

THE
VEGAN SELF-SUFFICIENCY NETWORK

**Winter
NEWSLETTER**



Welcome! This issue is quite a 'winter stew' - a wide variety of ingredients having been provided ("Thankyou" to all contributors) - we hope it goes down well and will help you through the next few cold months till spring!
Wishing you all a peaceful winter - keep warm!

Love from *Alan + Aaine*



energy saving

We all use a lot of energy in everyday life, and pay dearly for it - in money, consumption of finite resources, and pollution and gradual destruction of the Earth. So, it is more than desirable for the human race to reduce energy consumption to a minimum, something the householder/smallholder can contribute towards, to financial advantage in the long run (lower bills!).

This article gives some ways of saving energy in the home. The list doesn't pretend to be exhaustive, and I haven't gone into too much detail to save space (and writers' cramp!).

HEATING AND INSULATION:

The biggest chunk of energy usage in the household goes into space heating, with hot water as the second biggest energy user. About three-quarters of the energy used for heating an uninsulated house is lost through walls, windows, roof, etc. Insulating the house well can roughly halve this wastage.

The walls and roof are the major offenders, accounting for just over half of the losses - the rest being through the floor and windows by draughts.

A recommended order of priorities for insulation is draughtproofing (cheap and easy to do), loft, then the walls, then the floor and windows. Insulating the hot water tank should also take a high priority.

Most insulating can be DIYed. Draughtproofing is particularly easy and draught-proofing strip can be bought from many hardware shops... but you have to get a contractor for cavity wall filling.

It's probably best if I suggest that you get hold of a good book on home insulation if you decide to insulate, since it would need a book to explain all the various DIY methods. I've listed some good looking books at the end - "Keeping Warm for Half the Cost" is particularly recommended.

Energy can also be saved by lowering room temperature to as low as is comfortable and wearing extra clothing in cold periods.

If you have central heating controlled by a clock or programmer, set the controls so that the heat is off when you are out or in bed, e.g. let it come on half an hour before you get up or come home from work (?) and switch off about half an hour before you go out or turn in. If you just have a thermostat, turn it down at night or turn the heating off. Don't put a thermostat on an outside wall, in a draught, in direct sunlight or in any position where its temperature

reading is likely to be altered.

Regular bleeding of radiators will ensure that they run efficiently. Efficiency can also be increased by putting silver paper or foil against the wall behind - this reflects radiated heat back into the room. A shelf set a few inches above a radiator will direct warmed air into the room instead of wastefully up to the ceiling or a cold window - it also prevents the brown stains that sometimes appear on the wall above radiators.

Try only heating a few rooms instead of the whole house. Some rooms, like bedrooms and the kitchen, don't need as much heating as the living room, if any at all: some heat will inevitably drift to them from the heated rooms. Using an electric blanket in bed may be cheaper than heating the whole bedroom.

There are thermostatic radiator valves available which allow the setting of individual radiators to different temperatures - they're pricey though!

A conservatory or sun lounge on a south facing wall will contribute some heat to the house by trapping energy from the sun.

One unusual heat saving idea I have come across is living 'upside down' - having the kitchen and living rooms upstairs and the bedrooms downstairs. Warm air will form a layer upstairs above colder air downstairs, and the air will be relatively still, giving some comfort. There are less external openings and smaller windows upstairs, and the floors are warmer than solid floors downstairs - this helps to make the upstairs rooms more snug. There is also less chance of condensation.

CONDENSATION:

This is a common and often serious problem with housing, arising from excess moisture condensing on cold surfaces. Sources of moisture are rising damp from the ground (usually stopped by a dampcourse), rain - particularly driving rain - penetrating the walls, and household activities.

Much energy can be used getting rid of moisture by heating, so it's worth reducing it by other means. Rooms should have adequate ventilation, so don't overkill on the draught stopping. It is worth leaving the bottom rail of each window unsealed or, if sealed, open the fanlight a crack.

Kitchens and bathrooms are particularly prone to moisture - opening a window for an hour or so after a bath or for a while after a lot of cooking will change the air, getting rid of water vapour.

Try to reduce evaporation indoors, e.g. by fitting tighter lids on saucepans, not drying clothes indoors, drain drying crockery, not using humidifiers, reducing houseplants, etc. Avoid unflued gas/paraffin heaters as they produce moisture as a combustion product. Also check that the boiler is working efficiently and has not sooted up.

Insulation will help reduce moisture, but condensation within or behind it must be avoided. This can be done either by putting a vapour barrier - usually a continuous sheet of aluminium foil or polythene - on the warm side, or by ventilating the cold side. Take care to well ventilate an insulated loft as it is more prone to condensation.

Sometimes condensation can arise from 'cold bridging', e.g. from part of a concrete floor or a steel joist being exposed outside: in such cases, consult a surveyor for advice.

HOT WATER:

If you have a hot water tank, lag it well - and lag the hot water pipes too to save wasteful heat loss between tank and tap.

Water heating can be supplemented by a solar panel mounted on the roof or a wall. There are many books available on solar water heating, even some telling how to make your own system.

Heat is wasted by over-use of hot water, so it is worth trying to reduce hot water consumption. If the hot water tank is too big for requirements, energy is wasted in heating excess water. A smaller cylinder would help remedy this, or, alternatively, use an instantaneous heater which only heats water as needed at the tap.

A shower uses about a third as much water as a bath (and I find it is quicker too) and a simple shower can be made by connecting a long shower hose to the bath taps. Shared baths or showers also save water, for those into such things!

Make sure that hot taps don't leak, thus wasting water. Fitting spray nozzles on taps means less water is needed when rinsing hands, etc.

If dishes are soaked well before washing up, much less water is needed to clean them.

Some extra heat can be got out of washing up water, etc., by leaving it to cool before pulling the plug: one snag though - increased moisture!

COOKING:

Energy can be saved in the kitchen - why not pension off the kettle and heat exactly the water required in a small covered saucepan instead of wastefully boiling too much. Steaming vegetables instead of boiling uses less energy and destroys less nutrients. Pressure cooking reduces cooking time considerably, also saving energy. Dried vegetables require less cooking if soaked first.

Don't use the oven for small jobs - cook in batches. When using the oven, open the door as little as possible and turn the heat off a few minutes before the end - it will stay hot long enough to finish the cooking.

Much energy can be saved by using a haybox - a well insulated box into which a hot casserole can be put to slow cook as it cools very slowly (see VSSN Newsletter No.7, page 7).

Finally, eating more food raw saves on cooking and is healthier.

LIGHTING:

Lighting uses much less energy than heating, but is still worth conserving. Don't leave unnecessary lights on. Try using less lights, of lower wattage, and with only one light per switch.

Fluorescent tubes use three to four times less power than filament bulbs, although they are not so conserving when switched on/off often. There are also new energy-saving fluorescent bulbs available now - but at a price!

APPLIANCES:

Try to reduce the use of electrical appliances and turn them off when not in use. If you use a washing machine, wait for a full load before doing a wash. If you heat water with solid fuel, it is cheaper to disconnect the washing machine's heater and fill the machine from the hot water tap. On a sunny, breezy day clothes may dry quickly enough without the spin drier - don't use a tumble drier.

There are one or two makes of hand-operated 'pressure washing machine' on the market which will wash clothes quickly and use only muscle power.

Minimise the amount of ironing and turn off the iron a few minutes before the end, making use of residual heat.

Defrost the fridge regularly to ensure more efficiency and less power consumption. Use the deep freezer (if you have one) economically by keeping it full.

Finally, think of the energy consumption of an appliance before buying it (or not!).

TRANSPORT:

If you have a car, make sure that its engine is not guzzling fuel. Make sure that the spark timing is adjusted correctly, that the ignition is advanced enough, and that the carburettor is set for efficient running. Also beware of petrol leaks. Use the manual choke as little as possible, and don't drive too fast - driving at 50mph instead of 70mph saves 20% of fuel.

