
Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 148

Simple Long Term Food Storage

Show Notes are at: www.LivingHomegrown.com/148

Kathy: Some vegetables you simply can't can. You can't can broccoli. It's going to be mush. I've never been successful canning asparagus. Right now, it's asparagus season. But dried asparagus, fabulous. I blanch it, dry it. You take the stalks and run them through my food processor so that they're a fine powder. I keep the tips whole, and you can just rehydrate that in some warm water, add some chicken stock and some cream, and, oh, you've got cream of asparagus soup, and it's fabulous stuff.

Theresa: That sounds amazing. This is the Living Homegrown Podcast episode 148.

Announcer: Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast, where it's all about how to live farm fresh without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle is your host national PBS TV producer and canning expert Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey there, everybody. Welcome to the podcast. I'm your host Theresa Loe, and this podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without a farm, which includes organic, small-space food gardening, canning and fermenting the harvest, and artisan food skills like baking your own bread. It's all about the different ways that we can live closer to our food and take small, delicious steps towards living a more sustainable lifestyle. If you would like to learn more about any of these topics or my online courses, my coaching, or my Living Homegrown Institute, just visit my website livinghomegrown.com.

Today's episode is about prepping for emergencies. Now, before you think, "This doesn't have anything to do with me, I don't need to prep, I'm going to just tune out on this one," hear me out because this is a really important topic. I think it's imperative that we be prepared for emergencies, any type of emergency. I live here in Los Angeles. We are in earthquake country, and we have wildfires like there is no tomorrow. Since I have lived here my whole life, I have experienced several different disasters related to both, and being prepared, having food, having water, having access to flashlights and batteries, and being ready for any type of emergency as well as we can be has really given me peace of mind and actually helped us out when we did have a big earthquake, and we didn't have access to water for a few days, and there was a big mess to clean up, and we had no help whatsoever to do that. We were really on our own.

And I want to cover this because no matter where we live, we could face an emergency where we may need to be on our own for either a short period of time or a long period of time. And I don't want to approach this as, "Oh, let's all live in fear and be scared that any moment the next shoe is going to drop." I don't come from that sort of place, but I do believe in being ready and having food and water available so that if something does happen, we are not in a total panic.

Now, to help us with this conversation today, I brought on an expert. I brought on Kathy Harrison, who is the author of *Prepping 101: 40 Steps You Can Take to Be Prepared: Protect Your Family, Prepare for Weather Disasters, Be Ready and Resilient when Emergencies Arise*. Now, what I really wanted to focus on for this particular episode, because obviously we could cover any type of emergency, we could cover all sorts of different ways to be prepared, but what I really wanted to cover here was how we can be prepared when it comes to long-term food storage.

So many of you grow your own food and are canning and preserving your own food, and some of you want to do that, and I felt like making the connection through food and being prepared would really resonate with you, so I brought on Kathy to talk about that particular area of being prepared. We're going to talk about the types of food we can store, how long we can store them, how we should go about creating a plan for doing this sort of storage, and some of the things that we need to consider when it comes to how we use up this food once we have stored it.

I think you'll get a lot of valuable information from today's episode, so let me tell you a little bit about Kathy. Kathy Harrison is the author of five books. Her last book, *Just in Case: How to be Self-Sufficient When the Unexpected Happens*, was voted best book on family preparedness by *The Prepared*. Kathy and her husband Bruce live on a tiny homestead in Massachusetts where they raise bees and chickens. They also have a small orchard and a greenhouse.

Kathy teaches classes in food preservation, soapmaking, candlemaking, beekeeping, and other topics devoted to small-scale farmsteading. Kathy has presented workshops at Mother Earth News Sustainable Living Fairs, NOFA conferences, and she was an adjunct professor at Greenfield Community classes, where she taught classes in the agriculture department. And Kathy's latest book that we're going to talk about today, *Prepping 101*, is actually being released today on the day that this podcast comes out, so we had perfect timing there.

And I will have links in the show notes to everything about Kathy, links to her website, her social media, and links to all of her books on being prepared. And

to get to the show notes, you just go to livinghomegrown.com/148, and I will have everything there for you.

