

## Tips to Prepare for Blackouts!

[The National Preparedness Community](#)



The power grid consists of a set of large power plants connected together by wires. It works well as a power-distribution system because it allows for energy sharing. Interestingly, there is no storage in the system. As power is demanded by consumers, that same

amount is generated and distributed. This works great until there is a failure in part of the system that other parts can't fill in. Then they fail and a domino effect leaves a large area in the dark.

Follow these tips to be prepared for a blackout:

- Practice energy conservation measures to reduce electricity usage, acquire flashlights and batteries, solar lights, candles or oil lamps for lighting & alternative cooking devices (like a Sun Oven®.)
- Always have a large cooler and a supply of ice on hand. Fill plastic containers with water and store them frozen. Leave space for expansion. These can be used to keep food chilled and then as drinking water when they have thawed.
- Store additional containers of water for long term use. One gallon per person per day is recommended.
- Create a general emergency preparedness kit with a first-aid kit, personal hygiene items, flashlights, copies of important documents, emergency contact telephone numbers, etc. Include extra medicines.
- Keep your car gas tank at least half full at all times.
- Keep a key to your house with you if you regularly enter from your garage, because the electric door opener will not work.
- Keep any generator activity well ventilated to avoid CO poisoning.

[References](#)

## Ask Billie



### Jane from MD Asks:

How do you get in the habit of using a Sun Oven®?

A. Our Solar Chef says, "Weather permitting, I started setting up the Sun Oven® first thing in the morning, even on days when I had no idea what I'd be cooking. I could see the oven from my kitchen window and that was enough to remind me to use it.

With my oven always ready to go I can take advantage of special deals I might find at my local supermarket."

What is your Most Burning Question about Food Storage or Emergency Preparedness? Send your questions to [editor@sunoven.com](mailto:editor@sunoven.com)



Billie Nicholson



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## Creating a Sustainable Farm

Billie Nicholson

At the edge of a sparsely developed neighborhood in Milton, Florida, you'll find Ray and Wanda Davis' "Clear Creek Farm." When they decided to retire from their original careers, they thought it would be fun to try their hand at farming as a way to maintain activity and to grow their own food. Their 30 acre property, just west of a Naval Aviation Training base and backing up to a land preserve, has hills, flood plains, hardwood and pine forest areas and is bisected by Clear Creek as it winds its way to the Blackwater River.

From the property description, you can imagine, there are lots of ecosystems, but level fertile ground is missing. Ray and Wanda accepted these challenges to create their version of a Sustainable Farm. Here are some of the techniques they use.

One of the first problems to be addressed was controlling run-off and erosion. They created a series of terraces and concrete drainage streams, including a pool. Square foot garden beds and narrow long beds were built on the terraces. Trees cut down on the farm as they cleared areas were milled into lumber that they use to make the long beds. Tree height determined the bed length.



Water containment channels and a pool



Terraced hillside with raised square foot garden beds



Raised beds made from lumber on the farm

To extend the growing season and protect some delicate plants during the winter months, they have built high tunnel (hoop houses). Ray also has some hydroponic lettuce beds where he grows individual lettuce plants in a nutrient rich liquid supported by styrofoam.

All plant material that is left after harvesting is tossed into compost bins built from throw away pallets lined with hardware cloth and tied together with zip-ties. They use straw and shredded paper as the carbon component and toss in a shovel full of manure to keep it "hot."

Solar panels installed on the farm buildings generate electricity for farm use as well. As a result of their hard work, farm tours, plant sales and consultations provide additional income. Now that's sustainable.



Hydroponic gardening to raise individual lettuce plants



High tunnel (AKA hoop green houses) even unheated they extend growing season



Compost bins made from pallets and hardware cloth

Photos RustyBuggy.com

## Disaster Plan for Pets

### Humane Society

When preparing for an emergency situation, don't forget to make plans for any family pets. Just like any other family member, pets are your responsibility, too. Create your disaster plan to include their basic needs. Here are some ideas.