For more economy use a smaller car and/or try car sharing. I have seen one van locally that is co-operatively owned.

Better still, travel by public transport which is generally more energy efficient - and invest in a bicycle, which is the most efficient form of transport and is cheap and easy to maintain.

Thus endeth the list of energy savers, so far. Has anyone else any ideas? Why not send them in!

Now, let's get saving it!

Handy literature:

"KEEPING WARM FOR HALF THE COST" - J. Colesby & P. Townsend, Prism Press, 1981.
(£2.95 in 1983) - recommended.

"HOME ENERGY SAVING" - R. Brodie & D. Simpson, E.P. Publishing Ltd., ("Invest in Living" series), 1978.

"CUTTING THE COST OF ENERGY" - M. Clayton, David & Charles, 1981 (£4.95).
"OVER FIFTY ENERGY SAVERS WHICH ARE CHEAP TO USE" - N. Dudley, Centre for Alternative Technology (50p at an eco-shop near you) - recommended.
"PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVES" (magazine) - available from P.A. Products, Tirmorgan, Pontyberem, Dyfed (see VSSN Newsletter No.19, page 7).

GRAHAM HOOPER, Oxford.

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As there is some overlap between Graham's article, above, and our own article on "Using Less" - which was scheduled as a follow-up to "Recycling", see VSSN Newsletter No.18, Summer '85 - please note that "Using Less" has instead been submitted to the Movement for Compassionate Living for possible inclusion in the second issue of "New Leaves", due for publication in January '86. Further information on MCL and review of the first issue of "New Leaves" can be found on page 5 of this Newsletter.

(Alan & Elaine)

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' V E G A N V O L U N T E E R S '

An updated 'Vegan Volunteers' Host List is enclosed with this Newsletter as we have some new additions. There are also three deletions:

PETE DAVIS and STEPH JEWELL - we feel sure that all VSSNers will join with us in congratulating Pete and Steph on their recent marriage, and also to wish them both the very best of luck with their plans for moving (hopefully) to New Zealand early in '86. Have a safe journey folks, and a successful venture (and don't forget to send back some unusual NZ seeds!).

Good luck too to TERI and SIDNEY LOCKTON who are temporarily withdrawing from the Host List whilst they move and get settled in (see their letter below). Warm wishes to them and Aaron in their new home.

'Bye for now to KATHLEEN NEWLAND as well, who sends the following message to Volunteers (and Hosts!) Tony and Jaimie Creek:

"I should like to thank Tony Creek for his invaluable help with the removal of my bramble hedge and elderberry tree. The latter especially was a big job, needing all his strength at one point I know. I am very grateful. Also to Jaimie for his help and the recipe for roast soybeans - delicious! (The grazing rye is 8" high!).

I am sorry I could not provide rivetting conversation all through the night, nor at any time for that matter - we did just touch on the enormous challenge thrown out by Tony and Vicki and the first response to it from Alan."

KATHLEEN NEWLAND, Trowbridge, Wilts.

"We are writing to say that we must ask to have our names taken off the 'Vegan Volunteers' Host List as we are about to move to our 'new' house, where we will be living in a caravan at first so will not have facilities for guests.

We have been very remiss in not writing in to report on the Volunteers we have had recently, but things have been very hectic with two gardens to tend, plus the building work and getting ready for the move. Perhaps we could take this opportunity to thank Ariadne Morais, Graham Hooper and Karen Robinson, who have spent varying amounts of time with us during the past year, for their help both in building work and in gardening.

Keep up the good work with the 'Growing Vegans' page! Aaron and I found an excellent book at the library some time ago called "The Seed" by Kazuko Nakazana, part of Wayland Publishers' "Observing Nature" series. In the back is an idea for a 'project' which we carried through and which turned out to be really wonderful - (this involved growing one or two beans by first sprouting them on moist cotton wool, then planting in a flowerpot. All stages of the development of the bean, from germination to plant, are carefully observed and recorded in the child's own words and drawings in a home-made book.) - I made the book for Aaron by covering two pieces of stiff cardboard with coloured paper to make front and back covers, then punching holes in those and some paper. We called it "Aaron's Seed Book" and he has gone back to it several times to record different stages of growth. We used two broad beans (the book uses French beans) and eventually planted one outside and put one on a windowsill. The one outside did really well - we ate some

Pods, and others are still on the plant waiting to be saved for next year's sowing. The other one had flowers but was not pollinated so never had any beans - and, of course, it got ridiculously 'leggy'. But Aaron really got a lot out of it and saw how important pollination is, in practical terms.

Some other projects we have found interesting came from a Ladybird book (which are usually awful!) called "Simple Chemistry", part of their "Junior Science" series. We dyed some cloth using onion skins, and made an abortive attempt to make paper from nettles (we're going to try again). Anyway, there are some interesting things about, and as Aaron is not going to school, we're always on the lookout for good ideas.

For those who are interested, we have grown Chase Organics' "Kelvedon Glory" sweetcorn successfully this year (and other years, but conditions were better) under what I think all would agree are unfavourable climatic conditions, so we highly recommend this variety. The only snag is that it is a hybrid, so you can't save your own seed.

Hope we'll be back on the Host List before long!

Best wishes and love from

TERI & SIDNEY LOCKTON, Suffolk.

(September '85)

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"NEW LEAVES"

The first issue of "New Leaves", the magazine of the Movement for Compassionate Living, came out in October 1985. In keeping with the policy of the MCL "to function with the minimum expenditure of money and resources compatible with effective communication", the magazine has been produced by volunteers.

The magazine offers practical and philosophical inspiration to encourage the development of a compassionate lifestyle for the good of all life. To quote from the editorial: "What is needed is a realisation that nothing less than a radical change in human motivation, behaviour and lifestyle is required".

Subjects covered in this first issue include: the reasons for famine, the life of Adela Curtis (whose book "In Praise of Littleness", written in 1919, describes her remarkably self-reliant lifestyle), the cultivation and use of garlic, a recipe section based on ingredients either actually or potentially home-grown, a children's page about hedgehogs, and instructions on making rag rugs - a good recycling idea.

(Elaine)

SUBSCRIPTION to the MOVEMENT FOR COMPASSIONATE LIVING is £3.00 per annum, or whatever people can afford. Send subscriptions or enquiries to CATHERINE and DEAN YATES, 9, MOYLE TERRACE, HOBSON, BURNOPFIELD, COUNTY DURHAM, NE16 6EQ. (Please enclose two postage stamps with enquiries).

A PERPETUAL CALENDAR featuring monthly seasonal recipes, attractive illustrations and inspiring quotations - printed on A4, best quality recycled paper with a spiral binding. Price: £2.00, including postage, from the Movement for Compassionate Living at the above address.

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"GREEN LINE" RECIPE PAMPHLET

There are increasing numbers of vegan cookery books about, but most of these use large amounts of foodstuffs imported from the Third World. I am sure that most members of the VSSN are well aware of the objections to this, therefore I am appealing for your help in compiling a pamphlet of vegan recipes that only use foods grown in this country. I need recipes for soups, spreads, main meals, pickles, everything! The pamphlet - one of a number being produced by "GREEN LINE" magazine - will also contain information about the food industry and its effects on the world.

Please send recipes to: ANDY KAYE, 52a, NEW YATT ROAD, WITNEY, OXON, OX8 6PA.