Now, before we dive into the interview, I want you to know that today's podcast episode is brought to you by my Living Homegrown Institute, which is my monthly membership site where you can access an entire library of monthly master classes that will help you live farm fresh without the farm. In my membership site, we cover everything from how to grow heirloom tomatoes and raise chickens to how to make your own cheese or ferment vegetables.

Now, I believe that living an organic, farm-fresh lifestyle is really a journey in learning. Just as we learn different skills, such as food fermentation and food growing and even critter keeping, there are three distinct stages for growth: we start out being curious, we go into experimentation, and eventually we grow into mastery of these different skills. Now, if you're looking at creating a farm-fresh lifestyle for yourself, and you're curious where you fall on the growth scale on the different skills, I've got a free resource for you. It's my Farm Fresh Success Path that my students use inside my learning institute, and it will help you decide where you are on your own journey, the characteristics of that stage, and some action steps and information that you can take to get to the next level. To get the Success Path PDF, you just go to livinghomegrown.com/path, that's P-A-T-H, and you can download it there for free.

Okay. Are you ready to get prepared and learn how we can store our food long term for emergencies? I knew you were. Let's dive into my interview with Kathy Harrison, the author of *Prepping 101: 40 Steps You Can Take to Be Prepared*.

Hey, Kathy. Thanks so much for coming on the show today.

Kathy: Thank you so much for having me.

Theresa: Well, I'm excited about this topic. It's something I've wanted to cover for a long time on the podcast. I live in Los Angeles, I grew up Southern California, and we have lived through several severe earthquakes, and luckily my family always had an emergency earthquake kit. We always had several weeks of food and water and supplies. And, man, it really came in handy. And there's so many other emergencies that can happen, and so I just am thrilled to talk about this because it's right up the alley of people who are growing their own food and canning their own food. This is certainly should be part of the conversation for even people who aren't doing those things. So it's just really important, so thanks for coming on. I think I'd love to start, because I know you're a homesteader as well in Massachusetts, and you have bees and chickens, and you also are into family preparedness, so can you tell us all a little bit about how you got interested in this topic?

Kathy: I can. I had actually two episodes in my life that really made it so clear how important this was. The first, my husband and I were part of that 1970s back-to-the-land movement, and we moved from an industrial city to the middle of nowhere, a dirt road off a dirt road. And I had three little boys, and when the youngest was eight months old, little bitty teeny thing, we had a major ice storm, and in the midst of it, he got sick. He got really sick. So sick that we nearly lost him. Part of the reason he had a stomach thing was that I didn't have any oral rehydration therapy on hand. It was something I often kept, but I didn't have any. We got through the night with him. The next day, my husband used the tractor and was just had to pull trees out of the road so that we could slide down the ice-encrusted hill to the local hospital. And he almost didn't make it for the lack of a very inexpensive, easy-to-access thing like oral rehydration therapy. So that was the first thing.

The second incident, many, many years ago, I took a serious fall, and I broke a hip, shattered my elbow. My husband had to take months off from work to take care of me. I wasn't working. He was working but not steadily. And it occurred to me then that being prepared isn't just about the big regional thing like an earthquake or a tornado or a hurricane. People have personal crises all the time that you need to be prepared for, and having a deep pantry in that case was a life saver. He didn't have to go out to buy groceries. I had a full basement. We didn't have to worry about money because we had money put away. We were prepared with extra cash on hand. And I was really glad that we had taken the time to take preparedness seriously.

Of course, I lived in the northeast, and we live with ice storms and, all of a sudden, we're living with hurricanes, which we never had before. Irene came right in my backyard. Who would've thought living inland in Massachusetts I'd need to worry about a hurricane? But I did.

The other thing that happened that was so interesting, we have always said, "Oh, we live in the most geologically, climatically stable place probably in the country," and yet over the past couple of years, we had a tornado that set down about a mile from my house in February. That is unheard of in Massachusetts.

Theresa: Wow.

