

Living Green is making choices in our day-to-day lives that reduce our impact on the environment and move us in the direction of a sustainable lifestyle – one that is healthy, ecologically sound, economically viable and socially just.

MANUFACTURED FIRELOGS

The cold weather has made its grand entrance in Spokane, and as we prepare for the heating season, many of us are making good use of woodstoves and fireplaces. Besides being aesthetically pleasing, woodstoves have the ability to provide substantial and consistent heat for hours in a home, resulting in lower energy costs.

In recent years, manufactured firelogs, like *Duraflame* or *Java Logs*, have become increasingly popular due to their quick start-up and long-lasting burn. However, before we strike the match, it's important to know the differences between using wood and manufactured firelogs as the fuel for the fire.

In the past, manufactured logs were created from combining industrial petroleum wax and sawdust byproducts. Environmental concerns eventually led to today's more eco-friendly ingredients of sawdust, plant wax, and other recycled ingredients like coffee grounds and nutshells. The plant wax and oils used in today's logs, like soybean, palm, and pine oils, are all derived from renewable resources.

Some logs, like Presto and North Idaho Energy Logs, are made purely from 100% compressed wood without any additives. Out of all manufactured logs, these are best for woodstoves because they do not contain wax additives which can

be damaging to enclosed stoves.

With these recycled ingredients, manufactured logs are a great environmentally-friendly alternative to conventional firewood. Besides reducing the amount of tree-cutting for firewood, the burning of manufactured logs has proven to produce 69% less particulate matter, 88% less carbon monoxide, 50% less visible smoke, and 78% less creosote accumulation in chimneys than natural cord wood. (Science Application International Corporation) Other air quality reports also found lower emissions of numerous air pollutants, like particulate matter, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, benzene, dioxin, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) (Treehugger.com). These lower emissions have led the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to recommend the use of manufactured logs over natural wood in their fireplaces.

When it comes to other sources of fuel, like natural gas fireplaces, log burning has its pros and cons. Because natural gas is a non-renewable fossil fuel, burning manufactured logs is a far more eco-friendly route to take. However, when it comes to air quality, burning both natural wood and manufactured logs emits more local air pollution than most other heating

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An efficient wood burning stove.

WINTER GARDENING

Enjoying homegrown vegetables doesn't have to end with winter. If you and your family would like to keep the homegrown salad lasting longer into the year, it's time to look into hoop houses and cold frames.

Hoop houses are simple additions to the regular garden used for the end of the growing season. They look like plastic tunnels built up over the garden rows. The plastic is a clear poly, supported every few feet with U-shaped hoops of wire. They include removable end pieces for ventilation. They also keep away rain, so additional watering may be required in some cases.

Cold frames are excellent for winter gardening and easy to make at home—the size doesn't make any difference. They can also be used to keep newly transplanted young plants growing in the fall. Start with an old window sash or aluminum/glass doorframe, then build the box to those dimensions. If the sash does not have glass in it, replace it with



A hoop house (above), and cold frame (below).



fiberglass, polyethylene or a similar material. The frame itself basically sits over a smaller garden plot and is slanted towards sun with at least a 10 percent angle.

If possible the cold frame should face south for the best sunlight exposure and have protection from northern winds. You can either place the cold frame on top of the ground, or buried partly under-

ground to offer the best insulation.

When the temperatures get below the mid 20's, or during a cold snap, be sure to have extra insulation like blankets, burlap bags or sheets of foam. To make what are known as hot beds, some gardeners even add a heating cable under the soil.

To prepare soil, mix your existing garden soils with compost and aged manure, and prepare for a depth of 12-18 inches. Cold frames also require watering and ventilation as needed.

The reason cold frames are so great: homegrown, organic greens in December. Yes, greens, like lettuce and spinach. Other crops that grow well in cold frames or hot beds are green onions, radishes, chard, round or little finger carrots, endive and other greens. In addition to growing vegetables, a cold frame is an excellent place to start new seeds in springtime.

