



# MEMBERS UPDATE

June 2023

## IS MODERN ARCHERY FOR ME?

UPGRADE YOUR FIRE MAKIN' GAME

18 MEDICINAL PLANTS YOU CAN GROW IN YOUR YARD

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You need to start a fire, but your fire starter is missing. You also don't have any matches or lighters. How in the world are you supposed to start a fire now? Read on to learn how!



I have always found that the best way to survive in the world is to be a well-rounded individual, unafraid of learning new skills and ways of doing things. This is because these little nuggets of information could ultimately mean the difference between life and death. That is why we will be introducing new methods and ideas from time to time to help build your cumulative knowledge of overall self-preservation. Our subject for discussion is an ancient method of silent, but deadly skill; useful for hunting/survival and, surprisingly, for self-defense as well. Due to the large scope of the entire sport of archery, we shall concentrate on the hunting/survival and self-defense aspect, looking at types of bows, arrows and their points, and what to look for when selecting your equipment.



## One Or The Other, Or Both, Whatever Works For You

Out of four types of bows used in archery, we will only be dealing with half of them, greatly simplifying our lesson at hand.

Recurve bows were basically the first bows to hit the world stage, good golly, it seems like eons ago, having changed little in their appearance and performance, but vastly improved with modern materials to make them lighter in weight and able to withstand greater pulling force on the string. The nice thing about these bows is that they are the cheaper of the bows on the market and would be a



## Is Modern Archery For Me?

By Eric Austgen

good starter bow for anyone getting into the sport or on a fixed budget.

These bows will have 25 to 30-pound pull on the lighter weight models, but expect to be doing some serious gym time if you want to tackle the 55 to 70-pound pull on the heavier guys. It should be noted that muscle strength will be needed, not only for drawing the string back, but also holding the position, especially when tracking yummy morsels in the back forty. One good thing about the weight is that the bows come in a fixed or take-down model, which allows you to either have a bow in one weight only or the option to switch out different lengths of limbs to increase or decrease the poundage.

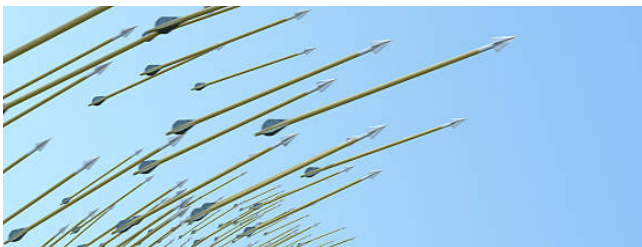
While light, the recurve bow is a bit longer and can be hard to handle in the field. Due to the low power and speed of the arrow, one must be closer to their target in order to affect any meaningful damage, and this will require more field training which encompasses proper kill shots and being "one" with the prey you will be stalking.

If you aren't interested in getting a full upper body workout each time you shoot your bow, you should consider the relative ease of the compound bow. These bows use adjustable cams and pulley system, allowing the archer to draw the string further back than would be possible with a recurve, thus avoiding a potential appointment with that tube of Ben-Gay later.



Unlike the recurve bow, the compound has a flatter shooting accuracy; can be shorter in length, making it versatile in the field; and will generate more power with little effort from the shooter. Owing to this fact, bows in the 40-pound range can easily take down medium to large-size games at a longer distance without you breaking a sweat. However, your skill as an archer will be the key to success when hunting.

These bows tend to run on the expensive side, as base models start at about three Ben Franklins and upward if you want to add on some bling accessories like sights, quivers, counter weights, and arrow rests. You can also add maintenance costs to the equation, as the compound needs to be serviced at least once a year, usually by the outfit that sold it to you. However, it should stay “sighted” in between services, but that will depend on how often you use it.



## Raining Shafts Of Terror

Like firearms, bows have a codependent relationship with their ammunition, from both working in concert for perfect shot placement to using the proper weight and size of projectile. This is why it will be paramount to match the correct arrows to the bow you are using.

The right arrow heft will correspond to your bow’s poundage. Simply put, the arrow will be lighter or heavier, based on the weight your bow is pulling. The reason for this is because the arrow has a tendency to “snake” while sailing through the air. You should probably ask a pro as to the weight and length of arrow you will need for your bow to cut down on the “snaking” and to prevent the arrow from going through your hand if too short or from being out of balance if it’s too long. A general rule of thumb is to keep at least an inch or two of arrow past the riser when drawing back to unleash stealthy death.

Some arrows are still made from wood, but they are more likely to be manufactured from carbon fiber, aluminum, and a composite of both. They all will have a flight stabilizer added to the rear, either a plastic vane or good, old-fashioned feathers. These arrows will all have their own specific uses, such as for paper targets, full-on archery matches, and hunting/survival applications. But despite the use of modern materials to maintain rigidity, arrow spines will begin to weaken with use and should be replaced when accuracy begins to diminish. It should also be noted that improper storage methods can contribute to the breakdown of the materials used to make arrows. So, keep them away from chemicals and avoid any prolonged exposure to the sun and elements.



## A Long Road From Flecked Obsidian

Turning to the business end, the arrowhead will also be a determining factor in the balance and flight of the arrow. And you had better thank your lucky stars that modern arrows come with inserts so that you can interchange heads without fuss. That way, you won’t need to hoard arrows with different heads, thus averting an avalanche of flecheted injury to rain down on someone who just wanted to grab a light sweater from the closet because it’s kind of drafty in here. Again, this decision should be left up to an arching pro, as too heavy or light of an arrowhead will prevent the arrow from flying true. That could present a very serious danger to everything around you, even inanimate objects.

It would be wise to have an understanding of the arrowheads available before heading off to the archery big box store, just to get an idea of what appeals to you and to keep your shopping experience short and sweet. There are a total of five different types of arrowheads from which to choose. They are, in no particular order, blunt,



broad, bullet, field, and fishing tips/heads. Just kidding, they were in alphabetical order.

Blunt tips look exactly like their name implies; a blunt cylinder of metal capped at the front of the arrow. These tips are excellent for hunting small game and birds.