Kathy: We felt an earthquake, the one that hit Washington, D.C. several years ago. That didn't affect us, but we felt it. We don't usually feel earthquakes. Then we had Irene come up. We got clobbered by Sandy. We had the Halloween ice storm that left my son and his wife needing to ... Again, they had to come slipping and sliding up ice-covered roads to our home because they had a brand new, four-week-old baby and had to heat and had no water. So they were with us for almost two weeks before their power was restored.

Theresa: Wow.

Kathy: We have stopped thinking, "Oh, it'll never happen to us," because it's happened to most of us.

Theresa: Yes, that is so, so true. Even here in the middle of Los Angeles, we have had wildfires and had to bug out, and it's so, so important. And all of the things you can do, like making sure that you have gas in your car and that you have a backpack with water in your car. You never know, you could get stuck on a freeway and there's some disaster, earthquake, or anything. So, yes, no matter where you live, there is really important things that we can do that are not difficult to do but can make a world of difference, a life and death difference. So I'm so glad that we're able to talk about this.

Now, in your book, you point out, and I totally agreed with you, that the media tends to present people who prepare for emergencies as a little bit nutso, and it's unfortunate because that makes you think that, "Well, if I'm going to do any kind of preparing, then I'm a nut, too," and I think it's really common sense that we should all be prepared, especially when you don't think you need it, just like you said. So I'd love to have you elaborate a little bit about why we should be prepared. Not just that there could be some emergency, but there's all different levels of preparedness, and even having the bare essentials are important. So what's your take on that? Why should we be prepared?

Kathy: I think being prepared is, it's really not about bunkers and bullets, it's the mentality of being a good citizen. We have a responsibility to our families, and we have a responsibility to our community. If we are privileged enough to have extra money that we can use to put aside some extra food, some extra supplies, it's our responsibility to do that so that if there is a crisis, those people who are truly vulnerable — the disabled, the really poor, the very young, the very old — those people are able to make good use of what is available without us taking advantage of it when we don't really need to.

The other thing I think is a piece of this for me is that when we build healthy communities, communities that are prepared, that that supports healthy families, and healthy families are just more resilient across the board in an emergency. It can be personal, it can be local, it can be regional, it can be national, it can be global. So you have a responsibility to keep your family and your community healthy, and I think being prepared is part of that. I find that it makes me more confident. It certainly makes me more comfortable. And then I can stretch out. I just joined our community emergency response team because I'm in a position where I can walk to our local emergency shelter, and I can be of use to people.

So I think of preparedness, not about bunkers and bullets because I'm afraid my neighbors might steal my last jar of apple sauce. I'm a lot more concerned with, how can I help my neighbor figure out how they can have enough to get them through an emergency as well? How do we build skills around food preservation, cooking? How do we learn to grow our own in ways that are cooperative and communal rather than isolating and fearful?

Theresa: I love that, and that's exactly how I feel as well. And I know my listeners do because so many of them are gardeners, and being able to share and help with growing food and teaching people how to grow food is a real big part of what a lot of my listeners love to do. And something else you've talked about, which I also agree with and think is important for people to consider, especially because we're going to talk a lot about food preservation today, is that buying in bulk can save money. You talk a lot about that as well.

Kathy: I do because it doesn't just save money, although it certainly can save significant money, but it also reduces your carbon footprint, it saves resources, and it gives you the deep pantry without even really trying. So, for instance, I recently replaced my cocoa powder. Now, I last bought cocoa powder, I will say, seven years ago. But I bought 25 pounds, which is a lot of cocoa powder.

Now, it has been shared. I've given it to people. I've swapped it for other things. But if I didn't do that, if I didn't buy the big sack of it, if I didn't store it properly so that it was still in good shape when I wanted to use it, I would've been buying little tins of it. They're most expensive to ship. They take more oil to ship. They take more packaging. It's more junk going into the waste stream. Bulk buying is a terrific way to get started with a food preparation plan.

And it also is a way to build community because how do you buy in bulk? Very often what you'll find are people start food co-ops. So much fun and so useful. And you don't need a lot of people. You can have one that is around a church group or a PTO or a playgroup or your family or a group of neighbors. I homeschool my youngest daughter, and our homeschool co-op has a terrific buyer program, so we get everything in bulk.

