sprouting. Nonorganic seeds may be contaminated with GMOs or have fungicides or pesticide residues. You don’t want to eat that.



#### ***Quick sprout directions:***

1. Using a 1 quart, wide mouth mason jar and a wire-mesh screen, nylon stocking, or screen made for sprouting ,
2. Add 2 tbsp. sprouting seeds – choose one or a combination of the fast growing seeds mentioned above.
3. Soak seeds overnight, rinse and drain.
4. Rinse seeds twice a day for 4 to 6 days, when seeds will have their first two leaves and be ready to eat.
5. Rinse again, drain, and use in salad or a sandwich.
6. Bean seeds should be stir fried or lightly sautéed before consuming.

#### ***Microgreens:***

Microgreens are fast growing, like sprouts but they are grown in soil instead of in water. They are harvested, by clipping the top growth, when they are still tiny and packed with nutrients. Micro-gardening allows you to produce lots of fresh greens with a wide variety of flavours, year round. Some seeds to use for growing micro-greens include: Kale, Swiss chard, arugula, broccoli, sunflower, mustard, and

pac choi.

### Choosing which seeds to plant

In your first foray into gardening, grow the vegetables and fruit that you are most likely to purchase in the store – the fruits and vegetables that your family already loves. This isn't the time to grow strange plants like Kohlrabi, or Gai Lan. Save more unusual vegetables for after you've had some gardening successes. Easy to grow plants include lettuce, kale, summer radishes, carrots, beets, chard, green onions, cherry tomatoes, and spinach. If you have never gardened before, make sure these are among your seed packages, for quick success. You can harvest radishes in only 30 days from planting. Some lettuce and spinach varieties are ready to harvest in just 45 days. Cherry tomatoes will keep producing tomatoes until the vines are killed by a frost.

Check the frost free period in your climate zone and pick the varieties that can be harvested in the number of frost-free days that you expect to have. At Joybilee Farm we stick to varieties with a 60 day or less growing season. That drops corn, and most squash out of the running for me. But there are bush bean varieties, as well as peas, carrots, and beets that can be grown in 60 days or that are hardy to intermittent frost. These shorter season varieties are not the common varieties that you'll find on the seed racks in the hardware store. These shorter season varieties are only available from seed companies. Since these are the ones that will produce a harvest for me, I buy my seeds from seed catalogues and stick to these varieties.



If you are further south or at a lower elevation, you will have a longer growing season. If you expect your last frost in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May and get your first frost on Labour Day, as many Canadian and Northern gardeners, you'll have about 100 days of gardening and have a greater variety of fruits and vegetables that will do well where you live. However, you should avoid corn or squash that needs a 120 day growing season, unless you can provide protection from frost near harvest time.

If you have a choice, in a shorter season area, plant your seeds earlier and protect the seedlings from frost. Plants that are started at the normal time but need to be covered in the later season, don't fare as well, because the plants are larger and more difficult to cover completely.

## Extend your growing season by growing in containers

In the last section, I suggested that apartment dwellers grow their vegetables in containers in order to have creative space to grow food where they live. For the rest of you, consider adding container gardening to your regular gardening too.

I'm sitting at my computer desk with the West Coast Seeds' catalogue open to the back where there are several new options for growing containers available. One intriguing option is "Reusable Potato Grow bags" for growing potatoes on your balcony or patio. Each bag is about \$6 each and holds 48 quarts (54 litres) of potting soil. The success of your potato bag is dependent on supplying adequate water and nutrients to the plants. Other options in this catalogue are Patio Garden Grow Bags, Climbing Tomato Grow Bags, and Pea and Bean Grow Bags. Each bag uses organic potting soil and is made for apartment or patio use.