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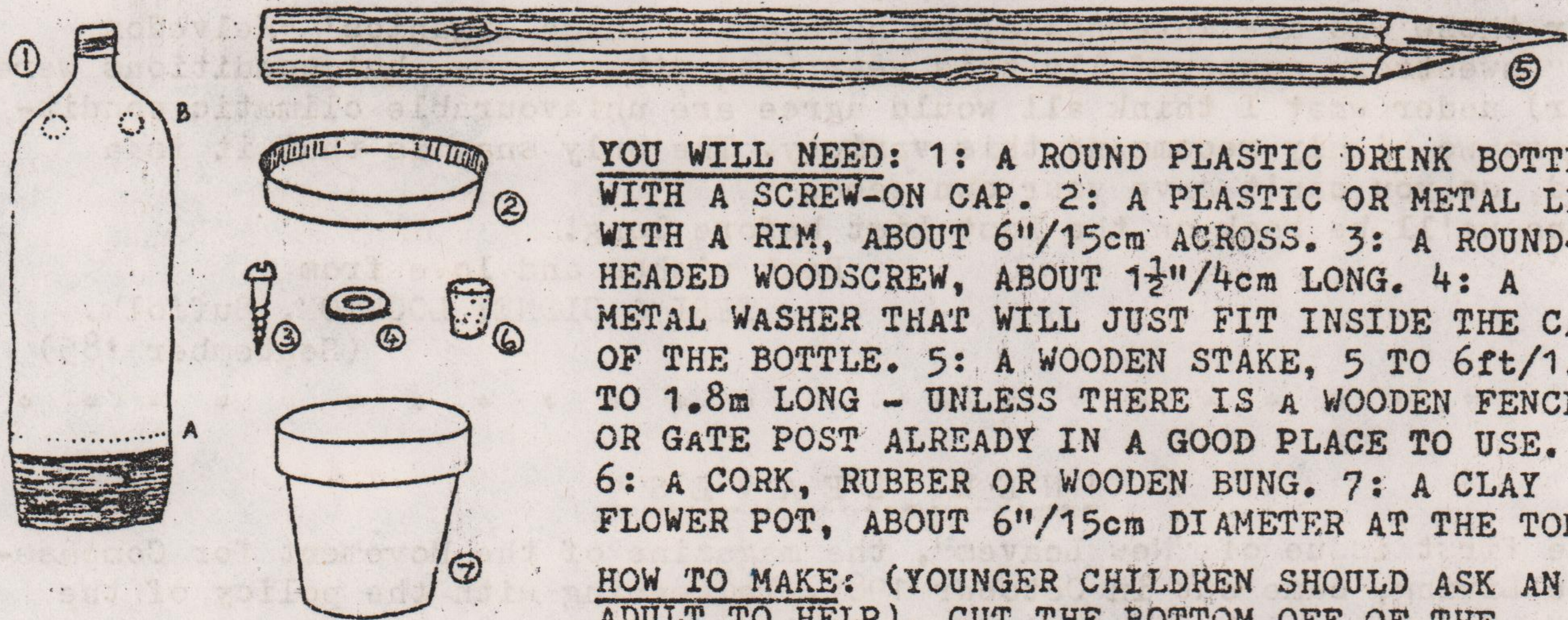
"PITY THE NATION THAT WEARS A CLOTH IT DOES NOT WEAVE, EATS A BREAD IT DOES NOT HARVEST, AND DRINKS A WINE THAT FLOWS NOT FROM ITS OWN WINE-PRESS."

Kahlil Gibran.



HOW TO MAKE A BIRD-FEEDER

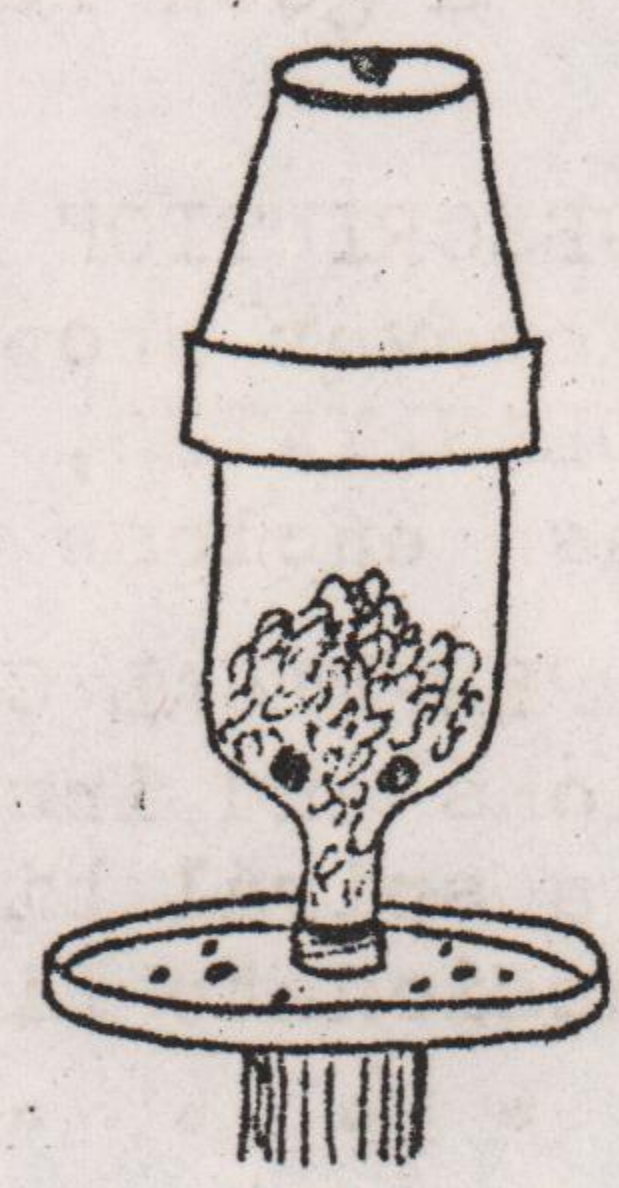
QUICKLY AND EASILY FROM RECYCLED MATERIALS



YOU WILL NEED: 1: A ROUND PLASTIC DRINK BOTTLE WITH A SCREW-ON CAP. 2: A PLASTIC OR METAL LID WITH A RIM, ABOUT 6"/15cm ACROSS. 3: A ROUND-HEADED WOODSCREW, ABOUT 1½"/4cm LONG. 4: A METAL WASHER THAT WILL JUST FIT INSIDE THE CAP OF THE BOTTLE. 5: A WOODEN STAKE, 5 TO 6ft/1.5 TO 1.8m LONG - UNLESS THERE IS A WOODEN FENCE OR GATE POST ALREADY IN A GOOD PLACE TO USE. 6: A CORK, RUBBER OR WOODEN BUNG. 7: A CLAY FLOWER POT, ABOUT 6"/15cm DIAMETER AT THE TOP.

HOW TO MAKE: (YOUNGER CHILDREN SHOULD ASK AN ADULT TO HELP). CUT THE BOTTOM OFF OF THE BOTTLE AT THE LEVEL MARKED 'A'. MAKE FOUR OR

FIVE HOLES, ¾"/1cm DIAMETER, AROUND THE TOP OF THE BOTTLE AT LEVEL 'B', USING EITHER A DRILL OR A HOT POKER. DRILL A HOLE, JUST LARGE ENOUGH FOR THE SCREW, IN THE CENTRE OF THE BOTTLE CAP, AND ANOTHER IN THE CENTRE OF THE LARGE LID. WITH THE SAME DRILL, MAKE SEVERAL DRAINAGE HOLES NEAR THE EDGE OF THE LARGE LID. UNLESS YOU ARE USING AN EXISTING POST, DRIVE THE STAKE ABOUT 1ft/30cm INTO FIRM GROUND WITH A MALLET (IF YOU USE A METAL HAMMER, POP AN EMPTY TIN CAN OVER THE END OF THE STAKE TO STOP THE WOOD SPLITTING OR 'MUSHROOMING'). WHEN THE STAKE IS SET FIRMLY, PUT THE SCREW THROUGH THE WASHER, THEN THE INSIDE OF THE BOTTLE CAP AND THE LARGE LID. SCREW ALL THESE TIGHTLY TO THE TOP OF THE STAKE OR POST. NEXT, SCREW THE CUT BOTTLE UPSIDE-DOWN INTO THE CAP AND FILL IT WITH A MIXTURE OF WILD BIRD FOODS - NUTS, SEEDS, GRAINS, CRUMBS, DRIED FRUIT AND WILD BERRIES, ETC., WILL ATTRACT DIFFERENT SPECIES OF BIRDS TO YOUR FEEDER. PUT THE CORK OR BUNG INTO THE HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE FLOWER POT, THEN USE THIS TO COVER THE FEEDER AND KEEP OUT THE RAIN.



