



House Repair, Backyard Market, and Endangered Livestock

Reviving Your House, Backyard Market Gardening and The Encyclopedia of Historic and Endangered Livestock and Poultry Breeds

Reviving Your House Doing repair work on our house is not my favorite weekend activity. I prefer to be out with the horses, riding and mucking pastures, rather than inside tending to a leaky toilet. However, after 50 years of sheltering many different families and enduring a few earthquakes, our house needs occasional TLC to fix a window sash or unclog a stopped drain. Most of the time I perform the ubiquitous “honey do” routine when it comes to repair work (he is in the construction business after all). Sometimes though, I just have to take the tools by their handles and do my part. (I’m actually pretty handy once I get going, thanks to my husband’s tutelage while working in his business and the nearly two years we spent refurbishing our home after moving in.) So when I came across *Reviving Your House, 500 Inexpensive & Simple Solutions to Basic Home Maintenance Issues* by Alan Dan Orme, I felt the same hesitation reserved for repair work around the house.

Once I got into the book though, I realized the chore was pretty simple. *Reviving Your House* is only 166 pages long—a very quick read that doesn’t delve into significant detail. Obviously not the best resource for those who have limited knowledge about restoration and repair, but want to tackle a major project. *Reviving Your House* is brief and the illustrations are not plentiful. If you have grandiose restoration plans and you want to do the job yourself—but you don’t have a lot of building and repair know-how—look for a more complete reference (probably several).

However, if you want a handy, yet quick guide to basic tasks, this book is good to have around. The author does scratch the surface regarding many topics, starting with finding the right house in the first place. For those on a budget (and who isn’t?), he is very “money minded” as the book’s title suggests—many of Orme’s subheadings include the caveats “penny pinching” and “the lazy way.” No doubt about it, *Reviving Your House* is written for those who want to do the work themselves but have heavy financial constraints.

While this book does lack detail, there is probably a little something in it for everyone—like ornamenting a stock wooden screen door, or the lazy way to make a circular staircase. If brevity and a simplistic approach are your preferred methodologies, then by all means, take the plunge. *Reviving Your House* might even get you thinking about potential weekend projects that could actually be, well ... fun. *Reviving Your House, 500 Inexpensive & Simple Solutions to Basic Home Maintenance Issues*, by Alan Dan Orme (Storey Books, 210 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, MA, 01247), 2001, 166 pages, softcover, \$14.95. *Backyard Market Gardening* Growing crops is pure pleasure for hobby farmers and by nature, we find working the soil, nurturing plants and harvesting a preferable lifestyle even when the work gets tough and the weather doesn’t cooperate. Along with growing crops, many hobby farmers also enjoy financial gains by taking their harvest to market. If you’re thinking about getting into the “business” of small farming, you’re certainly not alone. However, before you begin a marketing venture, you will probably want to invest some time researching your options. One of the many resources available to help get you started is a book by Andrew W. Lee, *Backyard Market Gardening, The Entrepreneur’s Guide to Selling What You Grow*. In his book, Lee outlines a business plan for profitable small farming beginning with the basics such as soil quality and composting to financing and marketing pointers. If you’re looking for a passionate voice to inspire you, Lee might be it. He believes in what he’s doing and that comes through in *Backyard Market Gardening*. (Along with writing and more than 30 years of gardening experience, Lee is the executive director of the Intervale Foundation, a nonprofit educational organization that promotes models of community farming.) In addition to lots of “how to” information, Lee provides an appendix that includes a listing of suppliers, book publishers, periodicals and newsletters, as well as a slew of other useful informational services. He also includes a suggested reading list that is fairly comprehensive. However, because *Backyard Market Gardening* was first published in 1993 (as of March 1998, the book was in its fifth printing), the listings are not as complete as they could be. For example, the suggested reading list doesn’t include any books published after 1992 and there are no website resources provided. While *Backyard Market Gardening* is not the most current book out there for those interested in making a few bucks selling what they grow, it’s still relevant and does contain useful information. After all, if you’re serious about turning a profit with your crops, you’ll probably want to read a variety of books and publications on the subject—some old, some new. *Backyard Market Gardening, The Entrepreneur’s Guide to Selling What You Grow*, by Andrew W. Lee (Good Earth Publications, 1702 Mountain View Rd., Buena Vista, VA 24416), 1998, 351 pages, softcover, \$19.95. *The Encyclopedia of Historic and Endangered Livestock and Poultry Breeds* When I first laid eyes on the cover of *The Encyclopedia of Historic and Endangered Livestock and Poultry Breeds* by Janet Vorwald Dohner, my interest was piqued. A pretty cover always grabs my attention and *Endangered Livestock and Poultry* was no exception: a Barred Plymouth Rock rooster set against a stark white background—a simple and clean cover with a descriptive title that evokes the “great coffee table book” reaction. But once I started flipping through the pages, I realized that *Endangered Livestock and Poultry* is more than that. While the book does have some



nice pictures and illustrations, it's far more text heavy than it is image heavy. There's a lot of information packed into the 592 pages. For each species covered—goats, sheep, swine, cattle, equines, chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese—one can find out about natural history, domestication, husbandry and of course, breed profiles that include history, characteristics, qualities, traits and the degree of rarity in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. When I first opened the book, I went straight for the section on equines (being the horse-crazed woman that I am). I happen to be very fond of Cleveland Bays and while I was disappointed to find no drawings or photos of these spectacular and rare equines, I did locate lots of informational facts that I could confirm. Because *Endangered Livestock and Poultry* is written by a librarian and researcher, don't expect to find peripheral resources such as breed associations or consumer publications. The author does, however, provide references for several nonprofit organizations—the likes of the Domestic Fowl Trust and the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy. In addition, she includes some references to journals and a "Where to See Rare and Historical Breeds" listing. *Endangered Livestock and Poultry* gets high marks from this reviewer. The detailed, factual and organizational attributes of this book make it an excellent choice for any hobby farmer interested in all manners of livestock.

The Encyclopedia of Historic and Endangered Livestock and Poultry Breeds, by Janet Vorwald Dohner (Yale University Press, P.O. Box 209040, New Haven, CT 06520-9040), March 2002, 592 pages, hardcover, \$75.