When people think of arrowheads, they tend to visualize a triangle stone or metal piece strapped to the arrow with a string of sinew. In the case of the broad head, this would be true, albeit sans sinew and stone. The modern broadhead is sharpened to a razor edge to ensure a clean kill on large sized animals. They will vary in size, weight, and blade conformation, so ask the pro about that.

The tip of the bullet head is a bit pointier than an actual bullet, but that's where it makes up for the lack of velocity that comes with a firearm; it ensures better penetration. These heads are employed in indoor and soft target shooting, and for taking down small game.

For anyone old enough to remember using or seeing one, the field tip looks almost like the point of a fountain pen. But make no mistake, these bad boys will be spilling blood, not ink, from those pesky field targets and tastier small game animals. Ok, maybe a little ink from the paper field targets.

Lastly, we have a tip used solely for fishing. This is great because firearms just make a mess of things, and sitting around waiting for a bite in a survival situation is absolutely unacceptable. This tip has a tapered shaft that sports a small, sharp triangular point, to which rear pointing barbs have been attached so that fish retrieval will be a breeze after you shoot it. Just remember to tie a fishing line onto the arrow for said retrieval. It may sound silly to mention; however, it's the small details that buckles people in the end. So, be mindful of such things.

## Kicking The Tires And Looking Under The Hood

Just as one would do research before purchasing a firearm, the same due diligence should be applied to acquiring an archer's bow. Since more muscle groups will be impacted when using a bow, it would

be wise to take a trip down to your local archery range and test drive some models. However, there are a few things to keep in mind when inspecting a bow.



The first thing to consider would be the length of the draw. Everyone is built differently, which means arm lengths will vary, and thus, the draw length. This is determined by measuring from the back of the riser to the valley of the string when the string is fully drawn. Although you need not worry about this with recurve bows, it is essential to get this measured when using a compound job.

On the heels of length, we have weight. The draw weight will determine how quickly the arrow is launched, its terminal velocity, and the flatness of its trajectory. Therefore one should inquire as to the peak draw weight. This is because the greater it is, the more effort will be expended to draw back the string.

Most archers want an arrow that runs fast, flat, and true, kind of like a torpedo in the air. This is where a check of the ATA (Archery Trade Association) and IBO (International Bowhunters Organization) speed is advisable. Basically, the faster the arrow, the flatter its trajectory, and in the end, it will be able to better compensate for minor miscalculations in target distance.

Another consideration for the compound bow should be axle to axle length, as short bows are more maneuverable in tight quarters and less forgiving to shoot. Due to the short risers, these bows are lighter than longer recurve bows.



As I mentioned before, recurve bows can be fixed or take-down models. Neither one of these factors will affect the bow's performance. However, take-down bows are generally more desirable because they can be easily transported.

As the bow seems to be length-centric and subject to Freudian therapy, the Archery Manufacturers Organization decided to put together a set of standards to define everything to do with the bow, including length, so that everyone would be on the same sheet of music. So check the AMO length against your measurements and come out with a perfect match every time.



## Hunting And Survival And Self Defense Arching, Oh My!

To me, these three activities have always been intertwined, as I see no difference between them. While I recognize that hunting is a way of life for some as a method for supplementing existing food stores with fresh meat or a little “one with nature” zen-like clarity session stuff, my brain has always considered hunting as a primary means of survival. And in some parts of this country, many people wouldn't bat an eye at that argument as it is their daily reality.

On the other end of the stick, self-defense can not solely be applied to two-legged critters up to no good. Those of you who live in the rural areas of this great land can attest to the fact that the predators in residence can be just as nasty as humans, and must be dealt with in the same lethal manner. That is why it is always wise to be armed in places where humans do not reign supreme.

There is no end to the choice of bows on the market, and it may seem overwhelming when trying to make a decision. However (with the information presented here), you will better understand what to look for and what you are getting yourself into if you decide to plunge into this shooting discipline. Then again, after reading over all of this, you might decide it would be better to stick with what you know, and not try to master a new skill at this time. Either way, these are the basic facts of archery without going into too many unnecessary details. I would, however, encourage you to spend a little time doing some further research on the subject. You may find, as I have, that archery can be very useful for doing the jobs that firearms cannot do.

So, is archery worth a plug nickel? I would have to say that researching this topic has certainly piqued my interest enough to pursue the subject further. It was the fish tip that did it, the very idea of catching fish wholesale with this method, especially when hunger is gnawing at your belly. This is very appealing to me. However, I can't say that I'm ready to trade my firearm for an archery set, and not because it can be physically demanding. Rather, I would like to keep my focus on the threat or potential entree without trying to calculate trajectories, distance, and the like, especially in a situation where seconds count.

As I have never forced my opinion on you nor have I demanded you do what I say, this will strictly be your choice. But as for my two cents, archery seems to be a worthy skill to have in the cranial and steel arsenal. One need not go crazy and lose themselves in the sport. Quite the contrary, one could concentrate and train on a certain arching discipline to keep in reserve if they should find themselves without a firearm. The best way to get started is to find your local archery range, have a chin wag with the club pro, and get the fundamentals down. After that, you can continue on with one-on-one instruction, or if you have the wherewithal, self instruction. I prefer the latter as the learning process is more satisfying and personal, rather than having a teacher push their way of doing it on you that may not be comfortable or lead to learning bad habits. So, until next time, dear reader, stay safe and let's be careful out there.





# BLACK POWDER 101: A BASIC PRIMER TO GET YOU STARTED

## BY ERIC AUSTGEN

As many of my faithful readers know, I am not much of a fan of modern technology, although I don't shun it all together; it seems to be a necessary evil, emphasis on the evil, to rely on to navigate in this world. One reason technology doesn't impress me all that much is that it will invariably be tied to some sort of life-sustaining force, and when that is severed, chaos and panic generally ensue. That is why I love keeping old know-how tucked away in the gray matter so that when the grid finally bursts, it will be a minor blip on my radar. Black powder shooting technology is one of those skills that should absolutely be a part of your cranial library, as you can easily gather all materials, even from nature, if supply lines are cut off.

