

Frugality - A Homesteading Preppers Way

I was reading a blog posted by HumbleWife the other day and it got me to thinking about all the things I have learned in life regarding frugality and to how it applies to us Homesteaders and Preppers.

I am a firm believer that history teaches us invaluable lessons and gives us tips'n'tricks to survive just about anything our human civilizations can throw at us. So as I got to remembering my youth and researching, I realized this is even truer today than "back in the day".



Then I realized that like many common words in use today, we humans have altered the meanings or in some cases formed new words to describe old words and their meanings. If you don't believe me, use an old 1700 or 1800's dictionary and look up words like: frugal; commerce; church; state; health; liberty; freedom; rights; happiness; central; federal; tax; tariff; thrift; meager; sparing. Then look the same words up in a dictionary of today. We have altered the meanings of these words or given them new names. (Ok, Ok, I got a little carried away and political here, but I am sure you get my drift.)



The word "frugal" can be an adjective, noun or an adverb. It is traced back to the 1500-1600's and was almost always associated to the general economy. Here is a little refresher course:

Nouns

Nouns are parts of speech commonly referring to a person, place, thing, state or quality. They include:

- concrete nouns (pencil, horse)
- abstract nouns (hatred, love)
- proper nouns (William, Sydney Opera House)
- countable nouns (pebble, coin)
- common nouns (table, book)

Adjectives

Adjectives are descriptive terms that modify the meaning of a noun. For example: brown dog, large building, tall tree.

Verbs

A part of speech that denotes existence, action or occurrence, verbs are more simply explained as “doing words”. Examples: the verb to be, rise, jump, have, carry, sing, run, lift.

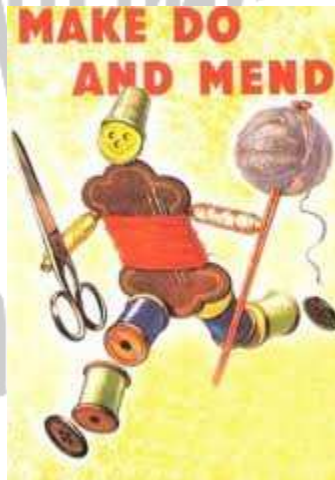
Adverbs

A part of speech that modifies the meaning of a verb, adjective or other adverb. For example easily, very and happily in the sentence: They could easily envy the very happily married couple.

Definitions of Frugal

1. Practicing or marked by economy; living without waste; avoiding waste; thrifty; thrifty - careful and diligent in the use of resources; as in the expenditure of money or the use of material resources.
2. Not costly; meager; Costing little; inexpensive; sparing, stinting, scotch, economical; a frugal lunch.
3. The quality of being frugal; prudent economy; that careful management of anything valuable which expends nothing unnecessarily, and applies what is used to a profitable purpose; thrift; --- opposed to extravagance.
4. A sparing use; sparingness; as, frugality of praise.

Now take a look at the meaning of frugal and apply it to the “green” movement. They are going by new words used to describe old word meanings and actions.



I was raised by parents and grandparents that survived the Great Depression. They taught me to make things last and to reuse whatever I could. This was something my grandparents were raised with before technology and they taught my parents and my parents taught me.

As I got older and combined these lessons with my love of wildlife, I guess you could say I turned into a conservationist. Not only that, but I was always interested in alternative energy sources because my grandparents farm was very rural and they lost their electricity regularly every winter. They took advantage of wind, solar and geo-thermal energy before it was the “in” thing to do. They just figured what is the point of paying for something that you can get for free with a little sweat.



These simple habits are now called a number of things, from frugality, to being green, to just plain smart thinking in hard times. Therefore, by my standards, these lessons learned from my elders are now literally a survival tactic for today's world.

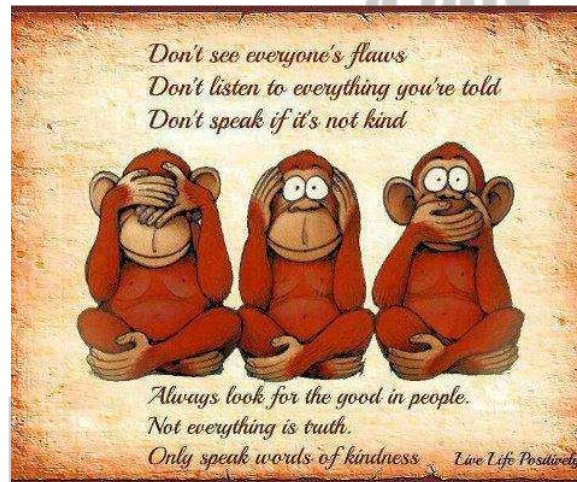
Whatever you want to call this attitude, it is a part of my nature now. This just saves money, gives me a sense of freedom and makes sense, not only in these current hard times, but it helped me a lot when I entered my budget crunch years. I had to find ways to save money and reduce my expenses. My city trash was billed on volume and weight, so I had to find ways to reduce it. Reducing waste led to reducing power usage and alternative power. During this time my area entered a drought, I had to save on water bills too – all before “reduce, reuse, recycle” or being “environmentally friendly” became the fad of the day.



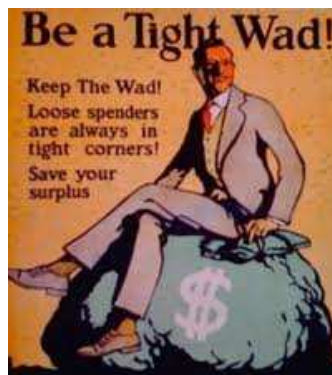
As a result of what I did (and still do) to conserve my funds, some people call me an environmentalist or “Greenie”. Whatever, I am merely a person who is always looking for the cheapest (while still having my TV, PC and CD's, etc), easiest way to live with the least amount of money, time and effort in doing so, while gaining and maintaining as independent and self-sufficient lifestyle as possible. To do this I utilize old ways and modern technology. To me this is just a smart, common sense approach to life and it fits in well with Preppers and the self-reliant lifestyle.



The bottom line is if you are interested in getting the most bang for your buck and stretching your dollars then let the name calling roll off your back and just do it. Don't let the marketing and advertising of the "green" movement or our "use and toss" consumerism turn you off to these money saving ideas. Stop and think, then do, as these are just plain common sense money saving tools!



Practicing this type of frugality on a regular basis for many of us will require some kind of lifestyle change. As with just about anything, the best thing to do is to start simple and it will lead to other ways to obtain your goal. You may only get a small amount of savings with each of these suggestions, but when added together over the long haul, you can really appreciate Benjamin Franklin when he said "A penny saved is a penny earned."



Below is a list of items I have done over the years that have become second nature. As you get farther along the list you are moving thru time with some of the newer technological advancements. Many of these ideas and suggestions are geared towards the Urbanite; however a lot will apply to suburban and rural people too. At the very least these should

spark an idea or two that will work in your living environment. All of these items, when put into practice, will save you money and that is what counts most.



