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May 2020

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Best Veggies for Right Now

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Top 10 Readymade Bugout Bags

Most of us are well aware that a bugout bag (a backpack filled with emergency supplies) is a key part of our disaster readiness plan. So why don't we all have one ready to go? If procrastination has left you bugout bag-less, perhaps you should invest in a readymade emergency kit. In this head-to-head review, we'll break down which pre-made kits are worth the money.



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Best Guns for Your SHTF Arsenal

As the COVID19 panic is sending firearm sales through the roof, you may be wondering: How does a virus have anything to do with buying guns? This is just one of the questions we unpack as we get down to the nitty gritty regarding why you need to build the right SHTF arsenal for YOU.



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Best Veggies for Right Now

If you're an experienced gardener, you know that it's very late in the year to start a vegetable garden. With many of us under "shelter in place" restrictions, however, right now is the ideal time to start that self-reliance garden you've always wanted. These are the veggies you should be considering.

PRE-MADE DOOMSDAY PREPPER KITS: ARE THEY WORTH THE PRICE AND WHICH ONES ARE BEST?



Between rising international tensions and the global spread of the coronavirus, there's never been a better time to ensure you're ready to move at a moment's notice if the SHTF. Most of you probably have a prepper kit, AKA a bug out bag, packed and waiting. But those of you who don't – or those of you who want to help out a loved one – may feel a bit intimidated about how to start.

With that in mind, some companies have put together pre-made prepper kits. On the surface, this sounds like a great way to get ready in a hurry. But are these kits truly worthwhile? We're going to take a closer look and will let you know which ones give you the most bang for your buck.

EMERGENCY ZONE URBAN SURVIVAL 72-HOUR BUG OUT / GO BAG SURVIVAL KIT

This kit is offered in two sizes: two-person or four-person. The items shared between the backpacks aren't meant to sustain you forever, but they should give you a good 72-hour head start on everyone who hasn't prepared at all.

Items included in this kit include pouches of purified water, SOS survival food packets (with a 5-year shelf life), a multi-tool and various other miscellaneous tools, a first aid kit, important hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, feminine hygiene products, etc., weather protection, a windup flashlight and radio, and water purification tablets.



As you can see, this kit definitely offers some very important supplies. And with a 4.7-star average out of more than 250 reviews, you know that it's decent quality too.

PROS: Quick and easy, supplies for four people cost less than \$200, sturdy backpack (or backpacks, if you purchase the set for four people), and comes with enough extra room for you to add a few personal items to each pack.

CONS: The backpacks aren't waterproof (but they are water resistant), and some of the items aren't the best quality.

OVERALL: Despite the cons, this is one of the better pre-made doomsday prepper kits available. When you consider the price, the kit would be a decent investment, especially if you're going to flesh it out a bit. You could certainly do worse, and this provides an easy way to get many supplies at once in a hurry.

MAYDAY 13040 DELUXE 4 PERSON HONEY BUCKET EMERGENCY KIT



You're not going to be tossing this bucket of supplies on your back like a bug out bag, but it does have some really practical items that may earn it a spot in the trunk of your car. It could also come in handy when sheltering in place or at a cabin you plan to bug out to when the SHTF.

One of the things we really like about this particular kit is that the bucket that carries everything can also double as a makeshift toilet. In fact, this set comes with chemical toilet disinfectant and toilet bags, which most kits don't.

Other items featured inside this bucket include a

(or a six-day supply for two people). It also comes with an impressive list of other necessities such as solar blankets, dust masks, light sticks, wet naps, duct tape, a pry bar, a first aid kit, water purification tablets, a windup flashlight and radio combo, a utility knife, gloves, and much more.

The Mayday bucket kit has earned a 4.4-star average from more than 35 reviewers. According to the manufacturer, this bucket of supplies was made with the home and office in mind as it can also double as an earthquake kit.

PROS: Has a nice variety of items and comes with a makeshift toilet.

CONS: Not nearly as easy to move and carry as a bug out bag.

OVERALL: Anyone who is worried about sheltering in place or getting stuck in their office due to a natural disaster or the coronavirus could definitely do worse than to start with this kit. Much like the others, though, it's still only a 72-hour supply, so additional items will be likely be necessary for any real-world situation.

RESCUE GUARD FIRST AID KIT HURRICANE DISASTER OR EARTHQUAKE EMERGENCY SURVIVAL BUG OUT BAG SUPPLIES FOR FAMILIES



Rescue Guard lets you pick your level of bug out protection by offering this kit in three sizes: Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced. The item pictured above is the Advanced option, which provides a 72-hour kit for a family of four or up to 12 days of supplies for one person.

The image already showcases some of the many ways that this kit stands apart from its competitors. Yes, that's a nice lantern you see, and it also serves as radio, flashlight, and phone charger! You'll also get a useful knife, a small hatchet, a multi-tool, survival shelter, first aid supplies, a sleeping bag, N95 face masks, food rations, and even a deck of playing cards.

Over on Amazon, the Advanced kit has a 4.5-star average out of 110+ reviews. This item has also earned the coveted designation of "Amazon's Choice" for survival bags.

PROS: A truly unique collection of items that's not offered in many premade bags, combined with most of the basics you've come to expect.

CONS: The bag, and each item inside it, comes in a smaller size than you'd expect based on the image. The bag itself is also a bit flimsy.

OVERALL: The items inside this premade bug out bag offer a very nice starting point for new survivalists. However, if you're going to buy this kit, we recommend also getting a more durable backpack to store everything in.