Theresa: So good.

Kathy: Good for the planet, good for the community.

Theresa: Yes. Yes. Love it. Okay. When I was going through your book, what immediately I noticed, which made me fall in love with it, was that it was really easy to implement. I'm a step-by-step girl, and you definitely have this broken up and laid out in a really easy-to-follow format so that people aren't overwhelmed. Because I think that's one of the reasons why people don't start, is when they start looking at this, they start feeling like, "Oh, I can never do all of this." Well,

you have it laid out really easy, so they can just tackle one section at a time and get through to the level of preparedness that they want. So that's what I love.

Now, a lot of my listeners grow their own food, and they can their own food, and you had a section in there on planning a system for managing what you were going to store, which I thought was really helpful. And one of the first things you talked about was how we have to kind of look at what our needs are in terms of food, like if someone has a sensitivity, you don't want to store a bunch of stuff that you're just never going to use. So could you talk about that for a minute?

Kathy: Absolutely. I think it's important to start with, what is it that your family actually likes to eat? And you may need to tweak this a little bit. If your kids are used to fluorescent frosted cocoa sugar nuggets with a side of donuts for breakfast, the lights go out, and you're making from-scratch oatmeal with some raisins and maybe a little brown sugar and evaporated milk, from experience, I will tell you that this is not going to go over well. It's never too early to start feeding your kids whole foods that are accessible and that are good for them. So there's the first thing.

Also, look at the reality of who you're preparing for. Now, this'll be a little scary to some people. I have seven kids. I have 10 grandkids. So when I think about how much do I need to buy for how many people, there are only three of us at home now, but realistically it wouldn't be three. During the last big ice storm, I ended up with my son and his wife and their three children. So I was glad to have a deep enough pantry that I could incorporate an extra five people. So think about the number of people.

And before you get frightened by words like "three months worth of food," which just seems crazy to most people, that's just so much food, and it is a lot of food, look at one week. Can you come up with seven meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Seven that can be all made with shelf-stable ingredients. This isn't too difficult. There are a lot of cookbooks on the market that cater to just this kind of thing. Put aside those things. Start with three days. If seven days is overwhelming, start with three days.

But make sure you have everything. If you're going to be making rice and beans, for instance, you don't want to put away 50 pounds of dried beans but then have no water to cook them with. Canned beans are fine for this. Think about everything you need. Do you need water for the rice? Make sure that that's in your package of ... Some people store a day's worth of food in a six-gallon bucket or in a plastic tote, however you want to do it, on metal shelving units in your basement. Whatever you choose to do, start small but get every single thing you need. And don't forget to consider a few treats. Your kids will thank

you if in this bucket there are some chocolate chips because that can go a long way to easing the pain a little bit.

When you've done three days, make sure you go to seven, then go to 14 days. While you're doing this, and this is really important, start incorporating that food into what you eat. If you're going to be making one meal that is, say, a tuna fish casserole, that's an easy one, serve that once in a while. Get in the habit of making it completely with shelf-stable food so that your family is used to that flavor. Kids have been known to really go on strike and flat out refuse to eat if the food is unfamiliar to them. Elderly people can be like that, can be really fussy about what they're consuming. Once you've done this, now you can start thinking, "Okay, I've done this. How can I expand this? Well, let me look at, what's our favorite meal? What can I do to that meal to make it shelf-stable? Now let's get some of those meals put away."

Bit by bit by bit, in this you're going to see where your problems are, your problem areas. How are you going to store all this? There are ways to do this. I utilize space underneath beds. I have some shelving units. Because you have to think about some of the important things. What are enemies of food? Light, moisture, heat, oxygen, pest. You can't be putting things, for instance, up in your attic if, like my attic, it can be 130 degrees up there. Your food is not going to store well. I can't store much in my basement. I live in New England, my basement is damp, so for instance, I could never put grains down there. They wouldn't last. I store canned food, my home canned food down there, but anything in a cardboard box, for instance, isn't going to last.

