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from the EDITOR



Mary Greene
Section Editor

“Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist of creating out of void, but out of chaos.”

— Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Okay, Shelly was talking about Frankenstein, but there is a degree of truth to this thought. As the busy (you could say chaotic) season of spring and summer replace the contemplative winter, we are constantly reinventing and reinvesting ourselves and our environments. Sometimes to do so takes a leap of faith, leaving the safety of what we know and what we've always done, and trying something brand new.

This issue of **Our Country Home** invites you to try something new and also introduces you to those who have invented art and functionality out of the elements of wood, rock and wind. You will meet a pair of innovative homeowners who have transformed a classic barn into a green home—intrinsic to its setting and incorporating natural landscape features. (And oh yes, they love iguanas, in case you were wondering.) We introduce you to several of the pre-eminent furniture makers of the region and invite you into their process and into their shops. We also talk to an area builder who is an expert in wind energy, who gives pointers to homeowners who have been considering this alternative.

We invite you to rediscover the common lemon, with its luscious color and flavor, and to also learn about its cleansing and healing properties. We give you tips on creating outdoor spaces that will give you a spot to entertain or to just sit and dream. And because it's spring, that time of year for digging in the dirt, we invite you to begin a vegetable garden and give you a step-by-step guide to doing so. And when you are done with your gardening, we give you natural beauty remedies to replenish dried and windburned skin and hair, and pesto recipes to use up your fragrant herbs of basil and cilantro.

Enjoy.

Mary Greene
Section Editor

OUR COUNTRY HOME

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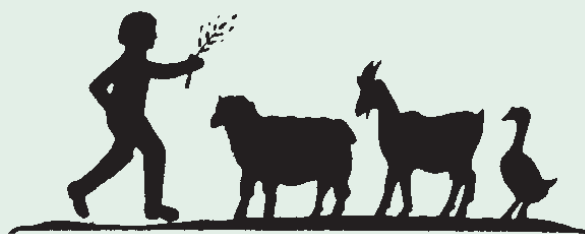
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Harmonious living

The Keoppen barn in the Beechwoods

Text and photographs by Erin Vanderberg

As a kid growing up in western New York, Mark Keoppen developed an affinity for barns. Come summer, he would spend his days with his neighbor, an old timer named Howard Taft, who made his living working the land with a few dairy cows and a few horses. Mark would sometimes drive into town with Mr. Taft in his half-ton pickup to make milk deliveries, but more often he would keep him company while he worked in the barn or just hang out in the quiet hay mow. "Barns are sanctuaries to me," says Mark. "[In the 1800s], they

spent money on barns first and houses second. You could always tell the success of a farm by the size and the detail that they put in the barn, because that was their life. Without a decent barn, who were you?

"These buildings are tremendous, and an important piece of history," says Mark.

Now, Mark and his wife, Wendy Townsend, are putting the finishing touches on their barn-cum-modern home, nearly 12 years after they first cleared the home site.

Continued on page 8



This view illustrates the natural elements of the house, as well as its open, but defined, feel.



In the northwest corner, Wendy keeps her desk. "It's just a writer's dream, this little corner," she says.



“No matter where you are in the structure, there is a visual path through the building at every angle—and yet, you feel held.”
—Mark Keoppen

Mark built the north wall himself, using the original stone foundation of the structure. The four-foot-thick wall is actually two stone walls with room in the middle for a thermal break. The fireplace is built in the Rumford style: shallow with a streamlined throat and a wide angle coving to hold the fire closer to the house.

Green elements

Their new home is the “ultimate green building,” says Mark. The barn is completely recycled, for one, and all the additional wood in the structure came from within 50 miles of the home. It’s built for passive solar with a glazed southeast face to allow warm sunlight in, and with thermal mass inside to store the heat. It’s super-insulated with Foilflex lining the exterior walls and roof. A modern LP boiler currently charges the radiant heat system in conjunction with a brick-lined water heater, but Mark and Wendy will soon circumvent the need for it with the addition of an outdoor computerized wood gasifier that will bypass the LP system and speak directly to the boiler. Regarding the radiant heat, Mark has built up the ground floor in such a way that he’s augmented heat transmission (without revealing the exact procedure, “thermal mass” and “surface contact” are big hints). The basement is passive geothermal, remaining at a steady 45 degrees. And when New York State affords solar incentives for residences, they’ll add an array for their electricity. Also, they’ll bring nothing in that would emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and all of the wood finishes, floor and wall, are low to no-VOC.

Iguana love

While the couple has been constructing their new home, formerly a Diehl family barn near Jeffersonville, NY, they’ve been living in another barn structure on their land, formerly a DePasquale family barn from Beach Lake, PA. There, Mark and Wendy coexist harmoniously with seven members of the *Cyclura* genus: two Cuban iguanas (Che and Luna) and five rhinoceros iguanas (Sebastian, Emo, Ava, Mina and Oliver). While Mark specializes in the art of construction with his company, **Toad Hollow Barn Restoration** (barnsandhomes.com), Wendy is a writer, and her first two works take their inspiration from her pets.

The first book was co-written with a veterinarian. “Iguanas: A Guide to their Biology and Captive Care” was inspired simply because there was not enough to read about lizards. After spending 40 years caring for and rescuing iguanas, Wendy was an authority on the subject. She later attended Vermont College and received her MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults. Her second book, “Lizard Love,” published by Front Street Books in 2008, is a YA novel about a girl who is transplanted to Manhattan and finds comfort in the people and animals at a reptile store. Her third published book, “The Sundown Rule,” will be released this summer. She is at work on



The spacious kitchen, with its French La Cornue range, awaits.

a third novel and her first picture book is in the hands of the illustrator Lindsay Barrett George.

The iguanas were a major consideration during the construction process and, when the economy improves, an addition will be built in their honor: a glass vivarium on the western side of the barn. “It will be nice to walk into an area where you can pull up a chair and watch them do what they do,” says Wendy. She grows several beds of greens around the property to feed the animals—nasturtiums, collards, arugula, turnip and mustard greens.

Kitchen duty

When it comes to family meals, the kitchen is a central feature of the house. “In both our barns, the stove was the first item that came in the door,” says Wendy. As Mark puts it, “We hate wimpy flames.” The French range in the new barn, a La Cornue, was scored online at a huge discount as the last of that color and trim kit—exactly the combination they desired. The price fell within \$10 dollars of Mark’s tax return that year. “We counted that as destiny,” Wendy says. It goes without saying that Mark and Wendy are into food. Mark jokes about his library as the place where he will keep his one book, Michael Pollan’s “The Omnivore’s Dilemma.”

Space defined

Mark and Wendy have always appreciated barns for their openness, and minimalism drives their aesthetic. “I’ve always imagined putting up a barn and having nothing in it,” says Mark. “But since you can’t live in a space like that, the next best thing was to have a design that no matter where you are in the

structure, there is a visual path through the building at every angle—and yet, you feel held. You’re in an open space, yet it’s defined.”

Scouring New York City streets and barn rehabs in the Delaware Valley, Mark and Wendy have collected certain items that are finding new purpose in the structure. Perhaps the most cleverly adapted objects are the 10 three-foot-by-six-foot greenhouse panels that now constitute the upstairs walls. Mark had a few to choose from, so he refinished the best frames with the cleanest glass. Other items of note: an eight-and-a-half-foot-by-three-and-a-half-foot door salvaged from one of Wendy’s childhood apartments is now the interior basement door; an inheritance of black walnut from Mark’s gunsmith uncle will become the winter entrance on the north side of the house; and a weathered porch column has been transformed into the legs of the kitchen island. Other unusual features include other doors and knobs, an industrial sink and a musical window frame. A little luck adds to the aesthetic, too. The maple that was logged for the home site turned out to be tiger maple, valued for its resemblance to the tiger’s eye gemstone.