**BUG OUT BAG SURVIVAL KIT
- TACTICAL SLING BAG WITH
EMERGENCY GEAR, HIKING FISHING
BACKPACK TACKLE BAG MINI
DAYPACK**

This 28-piece kit is surprisingly affordable, retailing on Amazon for around \$32. Therefore, any preppers on a budget that are looking to get a premade kit will want to take a closer look at this offering.

The sling bag comes with some highly practical items, but please note that none of them include food or water. Instead, you'll get a 350-lumen tactical flashlight, an emergency blanket, a 28" pocket saw,

fishing supplies, a flint rod and striker that doubles as a bottle opener, an 11-in-1 tool card, and more.

With more than 40 reviews, this sling bag kit has accrued an impressive 4.4 stars.

PROS: Contains many tools that are useful and often overlooked such as several items to help you go fishing. Lightweight enough to be an emergency kit for teens and pre-teens.

CONS: The bag is relatively small, which doesn't leave a lot of room for other items. There's no food or water included.

OVERALL: Although it's far from the best premade kit available, this is a great bargain for those who need some of the included items. Children 10-and-up are also able to carry this pack due to its minimal weight and small size.

**EVERLIT 250 PIECES SURVIVAL
FIRST AID KIT IFAK MOLLE SYSTEM**



If you're going to be bugging out with your family, this would be a great pack for one person to wear. It does have some basic survival gear in it, but most of this premade kit is geared toward first aid.

In this small bag that weighs only 1.8 pounds, you're going to receive a huge amount of first aid items. Highlights include alcohol prep pads, bandages of many sizes/types, sterile gauze pads, PVC gloves,

metal scissors, tweezers, antiseptic cleaning wipes, a tactical knife, a paracord bracelet, a flint and scraper, and a poncho.

When almost 1,200 people give any item on Amazon a 4.8-star average, you know you're dealing with something that's high quality. No wonder this bag is often a #1 best-seller in Camping First Aid Kits.

PROS: There is much to love about this kit, including the fact that many of the first aid supplies come in multiple quantities. For example, it comes with 80 cotton tips and 40 medium-sized bandages.

CONS: Everything is crammed into an 8.5" x 6" x 4.5" bag, which is a pro because it doesn't need much space but can also be a con when it comes to fitting anything back inside the bag.

OVERALL: If you're on your own and can't fit this bag inside your existing bug out bag, then this may not be a viable option. Otherwise, it's a highly useful addition to anyone's bug out kit. If you have a family to consider, you should definitely get some type of well-made first aid kit, and this contains a lot for the price (currently under \$43).

UPGRADED SURVIVAL GEAR KIT 15 IN 1 BY JINAGER



Sometimes, you just need a tactical kit filled with tools to flesh out your existing bug out bag. In that instance, this is a great choice. And despite the manufacturer's constant claims to the contrary within their advertising, women can get just as much usage out of this as men during an emergency, thereby making it a suitable gift for anyone.

There are 15 items that come with this particular premade kit: a survival knife, military grade compass, flashlight, 11-in-1 knife card, a whistle, large rod flint, a mini LED light, wire saw, tungsten steel pen, fire starter, emergency blanket, 5-in-1 survival bracelet, carabiner, and a water bottle clip, all of which are inside a waterproof carrying case.

The manufacturer offers a one-year guarantee on the kit, and that's always a nice touch. Consumers seem to love this item, as evidenced by the 4.6-star average from almost 50 reviewers.

PROS: This kit is an easy way to get several useful tools for less than \$24. Everything in the kit deserves space in your bug out bag.

CONS: The carrying case is very small, as are the items inside. A couple of reviewers mentioned receiving broken items, so you'd want to check everything over right away.

OVERALL: This is yet another premade option that serves a specific purpose. Therefore, it would work well when added to other supplies, but it's not good enough on its own.

SUSTAIN SUPPLY CO. PREMIUM EMERGENCY SURVIVAL BAG/KIT, COMFORT4



Some people are satisfied with basic supplies because they place their survival ahead of their comfort. For others, there's this four-person kit that's designed to last 72 hours. The purpose of this Comfort4 kit, which is the top of the line version from a company

that also produces a Comfort2 and an Essential2, is to ensure that you can get through an emergency situation without leaving all the comforts of regular life behind.

As you can see in the nearby picture, they take the term comfort seriously. That's why there's items such as macaroni and cheese, teriyaki chicken, cartons of water, rubber bowls, and silverware. It also comes with a portable stove and small saucepan, a survival straw, fire starter, a first aid kit, LED lanterns, flashlights, and snap lights, emergency blankets, a knife, a sturdy backpack, and much more.

When something costs almost \$300, you can expect people to be more critical of it. With this in mind, the 4.4-star average from close to 270 survivalists seems like very high praise.

PROS: While others are eating emergency ration bars, you'll be dining on an extra cheesy version of macaroni and cheese. You certainly can't beat that! It's also fantastic to find items like a miniature stove and saucepan included, along with SHTF items such as an emergency straw.

CONS: The bag is very sturdy, but it's also quite heavy. You'll also need to add some essential survival gear to flesh the kit out.

OVERALL: If you can afford the price tag, this is definitely a nice kit. It comes with higher quality food and supplies than many similar options, but you will pay for that in terms of the bag's weight.