The right containers really matter. I never leave any food in a cardboard or paper container ever. I always switch it to a mason jar. And I have a reason for that. You do not want to hear about the saga of the pantry moth. I was infested. It took me weeks and weeks to get rid of them. It was a nightmare. So I'm far more careful now that I don't get myself in that position. When I bring anything into the house — flours, grains, mixes — it goes straight into the freezer. It sits there for about a week. When I comes out, let it come to room temperature, and then I store in either glass or food-grade plastic. I put in an oxygen absorber, I get out all the oxygen I can, and then I seal it up. And then I know that when I go to open that container, it isn't going to have pantry moths, it's not going to have weevils. It's going to be in the best possible condition.

Theresa: Let me ask you a question on that. And I love this because I'm the same way. I like to buy my grain and my flours in bulk, and I love mason jars, so they always look cute on the shelf. But I do also freeze it, and so one thing you mentioned there was the oxygen absorber. Can you give me more information on that? Because that is something I'm not familiar with.

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- Kathy: Sure. You can buy packets of oxygen absorbers. They're tiny. They're no bigger than maybe a sugar packet, I would say, and they come in a tightly-sealed plastic bag. What they do is take excess oxygen and absorb into this packet. So I don't use it for things that I plan to use up in the next, say, two months or three months. But if I should buy 50 pounds of wheat, and I'm going to store that in six-gallon buckets, I really want that wheat to last. So I'm going to freeze it first, put it into the bucket, and then I'll put in an oxygen absorber or two before I put the lid on. And I tend to also, for really long-term storage, use a Mylar bag as well. The food goes into the Mylar bag with the oxygen absorber. The whole thing then goes into a rigid plastic food-grade container. You can seal the top. And that food, people have used it 20 years later, and it's fine. Whole grains last a really, really long time.
- Theresa: That's so good.
- Kathy: May I suggest-
- Theresa: Yes.
- Kathy: ... that you also label it and date it. Ask me how I know that you really need to label and date it.
- Theresa: I can only imagine.
- Kathy: Because you think you're going to remember. You're not going to remember.
- Theresa: No. No. It's that way with canned food. I've canned things and put it on the shelf and thought, "Oh, I'll remember that this is blackberry jam," but you don't.
- Kathy: You really don't.
- Theresa: No.
- Kathy: More than once I've opened something and thought, "Huh. That's not at all what I expected. And I would wonder exactly what am I going to do with that chutney that-"
- Theresa: That you just opened.
- Kathy: ... "was not what I planned on?" Yeah.
- Theresa: Yeah. Exactly. Well, with all of this, what do you suggest ... When you were talking about how we should plan out different meals and have those in storage, what do you usually do for rotating out that food? Because that's something that I know is a challenge for a lot of people. They have it, and then they don't

want it to just sit there and never eat it. After a certain period of time, it would be great to use it. Do you have a system for that?

Kathy: My system is really that I have, depending on the season, a routine of maybe 10 meals that are my go-tos. This is what I cook all the time, and I go straight to my food storage. So I store what I eat, and I eat what I store. I did buy, they're really handy, a set of shelves that are at an angle, so you load from the time, you pull from the bottom so that I always know I'm getting the oldest can out first. And I'm just really careful that I don't store things that I don't eat all the time.

Theresa: Good.

Kathy: And if I do look, and occasionally this will happen, you've cleaned out your kitchen cabinet, and you look at that thing and think, "I know that at one point in my life I thought that that can of pickled something or other was a good idea, and it really wasn't a good idea. I never used it." And the pigs will consume it, the chickens will eat it. But sometimes you just have to admit that, well, that was a mistake.

Theresa: Right. Right. Yes, I've had that happen, too, and my chickens love just about everything. I don't have pigs here in L.A., but I'm sure that would definitely take up anything that the chickens wouldn't eat.

Kathy: It does. And I think it's also important to get your family used to the idea of eating real, whole foods. Bulk foods tend to be real, whole foods. So I grocery shop in my food storage room and bring it downstairs. For instance, this morning I looked in my big bucket, and I had no sugar down here. I went upstairs, got one of the smaller buckets, brought it downstairs, and now I'll rotate the bigger one back upstairs and refill that.