SHOVELING TIPS

Rumor has it that Spokane is in for a snowy winter! While the blankets of white make for pretty scenery, one of the classic ways of getting rid of the white stuff in a green way is to just dig in. Here are some tips for shoveling techniques:

DO!

- Bend at the knees! A hurt back isn't good for anyone.
- Pace your self- it's not a

race.

- Hydrate! Shoveling can burn up to 500 calories an hour- which is just like any other good exercise- and water will keep you going.
- Stretch your arms and legs before and after you shovel.

Don't!

- Wait till the snow stops falling. Getting out there to

shovel a few times reduces the amount of snow build up.

- Overload your shovel. Lifting lighter amounts will keep you out there longer, but your arms and back won't regret it the next day. If you shovel 16 pounds of snow, 12 times a minute, that amounts to somewhere close to 192 pounds of snow per minute. That's almost 2,000 pounds of snow in 10 minutes!

Family Friendly Science: Gooblek

Recipe from: Jill F. Hauser,
"Super Science Concoctions"

Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup cornstarch
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup water
Pan & Spoon

Directions:

1. Using a spoon, evenly blend the water with the cornstarch in a pan.
2. Gooblek should be thick enough to form a ball by rolling it between your palms. Add more water or cornstarch if needed.

Words of Caution:

- Do Not pour it down the drain or flush it down the toilet!!
- Dispose of Gooblek in either the trash or compost bin. Let the water evaporate and you've got cornstarch again. Store the dry granules in a re-sealable plastic bag. Just add water to reuse.

Science Behind Gooblek:

You just suspended a solid (cornstarch) in a liquid (water), so the suspension acts like both a liquid and solid. When you move slowly through Gooblek, the starch grains space out evenly throughout the water and flows like a liquid. When you move through it quickly, the grains jam together and it acts like a solid.

Science Challenge:

- a. Can you break a chunk in $\frac{1}{2}$?
- b. Flatten it in the pan and slap it with your hand. Can you make it splash?
- c. Squeeze some in your hand. Does it feel wet, dry, or both? Place a pan in the sun for a few hours. What happens to it? What happens if you add water?

NATURE BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

In his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Algonquin Books, 2006), **Richard Louv** sounds the alarm about the need for change regarding the future relationship between children and nature.

Extensive research confirms that cognitive, affective, and moral development of children is impacted significantly and positively by direct contact with nature. Something as simple as getting away from the daily house routine can be very rewarding and offer inner peace. The simplest things in life can sometimes bring the greatest pleasure!

Eco-friendly events are activities that cause minimal impact to the environment and often have a culturally and biologically diverse aspect to them. They attract participants who have a common interest in nature, wildlife and culture and can also create a strong family bond.

Eco-Friendly Activities

Parents who are looking to take part in eco-friendly and nature sensitive activities over the Christmas and winter holiday season can try some of the following suggestions.

- Seek out parks and natural outdoor places to experience plant life and wildlife in the fresh air.
- Bird Feeding Workshops: Learn how to turn a backyard garden into a friendly year-round sanctuary for wildlife.

- Help out a park or natural area restoration group by pulling out invasive plants or rebuilding a stream or other natural area.
- Take part in a local area Christmas Bird Count. Contact the local naturalist group for details.
- Nature Walks: Experience a guided walk along forested trails or snowy paths and then enjoy warm refreshments.
- Bird Walk: Discover the birds in the neighborhood. Create a contest to see how many the kids can recognize.
- Eco-Arts & Crafts: Create earth-friendly crafts using recycled materials, leaves, tree cones, etc. Contact a local recycling center for times and locations.
- Arrange a family nature scrapbook or treasure chest to display kids' nature finds and photos.
- Go outside and have fun in the snow by making snow angels or snow creatures.

- Organize a neighborhood nature treasure hunt. How many different pinecones or seed pods can the kids find? How many different leaves can they locate?
- Create a holiday and winter wreath using discarded tree prunings, seeds and branches.
- Turn off the TV and computer for a whole weekend!!

SOME REASONS TO EAT ORGANIC

Making Organic Food Affordable:

- Start with produce, then grains, meat, and dairy. Skip the packaged goods.
- Prioritize certain items and buy the rest as conventional produce*.
- Buy in bulk.
- Shop in season when food is locally available.
- Grow your own!