EVERLIT 42L TACTICAL BACKPACK SURVIVAL KIT BUGOUT BAG ASSAULT PACK RUCKSACK WITH HYDRATION BLADDER AND SURVIVAL GEAR 3 DAY RUCKSACK MOLLE

If you're serious about survival and are willing to add your own food, this tactical backpack full of supplies is a good place to start. Not only is the bag itself very sturdy and comfortable, but it includes a hydration bladder to help you avoid running out of water.



Other useful items that have been put inside this kit include a foldable tactical shovel/saw combo, multi-function pliers, a fire starter, compass, wire saw, multi-function saber card, a 100-piece first aid kit, a thermal blanket, tactical flashlight, 100-feet of paracord, and lots more!

This tactical backpack/survival kit currently has 19 reviews and a 4.9-star average.

PROS: The backpack is extremely well made, the supplies aren't limited to any specific number of days, and the overall selection of items was well thought out.

CONS: There's no food, so you're going to need to add your own emergency rations.

OVERALL: Consumers love this prepper kit, and it's easy to understand why. Most of the tools are higher quality than what typically comes with this type of kit. The price is currently \$65.99, and you could expect to pay much more than that for each individual piece plus a backpack that's this nice.

EMERGENCY SURVIVAL KIT, ULTIMATE 98-IN-1 OUTDOOR MULTI-TOOLS FOR CAMPING, HIKING, HUNTING, & FISHING

Size is one of the most important factors in any bug out bag, and this kit manages to fit 98 items into a bag that's only 8" x 3" x 5". The kit also comes

with a 100 percent money back guarantee from the manufacturer, which is always a nice touch.



The gear inside the bag is separated into two categories: First Aid and Tactical Survival. With 98 items, we won't be listing anywhere near everything that comes inside this tiny case. Here are some of the highlights, though: disinfectant pads, scissors, tweezers, gauze rolls, a triangular bandage, 550-feet of paracord, flint fire starter, emergency blanket, several fishing tools, multi-tool pliers, an LED flashlight, and a foldable tactical knife.

Holtzman's Gorilla Survival manufactured this kit that has a 4.5-star average rating from approximately 75 people.

PROS: You'll get many necessary items in one small package. Currently, the price is only \$29.95 for a lightweight bag that's easy to carry.

CONS: Everything is stuffed inside of a paracord grenade, which means you can't easily put it back together once it has been opened.

OVERALL: The sheer number of items you get for the price makes this an enticing option. Unfortunately, the inconvenience of the paracord grenade style may reduce its practicality for many, especially if you want to check everything out before the SHTF.

**WISE 5-DAY SURVIVAL BACKPACK
38 ESSENTIAL ITEMS NEEDED IN
A DISASTER**



This survival pack doesn't have much in the way of tools, but it does address many other vital needs. To truly get five days out of the included food, you'd need to use this pack for solo survival. Otherwise, you might be able to stretch it to 72 hours for two people.

Unlike most premade bug out bags, this one places a huge emphasis on keeping you fed. It comes with a whopping six large containers of food, that are meant to equal the calories of 38 small meals. You'll need to like the taste of Southwest Rice and Beans to rely on this kit, though. It also comes with six pouches of water, a first aid kit, a portable stove, a mylar blanket, a squeeze flashlight, and playing cards to help keep your mind occupied.

With just under 20 reviews, this kit comes in at a 4.6-star average. However, it is expensive at \$102.

PROS: There's a lot of food and water in this kit. We also love that it comes with a small stove and a few other basic pieces of survival gear.

CONS: It doesn't come with any survival tools. Additionally, the food all needs water to be cooked. The price doesn't seem worth what you get.

OVERALL: The backpack is quite nice, and the food is higher quality than you'd usually get with a doomsday prepper kit. Despite this, the lack of other necessary items and the high price tag make this one a less viable solution for survivalists on a budget.

BEST OF THE PREMADE OPTIONS

As you've just seen, there are many premade kit options, and some are better than others. Here's a quick breakdown to help you make a decision.

BEST LUXURY: The Comfort4 from Sustain Supply Co.

BEST ADD-ON KIT: EVERLIT 250 Pieces Survival First Aid Kit

BEST OVERALL: Emergency Zone Urban Survival 72-Hour Bug Out/Go Bag Survival Kit

DO PREMADE PREPPER KITS ACTUALLY MAKE SENSE?

There are always going to be two sides to this issue. Some will argue vehemently against premade kits because they believe it's better to gather all of your supplies based on your personal needs. Others will counter that every kit can have other items added to it and that they provide a good starting point.

It's true that some of these sets have a few items that are less than impressive. But overall, we were surprised by just how good some of these premade survival kits can be. Additionally, some of the lower priced options are much cheaper than buying each included item individually.

Our overall recommendation is that these kits are a viable option for anyone who wants to get a lot of items in one purchase. Just make sure you take the time to add additional items to fully flesh your kit out. Otherwise, you'll be very unprepared – and unhappy – after the SHTF.



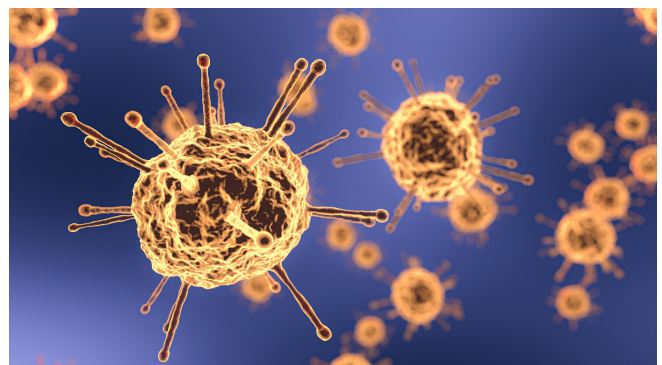


UPGRADE YOUR SHTF ARSENAL

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to grip the country, you've no doubt noticed several trends that don't really seem to add up. As soon as it was clear that the novel coronavirus was going to impact daily life, items like toilet paper, bottled water, and even generators suddenly found themselves in high demand. Another interesting sector that experienced what we usually refer to as "panic buying" is firearms.