So I don't tend to go to the market very often. I belong to a local food co-op, and I do most of my shopping there. Actually, it's a surprise to me, every once in a while, I'll go to the market and think, "Holy smoke, I couldn't afford to shop like this very often. I'm glad I don't have to do it." Because if you don't go for three months, price rises are really apparent in a way that if you go, I think, every week, it doesn't quite hit you in the same way.

So I'll go upstairs and look and say, "Okay, this week, I need three bottles of canned tomatoes. I'm going to need a couple of boxes of pasta. Gee, I'm out of peanut butter downstairs. Let me grab a couple of cans of tuna fish." I've gone shopping, but I've just done it up in my food storage room.

Theresa: That's so fantastic. Now, do you keep an inventory of everything? Or have you kind of been doing this so long that you just know by looking?

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- Kathy: I keep a generic inventory of the big purchases — dried beans, wheat, oats, dried fruits — because that's something I use a lot of. I don't want to be buying an extra 50 or 100 pounds of wheat if I know I've already got 200 pounds upstairs. So I do keep an inventory of those big things. Other things I'm in the habit, I like to buy so that ... For instance, peanut butter. Not the most responsible thing always to buy, but we use a lot of peanut butter around here. So I know that it goes on sale about every three months. Every three months I will go back to a place that the price is really right, and I'll buy a three-month supply and rotate that through so that I buy three months, I've got three months in storage, so I know I've got about six months at my best time, three months at my worst time. And I don't have to think about it very often. I just know that peanut butter goes on sale every three months.
- Theresa: Perfect. Yeah. And because you do this the way you do it, you notice the price difference. And I do think you're right about that because sometimes the prices creep up so slowly that we don't even pay attention.
- Kathy: Absolutely.
- Theresa: It happens all the time.
- Kathy: And I also find that I change my buying habits based on what I've learned. So for instance, coffee. When I first got married, coffee was something ... My husband only drank instant coffee with creamer. I know it's awful to think. I can barely remember those days. But he was an old Navy guy, that's what he drank. And then one day I had real cream in my coffee, and I thought, "Well, this is a revelation. Oh, my goodness. This is fabulous." And then I learned about how terrible instant coffee is, and I started buying fresh ground.
- Well, then I learned about shade grown, fair trade coffee, so I evolved into what we now buy for coffee for the most part and how we prepare it. And I did figure, too, I had to drink less of it. I am never in Massachusetts going to grow coffee. I am going to grow lots of herbs for tea. And slowly I went from four cups a day to two to one, and now I treat coffee more like a treat as opposed to a necessity.
- Theresa: That's nice. I like that. Yes. Yes. And I also do grow a lot of herbs, so I can totally relate to that, and I do drink a lot of herbal tea as well. So I hadn't really thought about stocking up on my dried herbs though. That's something that we should definitely do because I'm always thinking, "Oh, I will just" ... Here in L.A., we have great weather all year long, so I can always just pick fresh, but I should have some dried versions as well just in case.
- Kathy: Yes. And they actually last a fairly long time if you keep them out of the light and keep them dry.

Theresa: Absolutely. Now, something else that I think we should probably consider based on what I've read in your book is the way that we will be preparing the food. Like you mentioned how if we have a whole bunch of pasta in our food storage that we may not be able to in emergency have the water available to cook that. And here in the city, we have camp stoves and a limited amount of water. We have property up in Northern California as well, and there we do have a well, and we have wood burning fireplaces and fire pits and things that ... So we would have a different way of preparing our food up north than we would in the city. So how we will be preparing food in an emergency is something we should consider, too, right?

Kathy: It certainly is, and this is a place that gets tricky. One of the things that happened after the big ice storm, we really looked at how our house functioned, and we thought of our preparedness as a platform. We wanted to create a platform of resiliency, and that platform had planks, and one of the planks is, how do we cook? And we actually got rid of the stove that we had, which was a perfectly okay stove. We gave it to someone who really needed a new stove and replaced our electric stove with a propane stove because I have a 500-gallon propane tank, so I would be good. I couldn't use the oven, but I could use the stovetop. I'd have to light it with a match. That, to me, seemed like a really, really good spend.