- Before you purchase anything ask yourself “Will I die if I don’t have this?” and “When, what, where will I use this?” This will reduce impulse buying.
- Here is a blast from the past: If you have a mud room, take better advantage of what it was made for. Put a coat rack and bench there that can house boots and shoes. Take off your boots or shoes when you enter. This will stop the mud from being tracked through the home, less cleaning, less labor, less costs. My grandparent’s mud room was actually part of the laundry room with a ¼ bath there. When one came in from the fields, boots were removed, clean cloths picked up and granddad went right to the shower. When he came out his cloths were in the laundry basket to be washed and he was clean as a whistle. The floor also had a drain in it so if the mud was really bad, you just hosed it down or if the washer flooded; you swished the water down the drain.



- Plan errands so the trip takes the least amount of mileage as possible. To facilitate this have an Errand/Shopping List on the frig that you can add to as you notice you need an item. Limit shopping trips to no more than once a week, once every two weeks or more is even better.



- Car pool if possible. I organized a monthly car pool for shopping in my neighborhood. We take turns taking everyone around all the warehouse stores, malls, home improvement stores, farmers and flea markets and such. We make one circle around town to hit each one of these places. It is almost a full day event. We regularly shop the used book and furniture stores too. A side benefit is getting to know and networking with your neighbors.



- Walk, ride a bus or train, bike instead of drive whenever possible. I have purchased an adult tricycle that has a folding basket and rear axle and is lightweight enough that I can get it on the bike racks on the busses in town. I often walk to the grocery store with a folding cart when I do my shopping. Much cheaper than driving your vehicle and you get the added bonus of some exercise. Remember a healthier you means your medical expenses will be less too.



- When you grocery shop, eat before you go, stick to your list, be sure to read the labels and take a calculator. Figure out the price per serving. What looks like a bargain probably is not; it will either be a higher cost per serving or contain some kind of filler or ingredient that you don't need.



- Bring your own bags to stores, particularly the grocery store. Right now, our 2010 NM Legislature is looking at taxing plastic grocery bags so being a cloth bagger or bringing your own plastic bags could potentially save money depending on the tax rate if this bill is passed.



- Save your grocery bags from stores and use around your home for small trash can liners. Or use them to hang and store extension, other electrical cords, rope and other items. Take them with you when go back to the store.



- Utilize local produce and products where possible. The quality is usually much better, your local merchants and farmers get the money instead of a big corporation and (how's this for you greenies) the shorter the distribution to point of sale, the lower the carbon footprint and gasoline used.



- Save items like toilet paper, vitamins, over the counter health products, pet food and cleaning products for the warehouse or big box and overstock stores (Target, Wal-Mart, Big Lots). Because they buy in larger quantities, these are usually cheaper there.



- Look for Dollar and discount grocery stores. Again these are usually overstocked items or almost expired sell by items, but you can usually save at least \$5.00 (every 2 weeks) on the products you can purchase from there.



- Find the local "day old bakery" outlets in your area. You can often get bread and treats at half price. Sure they are just at or past their "sell by" dates, but you take them home and freeze them and save a small bundle in the process. I do this with tortillas too; they freeze great with some wax paper between each.



- Look for products with the least amount of packaging. This means a lot of my meat, poultry, sea food, fruits and vegetables are purchased from local vegetable stands, farmers markets and the butcher section rather than the pre-packaged sections of the supermarket. It also means I have less trash to put on the curb and be charged for. In one local grocery chain I found out the bacon from the butcher section was cheaper per pound than getting the exact same bacon pre-package in the breakfast section.



- Plan your meals in advance and then prepare them on the weekend to have handy during the busy time of the work week. This saves time, energy and money. Think about it: If you are putting together leftover roast into a stew or making a large batch of bread or soup, the energy needed to cook these items is less, when done back to back with no cool down, than it would be to make each meal all through the week. Plus you can use this time as family quality time by making it a weekly event. Your children not only learn something from you that they will need in the future, but you get to talk and discuss the week with your family too.



- If you have the time, bake your own bread, rolls and buns instead of purchasing at the store. Set aside a day to do this and freeze for the rest of the week or month. I have found that many of the breads I like to bake I can make batches of dough in advance, wrap in wax paper, then place in Ziploc bags and freeze, so when I need to during the week I thaw, let rise and bake.



- Be open to store or generic brands. I don't like too many store brands as they either have too much salt or some other imitation food item, but in a lot of cases they are great and just as good as the name brand at $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ the cost. Not only that but nowadays many store brands are actually produced and packaged by the name brand companies. Purchase small quantities for taste testing to determine if it is worth it for you and your family to switch. I have usually found that dairy products, cereals, canned goods, paper products, spices and other staple baking needs are a good buy without sacrificing quality.
- Save the vegetable scraps from preparing salads etc. Put them in a zip lock bag and freeze them or dehydrate them. Use this for soup and stew stocks. You put them in cheese cloth and cook or boil with the item you are making. Then compost it.



- Use the cardboard tubes from toilet paper, paper towels and wrapping paper for seedling plant protectors. By the time the seedling is big enough not to need them they have decomposed. Or use these as "toys" for small rodent, lizard and bird pets. Many love the paper for nesting material after they are done hiding and playing with them.

BEFORE You Recycle It...



17 Ways to UpCycle & ReUse Shredded Paper!

See "17 Ways to Upcycle & Reuse Shredded Paper" @ <http://blog.officezilla.com/upcycle-then-recycle-shredded-paper/>

- If you have a paper shredder, use the shredded paper (paper only not plastic) for pet bedding or packing material when shipping gifts. Once paper is shredded and if the dyes used in the ink are not caustic, this can go in your compost pile too (avoid glossy colored paper). And don't forget, shredded paper is still paper that can be recycled.



- Buy used instead of new where possible. You might even luck out and end up with a valuable collectible. A little elbow grease can save you a small fortune. Most of my bookcases, dressers, ottomans and a table or two were purchased this way. I have purchased used dining chairs from several sources. Then I just sand and re-paint or stain and make new seat covers. The chairs don't match in style but everyone loves them. I think this kind of reuse is now called "shabby sheik". If I had purchased these new I would have spent over \$1000, instead I spent about \$150 and that includes the make-over supplies. I don't know how many work jeans and sweaters I have purchased at Goodwill or the like for a few dollars each. When you know something is going to be used for "hard labor" why pay the big bucks?



- Try to purchase multi-functional appliances and furniture. The less clutter, the cheaper and easier it is to heat or cool your rooms and for someone as lazy as me, the less cleaning is needed. Under bed dresser platform beds or storage bins. Folding tables that can be a sofa or Huntsman table until unfolded and it stores the chairs to boot. Futon or Murphy sofa beds with drawers. The drawers can hold the bedding. A can opener that is also a bottle or plastic bag opener or knife sharpener. I am still hanging onto my old (from the early 80's and no longer sold the last time I looked) Sunbeam multi-functional kitchen center. It is a mixer, dough maker, blender, food processor and meat grinder all in one appliance.



