

Almanac

A Practical Handbook for Living Naturally in the Modern World

Spruce Up Your Seat

REFRESH YOUR SHOWCASE CHAIRS WITH THESE GENTLE, GREEN METHODS



WOOD

WHY Regular polishing restores luster to finished wood chairs.

WHAT TO USE

Method Wood for Good Polish (\$5; methodhome.com), a nontoxic, plant-based potion, lightly cleans and adds a rich sheen.

HOW TO USE Shake well and spot-check your wood first; then spritz it on a soft rag and wipe down your furniture until shiny.



FABRIC

WHY Stains can set in fabric if not attended to promptly.

WHAT TO USE

BuggyLOVE No-Wash Organic Stain Remover (\$10; buggylove.com), a tangerine-scented, paraben- and sulfate-free cleaner.

HOW TO USE Squirt directly onto fabric and rub with a soft cloth until the stain goes away; a mild soap-and-water mix is your backup.



STAINLESS STEEL

WHY Even the shiniest stainless steel benefits from an occasional polishing.

WHAT TO USE

Olive oil. **HOW TO USE** First clean the surface with a mild detergent and water, rubbing with the grain (thin, vertical or horizontal lines in the metal); then wipe dry. Apply a dab of oil to a soft rag and buff the steel, again rubbing with the grain. Use a clean cloth to remove excess oil.



LEATHER

WHY Just like your skin, your leather armchair occasionally needs TLC to stay soft and supple.

WHAT TO USE

Chamberlain's Leather Milk Furniture Treatment No. 5 (\$22; leathermilk.com), containing natural oils, gently cleans and softens.

HOW TO USE Wipe down your chair with a damp cloth. Let dry and rub conditioner evenly into the leather.



SUEDE

WHY Even water can stain delicate suede, so you need to be vigilant.

WHAT TO USE

Raid your kid's school bag for a clean gum eraser; combine with a suede brush.

HOW TO USE Using a circular motion, rub out the stain with the eraser, then brush it. You can also revive suede by buffing the entire surface with a soft-bristled brush to lift its nap.

Pet Care

A STICKY SOLUTION

The healing powers of raw honey are formidable (see page 37)—and that's not true just for those of us walking around on two legs. Try these three holistic cures on your pets. — *Liz Palika*

Care for Wounds

Apply a few drops of raw honey to a scrape to prevent infection and aid in healing. You don't need a bandage, but keep your pet from licking it off for at least 20 minutes.

Soothe Illness

A dose of honey (¼ tsp. for dogs; a few drops for cats) three or four times a day helps heal ulcers, calm an upset stomach, and relieve diarrhea. Dogs will drink honey-sweetened water; give cats warm honey water with an eyedropper.

Combat Allergies

Yes, pets get allergies, which manifest as severe itching, recurrent ear infections, and hives. Honey alleviates symptoms in dogs. Start with a drop or two per day (for a small dog) and up to ¼ tsp. (for a larger dog), working up to ¼ tsp. to 1 tsp. Don't give honey to pets younger than four months, because botulism spores found in honey can make them sick. Consult a veterinarian first if your pet has other health problems.

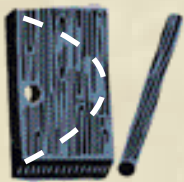


PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: PATTONMANIA; LUIZ KIM; NUWATPHOTO; ERIK RANK; STEVE CADY (ALL FROM GETTY IMAGES). ILLUSTRATION: IRENE RINALDI

MAKE YOUR OWN SUNDIAL

HOW TO BUILD A TIMEPIECE FOR YOUR GARDEN

1



You'll need a semicircular wood base and a ¼-inch dowel (for the gnomon, the part that casts the shadow). Using a protractor to measure, screw the dowel into the base so it sits at an angle equal to your latitude. For example, if you live at latitude 38° north, position the dowel at a 38° angle to the base.

2



Make sure the gnomon is pointing toward the center of the semicircle, like a clock's dial facing noon. Choose a spot on your property that receives sun for most of the day. Place the sundial on a level surface like a table or a flat patch of ground. Using a compass, make sure the dowel points north.

3



Each hour on the hour, hammer a nail near the edge of the semicircle to mark where the shadow falls. Label the hour. Noon should fall at the center, in line with the gnomon. When you have marked 6 A.M. (on the left) through 6 P.M. (on the right), use a ruler to draw lines connecting each nail to the base of the dowel.

To see a step-by-step guide, go to RodalesOrganicLife.com/sundial.