Gun stores were inundated with customers looking to stockpile both weapons and ammo. Many of these folks were "novel" gun buyers, looking to exercise their 2nd Amendment right for the first time in their lives. "But why," you might ask, "would a person purchase a firearm to protect themselves against a microscopic virus?"

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The truth is, there is a much more in-depth conversation to unpack here. Everyone arrives at the conclusion that they need to prepare for unpleasant realities in their own time. No amount of pure reasoning or foresight alone seems to be enough to flip the switch for most people.

It often takes that little bit of emotion that comes with the realization that you are not in control that does it. Obviously, this COVID-19 epidemic was that time for many Americans. But what exactly are they preparing for?

For most people, the answer is essentially that they have no idea. There's a vague sense that resources will be limited and that the potential for conflict is escalated. The truth, however, is you can't have adequate SHTF emergency supplies until you have a comprehensive plan in place. And you certainly can't have the related arsenal without a clearly defined emergency plan.

BUG OUT VS. SHELTER IN PLACE



Plans are, of course, just that... plans. They may not be relevant or accessible in the heat of the moment, but they give your preparations a cohesiveness that allows you to think through all the contingencies that you otherwise wouldn't be prepared for.

One example is the decision between whether your primary option in a crisis scenario is to "head for the hills" or hunker down with a house full of supplies and stay put. Translated into prepper speak, that's the decision to "bug out" (i.e. head to a secure remote location) or to "shelter in place" (more or less what many of us have experienced during the COVID-19 quarantine).

The key difference between these scenarios from a SHTF arsenal perspective is the types of firearms that would best apply to each scenario. If your emergency plan involves bugging out, then your focus should be on smaller, lighter, and more compact weapons. Portability is obviously a primary concern, as is concealment. In a shelter in place preparedness plan, you can select your defensive weapons with minimal concern for their weight, size, or the ability to conceal them. We're not advocating for installing

.50cal machinegun turrets or anything, but the truth is that it opens up your options considerably.

But rather than discuss these concepts in broad strokes, let's get down to actionable specifics. That way, you can begin building a comprehensive SHTF plan that suddenly, due to the global pandemic, seems incredibly timely and relevant. Without further ado, let's get to the good stuff.

NSRA'S TOP BUG OUT WEAPONS



As you traverse the landscape between your home and your bugout destination, it's important to consider the key constraints that traveling saddles you with. Most importantly, you'll need to focus on logistics.

Sure, it'd be nice to load your entire gun safe into the trunk of the family sedan, but chances are that space could be better used for food, water, and other essentials. The hierarchy of your SHTF plan will likely call for firearms, but not any and all firearms. You'll need to spend some thought determining which weapons you actually need, versus the ones you want.

CALIBER CONSIDERATIONS

A primary concern with any SHTF firearm option has to be the availability of ammo. Though it may not be the ideal weapon, a loaded .22lr beats an unloaded .300 Win Mag every day of the week. Ironically, we can remember a time several years ago when .22lr ammo was a bit hard to come by.

Panic buying such as we've seen recently can outstrip the supply of ammo quite quickly, even for the most popular and well-stocked calibers. If you wait until the panic begins to purchase your ammo, there's little you can do about this but continue diligently searching.



A secondary concern that's particularly important in a bugout scenario is weight. More is better when it comes to ammo, up to a certain point. The key, however, is to allocate your ammo carefully to make sure each round is pulling its own weight in terms of your plan.

For example, 12-gauge shells are quite heavy in comparison to 5.56 NATO rounds. And you can certainly do a lot of small game hunting with a .22lr, which has even lighter weight per round. Thus, it's important that you don't take a "kitchen sink" approach with your bug out ammo, as it gets heavy very quickly and chances are you won't use any ammo en route to your destination. If you plan to stockpile ammo, make sure you stash some at your bugout destination.

RUGER LC9S

The first class is what you might consider a sidearm. In this "bugout" application, however, we'd recommend a highly concealable option. This is a weapon you'll want to have accessible at a moment's

notice, yet one that doesn't advertise itself or invite any kind of trouble with fellow travelers or authorities.



When it comes to lightweight sub-compact handguns, the LCP series has really made a name for itself as the "shooter's choice" among CCW options. The secret sauce with this very small weapon is that it's both compact AND handles impressively well. Let's face it, there are tons of competitors in the sub-compact class these days. The issue with many is they're far from enjoyable to train with.

Upon initial release, the LC9 had a long double-action trigger pull that most reviewers panned. But Ruger quickly responded by releasing a striker-fired version that greatly upgraded the shooting performance of this 17.2 oz weapon. Ruger also scaled back some of its usual redundant safety features to make this weapon a little sleeker and better handling.

With a 7-round single stack magazine, your firepower is limited but you really have an exceedingly concealable and lightweight weapon in a very readily available caliber. That's the best way to view this firearm, in fact. This is a self-protection weapon, specifically designed to get you from point A to B.