1. Don't wait until the last minute, start your plan now. Make sure your pet is wearing a collar and identification tag that is up to date and visible at all times. Getting a micro chip inserted will greatly increase your chance of being reunited should your pet get lost. If your pet is adopted from a shelter or rescue organization, make sure the registration has been transferred to you. Add your cell phone number to the tag as well.
2. Put together a disaster kit to include:
  - Food and water for at least 5 days, bowl, and a manual can opener if you are packing canned pet food. Keep an extra gallon of water on hand to use if your pet has been exposed to chemicals or flood waters and needs to be rinsed.
  - Medications and medical records stored in a waterproof container and a pet first-aid kit and book.
  - Cat litter box, litter, scoop and garbage bags to collect all your pet's waste.
  - Sturdy leashes, harnesses and carriers to transport pets safely and to avoid run-aways.
  - Current photos of you with your pets and a written description to help others identify them.
  - Written information about your pet's feeding schedule, medical conditions and behavior issues along with the name and contact information for your veterinarian in case you have to board or put them in foster care.
  - Grooming items, newspapers or paper towels for clean ups.
3. Find a safe place to stay. Be sure to check your local shelters and select ones that allow for pets. This includes checking with hotels and motels that might be along your evacuation route.
4. Plan for your pets in case you're not home or can't get there by asking a trusted neighbor or nearby family member or friend to take your pets and meet you at a specified location.
5. If you must wait out a storm at home, decide on a safe area of your home where you can all stay together. Pet-proof the area. Bring your pet inside as soon as local authorities announce trouble is coming. Put all your emergency supplies in your safe-room. Stay inside until the "all clear" sign.
6. Following an emergency event don't allow your pets to roam loose. They can get disoriented, lost or hurt in some situations.
7. Be aware of the dangers high temperatures can cause for your pets. Heatstroke can be fatal. Apply cold towels to pet's head, neck and chest; let her lick ice cubes and go to the vet immediately.

## [An Adventure with Celery, Peppers and Onions](#)

Robert Nicholson

A few weeks ago I was dabbling around the kitchen close to dinnertime. I noticed that our garden had produced an abundance of fresh vegetables that were begging to be used. Out of the refrigerator came lots of celery, green peppers and onions (CPO). These chopped vegetables mixed with ground beef, spices and fresh breadcrumbs, made a tasty meat loaf that everyone enjoyed.

In my chopping fervor, I created lots of extra chopped CPO. In the past when we had extra salsa, pesto, or tomato paste, the extra was frozen for later use. Could CPO be frozen in the same way? Let's experiment.

I first par-cooked the CPO in a skillet with a small bit of olive oil. When the CPO was cool I brought out a muffin pan, covered it with a sheet of plastic wrap, and depressed the muffin area with my hand. I then placed a lump of par-cooked CPO in each spot. A second sheet of plastic wrap was placed on top and the muffin pan was placed in the freezer. The plastic wrapped, frozen CPO was divided into individual sections and stored in a zip bag. The bag was marked with the contents and a reference date.

One morning while fixing breakfast I retrieved one of my frozen CPO packets, unwrapped it and popped it into a moderately warm skillet. Within just a few minutes, with the addition of eggs and cheese, a delicious omelet was ready for our family.

We have now added CPO to the list of basic portion control ingredients that we store in our freezer for later use. The next experiment will be to see how long it stores and remains edible. I'll let you know.



Photos RustyBuggy.com

## Clean Up Mold and Mildew

Billie Nicholson

Do you have a problem with mold and mildew in your home? What can be used to clean up mold and mildew without using harsh chemicals? Some natural household items can be used to clean up the moldy mess, but first determine what is causing the problem. Check for plumbing leaks around water pipes, waste lines, ice-maker lines or spigots. Remember that water can run in any direction. You may need to extend your search to exterior building leaks. Look for leaks in the wall or roof, vents, window wells or for downspouts emptying near the foundation. Even badly sealed ductwork could be the problem. Warm, moist air condenses and forms water on ducts carrying cold air. The condensation is a sign that the duct is not insulated or is missing a vapor barrier. Moisture forms anywhere warm air escapes. Eventually the water saturates insulation and drywall and mold spores, which are everywhere, begin to grow. Once you've located and repaired the water problem, it's time to clean up the mess.<sup>1</sup>

The following common household ingredients can be used to get rid of mold and mildew.

- Use Baking Soda to remove odors from closets, bathrooms and refrigerators.  
Recipe: Mix baking soda and water to form a paste in a ratio of 1:1. Apply the paste to the affected area and let it dry. Scrub with a small brush and wipe away any cleaning paste remaining.<sup>2</sup> To remove mildew from your plastic shower curtain or liner, put it in your washing machine with two bath towels on the gentle setting. Add 1/2 cup baking soda to your detergent during the wash cycle and 1/2 cup vinegar during the rinse cycle. Let it air dry.
- Use White Vinegar undiluted.  
Spray distilled vinegar on the mold stains using a spray bottle. If the stain persists mix a little baking soda and a little elbow grease. Leave the surface to dry.
- Use Tea Tree Oil  
Recipe: Add one teaspoon of tea tree oil to one cup of water. Mix well and pour into a spray bottle. Mist the mixture onto the surfaces that have been tarnished by mold and wipe the surface clean.
- Use Grapefruit seed extract  
Recipe: Add 10 drops of grapefruit seed extract to a cup of water. Mix well and using a spray bottle, mist the affected area. Wipe and allow to dry.
- Use Lemon Juice  
To get rid of mildew on clothes, make a paste of lemon juice and salt; rub into the affected area, then dry the clothes in sunlight. This works well on rust stains, too.<sup>3</sup>

Restoration contractor and Do It Yourself television personality Mike Holmes says, "It's about healthy homes. We know mold can reduce indoor air quality, and poor air quality affects our health."<sup>4</sup> He recommends a product called Concrobium Mold Control. Have you tried it?