In tune with the land

The pair enjoy a special harmony with their 22 acres of land and wildlife. Mark has envisioned himself in this place since he first started visiting in the late 1960s, and Wendy happily moved here when they met. They keep some old dead trees (called “snags”) for bug food and bird habitat; they feed the songbirds, crows and a pair of turkeys who make the bird feeder a stop on their daily route; and tend to small gardens here and there.



This Dutch oven by the Vermont potter Karen Karnes is a favorite in the kitchen for its beauty and functionality.

A pond near the house, surrounded by Siberian irises, supports the frogs and toads that lend their name to the road (and Mark’s business) and provide a little bit of night music for summer cookouts.

Wendy and Mark hope fervently that life in western Sullivan County will stay as it is now, pristine, simple and unspoiled. “We have a commitment to this place and I’ve never imagined myself anywhere else,” says Mark.

Koeppen-Townsend Kale Salad

Wendy and Mark make a large batch of this salad on Sundays to dress up their meals throughout the week. As Mark says, “Kale is a nearly complete food.” It’s great alone, with white beans, on soups or as garnish.

Kale
Garlic
Lemon Juice
Olive Oil
Salt and Pepper

Stem kale and wash well. Stack the leaves and cut across them with a sharp knife as thinly as possible. Add lemon juice proportionally to the kale’s toughness: the more you add, the more the kale “cooks.” Add smashed garlic, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Use your hands to work it in.

Koeppen-Townsend Floor & Surface Treatment

To paint floor and wall space, Mark and Wendy used the idea behind an old recipe for floor treatment and added dry pigments to achieve rich, unique colors. They omitted turpentine (which adds workability and decreases drying time) from the classic recipe using linseed, which hardens the floor, and vinegar, which sends the linseed into the wood.

To apply: using clean towels, rub the mixture in. Let it sit overnight, and rub it off with more clean towels. Repeat until the desired color is achieved. If color isn’t a factor, apply as the old recipe guides: once a day for a week, then once a week for a month, then once a month for a year.

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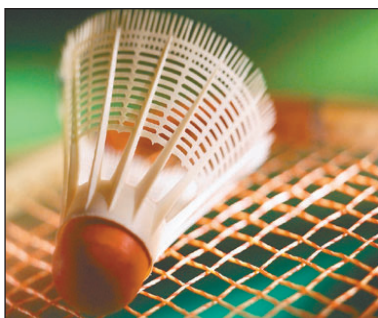
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GETTING READY FOR OUTDOOR LIVING

Text by Lori Malone | TRR File Photographs

Every year at this time, as most people excitedly anticipate spring and all its promises—birds in song, flowers burgeoning and a reprieve from snow—I'm excitedly anticipating preparing and arranging my outdoor furniture. Yes, outdoor decorating excites me. The wall-less rooms marked by ornaments and seating that are defined by tasks like grilling, reclining and marshmallow toasting remind me that the lazy days of summer, which beg to be spent outdoors, are well on their way. However, the readying of an outdoor lifestyle requires more forethought than the ease of its name would imply. Now is the time to sort through what you have, decide what you need and prepare your furnishings for the great outdoors. Doing this in early spring rather than the night before the Memorial Day barbecue will ensure a more relaxing time with guests and a more convivial environment to entertain in.

The furniture

I am not one that likes matched sets of anything. So my idea of outdoor decorating includes the unconventional use of furnishings and materials that add more charm and interest to an outdoor space than a purchased, preassembled patio set can ever hope to offer. Repurposing yard sale finds or your own furniture cast-offs is also good for the environment and your pocketbook.

Good paint can go a long way in making indoor furniture suitable for outdoor use. Paint, in the same

shade or coordinating tones, can also unify mismatched pieces. Be sure to use paint and a top coat suitable for outdoor use. Using tarps and outdoor furniture coverings will help maintain the finish and longevity of your furnishings.

Now is the time to repair wobbly legs and loose screws, and remove mildew and rust from existing furniture. A fresh coat of paint and new cushions will help existing patio furniture last another season with a renewed presence.

Cleaning Tip

A natural way to remove mildew and rust stains from outdoor cushions is to use a half-cup of lemon juice and a quarter-cup of salt. Mix ingredients together, creating a paste-like substance. Rub in clean areas where mildew or rust stains have affected the material. Set to dry in direct bright sunlight for a day.

To remove rust from metal furniture, use a stiff metal brush and steel wool. Use a mask to prevent ingesting particles and eye wear to keep loosened debris from getting in your eyes.

Power washing is also a great way to freshen up existing furniture, umbrellas, outdoor rugs and seat cushions.

Accessories

If you seek out excuses to add chotskies to level surfaces, then outdoor decorating will inspire you. Unlike more refined objects of art we use in our indoor living

spaces, outdoor accessories are more playful, rustic and should be somewhat useful. Lanterns, flower pots, area rugs, screens, pillows, containers, lighting and sculpture all lend to a cozy, well appointed space. Galvanized tubs, for instance, can be painted to match your decor and serve as a place to store horseshoes and badminton equipment or filled with ice and beer for a party. Lanterns of various sizes look splendid grouped on a table or console. Twinkling lights woven into bushes, up trellises or strung overhead with plastic shades cast a warm ambient glow for late night entertaining.

Fire and water features

A popular and attractive component to outdoor living is a fire pit. Whether you buy a manufactured one or build one yourself, this element adds so much to an outdoor space. Like a home's hearth, the outdoor fire pit begs to be gathered around. It sets the tone for stories to be told, songs to be sung and marshmallows to be toasted.

Check your town's ordinances to ensure you are permitted to use a fire pit in your locale. Practicing a safety drill is also recommended.

The sound of water is very relaxing. Including a water feature in your outdoor space creates a lovely focal point, and has the added benefit of drowning out traffic noise. With many manufactured and easy-to-install fountains available, finding one to fit your taste and budget shouldn't be difficult.

Continued on page 12

“Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability.”

—Sam Keen

Dining Al Fresco

Growing up in Brooklyn, dining al fresco meant a slice of pizza on the front stoop. Country life provides something a little more enchanting. Outdoor dining can be casual or sophisticated, depending on your preference.

Outdoor dining also provides ample space for larger gatherings. To accommodate more guests, consider using two or three saw-horses with a sturdy board placed on top and brightly colored cloths or quilts to cover the board. Don't be afraid to use fine china and crystal outdoors. Be creative and mix and match several sets.

Entertainment

Keeping family and friends amused during their visit requires little more than a few downloads and the purchase of some games.

Sing-a-longs are always fun, especially when gathered around an open fire. Simply select traditional campfire songs like the ones found at **Ultimate Camp Resource**, www.ultimatecampresource.com. Or maybe your guests would prefer Classic Rock anthems or Show Tunes; an internet search will help you obtain lyrics to most of your favorite songs. Simply download song sheets from the internet and pass out to guests.

Games like backgammon, checkers, Yatzee, Scrabble and cards are always great to have on hand and can be enjoyed in both good or bad weather. Horseshoes, badminton, bocce and ring toss are great yard games and if maintained, can last many years. Rules and court regulations can be found at www.familybackyardgames.com.

