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Issue 6

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# Ozark Homesteader



## Quote of the Week:

"In the long run people are going to buy the cheapest and the best article no matter where it is made." "In the long run people are going to buy the cheapest and the best article no matter where it is made."  
– Henry Ford on the back cover of the June, 1937 "Ford News"

## US Trade Deficit with China as of Nov. 14:

\$30,500,000,000

<http://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/us-trade-deficit-widens-percent-september-20886517>

**Do you have a story you would like to share with other homesteaders? Tell it to us! We are looking for contributors and story ideas.**

## Ozark Calendar of Events:

12/10 – 12/12 – Searcy County low cost spay neuter clinic. Reservations are required. Contact Searcy County Humane Society for more information.

Ozark Homesteader Poll:  
How did you hear about Ozark Homesteader?

Vote at:

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*Sustainability – Sufficiency – Sanctuary – Personal Responsibility*

## Let's Talk About Herbs!

Now you may be thinking, "This is winter, why would we talk about herbs now?" I will happily tell you that many herbs can be grown in pots in any sunny window. That's right; if you have a sunny window you can have fresh herbs all year round.

First, consider your pot. The size of the pot you need will depend on the requirements of your family and the preferences of your herbs. The type of pot will also change for some of your herbs. More water loving plants (parsley and basil, for example) will like a glazed or even plastic pot with moderate to light drainage. Herbs preferring drier conditions will do better in unglazed terracotta pots. Drainage is very important for many herbs. As already mentioned, herbs loving more moisture can be put into pots with self-watering reservoirs. These happy, tasty, easy plants include parsley, basil, cilantro, most mints, marjoram, and many more. The herbs requiring drier conditions include rosemary, thyme, lavender, and many of the more "woody" herbs. I like to out an old receipt held down with a few small pebbles under my potting soil to help with drainage while keeping my dirt where it belongs.

"Will these require a lot of space?" you wonder. In most cases, no, a six inch pot will keep most of your herbs very happy. Rosemary for instance, can be kept for years in a six inch pot and even be creatively snipped into topiary shapes. Herbs that create long tendrils are beautiful in hanging pots as they drape nicely in their search for ground to spread to. Oregano, thyme, marjoram, and mints do nicely in this fashion and can be hung outside in the warmer months.

"What about the soil, water, and fertilizer?" Most herbs can thrive in poor soils and even in rich poor soils where they grow. For indoor pots, I have had very good success with organic potting soils and for fertilizer I often spread a layer

of used tea that will continue to decay and add nutrients to the pot, the same as it would in your garden. How often an herb should be watered will depend on many things, the plant itself, the ability of your pot to hold moisture, and even the moisture content of your house. For myself I have found the best thing is to keep a close eye on the tender new growths of your plants. As soon as those tender tips start to droop give them all a bit of water. Be careful not to overwater! Half a cup of water for a six inch pot of rosemary will keep it happy for a week and it is better to water more often than to risk root rot with your herbs.

If you are reusing an older pot you may need to prepare it before use. If you are using a ceramic or terracotta pot set it in your oven and heat it to 300 degrees Fahrenheit. Do not preheat the oven and then insert the pot as this may crack it, but allow oven and pot to heat together and let it stay at this temperature for 10 to 30 minutes. This will kill any built up bacteria or fungus that may have attached itself to your pot. Allow oven and pot to cool together and your old pot should now be as good as new, from a biological standpoint. If you wish to reuse a plastic pot you will have to resort to 30 minutes soaking in a tub of bleach water (1 cup to a gallon) to ensure a fresh start for the new plant.

If you have enjoyed this article, next time I will expound on some of the ways to start your indoor winter herb garden with the easiest of herbs, how you grow them, when to harvest them, and even a few ideas on using them.

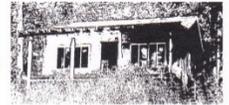
Until next time, SS Alexander.

*SS Alexander is a guest writer for Ozark Homesteader. We will be happy to forward any questions or comments. We hope there is a blog in the works!*

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## Picture of the Week



Here's the newest saw on the homestead! Read all about it on my WordPress blog:

<http://wp.me/p35coS-7t>

Email your amateur or professional picture to [ozarkhomesteader@gmail.com](mailto:ozarkhomesteader@gmail.com) to submit it for Picture of the Week. No copyrighted pictures, please.