- Reduce clutter. Your heating/cooling systems are doing their job based on the CUBIC feet in a room. (Yep ceiling height is a factor.) That includes cabinets, drawers, bookcases, hutches, closets AND their contents. If you haven't used something in the last year or two and it is not a collectible or sentimental – find another use for it or get rid of it. You are paying to heat and cool items you are not utilizing. Not to mention cleaning them. I have turned most of my T-shirt collection, that is too small for me now, into throw pillow covers and donated the rest of my seldom to never used/worn items. My heating bill was reduced by \$3.75 the first month. When I went through my kitchen I found two good sized boxes of kitchen gadgets that I used once and never again. Sold them in a garage sale. Wow, all the space in my kitchen cupboards was new!!!!



- Turn off faucets when brushing your teeth or shaving and use a cup of water or washrag or sink only partially full of water instead. This may only amount to a \$.15 per use but 15 cents a day times 365 days is \$54.75 a year, now triple that for three times a day and you save \$164.25 per year!



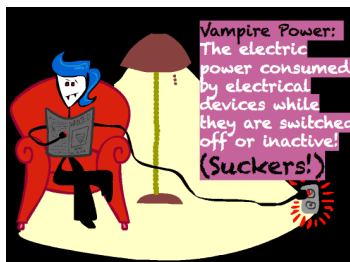
- Get shower heads that are not only low water use and aerate the water but have a turn off valve on the head so when you wash your hair or body you turn the water off while soaping. This way the temperature is set when you switch it back on to rinse. Less water use, less of a water bill at the end of the month. Even if you have a well or capture runoff water for showers, this will save on the water used so in dry times you are way ahead of the rest of the people around you.



- Take advantage of runoff or rain water by capturing it and using it in your garden or for showers or baths, dish and clothes washers. I have talked to many people who avoid doing this saying the containers are ugly or too expensive for the underground type or they don't want to be considered a "greenie". Phooey! These save money on your water bill and are so easy to make that my neighbors 10 year old son made me one and decorated it. Looks like a fancy planter with no plants.



- For more beauty or style from your gutter drains, make a rain chain. We don't get much rain where I am here in New Mexico, but I purchased a rain chain that some middle school kids made out of empty spice tins one summer. It not only looks great and is a conversation piece, but it works like a charm too.



- Utilize Smart Switches and Power Strips to turn off appliances and electrical devices that are not in use. Remember that most of today's TV's, PC's, DVD/CD/DVR/VHS players, microwaves and coffee pots are pulling electricity even when not in use. Anything that has an 'instant on' feature or built in clock is always pulling electricity. I had to order a coffee pot that had a timer instead of a clock from a French company, as I couldn't find one here in the states. All I wanted to do was plug the thing in and set the timer to start 8 hours later so the

coffee was ready when I woke up. I didn't need another clock in the kitchen as I already had the clock on the microwave, the clock on the stove and a battery wall clock.



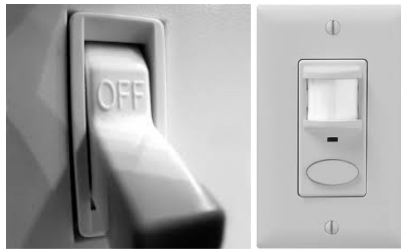
- Study your lighting. Most times you can stay with a lower wattage bulb if you have the proper reflector for it. Think of a lighthouse. It is a very small bulb in lighthouses. The penetrating light comes from the reflector and lens which magnify the intensity of the light, not the actual wattage of the light bulb. I found I saved about \$1.00 the first month on my electric bill and that was without switching to a CFL bulb!



- Switch to low energy use bulbs. Compact fluorescents (CFL) and LED. I prefer LED, no mercury for one. There are two ways to look at this LED expense: Most lighting fixtures take screw in bulbs. When you purchase LED bulbs that fit these kinds of pre-existing fixtures they cost a lot per bulb even if they do last twice as long as the CFL bulb or compact fluorescent. So your expense is on the back side each time you purchase a replacement bulb. Or you can purchase a fixture that is made for LED bulbs, the standard cheap kind that snap in (kinda like Christmas twinkle lights). This fixture will cost you more up front but you can usually recoup the cost after 4 or 5 light bulb replacements. Plus, more LED bulbs are dimmable than CFL's. I made this switch to save money on my electric bill. In the last year I have saved around \$100 on my electric bill.



- Use wind up "Big Ben" or battery alarm clocks instead of the electric type. How often do you use the radio option on the clock to wake you up or listen to music? Clock/Radios are one of those items that are always pulling electricity even when you are not using the radio part of it.



- Turn lights off when not in a room. You can get expensive and “techie” by getting the kind of wall switch that has motion detector/timer that will automatically turn off after someone leaves the room. I have no idea how cost effective these are as with just me now, it is far cheaper to just turn the light off myself when I exit a room for any length of time.



- Make the most use of natural lighting and reflecting that lighting around a room. Light colors, sheer and privacy/thermal drapes that you open or close as needed for light or to retain/reflect heat. I have single pane windows from the 60’s when my house was built. I had estimates done to replace the windows to the new thermal kind - \$9,000-15,000 for all 11 windows and a sliding door!!! I purchased thermal backed curtains and double rods for each of these windows. The thermal cost about \$200.00 and were placed closest to the window itself, my existing more decorative curtains were on the outer rod. The first month I saved almost \$25.00 on my AC bill and the first winter I saved even more. You just have to remember to open and close the thermal curtains as needed.



- If your thermostat is near the door see if you can move or cover it. This reduces the number of times it will get a blast of hot or cold air which triggers it to start your furnace or AC unit when people enter or leave via that door. If you have enough space by your door make a screen out of old windows or doors and place in front of your thermostat or doorway which will form a “movable foyer” and divert these open door air bursts, from the thermostat. Or just hang the decorative screen or old window or door on the wall in front of the thermostat with a small 2-3 inch spacer.



- Insulate and seal windows and doors. This can be accomplished with a little putty, thermal drapes/shades or weather stripping. If you need to replace an exterior door, get an insulated or solid core one. Instead of replacing windows or using thermal curtains, get storm windows. There is a new type that is applied inside instead of outside, these seal the existing window and can even add the look and feel of window molding. Much cheaper than window replacement but not as cheap as thermal curtains.



- Energy Star appliances. That old frig may be doing a good job but it is costing you each month in electrical costs and maybe even spoiled food. If you must hang onto an older frig or freezer, replace the door molding to increase the insulating properties. Refrigerator/Freezers no matter what age cost less to run if the freezer section is on the bottom and not the top. Chest freezers or bottom freezer drawers on refrigerators are cheaper to power than upright models. Remember cold air sinks, so use that to your money saving advantage.