Insects

Keeping pests like ants, wasps, flies and mosquitoes at bay is probably the most challenging aspect of outdoor living. Finding environmentally safe methods to deter these creatures from making a nuisance of themselves during your outdoor celebration is not as difficult as you might imagine. The first line of defense is to make sure that standing water in birdbaths, dog bowls and gutters, are replaced at least twice a week. Planting marigolds around your outdoor dining area will also help keep flying insects away. Here are some natural alternatives for pest control.

Mosquitoes: If you're using the barbecue, throw a bit of sage or rosemary on the coals to repel mosquitoes. Topically, oil of eucalyptus at 30 percent concentration prevents mosquito bites for up to two hours. For a longer period of protection, try a making a natural bug repellent, mixing one part garlic juice with 5 parts water in a small spray bottle. Shake well before using. Spray lightly on exposed body parts for an effective repellent lasting up to 5 hours. Strips of cotton cloth can also be dipped in this mixture and hung in areas, such as patios, as a localized deterrent. Safe, nontoxic pheromone-based mosquito traps are now commercially available.

Flies: Use mint as a fly repellent. Small sachets of crushed mint can be placed around the garden to discourage flies. Place a small, open container of sweet basil and clover near food. A few drops of eucalyptus oil on a scrap of absorbent cloth will deter flies too. Leave in areas where flies are a problem. Safe, nontoxic, pheromone-based outdoor and indoor fly traps are available.

Wasps are attracted to protein foods. Any food exposed, such as pet food, picnic scraps, open garbage containers or uncovered compost piles should be removed or covered. Wasps imprint food sources, and will continue to search an area for some time after the food has been removed.

In late summer and early fall, wasps prefer sweet scents. Open cans of soda, fruit juice, fallen fruit from trees and perfume will attract wasps. Keep sweet things covered and forgo wearing perfume. Don't swat wasps. When a wasp is squashed, a chemical (pheromone) is released which attracts and incites other nearby wasps. It's best to walk away from a hovering wasp.

Ants: Keep a small spray bottle handy, and spray the ants with a bit of soapy water. Leave a few tea bags of mint tea near areas where the ants seem most active. Dry, crushed mint leaves or cloves also work as ant deterrents. Ants on the deck? Slip a few cut up cloves of garlic between the cracks. Clove oil-based commercial ant deterrents are also available.

Some 'Healthier' Summer Beverages

How To Make Agave Lemonade

Use a 64-ounce container that has a top. Pour 49 ounces of water into the container.

Add 8 ounces of concentrated lemon juice.

Add 7 ounces of agave nectar.

Shake the mixture as hard as you can. (The agave nectar tends to settle on the bottom, so shake to distribute it evenly throughout the lemonade.)

Taste the lemonade. Add more water or slightly more agave nectar to taste.

Pour over ice and enjoy.

How To Make Sun Tea

Choose a clear glass jar that can hold the amount of tea you want to make and fill with cold water.

Select your tea (either bags or loose tea). Four tea bags or 4 tsp. tea will make 4 cups of sun tea. (Tie loose tea up in a little cheesecloth.)

Put the tea bags or loose tea in the water. Close the lid.

Set the jar in the sun for an hour. Then check tea's strength and color.

Add agave nectar to taste.

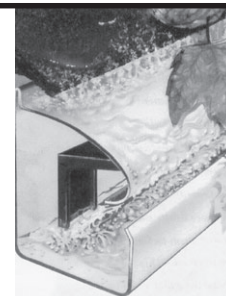
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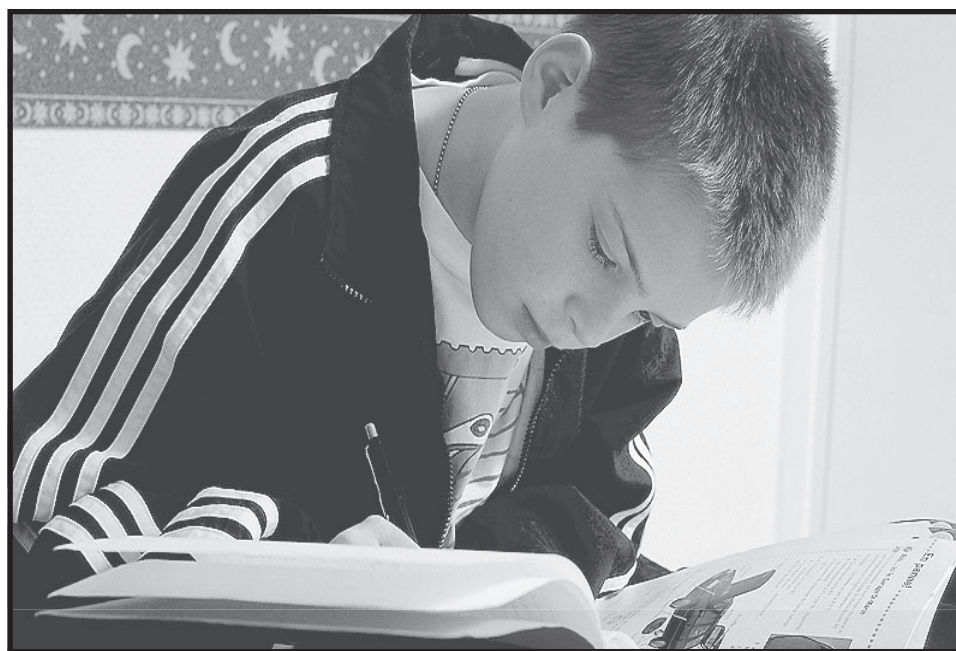
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The Galbert Caliper, invented by chair-maker Peter Galbert who is pictured here using one, makes quick and precise measurements of complex chair leg designs. Galbert sold out his first run of these trademarked tools and is manufacturing more.

Catskill Craftsmen

Talent plus individualism: the perfect fit

Text and Photographs by Cass Collins

People come to the Upper Delaware River valley for lots of reasons: the natural beauty of the landscape, the mountain air and cool summer nights, fishing, swimming and boating in the clear waters of its lakes and rivers. But the people who stay here to live and work and create seem to share a stubborn individualist trait.



Peter Galbert hand-hews subtle contours on the butternut seat of a classic Windsor chair.



Peter Galbert, chairmaker

Take Peter Galbert, chairmaker (20 Old Taylor Road, Jeffersonville, NY 12748, 845/ 482-9318, peter@petergalbertchairmaker.com). Galbert, who sells his work in fine craft venues including Matthew Solomon on Main Street in Narrowsburg, NY, has the intelligence, education and talent of 10 men. You get the feeling he'd be good at anything he set his mind to do, and that he could succeed in a world far larger than the rarified world of furniture-making. Besides chair-making, Galbert designed and built the classic farmhouse he shares with his wife, Sue Scott. Galbert raises goats and chickens, makes his own maple syrup, blogs on the internet, lectures on wood-working, teaches workshops and is writing and publishing a book with another craftsman, Curtis Buchanan, on—what else?—chair-making.

“So what is it about chairs?” I asked him on a visit to his hand-made (and community-raised) workshop barn just a log's length from the steps of his cozy Catskills home.

Galbert sees each chair as a “decathlon” and adds, “It's the variety I enjoy.” He doesn't spend too much time on any one aspect of the process, but Galbert chairs are works of art. After mastering the classic Windsor design form, he is branching out and designing his own blend of classic form and modern style. A grandly proportioned dark walnut rocker shares his living room with a lighter white oak version.