Runner Up: An excellent competitive option with the LC9s would be the Glock 43 (9mm). This sub-compact has the name Glock stamped into the side, which carries a lot of weight with some people. It's 6+1 capacity puts it at a slight disadvantage compared to the Ruger, but it's nevertheless an excellent alternative to consider.

SMITH & WESSON M&P 15 SPORT II



The AR-15 platform is an excellent choice for many of the same reasons that its cousins are used in military service. It's relatively light, easy to carry, reliable and accurate. In addition, the 5.56mm NATO round is extremely fast and capable, while also lightweight and widely available.

Many shooters have flocked to the highly specialized, yet less readily available caliber variants for one reason or another, and these are excellent rounds, except for the availability. We selected the M&P 15 Sport II simply because it's a very nice, all in one package for the price.

These are great rifles from an excellent manufacturer, chambered in the right caliber, and they come with sights. There's a dust cover, forward-assist, Magpul sights, and very standard AR-15 parts. That means if you have a problem or malfunctioning part, the likelihood you can find a replacement is high, even in a SHTF scenario.

With all of the bells and whistles, the Sport II really makes the case for an off-the-rack AR variant, versus a custom build. It delivers excellent accuracy and reliability, and it's also backed by Smith & Wesson's lifetime service policy. That way you will have some peace of mind between apocalypses.

HENRY AR-7



12 Here's a concept that's lost on many: When it comes to taking small game in a survival hunting scenario, too much firepower is destructive. Varmints, squirrels,

rabbits, etc. can all be harvested successfully with a .22LR **without destroying the pelt and/or meat.** And there's no more compact and self-contained .22lr than the AR-7.

This weapon was developed as an emergency backup weapon for US Air Force pilots in the event they'd need to bail out in a desolate area. In fact, the rifle is self-contained in the waterproof stock that doesn't in any way resemble a firearm.



Thus, the AR-7 makes a lot of sense in a severe survival situation where the transport of weapons could draw unwanted attention. If the rule of law has either been massively disabled or jettisoned, a .22lr could even be used to take larger game like deer. Again, this isn't ideal, but .22LR ammo is very plentiful, inexpensive, and lightweight.

Runner Up: The Ruger 10/22 Takedown is an excellent contender for a bugout hunting rig as well. In some respects, the Ruger offers a lot of customizing options that the Henry can't compete with, particularly on the magazine side of the equation. On the other hand, the AR-7 is vastly more self-contained, portable, and comes with an optics-ready Picatinny rail.

NSRA'S TOP SHELTER IN PLACE WEAPONS



Now when it comes to a sheltering in place scenario, your options for firepower can prioritize options that are bigger, heavier, and have larger capacities. The key, of course, is that you still want to be mindful of the fact that such an event typically has no defined end date. You simply have no idea how long a potential WROL (without rule of law) crisis may last. Thus, your weapons should reflect a mindset grounded in reliability, parts availability, and ammunition availability.

MOSSBERG 930 JM PRO SERIES 12GA



We've long been advocates for the 12-gauge defensive shotgun. In recent years, it seems that many manufacturers have adopted this idea and pushed it to extreme new levels. Many of the pump-action "Frankensteins" that have emerged hold a jaw-dropping amount of ammo, which is great in a home defense scenario. What's not so ideal about these tactical shotgun offerings is their propensity to jam, fail to load, fail to eject, etc. Additionally, these weapons are very expensive relative to even a nice auto-loading shotgun.

That's exactly why we chose reliability and speed over jaw dropping magazine capacity. Designed in collaboration with one of the best ever shooters to walk the earth, Jerry Miculek, the Mossberg 930 JM Pro Series is an extremely fast loading 12-gauge with an excellent 9+1 capacity.

With a 22" barrel, the 930 JM Pro Series isn't the shortest option in the field, but it's still very maneuverable in tight spaces. The beefy upgraded bolt-handle is a nice feature, as is the fiber optic sight. When you add this to an already outstanding semi-automatic system such as the Mossberg 930, you get one very excellent firearm.

This thing refuses to jam, even at extremely high-speed tactical shooting. The beveled loading gate eases the process of loading your 9 shells into the magazine tube. We're a big fan of pump loaders here at the NSRA, but this weapon really gives you both the capacity of a pump-action defense model with the speed of an autoloader.

GLOCK 17



We know that many of you are avid fans of Glock. We also know that many of you are specifically not fans...

Whether you are a fan of this Austrian manufacturer or not, you're no doubt aware of the brand's reputation for durability and reliability. That's one of the primary reasons the Glock 17 is our pick for a "shelter in place" sidearm.

The other broader considerations were, of course, the very wide availability of 9mm ammo and the fact that Glocks are so popular that both replacement parts and technical info on these guns are relatively easy to locate.

Another entry on the plus column for the Glock 17 is an overall capacity of 17+1, which gives this mid-size, easy-to-handle weapon plenty of firepower. Weighing in at 2lbs fully loaded, this certainly isn't a heavy weapon to carry in a holster, which is why this model is so popular with law-enforcement. The accuracy and dependability of this design are also high-value features for competitive shooters, security professionals, and even military professionals.

Yet another really nice thing about a Glock 17 is that, not only does it come with a 17-round capacity, but it also includes 3 magazines. In a home defense/shelter-in-place type of scenario, the more easily accessible (loaded ideally) ammo you can have at hand, the more robust your security plan is overall.

Chances are, you're never going to have any regrets about owning a Glock 17 or comparable firearm (the M&P 2.0, Springfield XD, CANiK TP9, etc).