### BLACK POWDER: THE ORIGIN STORY



The components that would form the basis of our subject were first mixed together in 9th Century China by a bunch of alchemists. Having grown bored with

trying to turn base things into gold, they decided immortality had a better sparkle to it, and set out to find an elixir to do just that. What they got instead was a recipe that burned them and their houses down and did, indeed, give immortality to a great many people down through the centuries, although not in the manner they had originally intended.

The term black powder was used in the latter part of the 19th Century to differentiate the gunpowder from the newly developed smokeless powder. Though it can be black in color, it also shows up as an off-white or tan color, depending on the manufacturer.

Differences between black powder and smokeless are quite obvious, considering the latter supplanted the former as a reliable lead propellant but not a detractor, especially when it could be one's last-ditch alternative. While it does produce a large amount of thick, white smoke, which would easily give one's position away and obscure vision when attempting to acquire the next target, that smoke can be used as a means to escape or get to a sheltered, unobscured position to reload and fire.



It will burn faster in open air conditions, hence the term flash in the pan, a reference to what occurs in the primer pan of flintlock firearms. It also has 0.3 Kcal/gram less thermal energy than the 1 Kcal/gram that smokeless packs. Still respectable statistics and enough to get the job done.

## HOMEMADE IS THE BEST KIND



The generally accepted recipe for homemade black powder is 75 parts potassium nitrate (saltpeter), 15 parts charcoal, and 10 parts sulfur. Now, if you have a mind to do this at home,

it is important to know that one can legally possess only up to 50 pounds of black powder. However, there is absolutely no prohibition on how much of each ingredient you can store. Just saying.

It should also be noted that a great deal of care and attention needs to be paid to every part of the black powder-making process, as you don't want to end up like the original inventors. Many of these ingredients can be found from online suppliers, local druggists', or, in a pinch, nature.

The first component you will want to get out of the way is the charcoal. Beech, birch, oak, fir, pine, spruce, and willow are the best woods to make charcoal. These woods should be boiled down over a good fire. Once this has been accomplished, the wood should be ground down using a hand mill or a large mortar and pestle.

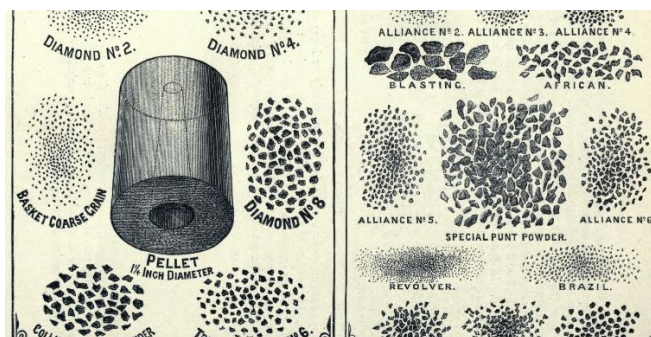
When the wood has been sufficiently ground, it should be combined with the sulfur and mixed for several hours in a ball mill, the result being a fine powder. While you are waiting for this stage of production to conclude, you should commence chilling the isopropyl or denatured alcohol. Normally, two and one half cups of the stuff are needed for every 100 grams of the charcoal/sulfur mixture. However, if you plan on having your powder magazine fully stocked in a short time, I would advise you to chill it by the gallon or more.

After the charcoal/sulfur mixture has spent the requisite amount of time in the ball mill, and your alcohol has been nicely chilled, you will now tend to the saltpeter. Every 100 grams of potassium nitrate should be dissolved in a quarter of a cup of boiling water, with the charcoal/sulfur being added and stirred until thoroughly combined.

Make sure you have your chilled alcohol handy, but safely away from open heating sources, in a good-sized container, and ready to mix with the piping-hot powder base. This is where your skill as a Jello whisker will actually be of some practical use other than just for making delicious desserts. Once the hot hits the cold, start stirring as fast as you can to combine the ingredients, and then get it to a freezer to get the overall temperature down to 32 degrees.

This would probably be a nominal time to make yourself a sandwich, do some light housework, or work on another project. Just be sure to check the temperature of the mixture every now and again to make sure it doesn't freeze completely. When it has reached the desired 32 degrees, the mixture can now be strained through a piece of cheesecloth to remove the liquid. This should be done until all the moisture has been drawn off, as any leftover dampness will produce a bad batch, and that would be a major bummer to find out at the end with all the work you have put into it.

Once all the moisture has been removed from your mixture, you should have pellets as a result. These should be spread out on a paper towel in the sun or in a warm area until dry, then dampened again, forced through a sieve, and dried again. The fineness of the powder can be regulated by employing mesh screens of varying sizes. When you're happy with the end product, store it in plastic containers in a cool, dry, and dark spot to minimize any explosive potential.





## WHAT TYPE AND SIZE POWDER TO USE

There is a wide variety of powders to choose from on the market, but the most important thing to look for is a powder that burns clean and doesn't leave behind residue that will gum up the works after four or five shots. Two name brands known for their reliability are Swiss and Goex. However, I discovered a year or so back a powder called American Pioneer that has improved and cleaned up traditional black powder to the point where you will not need to lube or swab between shots because the burned powder turns into water vapor. This might be due to the omission of sulfur in their recipe, but that is a plus, as one will not need to worry about that form of corrosion eating away at their shooter, and for those with delicate sensibilities, the elimination of the rotten egg smell.

The three types of powder used for our type of shooting are two through four; F, or FF, FFF, and FFFF. The Fs stand for the size of the powder's granules, FF being a size 16 mesh, FFF a size 20 mesh, and FFFF a size 40 mesh. The mesh refers to how many wires per inch are used in sifting, and like shotshell gauges, small is larger and large is smaller.

Flintlock enthusiasts will find FFFF to be a great powder to use, as it is fine enough to get the quick-burning flash needed to prime the pan. It is also a fine powder to use if one dry-balls their percussion muzzleloader. You can simply pour some through the nipple opening or drum cleanout screw, cap it, and fire. However, using a bullet puller attached to the end of the cleaning rod would be easier, especially in areas where one can not safely discharge their weapon.