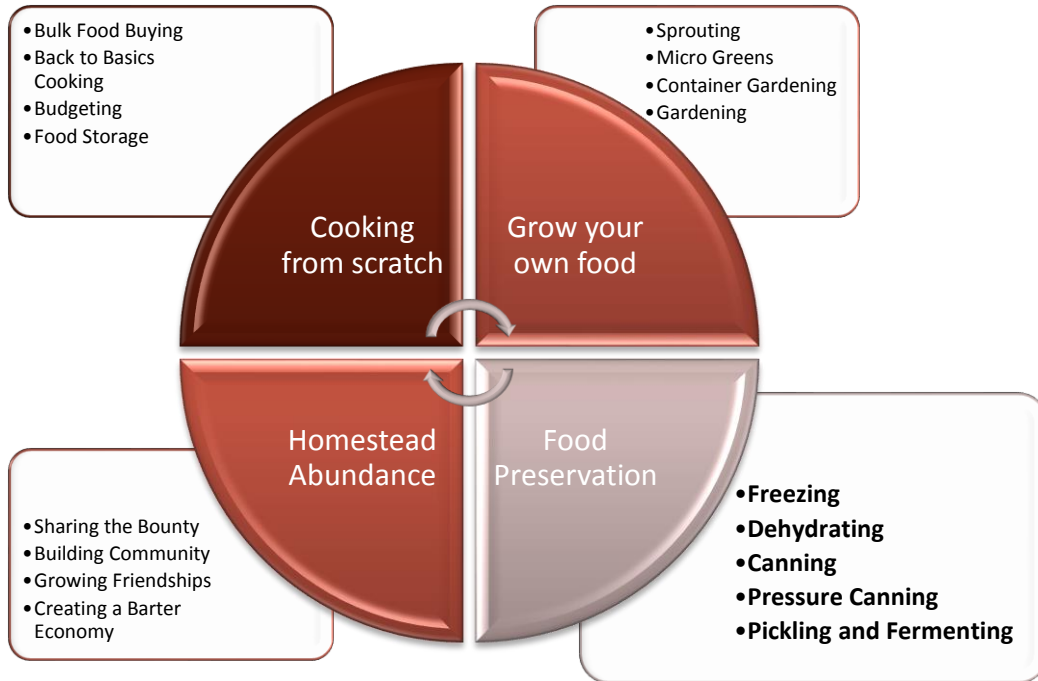
You can even make your own fertile soil by putting a worm bin like the ones called "Worm Factory" in your kitchen or mud room. Using a worm bin, stocked with red wigglers, kitchen scraps are turned into fertile potting soil and soil amendment, ready to use in your container gardening. As you can see, if you start out small and add a few extra containers or a worm bin, or compost bin to your garden area each season, you will eventually be set up for self-sufficient growing.

How self-reliant is it, if you have to buy plastic pots, plastic bags, and a plastic worm bin? Well, that's the beauty of gardening. You don't need to buy anything at all. Once you know the principles behind --- say how the worm bin works, or why potatoes will grow in a bag -- you can improvise using materials that you have on hand. Burlap bags, wood scraps, an old dresser, or a recycled cardboard box that has not been treated with an insecticide or fungicide, can be improvised with some modifications to create a worm bin or a container for growing your vegetables. For more frugal gardening tips see [this article](#).

### Take Action:

Sprouts are easy to grow and will give you success in just 3 to 5 days. Get a Mason jar, and 2 tbsp. of mung bean or radish seeds. Put the seeds in the Mason jar. Cover the jar with a wire mesh screen secured with a metal jar ring, or cheesecloth secured with an elastic band. Soak the seeds overnight and

rinse with fresh, cold water in the morning. Allow to sit on your kitchen counter, near the sink. Every time you get a drink of water or make tea or coffee, give your seeds a drink and drain them. In 3 to 5 days, your seeds will be ready-to-eat-sprouts. Make a sprouting habit and add the fresh greens to salads and stir-fries. Now consider other gardening habits that you can form. Make gardening a part of your routine.