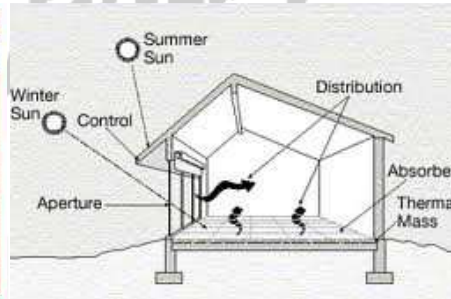
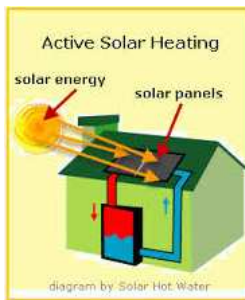
<http://www.home-storage-solutions-101.com/organizing-refrigerator.html>

- Organize the frig and freezer so the most frequently used items are closest to the front and door. Remember cold air sinks and that means any refrigerator or freezer that is upright will lose about 70% of its coldness when the door is opened for a minute or more. This means the compressor will come on costing you more money on your electric bill.
- Microwave/Convection ovens are more cost effective than a toaster oven or large range oven if baking/heating a small item. If you are alone, like me, a small toaster oven is a good alternative, however unless you spend the

money up front to get one that actually tightly seals the oven section when in use, the savings will be very, very small. I ordered an Avanti one for \$79.00 (including shipping) and have not regretted it in the last 3 years. The oven section to this particular item was also a convention oven when the temperature was set above 300 degrees.



- Rechargeable batteries. New laws and government regulations now require special disposal of used batteries from AAA to vehicle, boat and RV batteries. Save even more money and get a solar recharger that you can place on a porch or sunny windowsill.



- Take advantage of solar power, from solar outdoor lights, to panels, and other passive solar techniques. Like having light reflective shades/drapes for summer and dark absorbing shades/drapes for winter. Solar powered outdoor lights (dusk to dawn or motion detection). Use indoor light sensing type hall and bath night lights. In most cases (but not all) these will go off during the day when there is plenty of natural light.



- Programmable thermostats coupled with getting used to less drastic interior temperatures. Cooler in winter (68), warmer in summer (75). Remember you can turn the heat down to 66-68 when sleeping and turn back on an hour before you wake up. Or set the AC unit to turn up to 80 while you are out of the home for the day and come back on about an hour before you are due home.



- Cold water washing and rinse of clothes. Line dry instead of using the dryer. Then get one of those dryer lint vents that filter and can return the heat back into your house or direct outside in the summer. But why anyone would use a dryer in the summer is beyond me.



- Use the shortest and most efficient cycle in dishwashers. Or consider this - I had to replace my dishwasher recently and got two drawer dishwashers. One drawer is smaller than the other. I use this one most often as it is just me in the house now. But when I have guests I use both. Less water, less detergent, less energy, lower bills and the detergent lasts twice as long.



- If you have an old fashioned fireplace, get the most of its heat by getting a passive “heatalator” wood grate. These have tubes that curve up and over the top of the grate to passively funnel the heat back towards the opening of your fireplace instead of up the chimney. The one I have cost under \$45.00.



- Low water use commodes or devices. The ones with assisted power flushes are worth every penny. The one I purchased only uses 2 cups for regular flushes and 4 for what I call 'sticky pooh' flushes. These new commodes take up less space in the bathroom to boot. If you can't afford a new commode add a brick or other weighted object to the tank to displace more water. Or get a toilet tank insert. My daughter found one in Canada. It fits

inside the existing tank like a plastic tank. It only holds about a quart or two of water and you hook the flusher/damper thing to it. Hers also has a battery pack (9V). When she flushes this power flushes using only a few cups of water instead of the whole tank and only cost her about 50 Canadian bucks.



- Eliminate all drips - indoors and out. Washers are a cheap investment that save lots of money in water bills. One summer when I replaced all of mine, my water bill was \$3.00 lower each of the following months. I knew one indoor faucet dripped but I never realized I had other hidden drips until I did this.



- Take advantage of crock pots, pressure cookers and cast iron Dutch ovens. IE: Avoid major appliance use like ovens if at all possible, especially in the hot months. Plan oven use so you are making more items and freezing or canning for later use. Start with the lowest temperature foods first and work up to the highest. By reducing the pre-heat time you are saving energy and thus money. Using the oven less in summer decreases the times the AC compressor will come on, saving more money.



- Reduce the use of disposable items: Swifter, paper dust rags, towels, napkins, placemats, plates, utensils, cups, bowls, etc. If cold water washing, it is cheaper to wash these and reuse than it is to use and throw away. Remember in my city we are charged by the amount and weight of trash we put on the curb each month.

I have made my own "Swifter" dusters and mop rags from some of those miracle micro fiber cloths. These I can use and wash instead of use and toss. Great money saver.



- Filter your drinking/cooking water instead of buying bottled water. It is much cheaper to wash containers or replace filters than it is to use bottled water. If you have several 2 liter to 1 gallon reusable containers for in the house frig and larger 5-10 gallon containers for storage, you can facilitate your water storage rotation by filling the smaller containers from the larger ones.



- Reuse whatever possible. I reuse Ziploc bags among other things. I turn them inside out and put thru the dishwasher or soak them in a bowl of water with a little bleach then reuse them. If the bag was used for a food item that I don't trust the cleaning of for reuse with another food item - I use the bags for storing thread, buttons, hooks, nuts, bolts, nails, zippers, game pieces, etc. Multiple uses before it is recycled. You can reuse dryer sheets by soaking them in diluted liquid fabric softener, letting dry and using in the dryer again. I get about six uses out of each dryer sheet. I have even used them on my Swifter dusters!!!. You can also put some diluted fabric softener in a spray bottle and then spray the used dryer sheet before reuse. They work great. Or use them as the stuffing for stuffed animals and pillows, etc.



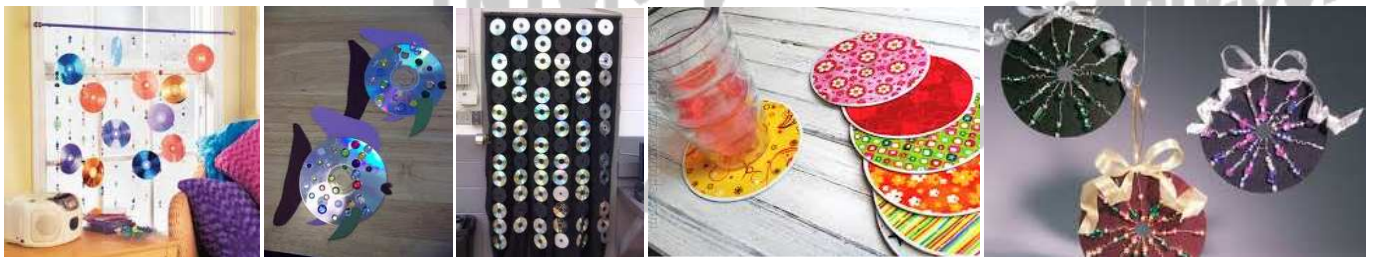
- Recycle whatever possible. A friend of mine built me a small Recycle Center. It has 4 drawers. The bottom holds paper and then comes glass, then metal, then plastic. Each drawer holds one of those plastic grocery store bags. So ALL gets recycled and each is small enough that even my 3 year old grandson can take out the recyclables. Newspapers are great for cleaning windows!!!! Then recycle them. Or use the newspapers in the garden. Lay on top of the soil and anchor with some small object or dirt, punch a hole for the seed, plant and leave. The paper will decompose and protect the young seedling until it does. Boy do I really miss the 80's when Wal-Mart had a recycle collection bin in their parking lot that gave you credits to their store when you deposited recycle materials.