IT MAY TAKE A FEW DAYS FOR THE BIRDS TO FIND AND GET USED TO YOUR FEEDER. WHEN THEY DO START TO VISIT IT, YOU COULD TRY TO IDENTIFY THEM AND KEEP A LIST OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES. WHAT DOES EACH SORT LIKE TO EAT BEST? WHAT TIME OF DAY DO THEY FEED? WHAT OTHER BIRDS DOES EACH GET ON WITH OR QUARREL WITH? CAN YOU TELL WHICH BIRDS ARE MALES AND WHICH ARE FEMALES?

IF YOU KEEP YOUR FEEDER TOPPED UP ALL THROUGH THE WINTER, YOU'LL BE HELPING LOTS OF BIRDS TO LIVE THROUGH THE COLD WEATHER. IF YOU ARE LUCKY THEY MAY STAY NEAR YOUR GARDEN AND NEST THERE IN THE SPRING.



HOW DID YOUR GARDEN GROW ?

- like ours I expect, with its mixture of success and failure. We had wonderful crops of runner beans, early and late, but only because we raised them in pots in the greenhouse beyond the slug-attack stage. "Eurocross" tomatoes yielded wonderfully in the greenhouse, but "Outdoor Girl" succumbed to the cold, wet season.

Our greatest triumph was with carrots. For 27 years we have tried, often half-heartedly, to grow carrots free from carrot fly; companion planting didn't seem to help. Last year we had the best crop to date, with comparatively little damage, and we attributed the success to watering regularly with home-made comfrey liquid manure with its overwhelming stench - much stronger than onion smell. However my euphoria vanished when I read in the Henry Doubleday Research Association Newsletter that there had not been 'fly' about in 1984. This year we had no fly at all in a row that we watered with comfrey and surrounded by a plastic wall 19" high. It was sown on April 4th. We had only a little in a row sown June 20th and watered with comfrey but with no plastic shield, and none at all in the carrots pulled so far from a row sown in July which has had both defences.

We had lettuces without a gap from late March to mid-October. I was surprised to find that "Salad Bowl" variety seemed the heartiest. It survived the bitter February weather under a sheet of plastic, and a fresh row germinated well in early March when three other varieties failed.

We did well with chard, spinach beet, beetroot, raspberries, logans, cucumbers, very well with land cress, and had an amazingly heavy crop of plums and worcesterberries.

Potatoes yielded - "Maris Piper" were attacked by slugs, but "Arran Pilot", "Majestic" and "Edward" escaped damage.

Parsnips and celeriac looked promising in the spring, but have been disappointingly small.

We managed to avoid getting the club-root that has plagued our cabbages for 27 years by using fresh ground and watering with comfrey - no compost - but the cabbages have been very small.

We grew soya beans for a HDRA project - a new variety, hopefully more suited to our clime. It yielded no better than those we grew three years running in the '70s. We had a mere 5oz from four 20ft rows! We had 5lb haricot from a piece of ground only twice the size.

My biggest disappointment was with sunflowers - all except one succumbed to slugs. I comforted myself with the thought that they wouldn't have ripened anyway in such a summer, but then saw a marvellous row of large, ripe heads a few miles away. I plan to grow them in pots in a greenhouse until, hopefully, they are big enough to withstand slug attack. This is a most important crop. We still await a dehauling tool. Meanwhile, they can be soaked and germinated to split the skins and perhaps grown on for sprouts.

Apples were not very good on the whole, but we had a lot of "Bramley's" so I shall be able to make apple crisps again - thin slices put to dry over a radiator.

My garden looked good in May so I invited the local Soil Association and healing group to a 'herb tea' morning on June 15th and was pleased to be able to show them healthy looking crops and compost that had matured in 38 days.

I kept records reasonably well until August, but when I should have been weighing yields carefully I was overwhelmed with work for the new Movement for Compassionate Living.

KATHLEEN JANNAWAY, Leatherhead, Surrey.

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A NEW VEGANIC GARDEN IN NORFOLK

I have been experimenting with Veganic gardening, raised beds and no-digging for about 4 years, and have now acquired a cottage with $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre and a deep bore well in country 1 mile from North Walsham station. I would welcome some support in setting up this garden with raised beds, cool greenhouse and probably tunnels. Food and accommodation offered. Nice wooded walks - 5 miles from coast - bring your cycle! DICK BARWICK, GATEHOUSE COTTAGE, HEATH FARM ROAD, WORSTEAD, NR28 9AH. Telephone: (0692) 404570 or 405463.

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: F I E L D B E A N S :
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Tic and daffa beans (= horse beans = field beans) are closely related to the more familiar broad bean. In the past they were widely grown in this country (for animal food). Being legumes, field beans are a useful crop in a rotation and they have become more popular recently. Several farmers in this area of Berkshire now grow them regularly.

Tic beans are smaller than daffas and appear to be more hardy. Plants of both can grow to 5ft and each seed may produce two or three main stems. Field beans can be planted in the autumn (October is the best month in this area) to stand the winter. They do equally well planted in the spring, but the harvest is later and the newly planted seed is often dug up and eaten by pigeons - in the autumn the birds have plenty of other food. It is well worth pregerminating the seed before planting. Soak the seed in water for 24 hours, then just keep damp and in a warm place until the roots appear. The individual beans can then be easily and rapidly dropped into individually dibbed holes, 4 to 6" apart.

Autumn sown beans generally ripen by August when the whole plant turns black. In a reasonable season the pods can be harvested straight from the plants. Do not delay too long as eventually the pods split and scatter the beans. In a wet season it may be necessary to harvest the whole plant and finish drying in an airy shed or greenhouse.

The dried pods or shelled beans keep well in paper sacks. Field beans are dead easy to grow and your own will not be treated with any pesticide or, come to that, any fumigant: the latter is used on all imported beans, even organically grown ones.

Tic, daffa and broad beans are thought to have originated in the Near East. They formed part of the diet of Iron Age Britons and were the only beans known in Europe before the discovery of America.

Field beans have 26 to 33% protein and a useful mix of amino acids, especially when combined with grains (or oils like corn oil) and nuts (or oils like sunflower). The beans are rich in calcium and several of the B vitamins.

Like all dried beans, tics and daffas should be actively boiled for 10 minutes at some stage in the cooking to destroy factors that inhibit the uptake of amino acids by the body. They should be soaked for at least 12 hours (preferably 24 hours) before cooking, and that water thrown away. It is a good idea to boil them in two lots of water, throwing the first lot away after some 10 minutes. Once cooked and soft, the beans can be eaten as a vegetable or added whole to vegetables cooked in a wok. If the beans are put through a blender or are thoroughly mashed up, they can be used as part of several dishes (such as a soup or a savoury loaf).

PEGGY ELLIS.

(The above item was extracted, with the author's permission, from an article published in "GREEN LINE" magazine. "GREEN LINE" is published 10 times a year: subscription is £5, or £4 for those who are unwaged. Further information from "GREEN LINE", 34, COWLEY ROAD, OXFORD, OX4 1HZ.)

Peggy Ellis adds that she has field beans for sale: "We cannot by law sell the beans for seed - we sell trial packs officially for eating. The packs weigh 1/2lb and are 60p each, post free. If you want larger amounts, they are £1.10 for 1lb and £2 for 2lb. If you ever come out this way and collect them, then we can let you have them unshelled at 40p for 1lb - we cannot send these through the post.

You may also be interested in growing French beans for drying. The following are the best French beans for drying - though we have no seed of these.

Climbing French beans - "Blue Lake" is a very good variety.