Although not as fine as FFFF, FFF still has a respectable fast burn rate which is needed when paired with the revolver due to the short distance the bullet travels down the barrel. The powder must completely burn off to get maximum velocity and decrease the residual powder from severe fouling between shots and reloads. This is the recommended powder for replicas and original handguns chambered for .31, .36, .44, and .45 caliber.

Lastly, FF is used in all muzzleloading rifles and

carbines, from flintlock to percussion. However, just to throw a monkey wrench into the gears, FFF can be used in longer-barreled firearms as well. The FF powder is for use with .50 and higher caliber long barrels, while FFF picks up the slack with the .45 caliber and under-crowd. This is a perfect time to experiment with different loads and powder sizes in conjunction with different barrel lengths. It should also be noted that FF is used in .10, .12, .16, and .20 gauge side-by-side coach guns for those interested in muzzleloading shotguns.



## THE PROPER BULLET FOR YOUR SHOOTER

There are two types of bullets used when shooting black powder firearms - conical and ball. They are made of 99% pure lead, which is the recommended material to throw through original and replica barrels, due to the materials used in their manufacture. Modern muzzleloaders constructed of the same steel as their smokeless brethren can accommodate both lead and jacketed bullets.

Lead bullets are by far the cheapest and easiest bullets to buy or make. Many single and multi-cavity conical and ball bullet molds from different makers proliferate the market, Lee molds being the best, as the company builds a tough mold in many hard-to-find calibers. A couple of different online dealers can supply 5-pound bars of pure lead ready to go into the melting pot straight from the package. If you don't want the extra work of casting your own bullets, there is a plethora of ammo suppliers that sell black powder bullets in bulk bags.

Jacketed bullets are all conical in nature, with some having a hollow point. Many will have plastic tips and plugs to stabilize them in flight, or will be wrapped in a sabot to keep them aligned in the barrel. Added pains in the keister compared to the lead bullets, but some people don't seem to mind it, so more power to you. These guys can only be purchased in bulk or by the box, as I doubt any of

us have the capital to afford start-up on jacketed bullet-making facilities and machinery.

Round balls were the traditional bullet used up until the introduction of the Minie Conical Bullet a short time before the North/South cage match. They were used well after conical bullets entered the fray for the simple fact that round balls were actually more lethal than their conical counterparts. The statistical evidence from the period shows this, as does eyewitness corroboration by the guys who were there. In his autobiography, gunners guru and .44 Magnum inventor, Elmer Keith, related a story about his growing up in early 1900s Utah. It seems that young Elmer grew up around more than a few ex-Confederate cavalymen who taught him how to properly shoot the 1851 Colt Navy he owned. Mr. Keith recalls that one of these fellers had told him that a well-loaded revolver with a ball round was capable of penetrating the heavy uniform and gear worn by other cavalymen, causing a fatal hit every time. Another positive feature of round ball bullets is that they won't tumble like conical bullets, especially if the muzzle crown is marred, and they can be used in both smooth and rifled barrels.

The Minie Conical was something of a technological marvel when it hit the man-killing scene. Aside from the conical shape, the base was hollow, with three gas/lube rings on the outside of the bullet. The rings were filled with tallow to seal the bullet in the barrel and prevent gas from escaping when the rifle or carbine was discharged. The hollow base design was pure genius and would be used later on the .45/50 Springfield Carbine cartridge. The gas pressure caused the hollow base to expand in the barrel, getting a solid purchase on the rifling, causing the bullet to exit the barrel while spinning like a perfect football toss. It was thought that, in theory and practice, it would pack a more lethal penetrating punch because of the conical design. Yes; but death from this bullet most of the time came from the result of blunt force trauma and amputations of broken limbs, with the subsequent infections killing the soldier. This is a choice bullet for my Civil War reenactor purist friends to use when they want to go hot with their Springfields or Enfields, only at the range, of course.

## THIS IS WHAT MAKES IT GO



The final integral component you will need is the powder's ignition source. As this isn't too complicated or long of a subject, we'll make it short and sweet.

Flintlock firearms are pretty straightforward; the flint sparks the powder in the primer pan, which ignites the powder in the barrel, and ejects the bullet. Quality flints can be purchased through Dixie Gun Works online or through their snail mail order catalog, which is still only five bucks.

Percussion caps are available in two different sizes, No. 10 and No. 11. The No.10 is used on revolvers due to their short length, while the No. 11 caps are used on muzzleloaders, as they are longer and tapered to get a good grip on the nipple. These are available in single tins of 100, or one can buy in bulk and get a case of 5000, depending on how much shooting you plan on doing.

## ALL THANKS TO G. GORDON LIDDY

Normally, I would summarize what we have learned or provide some nuggets of wisdom as a closing. However, I would like to thank the man who carved out an exemption for private citizens to own black powder and the ingredients to make it. That man was G. Gordon Liddy. In his autobiography "Will," Mr. Liddy spoke of working on federal explosives legislation, but how he did not want to deny the American citizen the right to own black powder, so he recommended a set amount. It became law, and here we are. The reason for his doing this, other than not infringing the citizenry's rights? He remembered fondly making cardboard tube firecrackers in his youth, and wanted others to share the same joy he did when that powder makes a helluva roar. So, to you, G-man, rest easy and thanks a million, and to you, dear reader, stay safe and let's be careful out there.





## 18 MEDICINAL PLANTS YOU CAN GROW IN YOUR YARD

Long before there were doctors, humans had a form of medicine. Although it may not always work as well as a pharmaceutical solution, medicine is all around us. Medicinal plants provide the basis for medicine, and when the SHTF, they'll do so again.

Keep in mind that several pharmaceuticals still use flowers and plants. For instance, the lotus flower assists your body to reduce bronchitis, diarrhea, and high temperature.

After the medicine you can gather is gone, you'll have no choice but to return to nature's solutions. Fortunately, you can grow several medicinal plants in your backyard. If you begin growing them now, you should have everything you need to deal with various medical conditions.

