



# Country Homestead Living Newsletter

Helping *You* Achieve *Your* Homestead Dreams!

*Gardening Enjoyment and Sustainability*

I don't know about you but I L.O.V.E. to garden! It's so rewarding to watch those little seeds you put into the ground sprout and become a wonderful plant that grows for your enjoyment and joy of eating.

I never seem to have enough room in the garden area to plant all that I would like to. Every year it's the same thing, I find more and more varieties of plants that I want to try to see how they do in our area. It's just SO much fun!

Long before Spring arrives I get the itch to start my plants but I have to be patient and wait until its time to plant. Boy is that hard! I do start some seeds indoors which makes it fun.

John built me a wonderful plant growing shelving system that has lights above every shelf. There's even light switches for each different light so I can have all shelves lit or just one. And, the lights can be adjusted to the height of the plants as they grow. How awesome is that!



Plant growing shelving system  
for starting plants early!

In our area it is really beneficial to get plants like tomatoes, some peppers and even lettuces started indoors, ready to plant outside when the weather warms up. It helps us get a head start in an area like ours that is a fairly short growing season.



Plants getting an early start indoors under lights!

One of the fun things that I've gotten in the habit of doing for the last few years is saving our own seeds. We don't use any chemicals or pesticides on our garden so I know our seeds will produce a wonderful plant for us.

Did you know that by saving the seeds from your own plants is not only sustainable, cuts down the cost of seeds, and healthier for you but the plants will do so much better because they have learned to adapt to the climate and area in which you live thus making a much stronger plant for you? They have a lot better chance of actually doing better than some of the seeds you purchase.

If you plan to try saving your own seeds you will want to make sure that you start with seeds that are heirloom or open-pollinated so they will produce the same

plant as you grew. We like to buy, as much as possible, seeds that have also been organically and non-GMO grown so you can start with a really healthy plant to save your seeds from.

You can find many companies that sell these kinds of seeds to get your plants started in your garden so you can start saving your own seeds. If you have friends who you know are growing their own organic non-GMO gardens you could always see if they would be willing to share some seeds with you.

When saving your seeds you'll want to wait towards the end of each plants season, let the plant or vegetable etc. mature beyond the way you would like to eat it then take the seeds from the plant or vegetable and put them on either something plastic or glass so they don't stick like glue. Put them in a nice dry place until they are completely dry, then you can package them up in whatever way you like best.

Don't forget to label them or you might be surprised when you planted what you thought was a tomato only to find out it was something else!



Onion flower head full of seeds

Of course the longer you grow a garden the better you become in recognizing your seeds but you won't know what variety each seed might be unless you label them. And don't forget to date them as well.

I've already saved most all the seeds from our garden that I want for next year, I just have maybe a couple of other plants to get seeds from like a couple of lettuce's and maybe a couple of herbs that have gone to seed.

If you want to be sustainable on your homestead or country property you will definitely want to try your hand at saving seeds from the plants that you grow! And you will have a lot of fun doing it I hope, I know I sure do.

Written by Linda Brownlee

## *One Reason to Look for Homestead Land in the Fall*

When you look for homestead property it is a good idea to look at the property in more than one season of the year, if at all possible, before making an offer to purchase the land.

If looking for land west of the Mississippi River it is a good idea to look at the land in late summer before the fall rains begin. Most of the western U.S. is dryer than the eastern states-less average rainfall-and the end of August or the first week of September is a good time to look at homestead property. This is critical if there is any kind of surface water on the property. A spring, creek, pond will be at it's lowest level at this time of the year and the ground will be the driest, dustiest too.

If you're looking for land in the mountain areas of the west, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, and you plan on heating with wood or using wood



heat to supplement your winter heat, the best wood to use for heat is Mountain Larch, also called Tamarack, or to use Red Fir for heat.

Around the middle of October the needles of the Tamarack Tree turns golden and a few weeks later the needles fall off and the tree looks dead. But it is not dead! In early spring new needles appear. This is the

only conifer that has needles that turn golden and fall off each fall. The picture above shows the distinctive golden needles in mid to late October and the picture to the



right shows a stand of Tamarack trees in late fall after the needles have fallen off.

As can be seen from the pictures, it is very easy to tell if there are any Tamarack trees on the property when it is looked at in mid to late October. So keep this in mind when looking for homestead property in areas where tamarack is found.

Written by John Brownlee