

DIY Projects You Can Start Now To Survive Later

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Preparing for a potential SHTF scenario can often seem like a monumental task. But getting reasonably well-prepared doesn't have to be an enormous undertaking, nor does it have to be expensive.

In fact, there are some great DIY preps that are affordable and can be accomplished in an afternoon or over the weekend, with just a bit of labor, the proper know-how, and a few minimal investments depending on the project.

Some of these preps are basically set and forget preps that require very little upkeep or input after initially being set up, while others may need varying levels of maintenance, but all these preps are quick, affordable things you can implement now. Here are some ideas to get you started:

DIY Rainwater Catchment



A rainwater catching system can be as simple as a large funnel directing water into a holding container of 5, 10, 20 gallons or more. Be sure to check the local regulations regarding [catching and storing rainwater](#) in your area, but so long as it's legal to do so, rainwater is a valuable resource to catch, save and use, especially during an emergency or post-SHTF.

Large, food-grade liquid storage containers, which are great for storing rainwater and range in size from 40 – 75 gallons to 300 or 400 gallons, can also be purchased for anywhere from \$75 - \$200.

In some cases you may even be able to get them for free by checking online and with local businesses. You can start catching rainwater as easily as putting one of these large containers or barrels beneath the drain of your roof's gutters.

{adinserte emp}There are a lot of ways you can make use of rainwater now, too. You don't have to wait for an emergency or disaster to start enjoying the benefits of watering your garden or plants with collected rainwater, for instance. Even your lawn can be irrigated with rainwater.

Add a basic level of filtration, and a few pumps or a gravity-fed system, and there are many potential uses for your rainwater in and around your home. Depending on where you live, you could potentially even use rainwater to fill a pool or top off your hot tub. Meanwhile, you'll pay lower utility bills.

DIY Urban Container Gardening



Where space is a constraint, I strongly recommend looking into [aquaponic gardening](#), but aquaponics can be a bit more of an undertaking to start out with. So for the space-constrained urban prepper, container gardening is one way to take advantage of limited porch or rooftop gardening areas.

On its smallest scale, container gardening in window box containers can allow you to grow some basic herbs, strawberries or other dwarf plants even in the most limited space.

A 2-gallon, 3-gallon or 5-gallon bucket or container can be acquired rather cheaply or for free, and if you are starting seeds indoors you can cut a milk jug or water jug in half and use the bottom as a seedling tray, with appropriate substrate.

Smaller containers like these are suitable for growing a variety of plants, including lettuce, garlic, peppers, herbs such as basil, thyme, rosemary and mint and even tomatoes with decent results.

With a larger container, such as a 25-gallon container or a half-barrel container, you have even more options. With more space on the surface and below the soil, larger containers give you the opportunity to grow squash, larger tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber and other sprawling vegetables, as well as carrots, onions, ginger, potatoes and other root vegetables.

Alternatively, you can use a larger container to grow a blueberry bush, a trained blackberry or raspberry, or even a dwarf tree.

DIY Vegetable Oil Lamp



When the power goes out, temporarily or more permanently, you'll no doubt want to keep the lights on after the sun goes down. The good news is that you can stock up on various types of vegetable oil rather cheaply, specifically for use as an alternative fuel for oil lamps when the lights go out.

Olive oil is especially good for this purpose, but just about any vegetable oil will do. You'll need a container, anything from an empty tin can to a glass mason jar will do, with or without a lid depending on what you have available.

To make a vegetable oil lamp, simply pour your oil into your desired container and prepare a length of cotton, some rolled up paper towel or another suitable wick material.

You can use a lid with a hole poked through it to hold the wick, or suspend the wick in the oil using a toothpick, stick or straightened paperclip. Soak the wick thoroughly and elevate in the air above the oil, but still $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ immersed in it, and light it on fire. Voila, you now have a vegetable oil lamp.

DIY Hen House



There are many affordable henhouse kits available, but if you have a hammer and nails or a good drill, and a weekend afternoon, you can build your own chicken coop, potentially even for free.

Craigslist and local retail outlets are often a good source of used pallets, empty wooden crates and other scrap wood that you can get for free or at a minimal cost. Chicken wire can be affordably sourced at a local hardware or farm supply store, along with a few hinges and a lock, and with an afternoon of labor you can have a secure chicken coop for a handful of laying hens.

DIY Fruit & Nut Orchard

This one kind of requires that you have a chunk of your own land to plant on, but if you rent land from another landowner or make a deal with a friend or neighbor there are more possibilities.

Before planting any fruit or nut trees, test the soil to ensure that it is somewhere in the 6.0 – 6.8 pH range, and ensure that there is adequate phosphorous and potassium content in the soil. Aside from yearly sampling of the soil to determine how much fertilizer to use, a handful of fruit and nut trees can be planted and left to grow largely unattended.

You will need to check on your trees a few times each season, to ensure that they are disease and pest free and to carry out any necessary pruning, but fruit and nut trees take years to reach full maturity. As a result, they are a great option for planting now in case of future need, since they take time to reach peak production.

The costs involved are fairly low, primarily the cost of seedlings and fertilizer if you need it. For the space or land-constrained, miniature or dwarf fruit and nut trees can potentially be raised in containers with decent results.

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