Dwarf French beans - "Chevriette Verte", the beans of which vary in colour from pale green to white; "Mont D'Or", with black seeds; "Dutch Brown", with brown seeds.

Seeds of runner beans can also be eaten, and these are very sweet so can be used in sweet dishes."

PEGGY ELLIS, 64, BLENHEIM ROAD, CAVERSHAM, READING, RG4 7RS.

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Further to the above mentioned beans for drying, we'd like to mention an excellent one that was passed on to us a few years ago and that we have grown ever since - "Robin's Egg", a climbing French bean. We don't know of a supplier, but (8) if you'd like some of our home-saved seed, send s.a.e. (Alan & Elaine)

leaves and leafmould

By this time of year, most of the leaves will have fallen from deciduous trees and collected in wind-blown heaps against walls, under hedges and in ditches.

Leaf mould, which is rich in moisture-retaining humus and plant foods and is especially useful in the vegan-organic garden, can be made by gathering the fallen leaves into a special heap for decomposition. A simple container, made from a circle of wire mesh supported by stakes (as illustrated), will prevent the heap from being scattered by the wind.

Virtually any deciduous tree leaves can be incorporated into the heap, but avoid adding green plant material (such as weeds) or woody branches.

As the heap is built up, a slight sprinkling of soil or ripe compost every foot or so will aid decomposition. The completed heap can be lightly firmed down, and should be moistened if it dries out during the summer.

As it matures, the heap will naturally settle to half or less of its original volume. The leaf mould should be ready for use six to eighteen months after the heap is made.

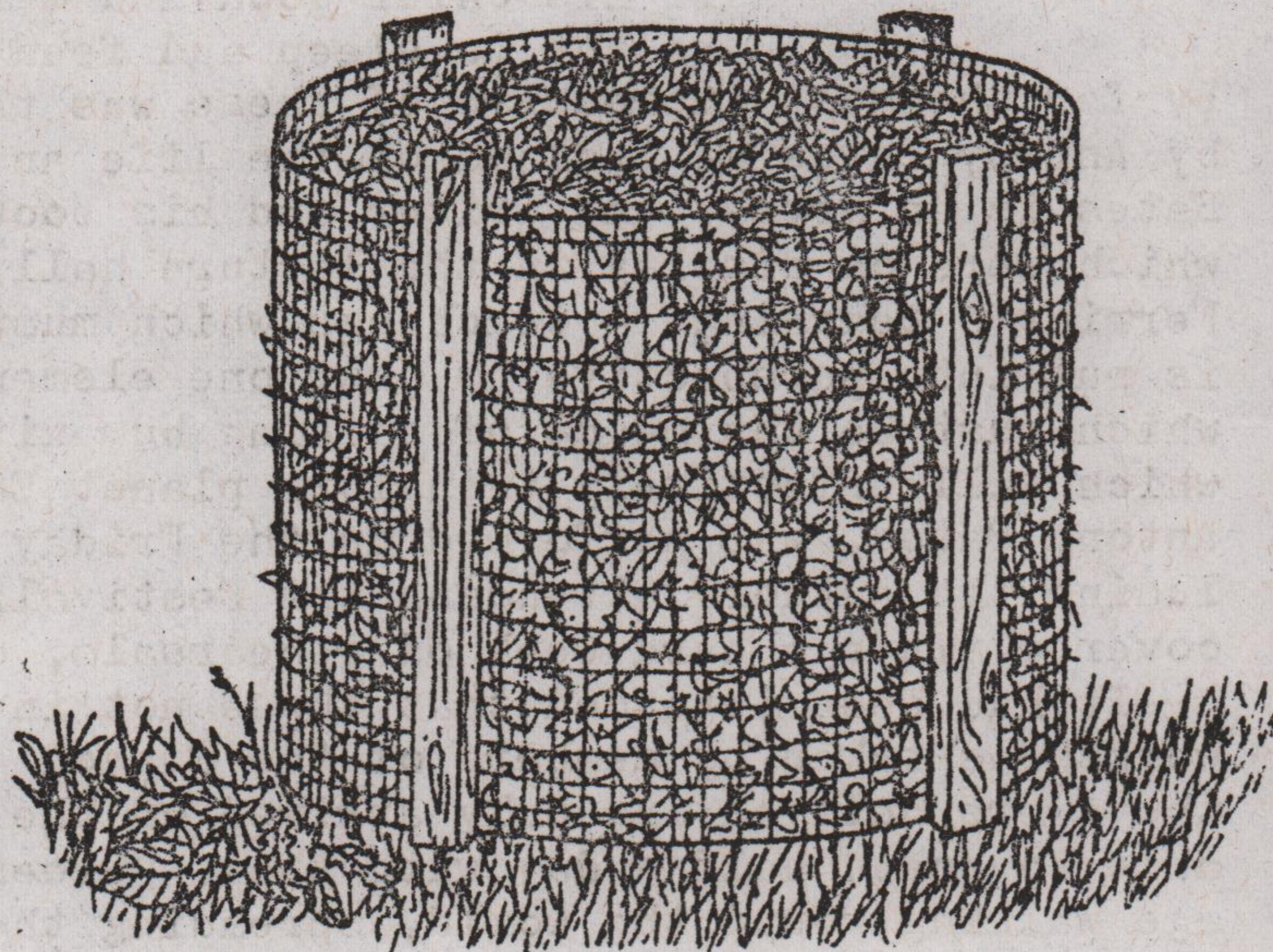
Leaf mould, either 'home-made' or that obtained when clearing woodland ditches, is a beneficial ingredient of potting composts when sieved. It is also ideal for mulching and is an excellent soil conditioner either spread on the surface or, if necessary, dug in. Birch and blackthorn leaves are said to produce a leaf mould that is especially good for revitalising exhausted soils, and a mulch of either oak leaves or oak leaf mould is claimed to repel slugs, cutworm and rookworm.

Small quantities of leaves can be incorporated in the general compost heap, but avoid adding thick layers which will flatten out and suffocate the heap - mix leaves thoroughly with other plant materials within the heap.

Dead leaves can also be used as they are for a mulch, provided you can prevent them from blowing away! A mulch of leaves is especially good around permanent crops, such as trees and soft fruit bushes. Leaves can also be piled up over strawberry beds and unharvested root crops to protect them from frost damage.

As a general rule, conifer needles have an inhibitive or toxic effect on other plants, though one notable exception is the strawberry. A mulch of pine or spruce needles on the strawberry bed can improve the growth and vigour of the plants and help produce better flavoured fruits.

Finally, a traditional use for maple leaves that you might like to try - layer them amongst apples and root vegetables in storage: the leaves have a preservative effect which will increase the storage life of your crops.



Bibliography:

"Companion Plants" - H.Philbrick & R.Gregg, Watkins (1967).

"Common-Sense Compost Making" - M.E.Bruce, Faber (1967).

"The Mother Earth News Almanac" - Bantam Books (1973).