Working with green wood, not dried lumber, Galbert splits whole logs—often ones that he has harvested himself—in order to work with the grain of the wood instead of against it. He can make up to 15 chairs from a single log. “The strength of a tree,” he says, “depends on its flexibility—its ability to bend in the wind,” and Galbert's chairs are eminently flexible as well as strong. He demonstrates this by taking a recently carved spindle and bending it in a half-circle. Most furniture that is made from board lumber would not survive such treatment. But Galbert makes objects from trees, not boards. After splitting a log into blanks with an axe, he uses a draw-knife to create spindles, then a spokeshave to finish them. Galbert doesn't use sandpaper. Only long curling tendrils of wood-shavings litter the floor—soon to be repurposed as bedding for his chickens, then mulched into the garden.

It's not that he consciously avoids power tools—although he finds them noisy—or has a philosophical aversion to making work easier. “I'm not a Luddite,” he says. “I just use the appropriate tool for the job.” Lacking appropriate technology inspired Galbert to invent a new tool—the Galbert Caliper, an ingeniously simple device that enables him to get a constant accurate reading of the diameter of a work-piece as it is cut, without resetting multiple tools, perfect for the elegant turnings on a Windsor chair leg. The caliper is so effective that he has had to go into a second manufacturing run, adding “industrialist” to his expanding list of job titles.

I can't help wondering what this Renaissance man started out to be before he became a chair-maker. Did he ever have a regular job? It turns out he did. After getting his degree in photography—and studying painting, drawing and sculpture—at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Galbert moved to New York City. There, he made cabinetry and designed museum displays out of a storefront in the East Village. Soon, though, as the East Village was gentrified, he found himself priced out of his workshop space. He and Sue looked around for a place with “more space and more trees.” Jeffersonville fit their idea of livable in the early part of 2001—just before New York City became unlivable for a time after September 11 of that year.

“Life is a series of imperfect things,” says Galbert philosophically. “The point is to find our own humanity in what we're making.” With time and space, trees and talent, Galbert marries his humanity with trees and makes chairs. What could be more perfect than that?

“Life is a series of imperfect things. The point is to find our own humanity in what we're making.”

—Peter Galbert

Continued on page 14

Mike Barber on the porch of his Jeffersonville, NY shop, The Rustic Cottage.



Mike Barber and The Rustic Cottage

Mike Barber's mother is not surprised that her son's livelihood involves something creative. "Ask my mother," he says. "I was always taking extra art classes and drawing." Barber grew up in Willsboro, NY near the southern shores of Lake Champlain. When he married Colleen O'Toole, whose father owned O'Toole's Harley-Davidson in Wurtsboro, his father-in-law was happy to show Barber the ins and outs of entrepreneurship.

On a trip to the Adirondacks with Colleen, Barber was fascinated by the Adirondack-style furniture they saw and wondered why there was nothing comparable being offered in their Catskills town. He knew he wanted to open his own business with the expertise gained from his father-in-law, and now he knew what he wanted it to be. Thus, **The Rustic Cottage (4938 State Route 52, Jeffersonville, NY, 12748, 845/482-4123, info@therusticcottage.com)** was born.

Barber hired expert furniture men and watched them work. He credits Mike Scardino and Ed Hanslmaier, both local craftsmen whose skills Barber enlists to this day, with providing his education. He loves the idea of re-using existing things and "bringing them back to life." His favorite part of the work involves designing. A favorite piece is a new console table whose legs are repurposed antique oars. That's what "sets me apart," Barber says, and makes his work interesting and fun. He has learned the craft of "barking and twigging" and is careful to harvest bark responsibly so that the tree is not damaged. His pieces often combine original painted scenes of wildlife. For those he employs the skills of Jessica Farrell, the wife of noted rustic furniture maker Jerry Farrell who lives near Oneonta, NY.

Artists from all over the country are represented in The Rustic Cottage. "Because of the economy," Barber says, craftspeople are always looking for a showcase for their work and the store is a favorite for many of the best rustic-style furniture makers. "We're doing very well," he adds.

Besides selling his work from his shop in Jeffersonville, Barber travels to furniture shows and he does a lot of custom work for houses in The Chapin Estate in Bethel, NY and the Beechwoods near Jeffersonville. He loves going back to houses he hasn't been to in a while and seeing his early work. He's not just building furniture, he's building a legacy. Barber's young daughter, Chloe Rose, is six years old. "If you ask her what she wants to do when she grows up," Barber crows, "she wants to make furniture like Daddy."



Jaime Stankevicius is in a constant state of motion in his shop, Bridgewater Mercantile in Jeffersonville, NY. One of his classic farmhouse tables is in the foreground.

Jaime Stankevicius and Bridgewater Mercantile

Originally from the Czech Republic, Jaime Stankevicius grew up in Brazil and is a trained lyric tenor with three degrees, one a Masters in Music. So it is only natural that he owns an eclectic home furnishings store in Jeffersonville, right? Stankevicius describes himself as "very theatrical," but "I come from three generations of furniture makers." So when his father heard about his son's Catskills livelihood, he said simply, "Ah-hah!"

Bridgewater Mercantile (4917 Main Street/State Route 52, Jeffersonville, New York 12748, 845/482-4044, info@bridgewatermercantile.com) is a pleasantly cluttered store featuring everything from antique dishware to candlesticks and mirrors to colorful scarves. It also showcases some fabulous homemade furniture.

Stankevicius's main trade is custom-designed kitchens. One of his most sought-after pieces is a kitchen island made from yellow pine or cypress with a heavy bluestone top. The piece is crafted in his Pennsylvania workshop and finished with six layers of tung oil, then another six coats of Briwax, a British beeswax polish/sealer.

Another favorite of homeowners in the area is Stankevicius's farmhouse table. Often a mix of old and new construction, the tables bring a sense of permanence and stability to any home. A European-style table has turned legs from a re-purposed antique, and a barnboard top that has been hand-rubbed to bring out its character. A classic American farm table is typically seven feet long and 40 inches wide, with tapered legs and a Shaker-inspired horizontal board at each end that is doweled in place to add stability.

Stankevicius's interest in large tables is stimulated in part by his fondness for entertaining large groups of friends in his Livingston Manor home. (At a recent St. Patrick's Day feast, he fed 25 for dinner on large quantities of Shepherd's Pie and beef brisket.) However, he is happy to make tables of any size to order. His home is also a guest hotel, Bridgewater Guesthouse (www.bridgewaterguesthouse.com), a "boutique hotel with a European sensitivity" and where Jaime's dream kitchen resides. The colors literally came to him in a dream: salmon and terra-cotta, with green lights. The home won Stankevicius and his partner, Paul Hargrove, a 2006 Sullivan County Showcase Award for best large-scale residential structure renovation.

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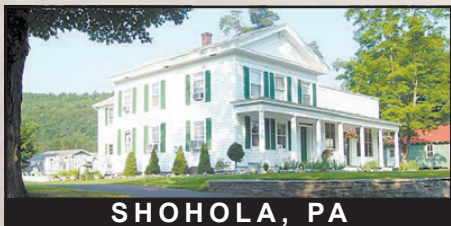
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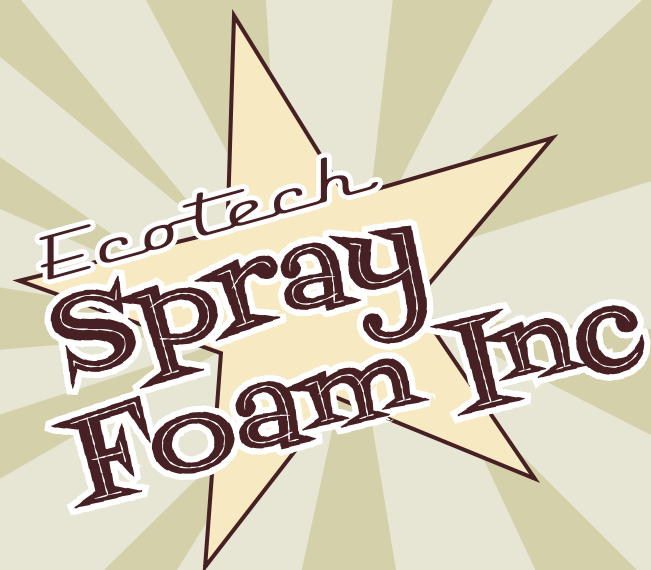
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Bewitched and Bewildered

Your first vegetable garden

Text by Mary Greene | TRR File Photographs

A vegetable garden is, as Thomas Edison said about genius, one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.

