



Tips, Hints, Recipes and More: Two Must-Have Books

Pearls of Country Wisdom; The Encyclopedia of Country Living

Each issue, the editors of Hobby Farms magazine will provide you with reviews of books written with the hobby farmer in mind. This issue, we were excited to find two excellent books that should be permanent fixtures on your bookshelf: Pearls of Country Wisdom compiled and edited by Deborah S. Tukua, and The Encyclopedia of Country Living by Carla Emery.

Pearls of Country Wisdom

In 1995, Deborah S. Tukua and her family escaped the confines of suburban Jacksonville, Florida, for life on a farm in rural Tennessee (sound familiar?) Her book, Pearls of Country Wisdom: Hints from a Small Town on Keeping Garden and Home, is actually a clever compilation of hints, tips, inspirations and advice she collected from friends and neighbors in her small rural town.

The book is divided into nine chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of country living: "General Household Tips," "Cleaning, Bath, and Laundry Tips," "Cooking, Food Preservation, and Kitchen Tips," "Wardrobe and Sewing Suggestions," "Home Remedies and Good Health Practices," "Home Furnishings," "Barnyard, Animals, and By-Products," "Lawn, Orchard, and Gardening" and "In the Tool Shed and the Great Outdoors." At the beginning of each chapter, Tukua offers a few paragraphs of personal anecdotes relating to the chapter topic. Her writing style is warm and inviting—the reader comes to know Tukua's way of life and the simple pleasures she receives from her rural environment.

All told, there are 737 bits of advice in this amazing book. Some will save you money; others will save you time. Some tips will help you grow bigger, tastier vegetables and fruits; while others will help you get over a cold more quickly. We can't help but share a few of these wonderful "pearls of country wisdom" with you to whet your appetite. Here are a few of our favorites:

From "Cleaning, Bath, and Laundry Tips:" #66: "To remove spider webs from the hard to reach corners of windows or walls, use a long feather collected from the nearest duck pond or poultry farm. We used one left behind from a neighbor's roaming peacocks. A long turkey feather would do just as well."

From "Cooking, Food Preservation, and Kitchen Tips:" #185: "Here's an easy way to keep honey from sticking to the measuring cup. When measuring honey, syrup, sorghum, or molasses, measure the oil first. Or, rub cooking oil around the insides of the measuring cup."

From "Home Remedies and Good Health Practices:" #411: "To relieve a sunburn, simmer several tea bags in a pot of water on the stove for ten minutes. Pour all into your bath water. Lie back and soak. The tannic acid in the tea soothes the burn."

From "Home Furnishings:" #483: "When family members come in from chores and working outside, it's essential to have a mud room area with sink, a bench for taking off and storing boots beneath, and a rack for hanging hats and jackets. This helps the rest of the house stay clean longer." Take her advice here; we learned this the hard way when we moved to the country. Our poor living room carpet can attest to our mud ignorance. There's a lot more mud in the country than in the city!

From "Barnyard, Animals, and By-Products:" #538: "Here's how the old-timers removed skunk odor from the farm dog. Give the dog a bath in tomato sauce. Then conclude with a bath of shampoo and a sprinkle of baking soda. Scrub well and rinse."

Of course, there are 732 more tips, hints and ideas to peruse in this wonderful book. Not only is this book extremely practical, it's also a heck of a fun read.

The Encyclopedia of Country Living

The first thing you will notice about Carla Emery's book, The Encyclopedia of Country Living, is that it is really heavy. This



book is so full of information, that reading it may seem somewhat daunting. However, if used as it was intended, as a reference book, organized very carefully and thoughtfully, this may be one of the most important books in your hobby farm library. Be sure to read the author's personal history of how she compiled the information for and wrote this book. It took her 24 years to write. You will certainly come to respect her deeply for her dedication to this project and for her strong ideals in her personal life.

Now in the eighth printing of its ninth edition, *The Encyclopedia of Country Living* has been designed to appeal to a large audience. Emery explains the audience for this book in her introduction: "This book is written for everyone. I kid you not. It's interesting reading, a valuable reference, and a useful source of recipes and how-to-do-it information. If you're in the suburbs with space enough for a little garden, you'll find it even more useful. If you dream of someday living on enough land for a garden and maybe a few animals, it's a great wish book and guide to that transition. If you live out of town, where you can have a big garden and livestock, you'll get even more use out of this book."

The *Encyclopedia* contains 11 main chapters: "Oddments," "Introduction to Plants," "Grasses, Grains, and Canes," "Garden Vegetables," "Herbs and Flavorings," "Tree, Vine, Bush, and Bramble," "Food Preservation," "Introduction to Animals," "Poultry," "Goats, Cows, and Home Dairying," and "Bee, Rabbit, Sheep, and Pig."

The "Oddments" chapter is fascinating reading. Among the topics addressed are "Schools of Country Living," "Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places," "Giving Birth by Yourself," "Backwoods Housekeeping" and "Quilting, Dutch-Oven Baking, and Candlestick Making." Having just had our second child a few months ago, we were particularly interested in the section on giving birth alone. Thank goodness that was not the case for us—we both went through the whole experience together, with both of our children. This chapter also contains extremely helpful directories of government resources, state ag colleges, USDA phone numbers, ag marketing resources, publications and mail-order suppliers.

Find out everything you ever wanted to know about herbs, including home remedies and recipes, in the "Herbs and Flavorings" chapter. The "Food Preservation" chapter will help you plan your meals in advance and guides you through the canning process. This chapter also contains great recipes for jams, jellies, fruit sauces and spiced fruit.

This book contains so much information that it would be impossible for us to even touch on a small fraction of it here in any detail. Trust us, you'll refer back to this book again and again—and you will learn something new every time. This is a must-have resource for anyone even remotely interested in gardening, farming or keeping animals.