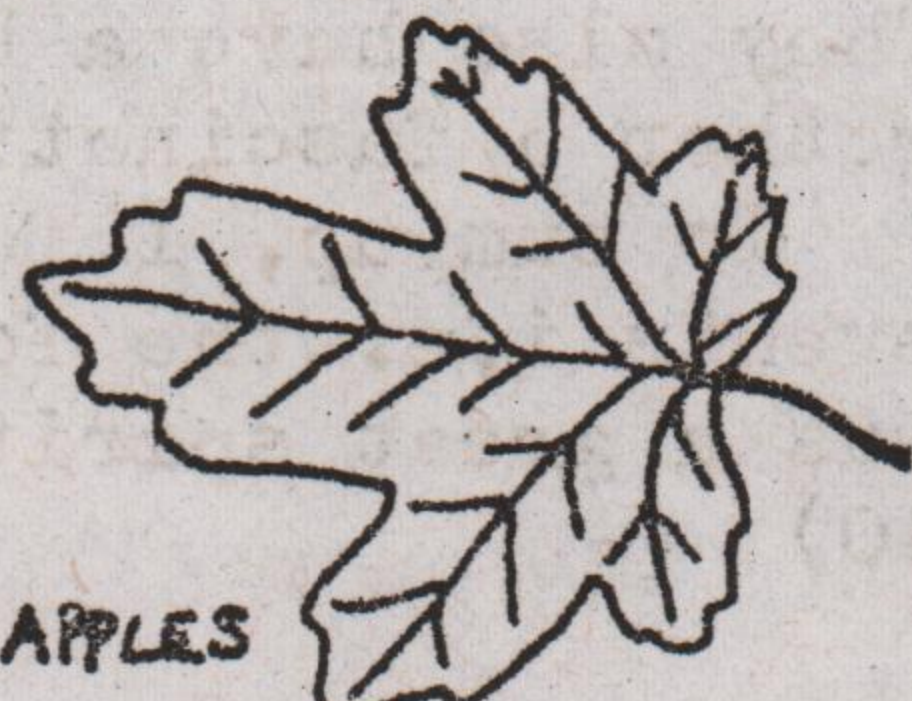
(Alan)



OAK LEAVES REPEL ROOKWORM



MAPLE LEAVES PRESERVE APPLES



THE 2nd INTERNATIONAL VEGAN FESTIVAL
a personal impression

The 2nd International Vegan Festival was held from 3rd - 10th August at the Martinus Centre, Klint, Denmark. About 50 people of all ages attended, from 14 countries, including representatives from Poland, America and Spain.

The Martinus Centre was founded by the 20th Century Danish thinker Martinus; an introduction to his cosmology was given on the evening of our arrival. The facilities at the centre included a large lecture hall; accommodation was in apartments, luxury or standard, and there was a large camp-site for those who were adventurous (or poor!).

After a showery start, Danish Summerland lived up to its name and the fine weather promoted a variety of outdoor pursuits - I myself have happy memories of exercise classes on the lawn in the early morning sunshine before breakfast.

There was a great variety of vegan food at every meal - volunteers assisted in the kitchens and mealtimes became like extended family gatherings; there was a tremendous happy atmosphere.

Early in the week we all met in the lecture hall and each one in turn introduced themselves and gave an account of their involvement with veganism and the vegan movement in their own country (it turned out that not everyone present was actually vegan). None of the other countries had anything like the Vegan Self-Sufficiency Network and, in fact, I was the only one to mention growing our own food. A couple from Sweden who had met at the 1st International Vegan Festival four years ago, now married with two delightful children there with them at Klint, actually lived in a block of flats in Sweden where all the other flat occupants were vegans - a ready made mini-community! A couple from Poland, both doctors, were endeavouring to be vegans despite all the restrictions of their country and recommended the vegan diet to patients, wherever possible. It was most interesting to hear the reports from different countries and gauge how far each one could progress towards a vegan self-sufficiency goal.

During the week we had various lectures on the more spiritual aspects of the lifestyle, for after all "What is a man,

If his chief good and market of his time

Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more!" ("Hamlet")

By far the most impressive of these was the talk with slides and meditation by Antony Bates of England on the life and work of John Todd Ferrier. Antony Bates is an artist and writer and his books and paintings (an exhibition of which were on display in the lecture hall) reveal his interpretation of Mr. Ferrier's teachings - teachings which must appeal to every vegan, as veganism is put into perspective as just one element in the totally humane lifestyle which must be the means of raising humanity to a new level of consciousness, which will effectively transform planet Earth. "Black Cross Lodge", a play by Antony Bates, was performed on the Friday evening by some of the people (including the author) attending the Festival, and latent acting talent was discovered after a hard week of rehearsals, supervised by a Danish actress.

It had been intended that those not involved in the play should attend workshops taken by members of the French group "Green World". Unfortunately, they were delayed and only arrived on the last day, so most of us were only able to spend half a day with them. "Green World" are involved in a Pilgrimage walking round the world, spreading the message of simple, peaceful living. They are a large multi-national group, although the project originated in France; the Pilgrimage started from Paris in 1984 and they aim for completion by the year 2000. They live in portable wigwams and have adopted a vegan diet as being the healthiest and the one most suitable for their nomadic lifestyle. To raise money they make and sell rural crafts i.e. basketware; they instruct rural inhabitants and also gypsies in the vegan way of life and cultivation in harmony with nature and the use of wild foods and herbs etc. A branch of "Green World" organises tree planting in the Sahara and other desert areas. They also have a University in Paris promoting their aims and ideals. Altogether a fascinating project.

To sum up, I found this a most inspiring week. We all enjoyed the set events i.e. the folk dance, the sightseeing trip, the farewell party; there was a great spirit of camaraderie uniting us, whether in sorties for wild

plants with "Green World", experimenting with vegan cookery or rehearsing for the play. For me, it was the spiritual framework of the whole Festival which made it really come alive. Beyond the 'nuts and bolts' practical aspects of vegan food and food cultivation we were made aware of a greater philosophy embracing all. Just being there, a vegan community for a week, was a tremendous experience.

JANET TWEEDALE, Ambleside, Cumbria.

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M O R E O N R E C Y C L I N G

Further to the article in VSSN Newsletter No.18/Summer '85, the following recycling ideas have been contributed - thank you to the senders.

"Looking at the article on recycling... I have made 'logs' by mixing coal dust and well torn up and soaked newspaper with the use of an ordinary tin can, open at the top and holes drilled in the bottom, the mush well pressed down and a weight put on the top. I feel this is an easier contraption than the one described, excellent though it is, and it does re-use the cans as well."

BETTY LOWTHER, Cambridge.

SAWDUST STOVES: Materials: A cylindrical steel drum, approx. 5 gallon capacity, one end open, the other closed but with a two-inch hole in the middle; a broom handle; a 'compactor', e.g. 3ft length of heavy piping; a couple of bricks; sawdust. Method: Stand the drum on the ground, open end up. One person puts the broom handle into the hole at the bottom and holds it upright, while the other pours sawdust in, stopping occasionally to compact it. You use the compactor like a pile-driver. Don't be tempted to wet the sawdust to get greater compaction - it'll never light. When the drum is nearly full, carefully remove the broom handle by 'unscrewing' it so as not to disturb the sawdust. Put the loaded drum on the bricks so that air can pass underneath. Put a match to the sawdust at the top or bottom around the hole left by the broom handle and give it ten minutes to get going.

The drum quickly becomes a furnace and will burn for hours. Roughly, a drum of 28cm diameter and 43cm height will keep a largish tureen boiling for 6 hours. What happens is that the air passes up through the funnel in the middle causing an upward blast of heat that slowly broadens as the central cone is burnt away. There is virtually no ash and after the first 20 minutes very little smoke. If the tureen overlaps the drum, you can cook in a blizzard. It is equally effective as a brazier.

There are plenty of variations. One is the incinerator, where you burn up your combustible rubbish, which is well mixed with sawdust 'primer'. If you have no sawdust, shredded paper is quite good and even crumpled paper, though it won't last as long. Anything compactable, combustible and dry should do.

(From a cutting taken from "Peace News" and sent in by JOHN GOLDING, Essex)

"A small inclusion for Recycling article: Cut plastic bottles lengthwise in half with scissors, pierce holes to make small seed trays."

DANIEL BARBER & FAMILY, Cornwall.

Strong plastic bottles (not the brittle type) make excellent packaging for sending live plant material through the post. Cut the bottle in half, pack plants in the bottom half, then slip this inside the top part as far as it will go and seal with sellotape - the plants will thus stay moist and should not suffer any damage by crushing. Recommended for sending cuttings and young plants to other VSSN members!

A novel use for old bicycle tyres spotted recently in "Time For Change", Portsmouth's exclusively vegan wholefoods shop (167, Fawcett Road, Southsea) which used to be a cycle shop - pieces of tyre, with the wired edges cut off, tacked to wooden stairs as 'nosings'.