But this is not quite true. The formula is more like a combination of research, experience and experimentation combined with faith, hope, magic and, of course, lots of digging in the dirt.

For the first-time vegetable gardener, the task can seem daunting. But really, there is nothing that is all that difficult. You prepare the soil, plop in a seed, the seed grows and—voilà!—good, fresh, affordable food on your table. Not to mention bragging rights that you grew it right in the back yard.



Choosing your spot

There are many factors to the creation of a successful vegetable garden. First and foremost is to decide where you'd like to place your garden. When growing vegetables, the main ingredient needed (along with regular watering) is sun, sun and sun. Choose the sunniest, warmest spot that you have, with southern exposure if possible. A good fence is imperative here in deer country. Although you may resist a fence for aesthetic reasons, it is a must for the success of your garden, unless you are growing it for the deer, rabbits and woodchucks. Your fence should be five or six feet high to discourage the leaping deer from entering.

Preparing your soil

Once you have marked off the boundaries of your garden (and before you construct your fence), find someone with a plow or a powerful backhoe to turn the dirt over for you. This will give your garden an initial start and save you hours of backbreaking labor. Alternatively, try the lasagna method, which consists of layering various materials right on top of your grass, beginning with cardboard or newspaper. This involves no digging at all, but it takes

longer before your garden is ready for planting. For more, see "Lasagna Gardening" by Patricia Lanza, a Livingston Manor author who has written a wonderful step-by-step guide to this method.

The richness of your soil will determine the health and size of your vegetable plants. But you cannot expect to have the best soil your first year or two. Good soil is created by years of adding organic materials such as compost, manure, straw or hay, peat moss, leaf mulch, wood ash and really anything else that you can beg, borrow or steal. I generally add enriching materials in both the spring and the fall. Manure is essential and there are also some good organic fertilizers around. I would avoid a product such as Miracle Grow, which does great in the short run but tends to deplete your soil over the long haul. It takes a while to build up the crumbly black dirt of an old garden. Gardens breed patience. No one will expect you to have great soil when you are first starting out.

If you can find a local horse or dairy farmer to deliver manure, this is ideal. Fresh manure needs to be aged a while; it is too "hot" and can burn your plants. Generally, a load of manure delivered in the fall is ready for spring use. Of course, some farmers will have aged manure to sell to you, and I got by for years buying bags of manure from my local garden center.

Also, if you do not have a compost pile, now is the time to begin. Check your local library or online for a good "how to" manual on composting.



Sand or clay soil?

Most of the gardens I have observed in the Upper Delaware River valley have either sand or clay soil. All of them are rocky. If you are fortunate to live near the river or a stream, you may have sandy soil. If you live on a hill-top, as I do, you may have clay soil. Sandy soil needs extra watering. If you have clay soil, I would suggest creating raised beds in your garden. It is a lot of work at first, but beneficial in the long run in that extra moisture will col-

lect in the ditches next to your beds and keep your beds relatively dry in a wet season. Raised beds have the added advantage of allowing you to place your soil additives just where you need them, rather than overspreading the whole garden space.



When to plant

Crops that are tolerant of cold, such as lettuce, spinach, radish, onion sets and peas, can and should be planted in late April/early May, as they can tolerate frost but not heat. (Onions need the long days of summer to mature.) You should wait to put most other plants in the ground until Memorial Day, when the danger of frost is past. You may be able to sneak your seeds in a little early, depending on the weather forecast, but all hot weather plants, such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant, should wait until the soil is warmer and danger of frost is past.



What to plant?

What you plant depends on two things: space considerations, and what your heart desires. A good start garden might consist of some combination of lettuces, radishes, peas, green beans, tomatoes, peppers, squash, carrots, beets, broccoli, garlic and onions. These are all relatively good producers and will give you a nice range for your table. Corn is not hard to grow, but it takes a ton of room. Be sure to read up on each plant that you try. Some plants will do fine from seed planted in the spring; others, such as tomatoes and peppers, need to be started early under a grow light or purchased as seedlings from your garden center. It's fine to experiment with unusual plants—gardening is all about experimentation—but beware of what the blur on these plants promises. Some are very hard to grow in this northern climate no matter what they promise.



Pests

All gardeners, whether new or experienced, wage a constant battle against pests such as insects, slugs, moles and crows. A homemade hot pepper spray or gentle insecticide such as Safer is good to use on your tender growing plants, but remember that it must be applied after each rain. I have found that tobacco, layered atop the pea seeds, deters moles. Mole-out is another gentle product to try. If crows or other birds are a problem, a cover of fine mesh netting over your newly planted beds can do the trick. (Remove it when plants are established.) The only thing that I have found that works against slugs is a product called Sluggo. Beer in saucers is a nice folk remedy that I used for years but it did not eradicate too many slugs in a wet clay soil.



Weeding

Weeding is also a constant challenge for every gardener. One trick is to weed a little every day to keep up with the job. After your plants are established, a thick layer of straw or hay will also deter weeds and keep your plants moist. (I prefer straw, which is sterile and produces less grass growth than hay.) Creating paths among your beds is another way to deter weeds, and also creates a nice finished look to your garden. Paths can be lined first with cardboard or black cover from your garden center and finished off with wood chips. In any garden, it is realistic to expect some weeds. As long as your vegetables are larger than the weeds, and thriving, don't stress about it too much.

There has never been a better time to start a vegetable garden. You will find that the pleasures extend far beyond the fresh food on your table. All you need is a spirit of adventure and a bit of determination. It can be a family project or a solitary venture. Either way, the challenges and rewards of vegetable gardening will bring you much richness. Enjoy!

Tips

Garlic is ideally planted in the fall, but can also be planted as soon as the soil can be worked, in late March or early April.

Peas work best when you plant a lot of seed. Forget about the instructions to place a pea seed every few inches. Buy extra seed and make a river of peas. No thinning required.

Lettuce can be planted successively all spring, summer and late summer to ensure a fresh supply on your table all season long. Use heat-tolerant seed for the summer months.

Avoid overcrowding. While it's tempting to try and plant a lot in a small space, you will find that your plants produce much more if they are given lots of room to grow and thrive.

Local CSA Farms

Community Supported Agriculture, or CSAs, are a growing trend that benefits both farmer and consumer. By purchasing "shares" in the farm, a household can receive a bagful (or two) of the freshest in-season produce their local farmer has to offer. To supplement your own garden, consider joining a CSA near you.

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Pesto with Panache



Text by Clarissa Chatley

What could be better than the blended flavors of garlic, oil, basil and Romano cheese? Served over pasta, chicken or shrimp, this colorful and fragrant dish shouts with taste and abounds with good health.

The name pesto comes from the same Latin root “pestle,” which is fitting as the sauce, in its simplest form, is made by crushing a few key ingredients together. There are two forms of pesto sauce, pesto alla genovese and pesto alla siciliana, named for the regions of Italy where they originate.

