5 Unusual Fuels To Keep On Hand For Winter

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It is not likely that refined fuels will be available for winter heating in the aftermath of disaster. Keeping yourself, your family, indoor crops, and farm animals warm will be very complicated unless you improvise.

Aside from wood which may or may not be plentiful, there are other fuels available that can be used now as well as in a crisis.

While you may need to create new devices for storing and using these fuels, it is well worth the effort.

Determining How Much Fuel to Store

When it comes to figuring out how much fuel to store, you will find that each person's home and situation are slightly different.

For example, one person may need to heat only a few square feet of space that is well insulated, while someone else may need to heat a larger, poorly insulated area. A person living in a warmer climate may also need to store less fuel than someone in a colder region.

Some calculators can be used to determine how many BTUs you will need per day on average to heat any given area. From there, you can use the next link to see how many BTUs you can expect from some of the fuels listed in this article.

http://www.generatorjoe.net/html/energy.html

http://www.calculator.net/btu-calculator.html

Candles or Wickable Fuels

Wax, crayons, shortening and solid greases can all be turned into fuel simply by adding a wick. Aside from fabric based wicks commonly found in candles, you can roll up a sheet of paper, or even a toothpick to act as a wick.

If you cannot buy candles or grease, fat from animals you hunt can be made into candles or grease pots. The average tea light will produce 250 BTU for about 4 hours. You can store candles and other wickable fuels in a cool, dry place where mice or other animals cannot eat them.

Best Use Tip: To get the most out of these fuels, and make a candle heater from clay pots. This will help increase the surface area heated by the fuel as well as help reduce the amount of soot that gets into the room. Just be sure to clean the soot from the inner chambers on a regular basis so that heat spreads as much as possible.



As the environmental temperature rises, the material accumulates heat and melts. When the environmental temperature falls, the material becomes solid, tranfering heat and maintaining the indoor temperature.

Paper

Everything from newspapers to old bills can be used to heat your home in the winter. Aside from simply burning crumpled up or rolled up paper logs, you can also make them into bricks mixed with sawdust and other flammable materials.

Once you make paper logs, they should be stored in a cool, dry place. In order to make paper logs:

- Start out by immersing paper in a bucket of water until it all turns to mush
- Mix in sawdust or any other additives that are of interest to you
- Pour the mixture into a screen box to pull out as much liquid as possible
- Use a block or some other heavy object to press down on the paste left in the box
- Let the brick dry out for several days and remove it from the screen form

Best Use Tip: Line your stove with bricks that will increase heat radiation. Advanced preppers can also turn the stove into a boiler or place copper pipe behind the stove and run water through that into radiators. You can also use a fan to blow hot air away from the stove and into the room. A ceiling fan set on low can also help push warm air back down to lower levels.

Methane and Heat from Compost

As you may be aware, compost piles produce quite a good bit of heat, and they also release methane. Creating methane capture systems will make it possible to operate methane heaters, stoves, and other devices. Just be sure to store the methane in tanks that are designed for this purpose.

You can utilize the heat from compost piles by running black plastic pipe throughout the pile. You will need a pump to bring the water into the house and then circulate it through radiators designed to accommodate water flowing through them.

Best Use Tip: Heat up water and then run it through pipes in the room or house. Use a ceiling fan to help keep warm air in the center of the room instead of letting it escape through the roof.

Passive Solar Heat

As strange as it may sound, no discussion on alternative fuels for the winter would be complete without studying passive solar heat. Essentially, you can use tin cans painted black and housed in glass to build up heat and then push that heat into the house.

If you aren't comfortable with trying to vent hot air through a window or hole in the wall, then simply add a few coils of copper tubing to the external heater and then connect a pipe from that to hot water radiators located throughout the house.

Advanced preppers can also try "storing" some of the heat generated during the day by burying a water tank with copper tubing in it, and then pipe the water from underground into the house.

If you are planning to use wood to keep your home warm, you may find yourself looking for alternatives faster than expected. The five fuels listed in this article are largely untapped and also far easier to renew than wood.

Why not give them a try and see what you can do to lower your heating bill this winter and prepare for a crisis at the same time?



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