*For more information, see our *Eating Organic* page under "Tips" at www.livinggreensnap.org.

Living Green Staff



A warm welcome goes to our new staff member, Kim Kreber, who will work as SNAP's new Conservation Education Coordinator. She recently worked for Spokane Regional Solid Waste as an outreach educator.



A snow piled compost bin in winter.

Organic certification is the public's assurance that products have been grown and handled without toxic chemical inputs. It's common sense – well-balanced soils grow strong healthy plants, which taste great!

Here are some reasons to eat organically grown food:

- Many pesticides were registered long before research linked them to cancer and other diseases. Now the EPA considers 60% of all herbicides, 90% of all fungicides and 30% of all insecticides as potentially cancer causing.

- The elimination of pollution from chemicals and nitrogen leaching, done in combination with fertilizing, protects and conserves water resources.

- Organic agriculture respects a healthy ecosystem: wildlife is encouraged by including forage crops in rotation and by retaining fence rows, wetlands and other natural areas.

- The loss of a large variety of species (biodiversity) is one of our most pressing environmental concerns. Organic farmers and gardeners have been collecting and preserving seeds and growing unusual varieties for decades.

COMPOSTING: A WINTER CHALLENGE

If you recently started composting at home, you may notice a difference in your pile as the temperatures drop.

Instead of staying the same size, or even shrinking as material is added, it may become noticeably larger. That is because microbial activity will naturally slow down as it gets colder. But that isn't such a bad thing, it is common practice to continue adding to a cold pile. When spring comes the pile will thaw and provide a solid foundation for next year's compost.

To keep a pile as active and warm as possible, first, make sure to have a lid or sturdy cover over it. Add 10-12 inches of dry browns to the top, like leaves, straw or twigs and other yard debris. To insulate, stack hay bales around the bin's walls, or compose

layers with several corrugated cardboard pieces, used housing insulation, and tarps. When the snow piles up, it can also be piled up around the walls for insulation.

It can be helpful to keep a second container (with a lid) next to your bin full of dry browns. Each time you put in food scraps, cover them with two to three inches of browns. After the spring thaw, turn and water as you normally would.

Another option is worm composting. Worms eat more than one-half their weight daily and produce excellent compost. Worms function best at normal room temperatures, so a cold cellar will not do. Instructions are available for making your own worm bin from the Spokane Regional Solid Waste, www.solidwaste.org, or purchase a prefabricated bin.

Raw Pumpkin Pie with Honey Nut Date Crust

Raw Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 avocado, peeled and seeded
- ½ cup raw honey
- 4 dates- soak in 1C filtered water
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon Celtic sea Salt
- 4 cups raw pumpkin, peeled
- 1 cup organic raisins
- 1 teaspoon psyllium
- ½ cup pumpkin seeds, washed, soaked for 8 hours, drained and dehydrated for 6-8 hours
- 1 cup raw macadamias soaked 8 hours and drained
- 1 Honey Nut and Date Pie Crust (see recipe below)

Directions:

1. Place avocado, honey, vanilla, dates with soak water, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, salt, macadamias, and water into blender and blend until smooth.
2. Add pumpkin and blend until very smooth.
3. Add psyllium and blend well. Let this mixture sit for 10 minutes and blend well again.
4. Fold in raisins.
5. Pour into pie crust and top with ½ cup of pumpkin seeds.

Honey Nut and Date Crust

Ingredients:

- 1 cup pecans, soaked for 12 hours, drained and dehydrated for 12 hours
- 1 cup walnuts, soaked for 12 hours, drained and dehydrated for 12 hours
- ¼ cup raw honey
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ pound organic dates, seeded
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until it begins to form a ball.
2. Remove small amounts of piecrust, and press into a pie plate. Continue until entire pie plate is covered. Wrap in plastic until ready to fill. Crust may be made ahead of time and refrigerated or frozen.
3. Crust may be used as is or dehydrated for a dryer crust. Some of the crust may be put aside to use as crumbles on top of the pie.