### MEDICINAL PLANTS THAT CAN BE GROWN IN YOUR BACKYARD

Sure, you can find many medicinal plants by foraging for them, but the truly easy way to do it is by planting them in your backyard. That way, you'll have full control over what plants are available, and you won't have to go far to retrieve the correct plant when you're in need.

#### 1. Aloe Vera



Aloe vera is one of the most popular plants around. You can find it in almost anything, including moisturizers, shampoos, and healing ointments.

So, why is it so popular? Well, the first time you get a sunburn after society collapses, you will be happy to reach for this plant. After all, the phytochemicals inside this plant can treat burns and cuts. Additionally, as you rub the goo inside the plant onto your sunburn, it will also stimulate skin renewal.

Aloe vera provides refreshing relief from sunburns and should be rubbed on your skin a few times daily. It'll take some of the sting out of your burn and ensure that it quickly fades into a suntan.

#### 2. Garlic

Most people love to eat garlic, despite the bad breath it can cause. And that's a good thing because it lowers the risk of heart disease, improves your cholesterol level, and controls high blood pressure.

The best part is that this isn't the end of its medicinal properties. It can also help treat tooth pain and relieve some viral infections, the common cold included.

Garlic is definitely something you will want to plant in your garden. It'll make your food taste infinitely better and improve your health. As an added bonus, it'll protect you from vampires, lol. Sounds good to us!

### 3. Sage



Sage can be a healing plant, and you can transform it into an essential oil. Both of these states can offer health benefits, which makes this one of the best plants you can grow.

One of the most beloved properties of sage is that it works for external and internal health issues. If you use it externally, you'll receive relief from mouth and cold sores. Internally, its usefulness shoots up, as it helps to ease stomach pain and diarrhea, lowers cholesterol and sugar, and boosts memory retention.

All in all, you'll definitely want to plant sage in your yard. When a single plant can help with all the issues listed above, it simply makes sense to keep it around.

### 4. Marshmallow Root

This sweet-sounding plant isn't going to give you the taste you desire, but it might save your life. Before you decide to pass on it, let's take a closer look at its many helpful properties.

It can help treat:

- Dry coughs and colds
- Dry mouth
- Low saliva production

- Bacterial infections, including urinary tract infections, bladder infections, and respiratory infections
- Tonsillitis and bronchitis
- Joint pain caused by inflammation/swelling
- Inflammation of the lining of the stomach
- Digestive issues, including constipation, diarrhea, and stomach ulcers
- Inflammatory bowel disease, leaky gut syndrome, and autoimmune disorders
- Burns, insect bites, wounds, or poultices on the skin
- Dermatitis and eczema of the skin
- Water retention, PMS, and bloating

Yes, you really can get all of these benefits from one plant. It certainly makes the marshmallow root more than worth the room you'd have to make to plant it.

### 5. Chamomile



The picture shows a mortar and pestle grinding up chamomile flowers, along with what appears to be regular medicine. It symbolizes chamomile's numerous medical properties. No matter how you feel, chamomile tea will help you relax. That's due to its ability to help you fight anxiety, depression, stress, and insomnia.

As if that wasn't good enough, chamomile boasts many more useful properties. For example, it is an antioxidant, improving your immune function, and making your body healthier in general. Furthermore, it can reduce swelling, reduce pain, relieve constipation, and relax your muscles.

With all these benefits, is it any wonder that people take a chamomile tea break every so often?

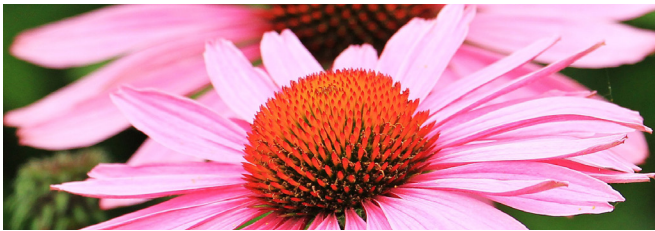


## 6. Pot Marigold

Pot marigold works much like aloe vera, so ensure you have at least one of these plants in your yard. Its primary usage is as a topical treatment, and it helps minor burns, infected cuts, blisters, and scars heal faster.

Just like aloe vera, though, it also has other useful properties. Not only can it get rid of acne, dandruff, and warts, but it also helps reduce pain, muscle cramps, and stomach ulcers.

## 7. Echinacea



First used medicinally during the 18th century, echinacea originally served as a general ‘cure-all.’ Its many uses from that time include treating scarlet fever, syphilis, malaria, blood poisoning, and diphtheria. Of course, it’s more commonly used to reduce the flu and common cold duration today. It can also treat associated symptoms, including sore throat, fever, and cough.

Several studies suggest that echinacea contains active substances that relieve pain, boost immune function, reduce inflammation, and have antiviral, hormonal, and antioxidant effects. For this reason, herbalists may recommend echinacea to treat urinary tract infections, vaginal yeast infections, ear infections, athlete’s foot, sinusitis, hay fever, and slow-healing wounds. Preliminary studies also suggest that echinacea may help inhibit colon tumors when combined with chicoric acid.

## 8. Siberian Ginseng

There are several ginseng varieties, all of which are believed to have adaptogenic uses. Siberian ginseng promotes the most health benefits, fighting common ailments and relieving stress.

Siberian ginseng is common in Chinese medicine, and it’s quickly gaining steam in the US too.

## 9. Great Burdock



This highly useful plant can assist you with a diverse list of health issues, and can be used for several purposes, including:

- “Blood purifier” to clear the bloodstream of toxins
- Diuretic, as it helps eliminate excess water by increasing urine output
- Topical remedy for skin problems such as eczema, acne, and psoriasis

Other things it may provide relief for include gout and rheumatism. The underground tuber is also known to help stimulate the appetite, which can be very helpful for treating anorexia. In some cases, it’s even been a treatment for AIDS, diabetes, and cancer.