## Preserving the harvest

***“Food security is not in the supermarket. It's not in the government. It's not at the emergency services division. True food security is the historical normalcy of packing it in during the abundant times, building that in-house larder, and resting easy knowing that our little ones are not dependent on next week's farmers' market or the electronic cashiers at the supermarket.”***

**— Joel Salatin,**

Initially your garden will give you a few meals for you to eat the same day that you harvest it. This gives you the freshest and most nutritious food possible. When food is eaten fresh, within hours of being harvested, all the vital enzymes are still active and food becomes your medicine. Later in the growing season, you may find that your harvest is greater than what you can eat in a few days. You are ready to begin to save the homestead abundance for future meals.

### Freezing

Freezing the excess is one way to preserve the harvest. To make it last as long as possible without a loss of nutrients and quality – vegetables should be washed, blanched, and put in heavy freezer bags. Air should be excluded as much as possible from the bag. A vacuum sealer is useful for this. And then the food should be frozen as quickly as possible.

I get uniform packages by laying the vegetable bags out on a baking sheet and placing this in the middle of my freezer. Once the bags are frozen, they can be neatly stacked.

Instructions for blanching different vegetables before freezing, varies depending on the variety of vegetable. In most cases, 1 to 2 minutes in boiling water and then a quick cooling under running cold water will suffice. Many vegetables will show you they are blanched by changing colour. Blanching destroys the enzymes in vegetables that turn sugars to starch and ensures that your frozen vegetables retain their farm fresh taste and texture.

Freezing is the simplest way to stock up for winter and this is the technique that most families start with when they are first learning how to eat what they grow themselves. One drawback with freezing your excess, however, is that if you lose electricity, for a few days, you may lose your food, too.

Before electricity, families used several other ways to preserve the summer bounty for winter, including drying, canning, sugaring, and fermenting.

### Drying the harvest

If you live in a dry, desert climate drying can be done in the summer months by laying fruits and vegetables out on screened trays, protecting the food from insects, and allowing the sun and wind to





dehydrate the food. Food dried in the open air should be pasteurized by putting it in an oven at 200F for 15 minutes, to kill any insect eggs, before storing.

In more humid climates, air drying will not be fast enough to prevent spoilage. Electric dehydrators can be used to uniformly dry your fruits, vegetables, and even meat for long term storage. **The Excalibur** dehydrator is one of the best on the market and will uniformly dry your produce in family size quantities, efficiently. These large dehydrators allow you to dry a full case of fruit or vegetables in a single day. Smaller counter top dehydrators work well for smaller amounts of food that you may harvest from your own garden.

Dried fruits and vegetables should be stored in jars to protect them from insect and rodent damage in storage. A vacuum sealer can exclude air from the jars or bags and tightly seal bags to extend the shelf

life of the food. This is not essential if you will consume the food within 6 months. For longer storage, you may want to explore this additional piece of equipment.

### **Canning the surplus**

Canning requires learning new skills and the additional investment in equipment, plus the space to store the equipment year-round. Canning jars, lids, a large water-bath canner pot are required equipment. If you will be canning vegetables, soup, seafood, or meat you will need to invest in a pressure canner. A pressure canner can be used as a water bath canner for jams, jellies, and fruit, so if you plan to eventually learn to can meat or vegetables, invest in the pressure canner and forego the water bath canner. Don't plan to water bath can vegetables or meat by simply extending the length of time that the food is boiled in the water bath. This doesn't raise the





temperature in the canning jars to a high enough degree to kill deadly botulism spores that can grow in the anaerobic, non-acid environment inside the canning jar, in storage. Without a pressure canner, the only safe way to can vegetables is to pickle them, by adding a strong vinegar solution before processing.

Don't take short cuts. Practice safe canning from the outset and you will enjoy the confidence that your family has healthy, safe food for winter storage and any emergencies that may come your way.

Canning is a satisfying way to preserve the harvest, but it requires a dedication to learning about food safety, and an investment in equipment for the long term. Canned food needs to be protected from freezing, as the liquid in the jars will expand, damaging the texture of the food and possibly breaking the jars, in storage.