Finally, have you ever wondered how to recycle unused diaries and calendars at the end of the year? The following list groups together all the years between 1981 and 2000 whose days and dates coincide (though obviously holidays, phases of the Moon, etc. will differ). So, now you can just change the year marked on the diary or calendar and put it away for future use!

Group 1: 1981, 1987, 1998. Group 2: 1982, 1993, 1999. Group 3: 1983, 1994. (11)

Group 4: 1985, 1991. Group 5: 1986, 1997. Group 7: 1989, 1995.

The remaining years - 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1996 and 2000, do not have recurring patterns within this period. All except 1990 are leap years, whose patterns do not repeat for several decades.

(Alan)

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5th ANNUAL VEGAN FAMILY CAMP - AUGUST 1985

For the third year running I have taken Tim along to this happy event. Mind you, the weather has been getting worse each year! But surely it can only get better after 1985 (the weather forecasters admit that 1985 is the worst on record!).

This year's camp was a record in more senses than one. Never before in the fields of Welsh Anglesey have so many vegans (and a few vegetarians trying out the vegan way of life) got together for a week's holiday. Whilst most people came for the whole week, a lot of people - mainly singles and couples - came for just a few days. The rain did interfere very much with the organisation, wet beds and torn tents, etc., but with children, in particular, swopping families and sharing during the week we managed to keep everyone who wanted to stay. We did manage to get out to see some of the beauties of Anglesey, sometimes in large groups, sometimes in smaller groups. The usual nightly meetings took place, weather permitting, thanks to the 'Camp' now owning its own large frame tent for camp get togethers under one roof (kindly extended by Diana Virgo's home-made awning). We were even treated to a puppet show this year by Frances Howard's puppeteers. We visited beaches, forests, islands, and Roman and early Celtic settlements (a little worse for wear!) as well as Beaumaris Castle. We were even visited by local vegans.

One new event was the Sports Day - for all ages - including a grand Pull for Peace (far more appropriate than a Tug of War).

We do hope that even more families will come to next year's camp (see advert below). Many thanks to the Williams family for finding a super site this year.

CHRIS PHILLIPS, Surrey.

P.S. The weather WILL BE BETTER in 1986.

P.P.S. It was nice to meet a few VSSN members and also a family who had given up self-sufficiency (not vegan though!) at this year's camp.

P.P.P.S. I still have a house - once used as a small guest house (7 bedrooms) - in a 1/4-acre of land in Mablethorpe, Lincs for sale. The price has been reduced to only £20,000 - a real bargain for anyone interested. Contact me at 4a, OAKDENE, THE GLADE, KINGSWOOD, TADWORTH, SURREY, KT20 6LL/0737-833623.

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VEGAN FAMILY CAMP 1986. DORSETSHIRE. AUGUST 1st to 10th. All vegan families (couples and singles also welcome) are invited to the 6th Annual Camp. Come for the weekend and/or the full week. Full details are available from:

JOHN STRETTLE, 3 ILFRACOMBE GARDENS, WHITLEY BAY, TYNE & WEAR, NE26 3ND.

Telephone: TYNESIDE (091) 252 7599.

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PLAMIL VEGAN/VEGETARIAN MARATHON will be held in Folkestone next Spring. If you would like to enter or assist, please contact ARTHUR LING at PLAMIL FOODS LTD., PLAMIL HOUSE, BOWLES WELL GARDENS, FOLKESTONE, KENT.

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ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSITY. There are moves afoot towards the creation of an Alternative University, avoiding hierarchical structure and conformity, and with emphasis on democratic control, personal development and a holistic approach to knowledge. Interested? Contact: NEW UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL TRUST, 11, ST. QUINTIN AVENUE, LONDON W10.

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THE CIRENCESTER VEGFAM SUPPORT GROUP was formed in May this year to promote the charity VEGFAM and also to raise funds. So far we have succeeded in raising over £200. A large amount of interest has been shown locally and many vegan, vegetarian and animal rights groups are keen to promote VEGFAM at events. However VEGFAM is sadly lacking in publicity material so we are appealing to anyone who is reading this to help us. We want to broaden the

interest in VEGFAM but in order to do this we need ideas and designs for posters and short, succinct slogans for badges and stickers.

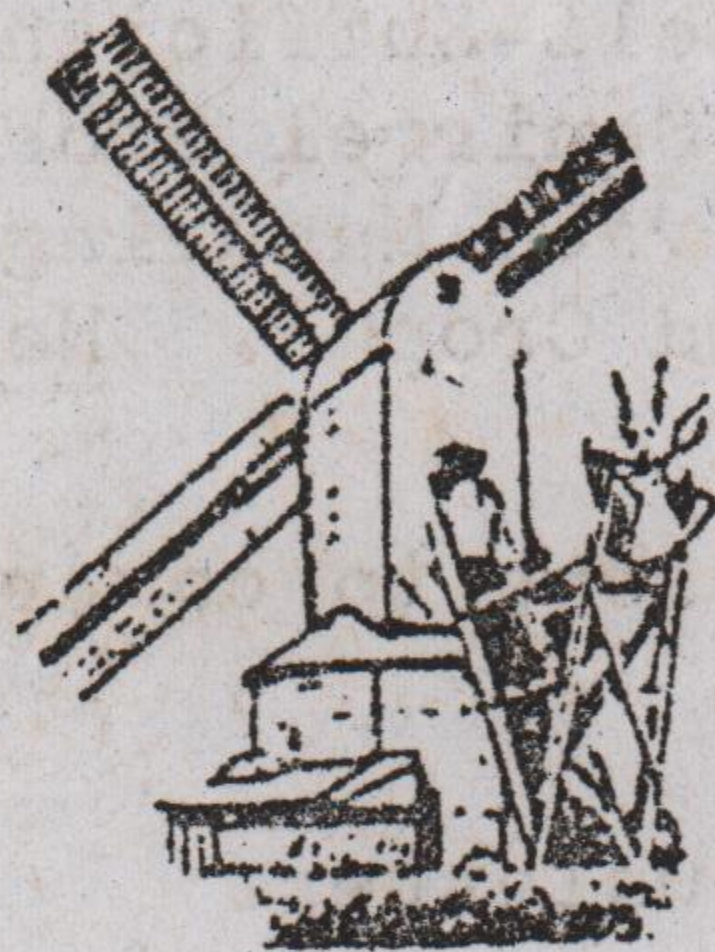
SALLY & KEITH SMITH, 14, STEPSTAIRS LANE, CIRENCESTER, GLOS., GL7 1LA.

* * * * *
HOUSE FOR SALE: Three bedroomed house in quiet rural Welsh village. Three rec. rooms, solid fuel central heating, in good condition throughout. Large garden, fruit trees, and extra plot if wanted. Next door to vegan family. £25,500, negotiable. Telephone: AMMANFORD 3144 (evenings).