## 10. Great Yellow Gentian



The root of the great yellow gentian - and occasionally the bark - are used to make medicine. It is known to help the following conditions:

- Loss of appetite
- Diarrhea
- Bloating
- Heartburn
- Muscle spasms
- Heartburn
- Wounds (topical)
- Cancer (topical)
- Sinus infections

**WARNING:** Make 100% sure that you harvest Great Yellow Gentian instead of the very similar-

looking, and quite toxic, White Hellebore. Accidental poisonings have occurred.

## 11. Gotu Kola

This is yet another plant that can assist you with many different things. For example, it's known to help boost cognitive function and may even help with Alzheimer's disease.

Other things it helps with include varicose veins, liver disease, bladder disease, and the hardening of your arteries. Additionally, it may help as a topical treatment for psoriasis and as a way to reduce pregnancy-induced stretch marks. Finally, it has shown some promise in relieving stress and anxiety, along with diabetes.

You'll need to be careful around this plant, however, because it can sometimes cause:

- Drowsiness
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Diarrhea
- Skin irritation
- Rare cases of liver disease
- Potential for an allergic reaction

## 12. Tea Tree



Tea tree oil is a fantastic way to treat several medical conditions, such as sunburns and bacterial infections. There is also some evidence that it may help kill bacteria, fungi, and mites; and reduce allergic skin reactions by decreasing swelling.

It is most commonly used to treat toenail fungus, athlete's foot, and acne. Some people also use it as a treatment for bad breath, lice, and dandruff, although the medical community has no scientific consensus regarding its effectiveness for these particular uses.

## 13. Chinese Yam

Although Chinese yams are most common in China, they also grow in North America. They can treat:

- Poor appetite
- Chronic diarrhea
- Asthma
- Dry coughs
- Frequent urination
- Diabetes

You can apply it topically to ulcers, boils, and abscesses on the skin. The juices from the Chinese yam's leaf can also treat snake bites and scorpion stings.

## 14. Peppermint



Peppermint oil, derived from the peppermint plant, has been used since ancient Greece, Egypt, and Rome. It primarily aided digestive conditions back then. Now, its uses include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), other digestive problems, the common cold, sinus infections, headaches, and other conditions.

You can also use peppermint oil topically to treat headaches, muscle aches, joint pain, and itching. Aromatherapists also believe it can assist in treating coughs and colds, reducing pain, improving mental function, and reducing stress.

Sadly, despite being used for centuries, scientists haven't devoted a lot of time to studying peppermint oil. One of the only things we know for sure is that this oil appears to help patients with IBS.

## 15. Rosemary

Much like peppermint oil, the usage of rosemary to treat medical issues goes back to ancient times. It has traditionally treated issues such as alleviating muscle pain, improving memory, boosting the immune and circulatory system, and promoting hair growth.



It is now believed to assist with the following:

- Indigestion
- Prevents brain aging
- It may protect against macular degeneration
- Cancer
- Neurological protection
- Anti-inflammatory compounds

Be aware that taking too much rosemary may cause you to experience vomiting, spasms, coma, and fluid in your lungs. Taking an extremely high dose has also been known to cause miscarriages.

## 16. Thyme



Thyme works well in your food and as a medicine. However, you'll want to drink thyme tea instead of taking the essential oil version of this herb. When taken as a tea, it can help with the following:

- Respiratory support
- Reduces inflammation
- Antimicrobial properties
- Reduces germs in food
- Improves gut microbes
- Improves protective gastric mucus layers in your stomach
- Increases appetite
- Supports healthy liver functions

Thyme works great unless you're allergic to it. Symptoms of an allergic reaction include skin sensitivity (if you touch thyme leaves) or nausea, heartburn, diarrhea, and vomiting if you eat or drink thyme tea.

## 17. Dandelion

You might have classified dandelions as little more than a weed, but you should seriously reconsider your classification. This little flower contains zinc, potassium, iron, and vitamins A, B, C, and D. Talk



Dandelions have traditionally been used as a diuretic. Other ways to help you include improving an upset stomach, improving appetite, fighting inflammation, and working as a mild laxative.

Dandelions have also been studied to see if they can assist with gallbladder and liver functions, but there is no consensus on this yet.

## 18. Self-Heal



Yes, believe it or not, one of the plants we're featuring today is called 'Self-Heal.' It was widely used by Native Americans and may still help you today!

It has properties that allow it to do the following:

- Useful as an eyewash
- Dermatological aid
- Wash for bruises, diabetic sores, cuts, and acne
- Sore throats

The Iroquois found it to be especially useful. According to them, it can be used as an antidiarrheal, emetic, antiemetic, blood purifier, cold remedy, cough medicine, gastrointestinal aid, gynecological aid, hemorrhoid remedy, orthopedic aid, pulmonary aid, respiratory aid, tuberculosis remedy, sedative, and venereal aid.

Today, it mostly treats sore throats.

## BONUS: A FEW EXTRA PLANTS

Every plant we've discussed so far will help you with various ailments. Now, let's look at some plants that may not be available in the US but can help people living in other countries.

### Plantain



Like bananas, plantains are a food staple in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. They provide a great source of fiber and can help prevent heart disease, diverticular disease, constipation, and diabetes. They're also rich in antioxidants, which help fight free radicals in your body. Other benefits include supporting the immune system, lowering blood pressure, and plenty of B6 to help your heart and mind remain healthy.

### Chickweed

You can find chickweed throughout North America and Europe. It has been used as a folk remedy for centuries and may provide some assistance with the following:

- Weight loss
- Digestion support
- Expectorant (helps you cough)
- Reduces inflammation
- Promotes wound healing
- Fights against germs

**WARNING:** Children, pregnant women, and women who are breastfeeding should NOT take chickweed. Also, if you take chickweed in higher than recommended amounts, you could deal with nausea, upset stomach, diarrhea, vomiting, and a rash.

### Willow



The bark of the willow tree has been used since 400 BCE. People were advised to chew on the bark to reduce inflammation and fever. Now, it treats headaches, lower back pain, and osteoarthritis.