Pesto alla genovese, widely accepted as the original pesto recipe, is made with garlic, salt, extra virgin olive oil, Pecorino Sardo cheese and Genoese basil. (Genoese basil is just one member of the large basil family.) The recipe for pesto alla siciliana is similar, but adds tomatoes and uses less basil.

Pesto sauces have been part of Italian cuisines since Roman times. Pesto is a very versatile sauce and can be used as a bruschetta topping, on pasta, with cooked meats or fish and even in soups. Variations on the recipe can include red bell peppers, sun dried tomatoes, pine nuts, walnuts, Parmesan and ricotta cheeses. Pesto can also be made by substituting cilantro, parsley, dill, rosemary or even arugala for the basil. A lovely way to explore pesto sauces is to make a few different kinds, and make a platter of pesto bruschetta using each sauce.

In general, basil is a hearty plant. If you happen to live in a climate that favors basil, you may quickly find yourself with a garden full of the aromatic herb. Basil thrives in the Upper Delaware region but acts as an annual, and must be replanted every year. While the herb is delicious to eat fresh from the bush, in salads or as a seasoning in sauces, it can also be preserved in the form of a pesto sauce.

Fresh Herb Pesto

- 2 cups fresh herbs, packed (choice of basil, dill, rosemary or thyme)
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan-Reggiano or Romano cheese
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, with a little extra for storing
- ⅓ cup pine nuts or walnuts (optional)
- 4 medium garlic cloves, minced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine fresh herb and pine nuts and pulse a few times in a food processor. Add garlic, pulse a few times more. Slowly add olive oil in a constant stream while the food processor is on. Stop to scrape down the sides of the food processor. Add the grated cheese and pulse again until smooth and blended. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Cilantro Pesto

- 2 cups fresh cilantro, packed, large stems removed
- ½ cup almonds
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- ½ teaspoon chopped and seeded Serrano, Pablano or Jalapeño chile
- ½ cup olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine cilantro, almonds, onion and chili; pulse until well blended in a food processor. Slowly add olive oil in a constant stream while the food processor is on until smooth and blended. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Pesto and Pasta Toss

- 1 pound of your favorite pasta, cooked and drained
- 4 cups fresh broccoli
- ½ cup of basil pesto

Cook pasta and broccoli, drain.
Add broccoli last 2 minutes of cooking
Add pesto and toss.



Pesto Chicken Salad

Ingredients

½ cup mayonnaise
⅓ cup of homemade pesto
4 cups cubed skinless, boneless chicken breast
1 cup diced celery
½ cup chopped onion (omit if using cilantro pesto recipe)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine mayonnaise and pesto, blend well. Combine chicken, celery and onion. Fold in mayo/pesto mix. If need be, add more mayo/pesto to reach desired taste. Finish off with salt and pepper to taste.
Serve on a bed of lettuce or as a sandwich on your favorite bread.

Pesto Bruschetta

Baguette, or your favorite bread
Homemade pesto

Slice a baguette into ¼- to ½-inch-thick slices and top with a generous coating of your favorite pesto.

Place on cooking sheet and bake in the oven at 350 degrees for 4 to 5 minutes or until bread turns lightly golden.

Pesto Hummus

2 cups chick peas (drained if in a can)
⅓ cup tahini
¼ cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons of your favorite pesto (or more according to taste)

Place the chick peas, tahini, lemon juice and pesto in a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth. Transfer mixture to a serving bowl. Drizzle olive oil over the bean mixture and serve with chips, fresh veggies, toasted pita, etc.

TIP

Pesto freezes well. Place in container and place in freezer as soon as possible to prevent discoloration. Pesto will discolor when exposed to air but this does not disturb taste. Pesto keeps up to a week in the refrigerator.

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Lustrous Lemons

Text by Clarissa Chatley

I must begin by telling you that I am addicted to lemons.

Each morning and evening, I drink a glass of water with freshly squeezed lemon. It you try this for a week and suddenly find yourself out of lemons, you'll be dashing to the market to replenish your supply.

This common citrus fruit has been cultivated in Asia for millenia. The Arabs introduced the fruit in

Spain during the 11th century, and it migrated across the ocean with Christopher Columbus during his second trip to Haiti in 1493.

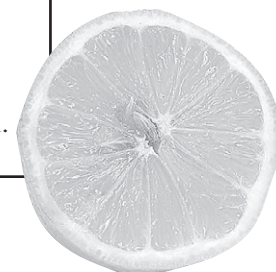
Lemons are acidic and provide antibacterial and antiseptic properties for cleaning, as well as many health benefits. You will find the common lemon has many more uses than to flavor tea or make lemonade.

What you can do with a lemon...

- Sanitize a cutting board. Simply run a slice of lemon over the entire surface to disinfect.
- Prevent browning by squeezing lemon juice over sliced fruit or guacamole.
- When making vinaigrette, replace white vinegar with lemon juice for a light, refreshing and more nutritional mix.
- Brighten your whites by adding half a cup of lemon juice to your normal wash.
- Decorate inexpensively by filling a glass bowl with lemons for a delightful centerpiece.
- Whiten your nails and eliminate gardening green by rubbing a wedge of lemon on the surface of your nails.
- A dot of lemon juice over a pimple several times a day will dry and heal it quickly.
- For natural highlights, squeeze several lemons to comb through your hair before sunbathing.
- Combine four tablespoons of lemon juice with half a gallon of water for an effective window cleaner.
- Combine boiling water with lemon juice and baking soda and pour down your drain for natural cleansing and maintenance.
- Pour lemon juice in your toilet for a fresh, clean and sanitary effect.
- Apply undiluted lemon juice to rid your bathroom surfaces of mold and mildew.
- Soak your toothbrush in lemon juice to kill germs.
- Sprinkle lemon juice over hands for a natural, effective sanitizer.
- A cup of lemon juice added to your dishwasher during the rinse cycle will help cut grease, disinfect silverware and add sparkle to your glassware.

Tips

- Immerse a slightly wrinkled lemon in warm water for approximately 30 minutes to bring the fruit back to form.
- To obtain more juice from your lemon, warm it by rolling it between your hands, cover it with boiling water or place it in the microwave for 30 seconds.
- Lemons will keep for up to a week at room temperature, two to three weeks refrigerated. Lemon zest (peel) can be frozen for months.
- To freeze the juice of a lemon, pour juice in an ice cube tray and place it in the freezer. Once solid, transfer the cubes into a freezer bag. Each cube is equivalent to the juice of approximately one lemon.



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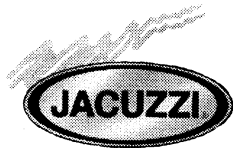
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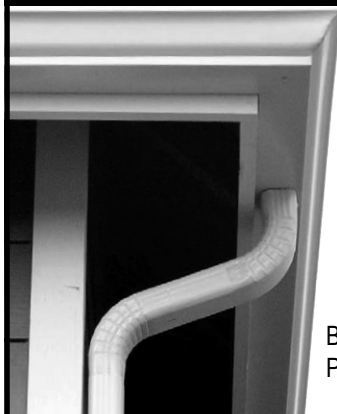
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Honey

Text by Clarissa Chatley | TRR File Photographs

When you really start to think about honey, doesn't it amaze you that such a fine product comes from such a tiny being?

Honey is made by bees in one of the world's most efficient facilities, the beehive. The 60,000 or so bees in a beehive may collectively travel as much as 55,000 miles and visit more than two million flowers to gather enough nectar to make just a pound of honey!