Food in glass jars should be stored away from light and heat to protect the texture and vitamins in the food. Canned fruit and vegetables will keep for at least a year in glass jars when properly processed. Fruit canned in sugar syrup will have an extended shelf life, as sugar helps to preserve the texture of canned fruit.

### **Pickling and Fermenting:**

There are two different ways to pickle the harvest. Pickling involves changing non-acid vegetables into acidic vegetables either by the addition of vinegar or through natural lacto-fermented processes with the addition of salt. Kimchee and sauerkraut are examples of this natural process. Pickling with vinegar is one way to allow vegetables to be processed in a water bath canner. The addition of a strong vinegar and salt solution prevents the growth of harmful bacteria inside the jars. Lacto-fermented vegetables can also be canned in a water bath canner, which will kill the lacto-bacteria – the good probiotics. However, lacto-fermented vegetables will also keep in crocks or glass jars, in a cool place without spoilage – under 40F is best. I keep my sauerkraut and fermented beets and carrots in my refrigerator. They will last a year and I can serve the amount needed for each meal right from the jar, with no loss in quality. Traditionally these vegetables were stored in a below ground, root cellar where temperatures are stable year round.



## Buying from the Farmer in season

If you live in an apartment or you don't have an extensive garden, you can join a CSA (community supported agriculture) and preserve the harvest from your surplus of vegetables and fruit each week. You can also arrange with farmers at the farmer's market to purchase their produce in larger quantities. Many farmers will give you a substantial discount when you buy a full box of fruit or vegetables, over the per pound price. It may not be obvious that they offer full boxes of their crops, so ask them. When you bring your boxes home make sure you can work with the fruit that you bought as quickly as possible. Buying ripe fruit by the box and then letting it go moldy before you have a chance to freeze it or can it will contribute to food insecurity. Plan to process it in a timely way, using one of the above methods.

Food bought in season is much cheaper than buying out of season. For instance this week (March) I can buy frozen vegetables (conventional not organic) at my local grocery store for \$3.99 per 500 grams. This is almost \$4 per pound for mixed broccoli and cauliflower or carrots, peas, and corn. But in season, at my farmer's market, organic carrots were \$1 a pound in season, and organic broccoli was \$1.50 a pound. Less than half of what I am paying now at the grocery store. While buying in season is a large outlay for the monthly food budget, over the long term it saves money and contributes to food security. When I grow the veggies myself, I save even more, and preserve more nutrients in the food, too.



### **Take Action:**

Dehydrating is probably the easiest way to preserve food. While using a dedicated food dehydrator is the most economical and efficient way to dry food, you can get by with an oven and a light bulb, in a pinch.

### **Easy fruit leather:**

You'll need a jar or can of unsweetened apple sauce, a baking sheet, parchment paper, and your oven or an electric dehydrator. Cut a piece of parchment paper to fit the baking sheet. Spread the apple sauce in an even layer over the parchment paper, no more than 1/8 inch thick. Turn on your oven to its lowest