There is also limited evidence to suggest that willow bark is good for menstrual cramps, fever, flu, tendonitis, bursitis, and cancer. However, the medical community hasn't agreed on whether it truly works for these conditions. Of course, if the world is basically over and you've got a painful bout of bursitis, you might as well try it, right?

## FINAL THOUGHTS

All 21 plants listed in this article would make an excellent idea for your next plant. Look through the conditions listed underneath each plant to decide which will work best for you and your family. For example, if someone has an issue with digestion, you'll probably want to plant rosemary. On the other hand, if someone is prone to getting sore throats, then you'll want some self-heal in your garden.

No matter what plants you decide on - and there's no wrong answer - you'll be in a better position than most after the SHTF. If you get along with your neighbors, you might even want to open the apocalypse version of an apothecary, complete with trades that can help you tremendously.



# Upgrade Your Fire Makin' Game

It's time to make a fire, but you can't seem to hack it. And, of course, you didn't spend a lot of time working on the fire piece of your SHTF plan because you were certain it would be a breeze. So, what do you do?

The good news is that there are many, many techniques that can help you build a roaring fire. Even better, you'll learn how to create fire out of thin air during an emergency. It's so easy that anyone can do it! All you need is to learn how, and you'll be starting fires in no time.

## Six Of The Oddest (but proven) Ways To Start A Fire!

You need to start a fire, but your fire starter is missing. You also don't have any matches or lighters. How in the world are you supposed to start a fire now? Read on to learn how!

### An Aluminum Can

Okay, okay, we know what you're thinking – how in the world is an aluminum can going to help you start a fire? Especially without matches! Well, all you need to do is find some clay (which is abundant in the wild) and polish the bottom of the can. It may take a few times to get it done right – you'll need the bottom shiny and nice.

Now that your can is in shape, hold it out to the sunlight. Reflect the light until you've got a good angle, then put your tinder out in that spot. You'll need to wait a bit for it to work, but soon you'll see the first tendrils of smoke. Once this happens, hold and blow lightly on it. This should get the ember burning better, and you can add the burning tinder to your kindling pile.

Voila! You've harnessed the power of fire without requiring a lighter or any matches.

### Steel Wool And A Battery



If you find yourself in an urban survival scenario, you're going to want to look for a 9-volt battery and some super fine-grade steel wool. Take your wool and fluff some of it up. Next, take the fibers

and stick them into your tinder bundle. Then, you'll touch the connections from the 9-volt battery directly to the steel wool, and, like magic, you'll see it ignite. As the steel wool burns, be sure to blow on your tinder bundle to ensure it catches fire. Once it does, add it to your kindling.

**WARNING:** Don't breathe in the smoke that comes from steel wool.

## A Flashlight

Yup, you read that correctly. Now, it's time to show you how to start a fire using a flashlight!

Begin by disassembling your flashlight. Be sure to remove the silver cup/cone that reflects light from the bulb. Next, pinch off a small amount of dry tinder, wad it up, and shove it into the bottom hole of the silver cup/cone. Finally, point the widest part at the sun. This allows the light to bounce off and focus on the tinder.

It may take a few minutes, but your tinder will start to smoke. Remove it from the cup/cone and place it with the rest of your tinder. Blow on the weak fire until you've got a nice ember going, then add it to the rest of your fire kindling.

**CAUTION:** The only time this can work is in the daytime. If there's no sun, you'll have no light. Therefore, stop wandering around early enough to take advantage of the sun.

## Gum Wrapper And Battery



As long as you've got a piece of gum and anything that requires AA or AAA batteries, you're all set to do this trick! To begin, you simply need to put a piece of gum in your mouth. Keep the foil wrapper it came in, then cut it into thirds, as shown in this picture.

As long as each strip has two big ends and a skinny middle, you've done it correctly. Now, you'll need to pick up one of the three strips. Using the metal side of your strip, touch the end of a AA or AAA battery. Then, connect the other side of the strip to the same battery. In a matter of seconds, fire should be born from the middle of the strip. You'll need to move quickly, so take this fire to your tinder.

Once you've ignited the tinder, you won't have to use the battery any longer. Place it back where you got it from before you forget.

## Water And A Plastic Bag

Fire and water are natural enemies, right? So, how in the world do you start a fire using just water and a plastic bag? Let's find out!

Take a plastic bag and fill it with water (don't waste your clean water supplies for this – instead, fill your bag from the river). Place dry tinder nearby. Take your bag and twist it into a sphere of water. Now, hold the water over your tinder and be patient. If you've angled it correctly, a fire will soon ignite! It won't be much, but you can light your kindling on fire with it.

## Ice

Is it cold enough for ice to have formed? If the answer is yes, go out to your closest lake, river, pond, etc. and cut off a large chunk of ice. Next, refine your ice by carving it down until all that's left is a large hunk of clear ice.

The next piece of the puzzle will probably cause a lot of discomfort, but it's not going to hurt you. Rub your ice down and hold it in your hand. You want it to look like a lens once you're done with this process. Once this is done, simply place the ice between the sun and your tinder. With enough patience, your tinder should light.

## Make A DIY Fire Starter

Do you want to bring a fire to life that will burn for up to 30 minutes? You can make DIY fire starters in advance that will ensure your fire gets off to a roaring start!



### Supplies Needed:

- Laundry lint
- Toilet paper rolls
- String
- Old candles/other wax
- Scissors
- Saucepan
- Foil or wax paper

## Create DIY Fire Starters

This process is extremely easy, and your fire starters can be stored until you need them.

1. Cut and fold one of the toilet paper roll ends;
2. Take laundry lint and fill the toilet paper roll, then cut and fold the other end;
3. Use your string to tie up the ends and make a wick;
4. Melt wax candles/wax;
5. Hold your fire starters by their strings and dunk them in the melted wax;
6. Pour wax or keep dunking the fire starters until they're well coated;
7. Let them cool off and store them until they're needed.

Making a few of these in advance will really help you out when it's time to make a fire.

## Create A Portable Rocket Stove



Your rocket stove will not end up looking like the nearby image. This image has simply been provided to give you a basic idea of what you're going for.