- If clothes are too worn to be useful as clothes. Find a craft club that turns these into other useful items like rugs, cushions, carryalls, etc. or keep them for your own washable utility rags. Old jeans, shorts and sweatshirts make great carryalls or hanging storage organizers. Material scraps make great stuffing for cushions and pillows or for decoupage craft projects.



- Avid reader? I am. To save money I take my used books to a book swap or a used book store. Then purchase my new reading material there at the same time. Many hospitals, dentists and doctor offices will take your old magazines for their waiting rooms. This saves money on the actual purchase as well as on my trash collection bill.



- Old CD's and DVD's even old LP's that are no longer usable but still have their shape can be made into coasters or hotplates. You glue a same size piece of cardboard to it and then cover with scrap fabric and or paint. For hot plates I usually add some bunting as well to the top and some crumbled up cork from wine bottles. Or you can string them together to make window dressings, kinda like those 70's bead curtains.



- Not many big fat catalogs out there now days, but in the past I used to take the old Sears, Montgomery Ward or JC Penny catalog and turn it into a door stop. You fold half of each page down from the top at an angle. Fold then glue or staple the front cover to the back, with a piece of knotted rope thru the middle and paint. There ya go a door stop. There of tons of other crafty things to make from old catalogs and magazines.



- Old computer equipment and many other electronics can be recycled now days. Some manufacturers actually offer rebate and discount programs if you trade in your old computer and purchase a new one of theirs. Try to find an organization that takes them if still workable. They “clean” them up and give to low income children. No these kids don't end up with the latest, greatest or fastest but they do get to hit the internet, write and print reports and make graphs. So yes that old word processing and spreadsheet software is reusable too. Community centers in low income neighborhoods or churches that do work in 3rd world countries often take these usable older computers as well. Many even offer a tax credit for the donation. I will grant you the money savings, if there, is minimal but since you are replacing the thing anyway , why not help someone else who is not as well off as you are.



- As flowers start to wilt, take a used dryer sheet and wrap the flower heads in it. Then tie a scrap of fabric around it with a ribbon. These make great scented sachet for drawers, closets and suitcases.



- Turn old ceiling fan blades and pine cones into decorative fireplace fans, wall and yard art, etc.



- Turn the tops of old TV trays into fancy plant coasters or boot trays for those wet and muddy shoes and boots by the door, a cork board or top for an old bathroom vanity.



- Old flower pots (glass, plaster, plastic or ceramic) can be broken up and used in the bottom of new flower pots or as mosaic pieces for table tops and plaster walls, etc.
- Use microwaveable containers and plates instead of plastic wrap for keeping splatters and such from going all over the inside of your microwave. Plastic wrap is expensive and the cost is only going to climb since it is a by-product of oil and in my case adds to the trash expense since most plastic wraps are not recyclable.
- Change outdoor lighting to motion and or dusk to dawn lighting so they are only On when needed and you don't have to remember to turn them on and off. Many of these are solar powered which even in Alaska get enough sun to power the lights.



- Have a water well? Instead of an electric pump, get one of the new fangled kind that mix yesterday's technology with today's - a "wind turbine" electric pump. The wind charges a battery that powers your water pump.
- To save money, good quality aluminum foil can be rinsed and re-used before it becomes a health hazard or too brittle and must be recycled. These are great for "sparkle" in decoupage crafts.
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- When it is time to thin closets or storage areas or you are replacing some piece of furniture in your home have a garage sale. Or if that is too much work for you use places like Goodwill, Salvation Army, DAV, Freecycle, CriagsList, Vincent De Paul Society and other similar organizations or internet sites. Even if some repair needs to be done, many of these places will take the item anyway; some even pick them up from your home. My neighbors and I plan a block garage sale once every two years. We all help to set up and man the sales tables and then split the profits. Or if the item is still in good condition look for consignment and other like type stores that give a credit to their shop or percentage of sale in exchange for the item.



- Compost instead of garbage disposal. There is even a new product for in-house composting. My friend has one, it doesn't smell and it looks like a trash compactor. Once the compost is complete - out to the garden. Compost yard waste instead of sending it to the landfill. There are many new composters that look nice and don't stink. There is even a product for composting doggie do-do. I am told it works for used cat litter too. Another friend of mine uses an old plastic container and adds all his meat and bone scraps. Then when it is full he "nukes" it in the microwave until it is ash and dumps it in his outdoor compost bin.

Gardening and Landscaping



- Consider your landscaping. If you just like good looks but don't want the work - xeriscape. Use only local or native plants. Plan your yard or garden based on what your needs are AND what is good for your location.



- I lived in the high desert of New Mexico. So I have very little grass and it is blue grama and buffalo, drought tolerant and native to this area. I use handmade rolling container “waffle” gardens for my vegetables. These above ground planters are on wheels made of scrap lumber, a neighbor’s old pond lining and straw bales that are plastered over. I even decorated these with old broken wine, beer, pickle, etc. bottles to make Mosaic southwestern designs on the outside of the planters. What in ground plants in the yard are watered with a sub-surface drip system that reduces evaporation and are set on a timer.



- In the desert use “sunken” or “protected” bed gardens to keep the wind off your plants so they use less water. Use drip irrigation instead of surface spraying that allows for more water to soak into the roots of the plants rather than evaporate into the air, lowering your water use and in my case the water bill.



- Like to grow fruits and vegetables? Don't get stuck in the row rut. Do intensive or companion gardening. Fewer pests, less fertilizer, less weeding, less water. Example: Sunflower, corn, squash or zucchini with pole beans. Carrots with tomatoes. Plant in small groups or waffles with a path in between. Spread like kinds of plants, like corn to avoid cross-pollination.
- My neighbor has his own tool that chops/grinds/mulches his yard trimmings. He also uses it for meat, poultry and fish bones since he buys in bulk or a half a steer at a time and then adds to his compost.
- Desert Water Features. Old water bottles were cut up into halves and, along with crumpled tin cans and added to the inside of a plaster mold of boulders. The base was a 42 inch old kiddie pool with a 30 gallon fish tank pump and some clear fish tank hose. The plastic bottles and cans filled the inside of the mold and the water trickles down them. They can't be seen, as it just looks like a pile of boulders with a small crack down the front, but you still get the soothing sound of trickling water. This is my water feature. You gotta remember I live in the desert and didn't want to have to worry about a lot of evaporation and wasted water. So this gives me the

soothing sound of water but very little evaporation. I only fill the well once a summer. The local roadrunner has discovered this water feature and with his long beak can get inside the crack and take a drink. It drives the squirrels and chipmunks nuts!

- Old baskets, lunchboxes, bowls, cans, boots, purses and the like can be lined with plastic grocery bags or used Ziploc bags, rubber mats, etc. and turned into planters or flower pots.