These weapons are excellent all-around handguns with virtually limitless applications, including serving as your shelter-in-place sidearm.

PALMETTO STATE ARMORY PA-10 - .308



Much like its smaller brother, the AR-10 platform has emerged as a mighty force in the world of sporting and competition rifles, and for many of the same reasons. Yes, it may fire the exact same ammunition as other rifles in its class, but it does so with reliability, speed, and a high degree of accuracy. It's the precise combination a weapon with a military pedigree is supposed to have.

The PA-10 is, of course, part of the civilian branch of the AR-10 tree, similar in looks and operation to the incredibly popular AR-15 platform, only pumping out a .30 caliber round instead of one based on the 5.56mm NATO. As you might expect, a .308 Win is a

larger, heavier round that adds greater long-distance capabilities to your setup, yet sacrifices weight (perfect for a "shelter-in-place" scenario).

Now, on to the specifics of what makes the PA-10 such a great choice among many other excellent weapons. Currently in its 3rd generation, the PA-10 has lots of nice features that have been getting better with age.

The soft rubberized grip, 2-stage nickel boron trigger, and the M-Lok free floating handguard are all parts that make this gun such a great value for those looking to get into the AR-10 class of rifles. With a standard 20-round magazine, the PA-10 packs a lot of fire power and really allows shooters to reach out to 300 yards with excellent accuracy.

What sets this rifle apart for us is the excellent reliability, features, and (the big one) value for your money. The people at Palmetto State Armory just get it. The PA-10 is the complete package for several hundred dollars less than many other battle rifle candidates that are quite simply not at all better.





GARDENING 101: WHICH VEGETABLES ARE EASIEST TO GROW?

We're always big proponents of self-sufficiency, and the importance of this has perhaps never been clearer than right now. After all, grocery stores have been unable to keep up with the demands of consumers in the US since early March.

We all know that most Americans are not going to take the time to figure out how to grow their own food. Therefore, that puts survivalists like you and me in a much stronger position in the long run, as we're personally invested in learning how to make ends meet without relying so much on others.

To that end, we've put together this easy gardening guide to assist you during the spring and summer months. Even if this is your very first time attempting to grow vegetables, we're confident that you'll have no problem bringing these fresh food sources to life.

SPRING VEGETABLES

There are numerous springtime vegetables that people typically plant between March and April. Let's take a closer look at some of the absolute easiest veggies to grow in your springtime garden.

LETTUCE

Forget about waiting for full heads of lettuce to appear. Instead, grab yourself a few packs of Mesclun Mix (mixed lettuce seeds), plant them in a row close

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together, and you'll have a delicious variety of lettuce

colors and textures that's ready to harvest in about two weeks.



Yes, that's right; if you opt for mixed baby leaves instead of full heads, you can harvest and replant all throughout the spring and summer. This is a fantastic way to ensure that you always have fresh lettuce on hand for everything from salads to wraps. Simply walk out to your garden at any point after the first two weeks, and there should be a wonderful mix waiting for you!

TIPS: Choose an area with good light and soil. Moisten the soil before you plant the seeds. After which, you should water the area daily from a watering can. Don't use a sprayer or hose.

SPINACH

Much like lettuce, you may want to plant a mixed variety of spinach seeds close together to create baby spinach that can be harvested in about three to four weeks. In both cases, you can also stagger your

planting times to ensure that you have fresh leaves ready to harvest weekly!



Once again, it's easiest to plant a mixture of spinach close together if you're planning to harvest it at the baby stage. Remember: variety is the spice of life, and you're going to want multiple flavors and textures.

Unlike lettuce, you can also plant one last batch of spinach seeds late in the fall. Cover them with mulch, and they'll often survive the winter. This will give you early spring spinach to harvest.

TIPS: Scatter the mixed seeds, then cover them lightly with soil. Next, firm the soil down and water the area well. It's vital to keep the soil covering the seeds moist until greenery begins poking its way through the ground.

SNOW PEAS

You can actually grow any variety of peas relatively easily. However, we've chosen snow peas because they're popular, easy to eat straight from the garden,



and they grow very quickly. In fact, while many other peas can take 60 to 65 days to be ready for harvesting, snow peas tend to need closer to 50 days.

Peas are well-suited to being grown in standard garden beds or via trellising. Even better, snow pod seeds are large enough for those without a lot of minimal dexterity to help out with the planting process such as young children and elderly adults.

TIPS: For best results, you should always soak pea seeds for 12 hours before planting. Plant each seed about 1 inch apart from its closest neighbors. Seeds should go about 1-1/2 inches deep, and you'll want to leave a minimum of 18 inches between each row. If you live in an area with hot summers, consider placing mulch around the growing pods. This will help cool them, which is optimal for growth.

RADISHES

If you're the type who impatiently waits for results, radishes are a great place to start. Not only will this



vegetable help flesh out your salads but it also only takes about three weeks to mature. Even better, there are a wide variety of radishes to choose from. You can select seeds that will produce spicy or sweet results, depending on your personal preferences.

Radish seeds can be planted in two seasons: spring and fall. For a continual supply, it's best to plant seeds every 10 days. However, you should not grow radishes during the heat of summer as this will provide ruinous results.

TIPS: Radishes love sun, so plant them in a sunny area. Rotate your crops every three years to avoid disease. The best timing for spring and fall radishes is approximately six weeks before the first spring frost, followed by four to six weeks before the average first fall frost. Plant seeds directly into your garden at a

depth of ½ - 1 inch. Put an inch between each seed and 12 inches between rows.