### Supplies Needed:

- Pineapple juice can
- Gallon can with a top and bottom
- Two bean-sized cans
- Hammer
- Giant nail
- Tin snips
- Work gloves
- Ashes
- Eye protection
- Pliers

## Let's make a hobo tin-can portable rocket stove!

1. Take your gallon-sized can and stick something against its side.
2. Make a bean can outline on the sides of the cans.
3. Bang a hole into the can with a hammer.
4. Using pliers, make the hole large enough so a can is able to poke through.
5. Both ends of the bean can have been removed, so you can poke them through. It should end up looking something like this:



6. Fill the space between your big can and the smaller can inside it with ashes.
7. To keep your stove tidy, cut out a piece of metal and lay it down over the ashes.
8. As for the remaining bean can, remove the rims and make it lie flat. This will create a shelf for your fire.

9. Punch some vent holes in the middle can.
10. You'll need to find a fireproof surface to sit your rocket stove on and voila! Within five minutes, you'll have heated up enough water to have a cup of tea.

## Even More Ways To Start A Fire Without Matches

Now, we're going to really get into the weeds. Friction-based fire making is the hardest way to create fire, but it can be done. Therefore, if all else fails, why not try some of these methods? Even if you don't succeed at first, you will get it eventually as long as you keep trying.

### Hand Drill

This is by far the hardest method for starting a fire. Intriguingly, it's also the oldest known method. To get a fire started, you're only going to need wood, gritty determination, and tireless hands.

1. Build a tinder nest out of bark, dry grass, and leaves.
2. Next, cut a V-shaped notch into your fireboard.
3. Make a small depression adjacent to the fireboard.
4. Put a piece of bark beneath the notch. This should catch any embers you create.
5. Place the spindle into the depression on your fireboard. Make sure your spindle is approximately two feet long. Keep putting pressure on the board, then start rolling the spindle between your hands, moving them quickly down the spindle. You must keep doing this until an ember is created.
6. As soon as you see a glowing ember, tap the fireboard, which will drop the ember onto the bark. Move the bark to your tinder pile and gently blow on it. Huzzah! You've created fire!

### Bow Drill

You just built the world's toughest fire. So, how about making an easier one? The bow drill is thought of as the most effective friction-based technique.



1. Get a socket (stone or another piece of wood).
2. Make your bow about as long as your arm. Use a slightly curved, flexible piece of wood. Use any type of rope or string that won't break to create the string of the bow.
3. Create a V-shaped notch and a depression adjacent to your fireboard. Place your tinder underneath this notch.
4. Put your spindle in a bow string loop. Put one end of the spindle on the fireboard. Use your socket to apply pressure to the opposite end.
5. Now, use your bow to saw back and forth. Keep on sawing until you've got an ember.
6. Simply drop the ember into the tinder and lightly blow on it.
7. You've made fire!

### Fire Plough

The steps for this one are short, easy, and to the point! First, you're going to cut a groove in your fireboard. Next, place the tip of your spindle into the groove of your fireboard. Rub the tip of the spindle up and down the groove. Have your tinder pile really close because you're going to gently blow any embers you create into it. This will start a fire!

### Flint And Steel

This is the old-fashioned method, and most survivalists will have a fire starter with them. Let's discuss how to actually start a fire with a fire starter, though, shall we?

Grab a piece of rock between your forefinger and thumb. Leave an edge hanging that's approximately two to three inches. Next, grab char cloth and grasp



it between your flint and thumb. Now, it's time to begin! Strike the steel against the flint several times. Eventually, sparks will begin to fly off, but they should land in your char cloth. Fold the char cloth, gently blow on it, and get your tinder nest to catch fire.

## Lens-Based Methods

You've already learned a few lens-based methods of starting a fire, but now we're going to teach you a couple more.

### Traditional Lenses

Creating a fire can be done in a wide variety of ways. One of the most commonly thought of methods is using the lenses of eyeglasses. Build a tinder spot, place a bit of water on your lenses, and angle the lens toward the sun. If you catch the sun just right, it'll quickly start a fire.

The drawback to this technique is, of course, that it only works when the sun is bright. Depending on where you live, this method may or may not work for you. After all, if you live in Anchorage, AK, it'll work on only about 135 days of the year. In Buffalo, NY, it'll only work really well on 54 out of the 365 days in a year. Still, it's better than nothing.

### Balloons And Condoms

Take either a condom or a balloon, fill it with water, then tie off one end. Be sure to make your balloon or condom as spherical as possible, but don't make it too big. Squeeze the condom or balloon in the middle, which will result in two smaller lenses. Hold your water-filled object only an inch or two from your tinder pile and wait for results!

### Have A Meal!



You've officially built a fire, despite not having any matches or a lighter. It's time to celebrate by putting one of your dutch ovens on top of the fire. For instance, you can make chicken and dumplings.

To do so, simmer your chicken in the dutch oven, and then start building your flavor profile by adding onion, carrots, celery, and spices. Wait for about a half-an-hour, then drop in full spoonfuls of your biscuit batter to create dumplings. Let it simmer down for a couple more minutes, and you're golden!

Alternatively, you could make campfire Nachos! This easy, one-pot meal just may become your go-to food option.

Brown ground beef (or crumbled tofu, shredded pork, sausage, or sliced chicken) with green onions and jalapenos. Do this for a few minutes, then remove your protein mixture from the skillet. Now it's time to build your nachos! Top your chips with protein, lettuce, cheese, salsa, and tomatoes. The only thing left to do is dig in!

## Final Thoughts

Building a fire is quite literally one of the most important skills that you can learn. For most people, it seems rather easy, but in practice, it's a heck of a lot harder to do.

I can remember a time when it took over an hour to get a fire going, before I discovered the survivalism movement. If that had happened after the SHTF, I don't know what I would have done. The energy that I exerted getting the fire going was more than the calories I consumed cooking over the fire. This is not a process that would have kept me going for very long, and I'm so glad that I've got the hang of building fires now.

Remember: even if you have no matches or lighter, there are still many ways to build a fire, including ice and water!



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