Neat Crafts and Uses for Common Trash Items

I was lucky enough one summer to volunteer for a community summer program for middle school children. The kids spent the last few months of school collecting all sorts of things that were going to be or were thrown out in the trash.

Then we all figured out what we could do with all this stuff. Through various crafts we made new items out of the trash and sold them at the end of the summer as a fund raiser for the next year's summer project.

Below are some of the items we collected, re-made and sold.

Bin style toy racks: If you have one of these left over from a child or grandchild that is not quite good enough to be donated and reused as it was originally intended; you can use it for the following:

- Organize your crafts and hobbies in the bins
- Organize tools and other home improvement items. You can reuse Ziploc bags to hold nuts, bolts, washers, screws and then place in bin. Note: To clean the Ziploc bag so it won't smell, soak in ¼ cup bleach to 1 quart water for about an hour and turn inside out to dry before using.
- Turn it into a recycle center. Reuse plastic shopping bags to line each bin. Fill with paper, plastic, metal and glass. Each bin/plastic bag is ready for recycle pickup and is small enough to be easy to handle from children and adults alike.
- Turn it into a canned goods center. Organize your soups, vegetables, etc. in the bins.
- Organize your sewing or knitting yarn in the bins.
- Turn it into a stackable container garden. Drill holes in bottom of bins. About 1-2 inches apart. Line bottom with used thin (one sheet) layer of newspaper or scrap fabric and used dryer sheets (to keep the soil from escaping), add soil and plants. Great for strawberry's, herbs, mint and any non-deep rooted plant.
- Put it in your closet and turn it into a shoe, handbag and accessory rack. Belts, scarves, hankies and the like.
- Turn it into a magazine rack for those you wish to keep. Organize by magazine name or type.
- Use it to store office supplies for your home office. Paper, notepads, hole punch, stapler, paperclips, envelopes and the like.

Note: Use old wrapping paper, used aluminum foil or paint to decorate the bins. If painting the paint will last longer without flaking if you rough the surface up a bit with sandpaper before painting.

Panty Hose: They always seem to run way too soon. Don't just throw them out. These have many uses.

- Cut up and use as stuffing for pillows, toys and the like.

- These make great filters that can fit over almost any surface. They work great to skim the fat off the top of sauces or to wash and drain fruits and vegetables or capture lint from the dryer vent.
- Stretch over an old embroidery hoop and use as a grease guard over a pan when frying. Note: These will melt if they come in contact with the heated pan surface, so I make sure the hoop matches the inner rim of the pan. That way the hose do not actually touch the pan, only the hoop does.
- Use to hold socks, good panty hose, delicate undergarments and other small items to keep them together and protect them when washing.
- Use as a patch for screens. A little super glue works great to hold the patch in place.
- Use as the holder of your spices that you do not want to stay loose in soups, stews and sauces. You can tie it off with a little cooking string.
- Make a sachet of herbs and or dried flowers to keep drawers sweat smelling.
- You can weave them together to make the bag portion of a tote bag and then braid some for the handle. Sew together with heavy duty thread or leather binding. Voila a - super strong tote bag. Note: You can dye to any color you like, embroider on it or paint on it with fabric paint or line it with patchwork fabric scraps, to spice it up.

Ziploc bags: Yes these can be reused for several things, even food.

- Clean the bag by turning inside out and soaking in 1/4 cup bleach to 1 quart water for about an hour. After drying, these can then be reused for additional food storage, even meat, as long as the seal (the zip part) still works like new.
- Put paperclips, buttons, thread, zippers, nuts, bolts, screws, pens, pencils, snaps, small game pieces and the like in them to keep things organized.
- Use to protect the items in your luggage when traveling by putting your deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, medicine bottles and the like in them. If camping, use to hold the soap and other small items.
- If the bag has split seams or small holes, use it to line the bottom of a plant pot/container by adding more holes (so the planter can drain excess water) then add your soil and plant.

Spice Tins: Empty of course.

- Paint them after washing and add letters, numbers or other images on them for building blocks.
- Believe it or not these make great small water features. Remove the plastic top and have the water run over them. The sound is unique and quite soothing. Depending on the water feature kit you get (they usually contain the pump, tubing and electric cord) and the collection bin/tub you use these become one of a kind in house water features. Mix and match with other water cascade items to make different sounds.
- Make a wind chime by painting and stringing with fishing line.
- Make a rain chain. I painted mine before adding an old dog chain and it works great as well as being unique.
- Make decorative lights. For a community farmers market we punched some holes in the tins then strung them with an old strand of Christmas lights and hung them around our booth. The glowing spices and herbs made a great accent to go with our produce stand. Note: We used the 'pour' side of the lid to insert the bulb.
- Turn them into garden plant labels. Either use the correct empty herb or spice tin for your spices and herbs or paint and then label. Use a tin cutter to cut a slit in the bottom of the tin and insert a Popsicle stick or old unmatched flatware, and then put in the ground by the plant.

- Make ornaments for your tree out of them. These can be painted or decorated or used as is.

Cardboard Boxes: I shop several times a year at a warehouse store and end up with quite a few of these.

- Make storage or recycle open top bins. Cover the box with old comics, aluminum foil, and decoupage with fabric or wrapping paper scraps. Line the inside with old plastic bags (shopping, garbage or whatever). Label the outside if you want. Now store whatever or start recycling.
- Use smaller boxes like shoe boxes for bio-degradable plant starter pots. Punch holes in the bottom for drainage. Line bottom with a sheet of newspaper. Add soil and seeds. About the time most seedlings are ready for planting the 'pot' is ready to disintegrate, so plant away!!! If you are starting your seedlings early on a cold to cool enclosed porch. Use an old Ziploc bag to cover the box and help keep them warm and frost free.
- For large appliance and furniture boxes see if there are any kids in the neighborhood who would like to 'play' with them. Show them how to turn a box into a fort, house, vehicle or cave by helping them decorate it with paint or magic marker. Use pieces of smaller boxes for wheels, etc. Then sit back, watch and have a few laughs!!! Be sure to take pictures. When it is all torn up, just recycle. At least you got a double use out of it first.
- These large boxes can be turned into hanging clothing storage boxes by notching the sides and adding a wooden dowel.
- Since these kinds of boxes are usually heavy duty cardboard, cut to the proper height, decorate the outside if you want and then use to contain shovels, rakes, hoes and other like items.
- Decorate shoe boxes and use to organize photos or trading cards. They make great sewing pattern holders too.

Spools of thread: These can be used to make a number of old fashioned toys.

- For toys they can be painted, covered with scrap cloth and strung together to make people, strung as beads for big clunky jewelry. Some types can be etched or carved into stamps that can be used with finger paint.
- Decorate them so they can be ornaments or garland for the tree.
- Many also make great bobbers for stick fishing poles.
- Create a floating line by stringing together and putting across a pool or stream to make a boundary for a game or just – “You can't go past this boundary” marker.