The other thing we have is a wood stove in the basement. That's not realistic for everybody. You have to have the infrastructure. You have to have the appropriate chimney. So this is a place where all preparedness needs to be personal, and what you need if you live in a one-bedroom apartment on the 14th floor of a building is very different than what I need living in a country house in a New England village. What you need if you live in South Texas is very different than what you need in Northern Maine. So you have to look realistically at what your options are.

A camp stove is hugely helpful in terms of cooking. Check the BTUs on whatever you get. I was really disappointed. I had purchased a couple of smaller stoves just to try it out, and what I found is they didn't generate enough heat to do a lot of cooking per se. They would heat things, they would heat up a can of soup or a can of chili, but they weren't going to cook beans from the dried state to edible in any reasonable length of time. They wouldn't even really boil a pot of water quickly. You used up all of your fuel on one meal. A stove with a real tank that produces enough BTUs is a much better investment.

And that brings up something I want to talk about, and that's the difference between spending and investing. And when you spend, I think of it as something goes out but nothing of permanent value comes in. Investing means that something goes out, but what you get in return is worth more to you than that cash outlay. The stove, for us, turned out to be a good investment because I can now cook no matter what. And I can cook for several weeks. Probably, actually,

if I'm careful with my propane, I could cook for several months assuming the tank was full when I started.

So think about what is the best way you can invest in a way to prepare food? And it may be that you can get a camp stove on legs that will go in your garage. You can't always use those stoves inside. Check. Many of them are not safe for inside, you need more air circulation. Particularly if you live in a new home that's really tight. Mine is so old and so leaky that I'm pretty okay no matter what. But that's an investment in your family's safety and security.

Theresa: Yes. Good advice. Really, really good advice. Now, I think we should also touch on the different ways that we could have our food stored. A lot of my listeners are canners, but there's also dehydration and freezing. So do you advise that we have a little bit of everything? Some dehydrated, some frozen, some canned?

Kathy: I do. Now, I say this with a caveat. I have a freezer, and it's about as big as a coffin. It's just huge. But if the power went out for a long time, I'd be in trouble. I'd lose a pig, a quarter of a steer, a lot of chickens. It would be a very sad day. So one of my investments ... And when I say I'm a food preserver, I've been known to put up a thousand jars a year. I preserve a lot of food. I have four canners, and I have an outdoor canning kitchen, my cannery that I love, and the stove in the house. I could get all four canners going at once, and I could can up that food in the freezer.

Otherwise, I would really be devastated. That's a loss that I couldn't stand. Some people might think it was worth their while to buy a generator that could keep them going for a few weeks. They're very expensive, they're very noisy, they require a lot of fuel, and they need a lot of maintenance. For us, it didn't seem reasonable. It seemed more reasonable to make sure that I've got the equipment and the jars on hand that if I had to, I could can up that meat. It would be a lot of work.

I have a mixture. I do buy some freeze dried food. Not a lot. I buy my milk that way in bulk because the shelf life is 20 to 25 years, and I don't want to be without milk. What else do I buy like that? I have some meat that is freeze dried, some vegetables, a few fruits. Not too many. It's pretty expensive. I dehydrate a lot, and if I could only use one method of food storage, it would be dehydration. I love my Excalibur.

Theresa: I have one, too.

Kathy: Oh, don't you just love it?

Theresa: Yes, I love it.