Timeless Tip: Growing Dandelions



MARCH 1960

Being a dandelion-greens lover, and regretting that they last only a couple of weeks in early spring in the wild state, I bought seeds from a nursery some three or four years ago and planted them in the garden . . . Each spring I loosen the soil and plant around them, then harvest the greens all spring, summer and fall . . . Seed is planted in the spring in rows about 18 inches apart and covered ½ inch deep . . . The dandelions, being untemperamental and undemanding, get no extra care whatever, and last summer they grew to such size that I had them photographed because nobody would have believed me. —*Gertrude Springer, "How to Raise Tame Dandelions," Organic Gardening and Farming*

Weed Wisely and Well

Effective weeding starts with avoiding weeds in the first place. Healthy soil and cover crops can help prevent unwanted plants from taking hold. Sometimes, though, your garden just gets away from you. When that happens, you need to pull weeds by hand. Timing differs by region, but as a rule you'll want to have weeds under control by June, or your yield may take a hit. Below, some pointers for highly effective—and ergonomic!—weed pulling. —*Jeff Moyer*



Get Down

Prevent back strain by squatting, kneeling, or getting on hands and knees—use knee pads if you like—and avoiding excessive bending at the waist. Get up and stretch periodically: Touch your toes, shrug your shoulders toward your shoulder blades, and gently bring your right ear toward your right shoulder, stopping when you feel the stretch. Repeat on the left side.

Root It Out

It's important to pull the whole plant, including the roots—otherwise weeds will shoot back up again in no time. When weeds are small and the soil is soft, you can extract them by hand. Dig your fingers a few inches into the soil, hold the weed firmly at its base, and use steady pressure to pull straight up.

Dig In

Use a spade to dig out more established plants—but don't go in willy-nilly, or you may sever the top of the weed from its roots, making it hard to extract. Instead, aim the tip of the blade at the bottom of the root zone to dig the entire system out of the ground. Not sure how deep to go? Use the spade to loosen the soil all around the weed to check.

Johnny's
Selected Seeds
Wire Weeder



TOP TOOLS FOR HAND WEEDING

Corona Tools eGrip Weeder

A serrated blade for slicing roots and an ergonomic design make this weeder effective and easy to use. \$8.52; coronatools.com

Corona Tools Trowel A classic, multipurpose trowel is great for digging up weeds as well as planting seeds, removing stones, and a dozen other tasks. \$6.68; coronatools.com

Johnny's Selected Seeds Wire Weeder

This simple tool pulls very young weeds from the soil when you scrape it back and forth across the ground. \$33; johnnyseeds.com

Grampa's Weeder Excellent for removing stubborn weeds with deep roots, this long-handled, forked tool also prevents back strain; you use it standing up. \$25; grampasgardenware.com

Jeff Moyer is the executive director of the Rodale Institute.



Back to Basics

GET TO KNOW YOUR FREEZER

Successfully preserving make-ahead meals (page 26) begins with knowing the secrets of your coldest appliance

1 CHILL SPEEDILY Slow freezing lets big ice crystals form, turning food mushy. Speed things up by refrigerating foods a few hours before freezing.

2 DIVIDE AND CONQUER Individual servings freeze, defrost, and reheat much faster than big batches. Portion food into small containers, then freeze.

3 PACK IT RIGHT Leave ½ inch of space for food to expand as it freezes.

4 ZERO IT OUT The lower the temperature, the better foods keep. Experts recommend setting your freezer temperature to 0°F for long-term storage.

5 REHEAT RIGHT Thaw food in the fridge, then transfer to the counter while the oven preheats. (This is especially important with glass containers, which can shatter if moved right from freezer to oven.) —Karen Shimizu

DOUBLE DUTY

Freezer- and oven-safe storage containers for every icebox



Emile Henry Ceramic Bakeware. Made in France from lead- and cadmium-free clay, these beautiful dishes can go directly from freezer to oven. Wrap food tightly in heavy-duty foil before freezing. Prices vary; emilehenryusa.com



Onyx Clip-Top Containers. Sustainably made in South Korea, these round freezer- and oven-safe stainless-steel containers feature airtight clip-on lids. \$90 for a set of four; Rodales.com



Onyx Square Airtight Glass Containers. Suitable for freezer storage and reheating, these vessels are made from borosilicate glass, an exceptionally sturdy material. Press the silicone button on the stainless-steel lid to create a seal. \$58 for a set of two; Rodales.com

ROL Sources

THE SWEETEST CURE, page 37: To find out how to order raw Wüstner Brothers honey, visit wustnerbrothers.com. For honeycomb, email jacob.wustner@gmail.com. Jacob Wustner also teaches organic beekeeping; see [facebook.com/SapphireApiaries](https://www.facebook.com/SapphireApiaries) for information. **THE WISDOM OF SAGE**, page 42: Buy dried white sage, feathers, and abalone shells online at nativecaliforniawhitesage.com; prices vary. **PICK ME**, page 45: Look for organic potting mix at your local gardening store to minimize the environmental costs of shipping. You can also order online from an organic supplier like organicmechanicsoil.com or groworganic.com. Source your herb seedlings locally, too, or order online from a reputable source like tastefulgarden.com or johnnyseeds.com. Make sure to search for *organic* and order seedlings rather than seeds. **BEST LAUNDRY DETERGENTS**, page 56: Look for the recommended detergents at Whole Foods Markets or health stores, or find them online at target.com, drugstore.com, or soap.com; prices vary. **HIGH RISE**, page 86: View Amanda McCauley's artwork at amandamccauley.com. **MY ORGANIC LIFE**, page 108: To get your hands on a product from Bio Oleos de Miombo, email info@biooleos.com. In our January/February 2016 issue, we listed an incorrect price for the Skhoop Mini Down skirts featured in "Winter Like an Alaskan" on page 53. The skirts are \$139.

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