CHARD



Once again, if you want to get the quickest possible results, it's best to plant chard seeds close together and harvest them as baby leaves. Doing this will yield results from some types of chard in as few as 25 days. To brighten up your salads (and your garden), you may want to plant a variety of chard seeds. Options include red, white, yellow, and green leaves.

If you prefer to grow chard to its full size, you'll need to wait about 50 – 60 days to harvest the resulting leaves. The type of chard you choose to grow will have a big impact on what it needs from you. For example, swiss chard should be sowed from early spring to midsummer in the northern part of the US (for a fall harvest), but in the south, you can sow it in the fall to have chard in the spring.

TIPS: Swiss chard is typically planted ½ inch deep. Rows are kept about 18 inches apart. If you're allowing the chard to grow to its full height, you'll need to thin the seedlings out to provide 12 inches of space between each plant. Otherwise, you can keep them closer together for baby leaves.

KALE

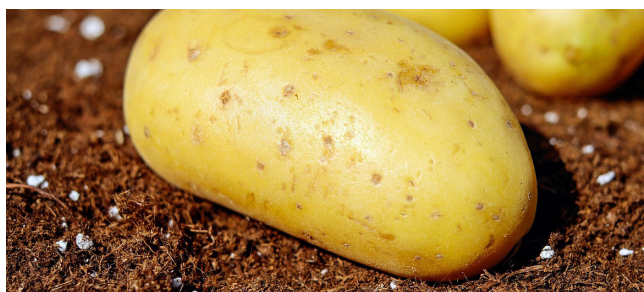
Whether you love kale or simply love to hate it, this member of the cruciferous family grows relatively quickly and requires minimal effort. You can choose between growing full-sized leaves or baby leaves, with the smaller variety coming to fruition in about three weeks. The larger leaves take an average of 40 – 60 days to be ready for harvesting.



Be aware that there are numerous types of kale available, and each one has a different flavor and texture. If you're looking for a sweet kale, try one of the Russian varieties and always harvest it when you're at the baby leaves stage. On the other hand, if you want leaves that are crinkly and dense, you should pick the so-called dinosaur kale.

TIPS: Kale loves to be planted in full sun. It also does best in loamy soil with a neutral to slightly alkaline pH. Kale grows well in the spring and fall, and it needs a well-drained environment. Seeds should be sowed ¼ - ½ inch deep. For full-sized leaves, thin the seedlings to provide 8 to 12 inches between them.

POTATOES



Are potatoes a vegetable? That depends on who you ask. But regardless of whether you view these tubers as a vegetable, they're still a great source of nutrients that can be easily grown in your garden. And there's such a wide variety of potato types that you'll never get bored!

Wait until the temperature stays above 45 degrees before you plant potatoes. If you want a second batch (or a first summer batch), you can plant them again around June 15. Use potatoes you already have to create seed potatoes. This is easiest accomplished by putting potatoes into an area that stays between 60 and 70 degrees for one to two weeks before planting. Ensure that there are at least one or two buds (or eyes) on planting day.

TIPS: Potatoes prefer light, loose, well-drained soil with a pH between 5.0 and 7.0. Dig a 6-8-inch trench, and place the potatoes 12-15 inches apart, with the eyes facing up. Allow at least 3 feet between rows. Keep weeds out of the potato patch and rotate your planting areas to provide three to four years off between crops.

SUMMER VEGETABLES

There are numerous other vegetables that are easy for gardening beginners to grow during early summer and throughout the entire summer season. By getting these seeds into the ground at the right time, you can round out your personal selection of homegrown veggies.

Be sure to double check any specific timing guidelines based on your geographic location. Just like chard has a different optimal growing system in southern and northern states, some of the following vegetables may fare better or worse in your local climate based on whether they're planted in the early, mid, or late summer.

Also, always remember to check for best practices regarding lighting, soil type, and moisture needs. Paying attention to these details will help you achieve the best possible results.

TOMATOES



Tomatoes are one of the world's most delicious vegetables (or fruits, depending on who you ask). They taste great straight off the vine and can also be sliced up and added into salads and sandwiches. Of course, they can also be diced and used in a variety of cooked meals because they're very versatile. So much so, in fact, that they've spawned an eternal argument about which category they truly belong to.

Regardless of categorization preferences, tomatoes come in a diverse variety of sizes, colors, and tastes. If you prefer to buy seeds, you'll want to grow them indoors for about four to six weeks before you transplant the seedlings into your garden. Give them lots of sunlight and heat, and these veggies will thrive!

TIPS: Tomatoes hate cold weather, so never plant them too early in the year. They need regular water and do their best with monthly fertilizer treatments. It takes six to 14 days for germination. Be careful not to plant tomatoes too close to peppers as bees will ruin the flavor of both with cross pollination. Put a row or two of some other plant between peppers and tomatoes to avoid this problem. Additionally, give tomato plants 18 to 36 inches of space between each other.

BELL PEPPERS



Bell peppers are, hands down, one of the easiest vegetables to grow. The fact that they also come in a nice variety of colors and flavors makes them even more exciting to work with! The most important thing to know about peppers is that they absolutely hate cold weather. In other words, never transplant their seedlings into the garden until after the last frost has passed.

Give these sun-worshipping veggies a lot of sunlight, regular water, and monthly fertilizer. They also prefer well-drained soil and love compost. Plant them at least 4 inches apart and be sure to harvest them once they reach a bright, waxy color.