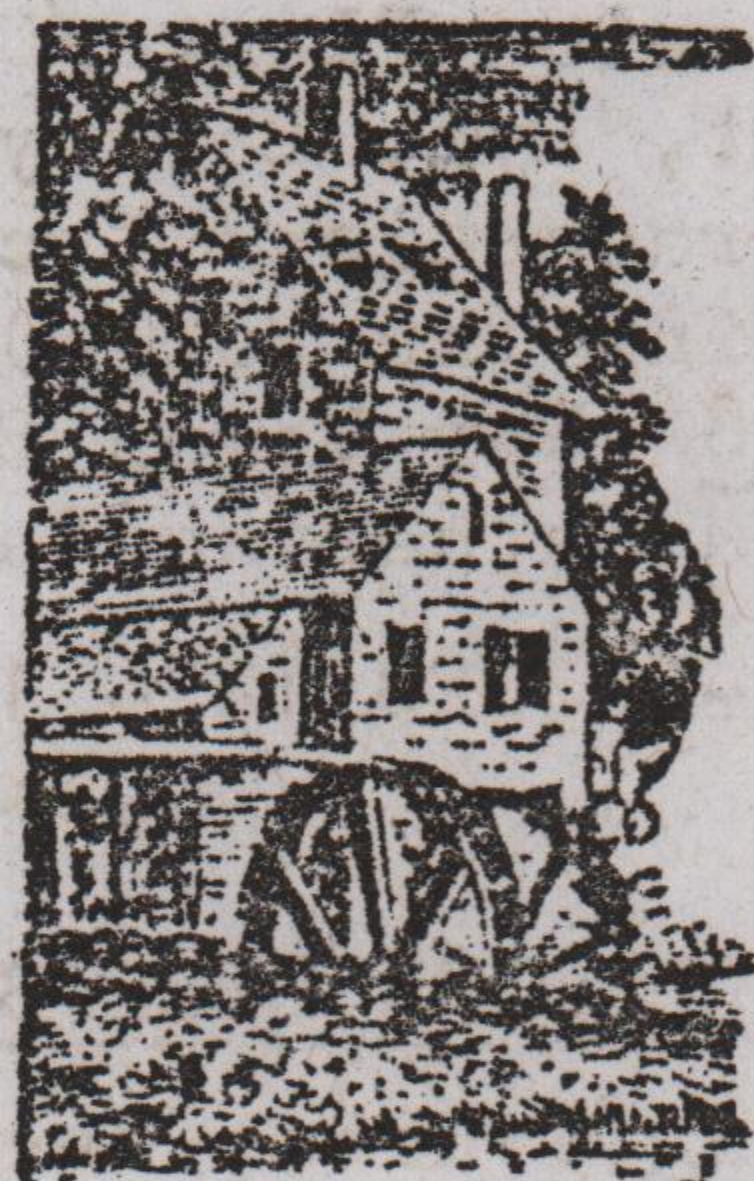
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MOLESWORTH/ALCONBURY LAND TRUST. More acres of Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire countryside are to be sacrificed to provide a new cruise missile dispersal route linking the A1 and M1 and passing within two miles of Molesworth. Peace campaigners have been offered a piece of this threatened land, close to both Molesworth and its command centre at USAF Alconbury. To buy this land we need about £25,000 and we need it quickly! The land will be used for life-affirming purposes, and vegans are welcome to join the project. For further information, please send s.a.e. to: The Molesworth/Alconbury Land Trust, c/o 59, WHITWELL WAY, COTON, CAMBS., CB3 7PW. (£18,000 has been raised so far).

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WANTED PLEASE! Details of ideas and methods used for protecting crops over the winter period - especially tried and successfully tested ones! We're also trying to find a supplier of seeds for the white aubergine variety "Easter Egg" - can anyone help? THANKS! (Alan & Elaine)

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The VEGAN VOLUNTEERS GUIDANCE SHEET is about to be reprinted and, if need be, revised. Comments are particularly invited from Hosts and Volunteers - suggested amendments and additions by mid January please!



POWER before steam



"POWER BEFORE STEAM" by John Vince (John Murray Publishers Ltd.), 1985.

In this beautifully produced book (the text is in fine calligraphy throughout, accompanied by marvellous sketches), John Vince takes a nostalgic and thorough look at the various means by which humans have employed natural energy to power machines and other equipment.

Each chapter investigates a particular power source and explains the workings of the many types of apparatus to which it is applied. Apart from the chapter on animals (used for draught purposes and in treadwheels) the rest of the book, detailing human, water, wind and gravity power, will be of interest to VSSNers.

The chapter on human power begins with early machines such as the windlass and the pole lathe, and, using numerous clear sketches and working drawings, continues with both domestic and industrial applications of hand and treadle power.

The section on water powered machinery obviously includes a large amount of information on grain mills and the various types of waterwheel and associated equipment. Further to this, the application of water power in foundries, sawmills and pumphouses is well detailed.

The history and mechanics of the many types of windmills and pumps are

fully examined, again with a wealth of illustrations, in the chapter on wind power. This concludes with the more recent adaptation for the generation of electricity. Both DIY systems and larger commercial plant are covered.

The final chapter covers gravity operated mechanisms - those which make use of counterbalances and weights to save or avoid human muscle power: gate closers, beam drills, mediaeval clocks, and even sash windows and the Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway!

The appendices include a list of places to visit where machinery can be seen, often working. There's also a sincere appeal by the author which asks us to reinstate old methods and employ new techniques to "create an appropriate technology - that is one which is capable of serving the needs of all humanity indefinitely, and not just those domiciled north of the equator".

John Vince has contributed greatly towards these aims with this inspiring and educational work. (160 pages, large paperback, £8.95)

(Alan)

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LETTERS, CONTRIBUTIONS, ADVERTS, NEWS, REPORTS, ETC. ARE ALWAYS WELCOME FOR INCLUSION IN THE NEWSLETTER - BUT PLEASE INDICATE ON YOUR CORRESPONDENCE WHETHER OR NOT IT IS INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION, AND WRITE AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE. THIS WILL HELP US GREATLY - THANKS!

COPY DATE FOR SPRING NEWSLETTER IS 21st JANUARY. Small items acceptable up to first week of February. Newsletter due out first week of March.

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PLEASE NOTE THAT IDEAS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY VSSN MEMBERS AND CONTAINED IN THE NEWSLETTERS ARE PRESENTED AS INDIVIDUAL VIEWPOINTS ONLY AND MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE SHARED BY OTHER VSSN MEMBERS OR THE NEWSLETTER COMPILERS... THANKS!

PLEASE SEEK THE CONSENT OF THE AUTHOR OF ANY PIECE DESIRED FOR REPRODUCTION IN ANOTHER PUBLICATION - IF ADDRESS IS UNKNOWN, SEND C/O VSSN AT ADDRESS BELOW.

* * * * *

BACK-ISSUES OF THE VSSN NEWSLETTER:

No.12 (Raised Bed Gardening/Tree Surgery). No.13 (Agroforestry/Insect-Detering Companion Plants/Coffee Substitutes). No.14 (Growing Food Without A Garden/Wheat, Rye, Barley & Oats). No.15 (Gardening With Children/Self-Sufficient Contraception/Misc. Reports). No.16 (Edible Fungi/The Deer & Squirrel Problem/Feeding The World). No.17 (Wholesome Food/The Onion Family/Green Manuring). No.18 (Why Vegan Self-Sufficiency?/Recycling/Summer-Sown Salad Crops). No.19 (VSSN Gathering Report/Franck System Review/Misc. Reports).

BACK-ISSUES 12 - 14, 30p each; 15 - 19, 35p each, plus sufficient to cover postage.

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INFORMATION SHEETS - all reprints of articles from earlier Newsletters:

Drying Fruits, Vegetables & Herbs, 10p. Food Additives: Are They Safe?, 15p. Growing Gluten-Free Grains (photocopy), 16p. Growing Nuts, 5p. Growing Unusual Fruits, 15p. Home Production of Linen (photocopy), 24p. Natural Tooth Care, 5p. Seaweed & Its Use in Gardening, 10p. Seed Saving, 10p. Soap & Soapmaking, 5p. PLEASE ADD THE COST OF A BASIC RATE POSTAGE STAMP WHEN ORDERING.

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BOOKLETS:

"FIRST HAND - FIRST RATE" (Recipes and self-sufficiency hints) 65p.
"SAVE YOUR OWN SEED" (HDRA booklet) 50p.
"RAISED BED GARDENING" (HDRA booklet) 60p.
"DIG FOR SURVIVAL" (HDRA leaflet/chart) 10p.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Those wishing to participate in the Network are asked to make an annual contribution of £2.00 (UK & Eire)/£2.50 (Overseas, surface mail). All are welcome.

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES/P.O.'s PAYABLE TO "THE VEGAN SELF-SUFFICIENCY NETWORK".

VSSN, c/o ELAINE & ALAN GARRETT, 115, EASTERN ROAD, MILTON, PORTSMOUTH, PO3 6EJ.