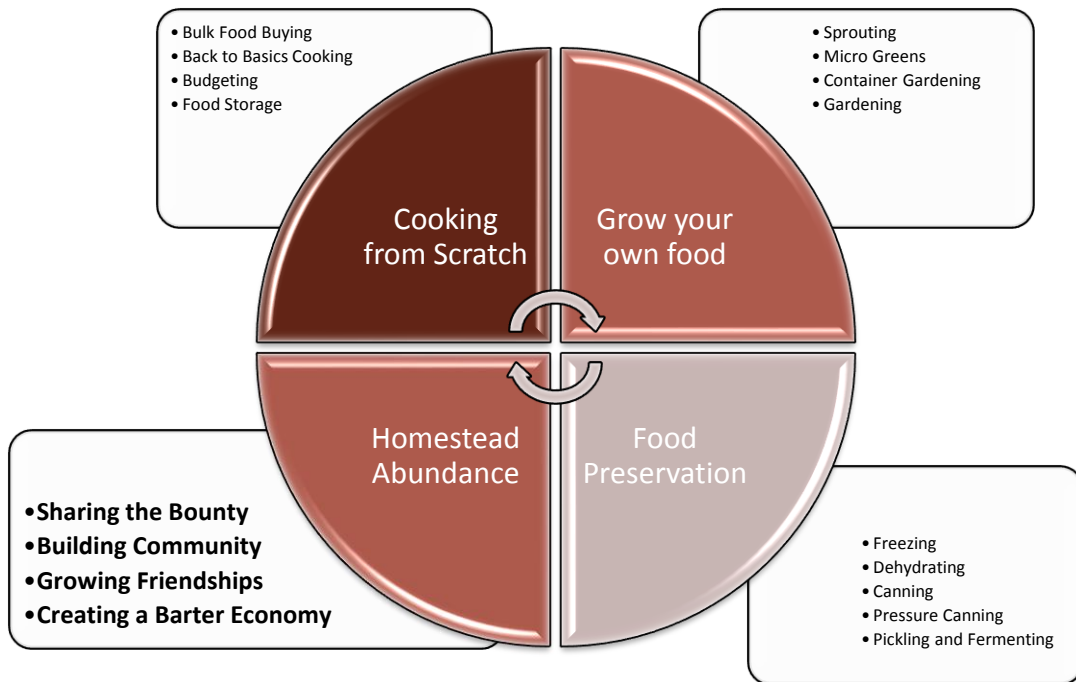
temperature. Turn on the oven light. If your oven is a convection oven, this will go faster, as your oven heat will be more evenly distributed.

Once the oven is up to temperature, put the baking sheet with the apple sauce in the oven and turn off the oven, leaving the light bulb on, and the oven door closed. Leave for 3 or 4 hours. Turn the temperature back on until it reaches the correct temperature again and turn it off, leaving the light bulb on. After 8 hours, rotate the baking sheet. Continue this process until the fruit leather is completely dry to the touch, but still pliable.



Remove from the parchment paper and roll each sheet of fruit leather into a tight roll. Using a serrated knife, cut the sheet of fruit leather into 2 inch rolls. Wrap in plastic wrap and it's ready to eat or serve for lunch boxes and snacks.

Once you have mastered the technique, use homemade apple sauce and add other fruit by blending the other fruit with a stick blender into the apple sauce before spreading on the baking sheet. Hard fruits like pears or peaches should be cooked until soft before being blended. Soft fruits like frozen berries or bananas can be blended raw into the apple sauce. Use at least 50% apple sauce to other fruits. It's the pectin in the apples that gives fruit leather its pliable texture. Add a 1 tsp. of lemon juice to keep the colours bright, while drying.





## Homestead Abundance and gratitude

*One day's happiness often predicts the next day's creativity. -- Teresa Amabile*

“Homestead Abundance” describes the intrinsic value of the homestead lifestyle. It attributes value to the overflowing abundance that results from growing your own food, creating things with your own imagination and your own hands. It celebrates the DIY mindset, and gives value to creativity. It is a celebration of gratitude. It is a spiritual action.

What I’ve noticed after 30+ years of living the homestead lifestyle, both on a little 1 acre homestead in the city, and on 140 acres in the forests and mountains of rural British Columbia – we get more of the things that we focus on. It’s really easy to focus on lack. It’s really easy to complain and talk about what we don’t have that we want. I’ve done it.

**When I was a child, I watched the comedy show, Hee Haw, and sang along with the hillbillies when they sang, ♪ “Gloom, despair, and agony on me. ♪ Deep dark depression, excessive misery. ♪ If it weren’t for bad luck, I’d have no luck at all. ♪ Gloom, despair and agony on me. ♪” Catchy tune. Did you hear it going through your head as you read those words? Sorry about that.**