Pure honey contains the natural sweet substance produced by honey bees from the nectar of plants or secretions of living parts of plants. When scientists began to examine all of the elements found in this wonderful feat of nature, they found a complex combination of naturally flavored sugars as well as trace enzymes, minerals, vitamins and amino acids.

The color and flavor of honey differ depending on the bees' nectar source (the blossoms). In fact, there are more than 300 unique kinds of honey in the United States, originating from such diverse floral sources as clover, eucalyptus and orange blossoms. In general, lighter colored honeys are mild in flavor, while darker honeys more robust.

Here are some great, little known uses for honey—the "liquid gold" of nature.

Antiseptic: Hydrogen peroxide is used for cleaning wounds and helping them heal quickly. Honey contains a good amount of hydrogen peroxide. Release its properties by diluting the honey in water. When applied on an open wound, the glucose, contained by honey, is diluted and gradually releases hydrogen peroxide. Honey will help your cuts and scrapes to heal faster as well as preventing wounds from sticking to the dressing and the appearance of scars.

Acne Remover: With constant exposure to the bee fluid, pimples eventually wither and fade. Apply a small amount of honey

on the pimply regions of your face. Cover with adhesive bandages. Soon, your zit attack will be nothing more than a distant memory.

Energy Booster: Why buy palpitation-inducing energy drinks when you already have honey? Simply mix honey with water and drink. Honey's glucose content will be absorbed by the brain and in the bloodstream, reducing fatigue in the process.

Sore Throat Relief: Some people believe that honey is an even better treatment for mild coughs and colds than over-the-counter medications. To create the sore throat-relieving serum, squeeze the juice from a lemon and mix it with some honey. Stir the mixture until both ingredients blend. Drink the solution. After a few moments, you will realize that your sore throat has been relieved and reduced. Make as many rounds of this as you like.

Parasite Remover: Honey, when mixed with vinegar and water, can remove worms and other parasites in your body. The combination of vinegar's acidity and honey's therapeutic components will help kill or expel bodily intruders. When you suspect that you have worms in your body, see a doctor, but also drink ample amounts of the solution regularly. The parasites might build a resistance if you don't manage to get rid of them all as soon as possible.

Relaxant: Anxiety and nervousness are the enemies of a healthy mind. When these conditions swarm your thoughts, your actions are likely to produce negative results. Free yourself from bad states of mind by eating porridge (oatmeal or rice meal) mixed with honey. Honey's nutrients produce a calming effect, especially when taken in significant amounts. No wonder some consider it a part of a breakfast of champions. Honey can also be mixed with a suitable beverage—such as chamomile tea—for a good night's sleep.



Save our bees

Unfortunately, honeybee populations are in danger and they need our help. Bee colonies have been succumbing to a mysterious condition known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), where bees leave their hives but do not return. You can help by planting flowers that attract honeybees, making a donation to research into CCD being conducted by Pennsylvania State University and the University of California Davis, and by supporting your local beekeepers. Local honey can be found at farmers markets and farm stands all over our region.



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Natural Beauty

Text by Lori Malone | TRR File Photograph



Since the beginning of time humans have sought methods to enhance their beauty and correct their flaws. British archaeologists discovered evidence that Neanderthals were experimenting with cosmetics 50,000 years ago, finding lumps of a yellow foundation-type pigment, together with a red powder, which had been mixed with a reflective black material at known Neanderthal sites in south-east Spain.

Today, the quest for beauty has resulted in a billion-dollar cosmetic industry. Consumers have been inundated with expensive products that don't always live up to their hype. In challenging economic times, these are usually the luxuries we forgo.

However, there is an affordable alternative. Over the last year, I have made a dramatic change in my diet, electing to consume organic and all-natural foods rather than processed and packaged foods. Not only did this change result in weight loss, lowered cholesterol and increased stamina, it also improved my skin's appearance. I noticed less breakouts, firmer skin and a healthier glow.

As I began reading the labels on some of my skin care products, it occurred to me that the products I put on my face and skin should be as natural as the foods I consume. So I began researching natural alternatives. I expected to find a few cosmetic lines that employ green and organic standards, and I did.

However, I also found a plethora of home-made remedies that have been used with good results for centuries. Aesthetician Narine Nikogosian's book, 'Return to Beauty,' is fabulous resource that is chock-full of easy and affordable skin-care recipes derived from all-natural ingredients.

In many cases, these are the same recipes that high-end spas are charging a premium to administer. In fact, "all-natural" beauty treatments are a growing trend within the spa industry. The benefits of these treatments are remarkable and the low costs of whipping them up at home means everyone can afford to pamper themselves from time to time.

Beauty is an inside job. Diet, exercise and a good skin-care regime all contribute to our overall attractiveness. For those wanting to pamper themselves the natural way, here are some basic beauty enhancing ingredients and their benefits.

Oatmeal

Soothing and anti-inflammatory, oatmeal contains beta glucan, a soluble fiber that creates a thin, moisture-retaining film on the surface of the skin.

Recommended use: Place a handful of whole oats in a clean washcloth and using a rubber band to secure it. Next, immerse it in a sinkful of warm water and squeeze the bag 4 or 5 times. Once the water is cloudy, splash it on your face and then air-dry. (If you must towel dry, pat as gently as possible.)

Avocado oil

Avocado oil's abundant fatty acids help balance skin's moisture levels, and the antioxidant vitamins A, C and E protect skin from further damage.

Recommended use: Combine equal parts avocado oil and evening-primrose oil (which supports collagen synthesis with its gamma linoleic acid) in a sealable bottle and shake to blend. Massage 5 or 6 drops into clean skin, and then cover your face with a warm washcloth for a minute to help the oils sink in.

Walnuts

Rich in oil, walnuts make for extra-gentle sloughing.

Recommended use: Blend ¼ cup shelled walnuts, ½ cup olive oil (for

extra emollients), and a tablespoon of honey (to seal moisture into your skin) in a food processor set on a slow speed, creating a fine-particle scrub. Standing in the shower (if you're scrubbing your feet) or over a sink (if it's for your hands), work the mixture thoroughly over your skin for a couple of minutes. Rinse with warm water.

Orange

The fruit acid loosens dead skin cells. **Recommended use:** Cut a fresh orange in half and squeeze the juice of one half into a bowl. Add ¼ cup granulated sugar and ¼ cup olive oil and then blend into a moisture-rich scrub. Next, rub the exposed side of the other half of the orange over knees, elbows, heels, and any other dry spots. Last, rub in the sugar mixture to slough off dead skin. Rinse with warm water and pat skin dry.

Milk

The lactic acid in milk serves as a gentle skin exfoliant, while its natural fat content acts as a body moisturizer. **Recommended use:** Add 1 gallon of whole milk to a tubful of warm water and soak. It's a great alternative to sugar and salt scrubs, which may be too abrasive for people who suffer from eczema, psoriasis, or sensitive skin. If you prefer a fragranced bath, add 10 to 20 drops of an essential oil such as lavender.

Eggs

The high protein content in eggs helps improve hair's resilience and luster.

Recommended use: Wisk together 1 egg, 2 tablespoons coconut oil, rich in moisturizing fats, and 2 tablespoons

sesame oil. Apply the mixture to dry hair and wrap a hot, moist towel around your head. Relax for 5 to 10 minutes. Without wetting hair first, work in a handful of shampoo, and then rinse and condition your hair.

Apple cider vinegar

The high acid content in apple cider vinegar makes skin inhospitable to blemish-causing bacteria.