## Sun Oven® Baked Carrots



*Have you ever tried baking carrots? Baked in the Sun Oven® they are tender and juicy.*

### Ingredients

6-8 carrots scrubbed and cut into chunks

1/2 tsp sea salt

1/2 cup water

### Optional

2 Tbs honey

1 Tbs fresh mint leaves, chopped

### Preparation

Pre-heat Sun Oven® to 300°F

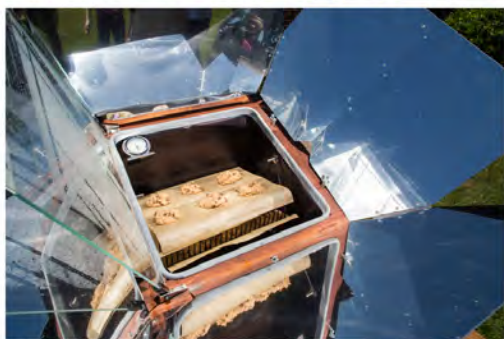
Wash carrots and cut into chunks of similar thickness. Sprinkle with sea salt and add 1/2 cup water. Bake 45 minutes or until tender.

Drizzle with honey and toss with mint leaves for a refreshing flavor.

Serves 4-6

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## Young Women's Group Gets Sun Oven Cooking Lesson



Solar energy lesson for Girls Camp preparation

Our Young Women's group planned a "Tea" for their moms. Solar cooking was one of the lessons required for their preparations for Girls Camp coming up later this summer. So they decided they could learn how to bake the cookies planned for dessert in a solar oven. Robert and I set up the Sun Oven® to pre heat while the girls mixed the cookie dough and took turns spooning it onto the parchment paper covered baking racks. By the time everyone had eaten finger sandwiches and yummy potato salad, the cookies were ready to serve with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. "It gets a lot hotter than I expected," said one of the young ladies. There were no leftovers.

## Fuel Disk/Fire Starter Case Lot SALE



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## Non-Edibles to Add to Your Emergency Supplies

Billie Nicholson

Of course, we recommend that everyone have a Sun Oven® in their cache of emergency supplies. In addition, and not related to food there are over a hundred other items that every family should have. [GoodStufffromLynda.com](http://GoodStufffromLynda.com) recommends these four easy to carry items that should be with you every day:

1. High Quality Knife - useful for more than just cutting, some versions have additional tools as well.

Photo RustyBuggy.com



2. Paracord - with over 100 uses itself, don't leave home without it! Using it you can secure a tent, make a tourniquet, tie up bad guys, and floss your teeth, just to name a few.
3. Small Flashlight - night without electricity is really dark. Remember to stock up on the batteries, too. Solar lights and luminous packs are also helpful.
4. Fire starter - featherweight fire starters consisting of flint and magnesium will spark a fire in the worst situations.
5. Cell Phone - has multiple uses including sending messages via voice or text if phone lines are down, signal mirror, night light, GPS locator beacon. Look for a solar charger to add to your supplies, too.

The [Survival Mom](http://SurvivalMom.com) also recommends:

6. Deodorant/antiperspirant - will be an instant morale booster when you've been hunkered down in a stressful situation for a few days or weeks.
7. Feminine products - menstrual cycles don't stop for crises. A six month's supply of tampons or pads will greatly improve your quality of life. Plus, they can be used as sterile pads to reduce blood flow from wounds.
8. Bar soap - always welcome to wash everything from laundry to hair.
9. Zip-Locs of all sizes - seal everything from food to waste products.
10. A pack of new underwear for each family member.
11. A battery-powered CD player & CDs with music to calm all the savage beasts.
12. Medicine - any prescriptions you must take should be stocked. Pain meds will always be welcome.
13. Toilet paper - obviously.

Angela from [Food Storage and Survival](http://FoodStorageandSurvival.com) suggests we include:

14. First-aid kit, bandages and hydrogen peroxide
15. Vinegar, hand sanitizer and an emergency toilet
16. Toothbrushes and toothpaste
17. Insect repellent
18. Assorted paper products from plates and napkins to paper towels and tissues
19. Clothesline, clothes pins and a large bucket for washing
20. Tent, sleeping bags and plastic sheeting or foam pad
21. Alternative season clothing like gloves and hats
22. Sewing supplies for mending
23. Battery powered radio or two-way radios
24. Hand tools like hammer, saw, wrenches and screwdrivers

The list goes on and on. We also need to think about multiple uses for everyday items. What's on your list?