I was left with the impression, on my teenage mind, that the rural lifestyle was a lifestyle of gloom and despair. I thought that homesteaders had clothes with missing buttons and that if you lived in the country you could never better yourself or succeed in life. It was a mindset, fueled by the media. So when I read Carla Emery’s book, “The Old Fashioned Recipe Book,” now called, *The Encyclopedia of Country Living* and decided to live my homestead dream, in 1983, I had this nagging mindset that rural life was hard, and we’d never get ahead. I thought that to choose the homestead was to choose “voluntary poverty.” I didn’t even know where this thinking came from. And you know, the more I complained about what we didn’t have and went into debt to get that thing, the more we didn’t have. My complaining increased our want. Instead of gaining food security, shalom (peace), and happiness, my heart became more and more bankrupt and filled with despair. You get more of the things you focus on. **I needed to change my mind.**

### **“Say the magic word”**

It takes focused effort to remind ourselves that we really have a great deal more on our homestead than what we ever experienced in the basement suite or townhouse in the city. I had to stop the nagging thoughts about lack, and realize that I believed a lie. And I started daily reminding myself that I had Homestead



Abundance. I've been sharing these thoughts about Homestead Abundance every day on my Facebook page, and Joybilee Farm fans are starting to see Homestead Abundance in their lives as well. And the amazing thing about this is, that as we are grateful for the little abundances that God brings in our life every single day – we see more Homestead Abundance. Our minds start to look for the bountiful, overflowing abundance that each new day brings. We are transformed. It is almost as if expressing gratitude, opens a flood gate and we get more and more of the very things that we are thankful for. Who would have thought that saying, "Thank you" could be so powerful. "Thank you" really is the magic word.

Sometimes the abundance isn't wonderful at the time. Too much rain can mean flooding. Too much sun can mean drought and fires. But what's interesting to me, is that when we are grateful for even the negative in our lives, there is a transformation in our mind, too. And the negative loses its power to harm us, and instead becomes an opportunity to grow, and a catalyst for positive change. If you haven't yet joined me in looking for and expressing your daily Homestead Abundance, do it today. Join me on [Facebook](#) and connect with over 20,000 other people in expressing your daily gratitude for the Homestead Abundance in your life. Sign up for the transformation. What have you got to lose?

## **Food Security and the Homestead Journey**

I wrote this short book to encourage you to stop worrying about the vulnerability of your family's food security and to give you four keys to ensure your own food security. I wanted to give you something that you could do right now and this year, to ease your fears about the future. I wanted this short book to give you a roadmap to successful food security, which will allow you to begin right away to take steps toward a more food secure future.

Depending on where you are on your homestead journey, you can begin today to make positive changes in how you buy your food, how your food is grown, and how you cook it or preserve it for the winter. Each of you is at a different place on the journey and because of that, you may find that you already use the first key or maybe a few keys in your personal journey. Your journey to food security will be shorter. Start where you need to. Here's a check list that you can print out and keep on your fridge to remind you where you are going and how to get there. If you are like me, you will want to remind yourself to do these things on a regular basis. Don't trade convenience for peace of mind. Don't trade convenience for health. It's easy to sacrifice at the altar of convenience but the cost is very high.

	Cook from Scratch
	Grow your own food
	Preserve the Harvest
	Celebrate Homestead Abundance – share and be thankful

Someone wrote to me last week and said that they used to practice the homestead lifestyle, but with growing children, and hectic schedules she had reverted to buying convenience foods once again. Her family's health had suffered from the change and she was determined to go back to the old way of doing



things, both for her budget and for her family's health. If you are in the same position today, it's not too late to start fresh. You can win this, by starting where you are at and applying these 4 keys to food security and peace of mind. I want you to be able to "Laugh at the time to come," too.

## Share the bounty while you build community

***Self-reliance fails to grow social capital, a truly regenerative resource that can only increase by being used. Why would I not want to connect to my community in every way that I can? - Toby Hemenway***

While giving food away may seem counter intuitive when we are talking about food security, sharing is an important aspect of food security. No matter how self-reliant we think we are, we need community to be really safe. We need friends and neighbors to watch our back and so we must watch their back, too. Sharing garden surplus is one way to make friends of neighbors.