TIPS: Don't let weeds take over the area where bell peppers are growing. Allow 18 to 36 inches between each row. Peppers will typically need 60 to 80 days to reach their ideal harvest time. If they move past their bright appearance and into a more faded look, then you've missed their proper harvesting window.

CARROTS



Carrots have similar needs to radishes, but they prefer to be planted in the summer. Unlike some of the vegetables on this list, carrots should be sown directly into the soil from the seed stage or grown in containers that they'll stay in. Don't transplant seedlings.

Carrots like loose soil and compost. They also prefer sun or partial shade. If you have harder soil, you'll need to plant a hardier, smaller variety of carrots. Nice loose soil can bring full-sized carrots to fruition within 60 to 80 days.

TIPS: If the soil on your property is hard or clumpy, you can use a loose soil inside a container to grow full-sized carrots. Wait for the top of the carrots to get big, bushy, and green before you pull out a couple for a size test. If they appear to be full-sized, you're good to go! Otherwise, keep providing fertilizer and water for two to three more weeks.

SUMMER SQUASH



Squash is a favorite vegetable for many people, and you can easily bring yellow summer squash to life in your garden. Buying squash seedlings will simplify the entire process. However, you can also start from seeds indoors and then transplant the seedlings outside.

19 Due to their vine growth, squash needs either a lot of room to spread out on the ground or a trellis to

grow. They also adore direct sunlight and grow best in well-drained soil with compost. Additionally, you'll need to fertilize yellow summer squash once a month and make sure to water these vegetables on a regular basis.

TIPS: It takes six to 12 days for germination to occur. In total, yellow summer squash needs 48 to 65 days to become fully mature. You'll know you've reached harvesting time when the squash is yellow and easy to remove by the stem. For best results, give squash 12 inches between each plant and 3 feet between every row.

CUCUMBERS



Whether you want cucumbers, dill pickles, or both, you can plant this vegetable after the last spring frost to have the two options to choose from. As a very versatile veggie, you can plant cucumbers in a container, directly in the ground, or transplant seedlings.

Like most of the food items on this list, cucumbers want to get lots of sunlight, they thrive with compost, and they need soil that's well drained. As a vine growing plant, cucumbers need lots of space. Therefore, give them a trellis, let them have ample ground space, or plant one cucumber per container.

TIPS: There needs to be 12 inches of space between each seed or seedling. You'll also want to provide three feet between rows. A sunny environment works best, but cucumbers can also be grown in a partially shady area. It takes an average of 48 to 65 days for cucumbers to be ready for harvesting.

BONUS: Are you interested in growing cucumber to make homemade dill pickles? Here's one of the easiest, quickest recipes available:

1. Cut your cucumbers into ¼ inch spears or slices. Place them inside a canning jar. You should also add some fresh dill, garlic, and peppercorns into the jar.
2. Make brine out of salt, sugar, vinegar, and water. Boil the brine until the sugar and salt dissolve.
3. Pour the brine into the jar. Seal it and stick in the refrigerator for one week.

You can also add any other vegetables or spices to the jar that you'd like for flavoring. Be aware that you don't have to use heat sealing or anything else of that sort with the can when you choose this simplistic dill pickles recipe. Simply screw the lid in place.

GREEN BEANS



Green beans are a popular vegetable that's fairly easy to grow. However, you'll want to pay close attention to the type of green bean seeds that you purchase. For example, half runners have strings, which makes it necessary to pick them from the vine and string them before they can be used. On the other hand, bush beans are much easier to work with and can be pulled directly off their bush.

No matter what type of green beans you choose to grow, you'll need to directly sow them into the ground. They need adequate sunlight and, like most veggies, they like compost and well-drained soil. Lightly cover the seeds with compost by using a hoe or a rake.

Expect green beans to take 55 to 65 days until they can be harvested. Although they like to be in sunlight, areas that are commonly above 85 degrees require some partial shade. Plant green beans 6 inches apart and in rows that are 18 inches apart.

TIPS: As long as you're giving your green bean plants enough water, they should start sprouting within a few **20** weeks. As they grow, a lack of water will make them

begin to shrivel up. If their hue starts to turn yellow, you'll need to introduce a better source of nitrogen into your soil. This can be accomplished with bone meal or blood meal.

ZUCCHINI



Depending on where you live, zucchini is either a late spring or early summer vegetable. The main rule is to keep it away from frost, so don't sow the seeds in your garden until the last frost is over. Zucchini joins the majority of veggies in this Gardening 101 Guide by being a big fan of sunlight, well-drained soil, and compost.

Zucchini plants need a lot of room. It's best to give them about 2 feet to each side, along with 2 feet between rows. Sow the seeds 1 inch deep or plant a pre-started seedling. The best tasting zucchini is harvested once the veggies reach a length of 6 inches. Their rind shouldn't be hardened. Simply remove each zucchini from the vine with a knife.

TIPS: Never grow from than 12 zucchini plants in the same general area. Be sure to protect young plants with row covers. Otherwise, they'll become much more susceptible to damage from squash vine borers and squash bugs. Your zucchinis will grow to their fullest potential if you use a liquid fertilizer to soak them as soon as they start to blossom.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Always remember that every environment will be more or less conducive to growing certain vegetables. Therefore, if something is listed as easy on this list but you're unable to grow it, don't give up! Your area may not be right for that plant or you may need to do some more research into the proper planting conditions. Either way, the more you experiment with gardening, the better you'll get at growing your own food supply.

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