



Plant a Memory: Five Steps to Create a Time Capsule for Your Farm

Follow these step-by-step guidelines for a simple indoor activity to remind you of what you're thankful for and what you love about your farm life.

By Lisa Kivirist

Here are more activities to enjoy on your farm: Gardening

Activities with Kids

Enjoy Wildlife

Savor Summer

and Fall!

Have a Potluck

From barn chores to garden harvests, daily farm life can absorb so much of our waking hours that we forget to celebrate and honor everyday life experiences: that gargantuan pumpkin expanding the garden bed baby chicks

Creating a farm time capsule is a simple activity that causes us to take a moment to reflect on and appreciate the heaps of blessings in our lives and to foster appreciation and gratitude for our farm life.

A highly personal project, there's no rulebook for creating a time capsule. The key is to develop a plan based on your priorities and needs, then simply do it.

Here are five steps to take you through the process:

1. Pick a Reason

Time-capsule projects typically stem from a commemorative event or holiday, building around a reason why family and friends may already be together, such as: Special anniversary or birthday New Year's Eve Family reunion Graduation Housewarming

A time capsule doesn't require a special holiday, however.

A farm time capsule can commemorate a phase of farm life, such as the garden harvest, a new pole building, or in our case, the completion of an experimental garden wall made with cob, a mud-and-straw building material.

2. Choose a Time Frame and Vessel

Decide how long you want to store your time capsule and where you want to store it, as this will determine the type of vessel needed.

For long-term storage, be sure to use something waterproof, airtight and preferably fireproof. You can purchase a container specifically designed for time capsules; however, a sealed container that keeps the items cool, dark and dry such as jar with a tight lid will work fine.

For an annual time capsule, such as something you open every New Year's Eve, a cookie tin or Tupperware container works well.

Have fun decorating the outside of the capsule, and include a short note painted on the outside to whomever might find the vessel, including information like why the capsule was created and the date it should be reopened.

3. Gather Content

Have fun selecting what to put inside the time capsule--just be sure that the items are nonperishable (i.e., no food), clean



and dry.

Invite family members and friends to bring items to contribute; even small children can find something small and of personal significance to include inside.

For extra protection from decay for items made from rubber, wool, wood or PVC, place the items into individual, airtight plastic bags before placing in the vessel.

Possible items to include: Photos. Black and white photos tend to last longer than color and do not fade as much. Make sure photos are on acid-free paper.

Personal letters, especially those that family members write to an “older version” of himself or herself.

Memorabilia such as postage stamps, ticket stubs, newspaper clippings. Remember newspapers are often highly acidic and quickly deteriorate. To prevent this, photocopy the article on a high-quality archival paper.

Local libraries can be a good resource for archival material questions.

Farm memories such as empty seed packets, rocks, favorite recipes.

Personal mementos such as a small favorite toy, piece of jewelry or keys to a car or house you no longer own.

4. Celebrate the Closure

Add some pomp and circumstance to the closing of the time capsule by inviting folks for a formal “sealing ceremony.”

Take a photo of the inside of the vessel before sealing, this is especially helpful for children to “see” the contents without needing the patience to wait for the reopening. Mark each item clearly, and include a detailed inventory of what each item is, what it represents and who contributed it. Don’t assume your brain will store all these details.

5. Archive and Remember

After sealing the capsule, store it in a hidden but accessible place. If you have kids in the house, make sure it’s somewhere they can’t reach.

Don’t bury time capsules—that’s how most of them get lost (and damaged, too). The International Time Capsule Society maintains a free online registry for you to officially record your time capsule.

About the Author: Lisa Kivirist is the co-author of *ECOpreneur* and *Rural Renaissance* and is a W.K. Kellogg Food and Society Policy Fellow. She writes from her farm and B&B, Inn Serendipity, in southwestern Wisconsin.