Like-minded friends are an encouragement. Talk to folks in your homeschool support group, or among your church or synagogue community. It could be that friends will be your ally when it comes to buying staples in bulk or sharing seed packages, or even sharing root divisions of common perennial herbs. In my "Home Group" at church, we share garden surplus, as well as sharing our research about GMOs and other issues that affect food security. This is a big encouragement and reminds my family that we are not alone in the battle to ensure that our community is food secure, when the world seems to be a very insecure place.

## Grow barter relationships

***"In a basic agricultural society, it's easy enough to swap five chickens for a new dress or to pay a schoolteacher with a goat and three sacks of rice. Barter works less well in a more advanced economy. The logistical challenges of using chickens to buy books on Amazon.com would be formidable."***

***-- Charles Wheelan***



Bartering is a very important part of food security. Bartering lets you take a commodity that you have a surplus of and trade it for something that you need. Bartering is different than sharing, because you receive something in exchange for your surplus, which you value.

Bartering relationships are especially important in establishing food security for your family and your community. If you don't have a bartering group already in your community you can set a Facebook group up for this purpose. Facebook Groups are protected from search engines and can be made

private to allow you some privacy. Some exchanges need to be reported as income on your income taxes. Check the tax laws in your area to make sure that you are compliant.

There may be a formal bartering society in your community already established. If you have a lot of things to share, it might benefit you to explore the possibilities within such a community. Bartering communities usually operate on a point system and bartering with one member of the group gives you credit that can be used with any member within the group. These transactions are deemed to be cash transactions for income tax purposes, so keep good records and make appropriate declarations on your income tax forms.

### **Take Action:**

Often we are afraid to talk to our friends and neighbors about our food choices. Food is so personal, that unless you or a family member suffers from a life threatening allergy, you don't talk about why you buy the food you do, or why you are gardening. Although food seems to be temporal, and nourishes our physical bodies, it is actually part of the spiritual part of us. This is why the Bible talks so much about food and kosher food preparation, and why Jesus (Yeshua) compares his physical body with bread and wine. This is also why when someone begins a journey to change their eating patterns, spiritual ideas are introduced, and why fasting can heighten our spiritual sensitivity. In many cultures, eating habits are an integral part of the spiritual disciplines in that culture. For instance, often people who start on the journey to vegetarianism are introduced to Hindu/Buddhist/New Age spirituality. Food is spiritual. Eating is a spiritual act.

In Hebraic thinking anything that separates humans from animals is spiritual. Both humans and animals eat food, but only humans grow their own food, preserve it for winter, and cook and prepare it for eating. Therefore the actions of gardening, preserving the harvest for winter, and cooking and preparing food for the table, are all spiritual actions. It's all right to talk about spiritual things with your neighbors – you share recipes don't you? You are spiritual, as well as physical. You are not merely a physical body.

Because food and the act of growing and preparing food is spiritual, you can fully appreciate that the corruption and adulteration of our food system is a profoundly evil thing. Talk to your family and your friends about this journey to food security and homestead abundance that you are on and invite them along. Give them the link to the Joybilee Farm blog and invite them to get their own copy of this book. Will they join you in the journey to food security and homestead abundance? You won't know till you ask.



## Meet Chris and Joybilee Farm

### Why Food Security?

Food security and permaculture design take into account how food is grown, how it is preserved, and how it nourishes people, animals, pollinators, and the microbiome. It's a complex dance that leads us on a journey of both justice and joy.

### About the Author:

Chris Dalziel is a veteran homeschool Mom with 3 graduates, a published author, with 30+ years of homesteading under her nails. Living in a log house, in the mountains and surrounded by pines, and pasture, Chris was a city mouse who migrated to the country, as a young mom. Chris is also an award winning fiber-artist who raises her own medium from her organic garden, and from her own sheep, goats, llamas, and angora bunnies.

Her passion is to revive the skills and knowledge of the “Lost Arts” of homesteading and present this plainly, so that others can master them and live joyfully and courageously in these perilous times.

### Other books:

The Beginners' Book of Essential Oils, learning to use your first 10 oils with confidence