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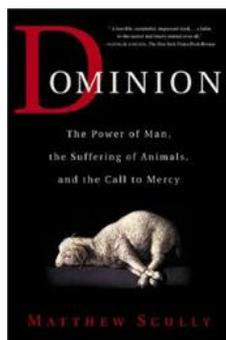
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— Benjamin Franklin

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## Trucking on Wood



We recently had the opportunity to take a look at Richard Craig's wood powered truck. He was nice enough to explain to us how it works and gave us a live demonstration. I will attempt to explain the process by which his truck converts wood to gas and then uses that gas to power the truck. Please forgive me if I don't get it exactly right. Any omissions or errors I make are entirely my own.

Richard started with a 1962 Chevrolet pickup. I'm not sure if it was painted before or after the conversion to wood, but it looks great. The Chevrolet has a 292 in-line six cylinder engine. Richard tells us that internally, it wasn't necessary to modify the engine. A solenoid has been added to allow the driver to switch from gasoline to wood gas, and a type of choke has been added to adjust the flow of wood gas into the engine.

Wood gasification itself appears fairly simple in theory. Small squares of wood about 2x2 inches are placed into a vessel about the size and shape of a 55 gallon barrel. That wood is then set on fire. The way the wood burns in the vessel produces gas and other substances such as steam once it reaches operating temperature. Some water is separated from the gas while in the first vessel and stored in a

## Compost Workshop

By Richard Gray

On November 19, we attended a composting workshop presented by the Searcy County Extension Office. The workshop, led by Skip Armes and Jennifer Warren, was, you guessed it, all about making good compost.

The workshop was held by the greenhouse at the Marshall High School, in Marshall, AR. There we were shown and how it works.

We learned what materials to put into the bins, and what materials shouldn't go into the bins. We

holding tank. The gas is then sent into a slightly smaller vessel which filters the gas and sends the gas into a series of cooling tubes which resemble and act like a radiator. Water is again separated from the cooled gas and collects in a separate holding tank. Richard says that at this point, the collected water is very clear.

The cooled gas is available for use by the truck's engine at this point. There are two ports at the back of the truck which allow access to the gas produced by the system. These ports allow the user to draw gas out of the system for other uses, such as to power a generator or even to cook with.



The engine of the truck siphons off the gasified wood as needed with the help of the solenoid and the choke type apparatus located on the engine. The truck is a little underpowered when running on the gasified wood, but even so, it has enough power to function as a normal vehicle. When he needs more power, he just flips a switch and changes back to gasoline.



Wood gasification is probably not for everyone. Richard says there is an art to operating the truck, and I can see why. One has to plan when using the wood gasification system. The wood has to be dry. The wood has to be burning at temperature before it makes a useful gas. And then the user has to control the flow of gasoline and wood gas to optimize performance. A series of gauges help to gauge the performance of the system. Sounds like driving my 1984 Mustang GT.



Driving a wood gasified vehicle is not as easy or convenient as driving a conventional gasoline powered vehicle, but it definitely has its merits, including freedom from fossil fuels. First Richard says he has about \$400 in the system. He also told us that his truck gets about 1 mile for every pound and a half of wood he burns. That's not bad considering the system holds about 90 pounds of wood at one time. If a person has an unlimited supply of free wood, maybe a little inconvenience isn't so bad!

For more information on wood gasification, try [driveon-wood.com](http://driveon-wood.com), where you can get information to turn your own truck into a wood burning machine. If you would like to contact Richard, email:

[ozarkhomesteader@gmail.com](mailto:ozarkhomesteader@gmail.com)

learned the nitrogen and carbon content of many compostable materials. We learned that there is an optimal ratio of nitrogen to carbon and how to achieve that ratio.

It was an informal and informative workshop. It was a small group, which allowed for everyone to ask any questions that they had.

We learned that we don't have the best resources for composting on our homestead, but we

learned that even if we didn't have the perfect ingredients, we could still be successful composters.

We also saw some familiar faces and met some new friends.

If you have any questions about gardening and you live in Searcy County, I'm sure that Skip won't mind you calling his office at 870-448-3981.