*Created by Jackie Graff
Living Food Feasts from Sprout Café
www.rawsacramento.net*

Veggie Bean Soup

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 TBS. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lg. onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 large carrots, sliced
- 3 ribs celery, sliced
- 4 tomatoes, chopped
- small clump fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp. fresh ground pepper
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- pinch cayenne pepper
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth

- 1 small bag 3 or 15 bean mix (soaked overnight and drained)



DIRECTIONS:

1. In large pot over medium heat, sauté onion, garlic, carrots and celery in hot olive oil for 5 minutes.
2. Add tomatoes and parsley

and bring to boil, stirring often.

3. While this mixture is cooking, bring beans to a boil.
4. Drain off water from beans then add beans and broth and season with salt and peppers.
5. Cook on low heat, stirring occasionally until beans and veggies are tender (Approx. 2-3 hours).

For a quicker version, 15 ounce cans of beans of your choosing can be substituted.

UPCOMING EVENTS

11/1 Author Terry Tempest Williams Luncheon Author and naturalist will speak at a luncheon for Inland Northwest Land Trust. The theme is restoration: restoring our connection to the land, to the sacred, and to each other. For tickets call 328-2939. Noon-1:30. The Lincoln Center, 1316 N Lincoln.

11/2 Panel: How will climate change affect the Inland Northwest? Join representatives from The Land's Council, Sun People Dry Goods and Friends of Scotchman's Peaks Wilderness as they talk about how their organizations are responding to climate change. Meet at St. Aloysius Parish Center, 330 East Boone Ave. 6:30-8 p.m.

11/4 2010 Focus on Farming Conference A day full of nationally known experts addressing leading agricultural topics. The conference will be held at the Tulalip Resort & Conference Center, 10200 Quil Ceda Blvd., Tulalip. 1-866-716-7162.

11/4 Hiking Washington's History with Judy Bentley Join Judy Bentley for stories embedded in Washington's landscape, as shown in her new book, *Hiking Washington's History*. Free event at REI, 1125 N Monroe. 7-8:30pm.

11/06, 13 Wood burners Burn Smarter Seminar For those who use wood heat, there are techniques that can make firewood last longer, improve safety, and reduce smoke particles indoors and out. Locations vary, check out www.spokanecleanair.com. 11am-noon.

11/11 America Recycles Day Recycling games and activities will be a part of this event. Mobius Kids, 808 W. Main Ave. 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

11/20 Eco Depot Solar Power Class Learn the basics of Solar Power and what is required to get started. The cost of the class is \$35.00 to include materials and handouts. Call 924-8803 or email [nad-](mailto:nad-ine@ecodepotinc.com)

ine@ecodepotinc.com to register. Eco Depot, Inc. 1326 E. Sprague Avenue, Spokane, WA.

11/20 "Get Your Message Out" workshop for environmental activists. This free workshop will share how to use social media to get your message out and create a professional video. It takes place over four days and includes lunch. Tincan Media Lab, 1317 W. 2nd Ave., Spokane. Call 744-0972, or visit www.tincan.org.

11/20 KYRS 7th Anniversary Party Dancing, and music, food and drink at Silver Auctions, 2020 N. Monroe. See kyrs.org for tickets. 7:30 p.m.-midnight.

12/4 Mobius Kids Santa Breakfast 7th Annual Mobius Kids Santa Breakfast from 8-10am at The Davenport Hotel Grand Pennington Ballroom, 10 S Post. For info and tickets (\$25/person includes breakfast) call 509-624-KIDS x305.

Manufactured Firelogs, *continued from p. 1*

methods, including natural gas. Federal Tax incentives for purchasing and installing biomass stoves, like wood or pellet stoves, are still in effect. If you are interested, visit: <http://www.energystar.gov/>.

If you already have a stove or fireplace and would like a local, northwest resource for firelogs, visit: www.northidahoenerylogs.com.



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Living Green
SNAP
212 W 2nd, ste 100
Phone: 509-744-3370
Fax: 509-744-3374
E-mail: livinggreen@snapwa.org



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