Recommended use: Place a handful of parsley (a skin-clarifying herb) into a French press and cover it with ½ cup of boiling water. Steep for 10 minutes, and then plunge and let the liquid cool. Transfer to a spray bottle along with a splash of vinegar and 4 drops of tea tree oil (an antiseptic), shake well and spritz on a freshly cleansed face. (Store the spray bottle in the fridge.)

Beer

Yeast and hops help to swell the hair shaft and plump the cuticle, adding volume. The acidity of the beer helps remove built-up product residue.

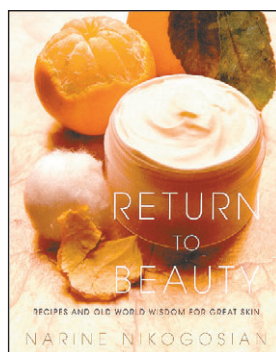
Recommended use: In the shower, after you've shampooed, pour a bottle of beer over your hair. Rinse briefly with fresh water. A rich beer with a high yeast content works best. Light beer is not recommended.

Cucumbers

It is the cold, not the cucumber, that helps shrink the puffiness around the eye area by constricting blood vessels and thus reducing inflow of fluid into soft tissues.

Recommended use: Chill sliced cucumbers and place over eyes for 5-10 minutes or get the same results with a washcloth dipped in cold water.

Resources



Recommended Reading

Return to Beauty
by Narine Nikogosian
Aesthetician Narine Nikogosian shares her secrets for time-tested, healthy and inexpensive skin care regimens that promise readers glowing, younger and more radiant skin using natural ingredients.



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Harnessing the wind

Text by Krista Gromalski | Photograph courtesy of Clemluddy Construction



Craig Smyth is owner and president of Clemluddy Construction (www.clemluddy.com, 570/ 226-2899) based in Hawley, PA. He is a Certified Green Professional of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and is active in the regional business community and within the building industry. Smyth currently serves on the board of directors of the Wayne County Builders Association and is a past director of the Pennsylvania Builders Association. He was recently nominated to the board of the Wayne Economic Development Corporation and has been a member of NAHB's Remodelers 20 Club since 2001.

Our Country Home asked this expert about alternative energy, in particular wind energy, for homeowners in our region.



Rendering of a model home with windmill.

OCH: Is residential wind energy a realistic alternative for homeowners in the Upper Delaware Region?

CS: Although residential wind energy is dependent on certain conditions associated with your location, it can be a viable choice for many local homeowners. The ideal site conditions include a parcel that sits atop a ridge or mountaintop, with a clear area to the west.

OCH: How does a homeowner determine whether his or her property is right for installation of a residential wind turbine system? And, how is the turbine site selected if conditions are right?

CS: If you believe you have an appropriate site, the best way to determine your home's feasibility and to select the best-suited equipment is to contact a professional qualified alternative energy consultant. A knowledgeable builder should be able to refer you to a consultant.

OCH: Can a wind turbine system be connected to a home's existing heating or electrical components?

CS: Yes, the wind turbine is connected directly to your home's electrical service and is intended to supplement your electrical use.

OCH: What size wind turbine is appropriate for the average home?

CS: There are several options for residential wind turbines. Depending on your location and budget, the mast can be from 35 to 60 feet, and the blades range in size from a 12-foot to a 20-foot rotor diameter.

OCH: In general, will homeowners need to navigate local zoning ordinances when installing a residential wind turbine? If so, is there a source of assistance during this process?

CS: Your wind energy consultant or—if you are installing the wind turbine in conjunction with either new construction or a remodeling project—your builder will be able to assist you in securing permits along with the proper information for tax and energy credits.

OCH: What do residential wind turbine systems typically cost?

CS: As with most home projects, there are different models of residential wind turbines available for consideration. Take, for instance, a Skystream 3.7, which is rated at 2.4 kW and will provide the average home with 30 percent of its total electrical demand. The cost for this model is approximately \$18,000 and it qualifies for about 30 percent of the cost to be reimbursed in tax and energy rebates. The average payback of an initial investment on a model such as this is six to eight years.

OCH: Can the average home run solely on a residential wind turbine system, or is a supplemental power supply necessary?

CS: A homeowner can expect a residential wind turbine system to supplement his or her energy needs, but not to meet the home's total energy use.

OCH: Besides energy and cost savings, what are some additional benefits of residential wind power?

CS: By installing a residential wind turbine, you are being a good steward of the environment. Anything that we can do to reduce the negative impact we leave on the planet is positive.

OCH: Are most regional builders familiar with integrating a residential wind turbine system into a home's existing electrical system, or including one in a new home's design?

CS: Speaking solely for the team at Clemluddy Construction, we are continuing to educate ourselves in alternative energy sources and use of sustainable building techniques and materials as they become available to the consumer. It is our hope that our colleagues in the industry are keeping current on these important industry standards and practices as well.

OCH: How can homeowners encourage wider use of alternative power sources within the home building industry?

CS: Today's homeowners need to remain savvy and informed about new and emerging technologies available for building more sustainable housing. And, they need to present these options to builders for discussion and consideration. Like anything else, there is a cost associated with new technology, but when viewed in the long-term and the big picture, the benefits far outweigh the cost. Homeowners should remember that, like any other type of savings plan, there is an initial investment associated with alternative energy in anticipation of an expected return.

OCH: Where can a homeowner find installation and maintenance support for a residential wind turbine system?

CS: A professional qualified alternative energy consultant is the best source of this type of information. Clemluddy Construction is happy to refer homeowners to a qualified consultant.

OCH: In general, how does residential wind energy compare to solar options or other alternative energy sources?

CS: Because of the restrictive circumstances involved with locating a residential wind turbine system, solar power is an excellent partner, or a good alternative, to a wind system. Solar, however, also has its limitations due to site conditions. In addition to wind and solar energy options, geo-thermal heating and cooling has recently become more affordable for the average homeowner. With advances in technology and increased energy costs, the viability of using a ground source heating and cooling system has increased substantially.

OCH: Is there anything you would like to add?

CS: An important thing to remember is that there are some terrific homeowner incentives out there that can help to defray the costs of installing energy saving products into your home. And in the long run, these components will not only pay for themselves, but will also contribute to the conservation of our natural resources.

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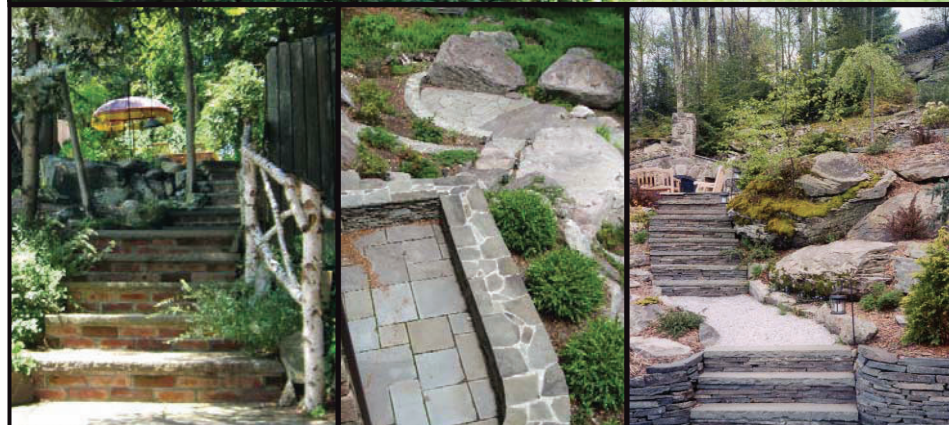
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