Old Clothing: We all have miss-matched or mate-less socks or socks with holes in them. Thin and holey t-shirts, stretched out elastic shorts, pants and stuff. Don't throw them out.

- Socks make great hand puppets and stuffed animals. Additional socks, old t-shirts, underwear and fabric scraps also make great stuffing.
- T-shirts and any cotton underwear make great cleaning rags or stuffing for toys, pillows and the like, even the pillow or pillow cover itself.
- Turn old jeans and shorts into tote bags or purses. I had a friend who put hangers inside some old shorts after sewing the leg bottoms together and turned it into a planter. She did some similar things with other old shirts, shorts and skirts and made them into her 'clothing' planter/garden boarder fence in her backyard. Another friend turned these into hanging wrapping paper, spice and canned goods holders.

- Get some old wood, add clothes, spray with any starch or waterproofing product, stuff add a hat, gloves and have a scarecrow, use as a backyard novelty/decoration if you don't have a garden.
- One friend of mine collects old clothing and cuts them into quilting squares and such and uses them to make the most marvelous quilts and cloth mosaic wall hangings.

Plastic bottles and jugs: Although we tend to try and avoid these, we still end up with way too many.

- Fill milk and juice jugs with water, sand or quickcrete, loop a string/rope thru the handle and tie to a tarp, pool or vehicle cover or anything else that needs to be weighed down.
- Fill gallon jugs with quickcrete to use as an anchor for canoes or small row boat.
- Cut the top off a jug to make the top wider, but don't cut the handle off. Makes a great scooper for dog food, dirt and sand or for snow when building snow forts.
- Punch a few holes in the bottom of a can or plastic bottle, decorate. Lay a strip of newspaper to bottom, add soil and a plant. You can even bolt a few different sizes together to have several plants in a planter grouping.
- Use the larger soda, milk and juice jugs by cutting the top off to the width of the jug then use as a miniature or single plant greenhouse for those early plantings.

Soup, vegetable and coffee cans: These can be made into a few interesting items.

- Take a metal or strong wooden pole about 4 feet long. Fill cans with quickcrete and insert to each end of pole. Let harden and you have a homemade weight bar. Smaller cans can be filled with quickcrete and used as hand weights.
- Use smaller cans to collect your grease. Put a hole in the bottom, put a string thru the hole and knot it. Seal with duct tape or wax. Add your grease drippings. Add some wild bird feed every once in awhile. When full, freeze. In the winter take out. Use a can opener or tin cutter to remove bottom and push the frozen grease out. Hang from a tree and watch the birds, squirrels and chipmunks. Note: If in bear country be sure place it far enough away from your back door.
- Kids can turn just about any size can into a pencil holder.
- Make an old time phone with two cans and some string for the kids.
- Make a wind chime out of several sizes of cans and a coat-hanger.
- Coffee cans with lids are great for storing nails, nuts, bolts and all kinds of things.
- Out of squat sized cans (pineapple) make a hot plate burner. Add rolled cardboard same height as can, put a wick in the middle and add melted wax. When the wax is set, light the wick, place under a foil pan and use to keep the food warm.
- Multiple sized cans can be turned into a Hobo Oven or Stove. Just do a search on the internet for instructions.

Outdoor planters and pots: Just about anything that can drain or have holes put in it to drain and hold dirt can be a planter or a plant pot.

- Old boots, shoes, cans, plastic containers: A child's doll buggy or shopping cart; An old Tonka big boy dump truck; an old lunch box or even an old cloth lunch bag; Used pocketbooks, purses and tote bags; Old jewelry boxes; Old tires and hubcaps. Take a footstool that is too weak to hold weight, turn it upside down, weave old plastic bags together to form the sides; A drawer from a dresser or an old dresser or bookcase on its back. One

friend bolted together a bunch of old hardcopy, hardback books to make a planter. You name it and it can probably be turned into a unique plant pot or planter for indoors or out. Use your imagination and save on trash.

The summer was a blast and we made lots of money. I bet you all have even more ideas to help us all shave a few dollars from our everyday expenses. Above all, these ideas will either save you money or make you money. So who cares about a little name calling, you get the last laugh on the way to the bank!

Some Special Tips for Home Buyers or Remodelers

If you are lucky enough to have the funds to do some remodeling or as was my case, I had to replace a kitchen counter and floor in order to sell my house, then these next tips are something you should consider.

- Do not go for the Granite or Marble counter tops. These are expensive and if you are a “greenie” they are not all that green. Their quarries are just as polluting as a strip coal mine and they too are finite earth resources. Same with most tile products not made of recycled materials. Instead you can use counter top products made of recycled paper, concrete, glass, porcelain and tile. Although the “green industry” has grabbed onto these products to facilitate their “Mega Buck, Mega Profit” mentality, they are still cheaper in the long run, last just as long if not longer and help to reduce the off-gassing of chemicals into your home. In my case I really saved by purchasing two \$60.00 concrete kits which let me re-surface my old 60’s Formica counter top. It looked like a modern concrete counter top when I was done and the cost was way less than actually replacing the countertop.
- I also had to replace the flooring in the kitchen/family room recently and I didn’t have much money to do this and I wanted a quality, bio-friendly product. For about 6 months I called and collected the scrap flooring from builders and floor stores. In my case this was bamboo. These flooring scrapes would have ended up in a recycling center or the land fill and most were free. When I was charged it was along the lines of \$5.00 a big box full. When I had enough scrapes I had the floor laid, sanded and re-stained. Different bamboo sources, shorter board lengths and varied widths, different grains and even different colors since not all the original stains were the same. One very unique, natural, renewable, durable floor that only cost me for the installation, as I did the sanding and re-staining.
- Paint in neutral colors is the cheapest way to add a fresh look. You can stripe it horizontally or vertically; make the room two tone with some walls a different shade or color; or you can enhance the size of a room by painting a lower half a different color than the upper half or ceiling.

Select a structure with the least amount of walls, doors, halls and archways. By archway I mean one that is door to double door width, not the kind that are the width of an entire room. The more walls, halls, doors and archways the harder your heating/cooling system must work, which means the more it will cost and the faster the system wears down costing you in replacement or maintenance dollars.

Look for homes that have deep seated windows as these reduce the extreme temperatures between inside and outside. Check the orientation of the house to the path of the sun to take advantage of passive solar qualities for cheaper heat and cooling bills. Be sure to consider the building material and exterior color. Brick becomes a thermal mass if it is medium to dark colored, which radiates heat. This is not being green, this is being smart.

Keep an eye out for smart, low maintenance landscaping instead of a picture perfect much work needed yard. Less work, less water, less fertilizer, less money.

Stick to room sizes that meet the necessity of your lifestyle and don't let the advertising and marketing people 'talk' you into something you will rarely if ever utilize, like super large bedrooms or baths. Remember the larger the rooms, the higher the ceilings, the more it is to heat and cool. Do you really want to spend heating/cooling money that way instead of a vacation?

Before you remodel, build or buy do a Home Usage Audit of your current home.