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- Kathy: It is fabulous. I dry a lot of vegetables. We prefer them dried. I don't really love many canned vegetables, and some vegetables you simply can't can. You can't can broccoli. It's going to be mush. I've never been successful canning asparagus. Right now, it's asparagus season. But dried asparagus, fabulous. I blanch it, dry it. You take the stalks and run them through my food processor so that they're a fine powder. I keep the tips whole, and you can just rehydrate that in some warm water, add some chicken stock and some cream, and, oh, you've got cream of asparagus soup, and it's fabulous stuff.
- Theresa: That sounds amazing.
- Kathy: It is amazing stuff.
- Theresa: I had never even considered powdering it. That's really a great idea.
- Kathy: One of the other things that I powder, so I'll do carrots, onions, celery, mushrooms. Dry them all. When they're really crispy, throw them all in the food processor, and what you come up with is kind of a bouillon. Toss that into some water, and whatever you're cooking is better for it. It's really quite lovely.
- Theresa: That's so good. Yes, I'm going to do that.
- Kathy: And garlic.
- Theresa: Yes, I have done garlic.
- Kathy: I always have too much garlic.
- Theresa: Yes, yes.
- Kathy: Yeah. I love my garlic powder. Onions, I make onion powder, and it's a good way to use up those onions. This time of the year, they're all sprouting and looking nasty, and my fresh onions will not be ready for months, so I'm just chopping them up and dehydrating them and powdering them, and I've got onion.
- Theresa: Very, very good. I love that tip. Yes. I had not even thought of doing that will asparagus though. I'm very excited. I'm going to try that. Now, since-
- Kathy: Broccoli does the same thing. You can make cream of broccoli soup.
- Theresa: So good. Yes, I love it. Well, yeah, okay, good. Now that you've got me salivating-
- Kathy: I know. I'm hungry.

Theresa: And that's the point I want people to understand, and you've touched on it several time, and you touch on it in your book, is that being prepared doesn't mean that you're going to have to eat cardboard. You can still be a foodie and have delicious meals. You just have to be clever and think around anything that might take a lot of water, like pasta, and look for other things that you can do and create, like making a creamy soup. So you could use the dehydrated milk and the dehydrated vegetables. You can still create something that's delicious.

Kathy: One of my favorite books is Apocalypse Chow, and it is a terrific book. The man who wrote it just created these amazing menus with shelf-stable food. I cook from it all the time. Another thing we cannot forget to mention is no matter where you live, you can grow something. You can grow herbs in a pot. We landscape with food plants. So when we bought the land that we're on now, it was just about a desert. It was sandy and covered with big trees that were well past their safe lifespan. They were always in danger of falling on the house. And we've been here now a really long time, about 30 years, and we've really created a food oasis in a place where nothing edible was growing. I think the last time I counted we have 37 varieties of perennial food, berry bushes, and fruit trees.

So if you have a little spot in your backyard where you can put in an asparagus patch, some rhubarb, and it's going to be different depending on where you live, a blueberry bush or two, raspberries, it's nice to have that fresh food to compliment what else you're eating. You can manage to eat something that is a little pedestrian if you can also go cut up some lettuce and make a salad that's crispy to go along with that.

Theresa: Yeah. And a salad dressing would be so easy. You could definitely whip that up really easily to go with it.

Kathy: Totally. Oil and vinegar.

Theresa: Yeah, absolutely. And throw in some of those herbs.

Kathy: Throw in some of those herbs.

Theresa: Yeah. Well, Kathy, I can't thank you enough for coming on. This has been really, really helpful. I know that people will look at being prepared in a different way, and being a foodie and being prepared is not too difficult to do, so I'm very, very excited that you were able to come on. Thank you very much for coming on today.

Kathy: Well, thank you so much for having me. This was really fun.



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Theresa: Well, I hope you enjoyed that interview with Kathy Harrison, the author of *Prepping 101: 40 Steps You Can Take to Be Prepared*. Now, as I said before, I will have links in the show notes for Kathy, her website, all of her books, any information that we discussed here today, including some resources for being prepared. To get to the show notes, you just go to livinghomegrown.com/148, and I'll have everything there for you.

And as a reminder, today's podcast episode was brought to you by my Living Homegrown Institute, which is my membership site. If you would like to get the free PDF Success Path that my students use inside my membership, then just go to livinghomegrown.com/path, P-A-T-H, and I'll have it there for you for free.

Well, that's it for today's episode. I hope you found this information valuable. And until next time, just try to live a little more local, seasonal, and homegrown. Take care.

Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown Podcast. Visit livinghomegrown.com to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Homegrown Podcast.