How much time do you spend in the master bedroom other than sleeping? How much time do you spend in the spa bath other than the daily "3 S's"? How often is that formal living and dining room used? If you find you have a lot of space in these rooms but rarely use them beyond their specialty needs, then you are wasting heating and cooling dollars – big time! Not to mention the time wasted to clean and maintain these rooms.

Here are some detail tips on doing a Home Usage Study (and be honest).

- List all the rooms in your home
- Measure each room for square and cubic feet
- List how you use each of these rooms and how many hours you spend in each. For bedrooms do NOT include sleeping. For Bathrooms do NOT include the daily personal hygiene routines. For Kitchens do NOT include the prep time of the three squares a day.
- List what you like and dislike for each room
- List how much time is spent maintaining/cleaning the room.

You may find like I did that I used my dining room 3-4 times a year and it was because it held my large table for my guests. This led to getting a home with a large kitchen area that could hold my large table. My living room was only used during this time too, just because I needed the space as everyone could not fit in the family room. So my new home does not have a living room. The kitchen/family room is plenty large enough for these few times a year functions. My old master bedroom was huge, yet I rarely did anything but sleep and get dressed or when sick watch TV in it. I rarely used the separate shower or the space in the master bath. Didn't need a walk in closet once I got rid of items I hadn't worn in years. Reduce a room size and save on heating and cooling.

If you want to see the costs involved per room; take a year's worth of heating and cooling bills and divide by the total cubic feet (not square feet) of your home. That gives you a good ballpark to the cost of heating and cooling per cubic foot. Then take the cubic feet of each room and multiply by the estimated cost per cubic foot and you will see just what each room is costing you. So if you don't use that room very often, the cost of heating and cooling a seldom or unused room sticks out like a sore thumb.

Learning from History

Take a close look at old buildings and homes from the 1700 and 1800's. Many had deep seated windows to avoid the worst of the winds affects and to help shade the window from the sun. Most had a louver window above interior doors and archways to facilitate air circulation. (The more air circulation the easier and cheaper to heat and cool.)

Older homes had smaller rooms. If you can tour one take a closer look and you will see that south facing rooms had more windows and a fireplace, while the north facing rooms had windows but no fireplace. This was true for both bedrooms and parlors. The smaller rooms between bedrooms were often the closets of the day before indoor plumbing.

Many also had summer and winter kitchens. The summer kitchen could be in the basement or outside on a covered porch on the north side, while the winter kitchen was inside on the south side of the house, close to the main living areas.

That's because in the olden days people "moved" within the house for summer and winter to take advantage of the passive heating and cooling of the sun. The south side of a home is generally warmer and the north side cooler and since most fireplaces and kitchen stoves were the heat sources of the home, having the fireplace on the south and kitchen on the north made lots of sense.

Just about every home had a root cellar or cold room for storing the harvest. Most had some kind of smokehouse built on top and these were on the north side of a home.

In northern areas most homes had an enclosed foyer or entryway to assist in keeping the temperature inside at a more even level. In rural areas the back entryway became a laundry/mud room to isolate dirt and reduce the need to sweep, mop and clean the house. This wasn't just to save time; this was driven by the need to use their supplies and time wisely and to save money while being comfortable.

With the advent of indoor plumbing and coal and gas heating, the first big shift in these floor plans was to enlarge the rooms into fewer larger rooms and stop moving around the house with the seasons.

Rural homes were a little slower at making this shift however they did start to keep the kitchen on the north side of the main floor with the general family living area open to it and the concept of the "open floor plan" was born.

When you think about it, these building arrangements or floor plans made a lot of sense for comfort as well as money savers.

Over time, what with the industrial revolution, the advent of big cities and the birth of suburbs we humans lost the common sense knowledge that cold air sinks, hot air rises and the north is cooler than the south. We also forgot that air circulation or lack of it can make a room too warm or cool and result in "layers" of warmth.

We have forgotten what it takes to grow and preserve our own food or weave our own cloth and sew our own clothes. We don't remember that bartering and trading were the norm and standard practice, not credit cards, department stores and supermarkets. We never have had to haul water from a stream or dig our own well.

Growing up in the "have it all" world of today, our youth have forgotten the hard times of the Great Depression or what it took to just survive back in the 1700's. Yet some of us have stopped to think about all of this. We are the

homesteaders, the country folk, the Preppers or survivalists and we are learning from the past and putting that knowledge to good use. Yes, history does teach and us smart people are learning and doing.

“When the going gets tough, the tough get creative”

Links to other Great Depression and Frugal Money Saving Ideas

What the Great Depression Can Teach Us About Food and Frugality

http://cheaphealthygood.blogspot.com/2009/02/what-great-depression-can-teach-us_04.html

Frugal Food Tips From the Great Depression <http://www.paylessforfood.com/cooking-for-less/frugal-food-tips-from-the-great-depression/>

Hard Times Bring Back Old, Frugal Ways <http://news.opb.org/article/4467-hard-times-bring-back-old-frugal-ways/>

Learning Frugality From Our Grandparents <http://www.usnews.com/money/blogs/alpha-consumer/2009/02/11/learning-frugal-from-our-grandparents>

The Great Depression A reminiscence <http://www.backwoodshome.com/articles2/yeager115.html>

What the Great Depression Can Teach you About Managing Money Today <http://www.articlesbase.com/finance-articles/what-the-great-depression-can-teach-you-about-managing-money-today-288443.html>

Frugal Tips: How To Make 10 Ordinary Things Last Longer

<http://www.thedigeratilife.com/blog/index.php/2008/04/07/frugal-tips-how-to-make-10-ordinary-things-last-longer/>

Common sense: The new frugality <http://www.frugalvillage.com/2009/04/04/common-sense-the-new-frugality/>

Living in a Frugal Way http://save.lovetoknow.com/Living_in_a_Frugal_Way

Frugal Living, Saving Money, Promoting Thrift and Happy Homes <http://www.allthingsfrugal.com/> (Great site, lots of frugal subjects, ways and means!)

For a whole bunch of great ideas on Frugality see Almost Frugal: <http://almostfrugal.com/category/series/>

Back to the Frugal Basics: Building a Budget <http://almostfrugal.com/2009/04/01/building-a-budget/>

Back to the Frugal Basics: Creating a Plan <http://almostfrugal.com/2009/03/25/frugal-basics-creating-plan/>

Concepts in Frugality: Hoarding <http://almostfrugal.com/2009/02/23/concepts-in-frugality-hoarding/>

Concepts in Frugality: Rethink Your Thinking <http://almostfrugal.com/2009/01/28/concepts-in-frugality-rethink-your-thinking/>

Concepts in Frugality: Know What You Want <http://almostfrugal.com/2009/01/12/concepts-in-frugality-know-what-you-want/>

Holidays by Hand: Ribbons and Thread <http://almostfrugal.com/2008/11/18/holidays-by-hand-ribbons-and-thread/>

How to Look Fabulous, Frugally: Part Three <http://almostfrugal.com/2008/11/10/how-to-look-fabulous-frugally-part-three/>

TNT

A 50 Something, homesteading Prepper