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## Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 154 The Homemade Kitchen with Alana Chernila

Show Notes are at: [www.LivingHomegrown.com/154](http://www.LivingHomegrown.com/154)

Theresa: This is the Living Home Grown podcast, episode 154.

Announcer: Welcome to the Living Home Grown 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. Now that includes organic, small space food gardening, canning and fermenting the harvest and artisan food crafts, 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'd like to learn more about any of these topics, or my online courses, my coaching or my Living Homegrown Institute, then just visit my website, [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com).

Now before we dive in to today's topic, I just want to take just a minute to acknowledge a couple of people who have recently left super nice reviews over on iTunes for my podcast. And the reason I want to do this is because you may not know this, but when you leave an iTunes review, it actually bumps my podcast up in the feed. And my podcast is consistently in like the top 20, top 25 in the food category, so that's super awesome. But more people see me or see the podcast when it gets bumped up in the feed, and this is so important to me, because the message that I'm really trying to get out with Living Homegrown, is that you do not have to be a farmer or even live next to a farm, to eat well with no preservatives. You can do that on your own, just by being a little bit more intentional with our food choices, and more intentional with how we prepare our food.

So the more people who hear about the podcast and get to listen to some of the guests that I have on and get those lessons, or the people who share it with their friends so that more people are hearing the message, that makes it so that we can make a little bit of a difference, it's like this ripple effect, where more people can get tuned in to how to do this. Many times, and one of the reasons why I even started this podcast, was because many times, people will say, "Yeah, I'd love to do that, but I live in the city, so I can't really have fresh vegetables." And in some cases, that is true, that there is no place that you can

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just walk down the street and get fresh vegetables. But that doesn't mean that you can't grow it yourself, even if you only have a balcony. You can grow a lot of things.

So that is one of the reasons why I started this podcast, and I'm really on a mission now to get as many people as possible to learn about the podcast, so that they can be turned on to some of the guests that I have on, and learn different skills and tips that can help you, or help other people that might be listening, to just get another step closer to being a little bit more sustainable with how we live. Maybe try a recipe that's from scratch for the first time, to replace something that we had been purchasing before that was in a processed form. Any little thing that we can do, or any little tip that we can take on in our life, an absolutely make a difference.

So that was a long-winded thing to say, that whenever someone makes a review, or writes a review over on iTunes, it does bump me up in the feed. So I'm going to start giving shout-outs to some of you who have been leaving me really awesome and heartfelt reviews. I absolutely love it, and I just wanted you to know that I read every single one. So the first shout-out is to Emily Gate, and Emily wrote,, "This has been such an amazing podcast to listen to. If you are new to homesteading or very experienced, there is something for everyone. I just subscribed and now downloading them all. I love that it's easy to listen to. Helps me dream and plan for our own homestead. Thank you for such a brilliant podcast. I will definitely recommend this to friends."

Thank you Emily so much, I really appreciate that review. That just means the world to me. And then I have another review here from Budgy Lover 59. Isn't it funny how we have to come up with some really unusual name for our reviews on iTunes, it's so funny. So I don't know your real name, but to Budgy Lover 59, they wrote, "I started listening to podcasts about a year ago, but hadn't been able to find a gardening podcast that I enjoyed, until now. While mulching my garden yesterday, surrounded by bees, wasps and butterflies, enjoying the flowers and herbs, planting among my veggies and melons, I started listening to an episode about bees. Then companion planting. Then vermacon posting. When you talked about putting apple cores in your purse to feed the worms, I knew I had just become a committed listener. We do that. Thank you."

I am so excited that you are totally getting turned on by all of the podcast episodes. So thank you so much you guys, and if you have someone that you know that might be interested in this podcast, please share it. Let people know that this podcast is out there, because I really do feel that the more people who are trying to live a little bit more intentionally, that they can make a difference too. And it's not about being perfect, not at all. All we can do is just try to be a little bit better.

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All right, so I just had to get that out there. Let me talk to you about what our podcast episode is about today. You guys really loved an episode that I had just about ... Gosh, I think it was like three or four weeks ago, that I had with Alana Chernila. She was here to talk about her latest book, *Eating from The Ground Up*. And you guys loved it. I got so many emails from everybody, saying, "Have her back, have her back. I learned so much." So, just so you know, when we finished that episode, I knew it was going to resonate with you guys, so I had already booked her to come back and be on the podcast again. So that's what this episode is. You can always go back and listen to episode 150 with Alana, but then enjoy today's as well.

Now, Alana has her blog, *Eating from The Ground Up*, but she has also written several books. So let me first tell you a little bit about Alana, and then I'll go in to what we talk about today. So Alana is the author of three cookbooks, *The Homemade Pantry*, *The Homemade Kitchen* and her latest book, *Eating From The Ground Up*. She also writes, cooks and blogs at [eatingfromthegroundup.com](http://eatingfromthegroundup.com). She has written for *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, *Tap Root*, *Food 52*, and many other online and print periodicals. And she teaches classes on things like making nutbutters and granola bars. So for today's episode, I asked Alana to come back, and we're focusing pretty much on her middle book, her second book called *The Homemade Kitchen*, but we're not talking about the recipes in this book, although it is an awesome, awesome cookbook. There are recipes in here like how to lessons on cooking with grain and making pasta, and she also has this whole section on milk products. You learn about making some really simple cheese and butter. And then she even has this lovely recipe on quiche, with all these different variations, and there are a ton of vegetable recipes in this cookbook. But this cookbook also focuses on her philosophy and how she approaches her entire relationship with food. And that's what really made me fall in love with it, aside from how delicious sounding all of the recipes are.

So we focus a lot on the philosophies today, plus she shares a recipe for us. So let me just give you a little bit about what we talk about. We're gonna talk about getting the last bit of flavor from our produce, so that just before you throw it away, there are some things we can do to get some more flavor out of things that we grow or things that we've purchased at the farmer's market. Which is always so helpful when we've put a lot of time or money in to our different ingredients. And she gives us some tips for making amazing soup stock, using some of these leftover bits. One of the things that I had her talk about is this really cool way to use up even strawberry hulls. So you're gonna learn some really unusual things that might make you think a little outside of the box, so that nothing goes to waste. We've gone to the trouble of either seeking out this organic produce and wonderful, seasonal flavors. The last thing we want to do is throw something away before we get every little bit of that flavor out of it.

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Now what I had Alana do on this episode, instead of doing a recipe, I had her share information on how we can care for our beloved wooden utensils, and our cutting boards in our kitchen, and she shares a recipe for making a cream to use on those things. So I wanted you to know that in the show notes for today's episode, I have links not only to Alana and her website and all of her books, but I also have a PDF download of that recipe for making spoon butter, which is this really cool oil/beeswax combination that you can use on all of your wooden utensils in your kitchen. And Alana graciously has let us share that recipe. So you can find all of that in the show notes. To get to the show notes, you just go to [livinghomegrown.com/150](http://livinghomegrown.com/150) and the recipe and all of the links will be right there.

And lastly, I also have a conversation with Alana about how there are life lessons in the kitchen, and we just need to take the time to notice those lessons, and she shares some of the lessons that she's learned with us. So I know this will resonate with you, because so many of you guys loved episode 150, so we will definitely dive in even further in today's episode.

Now before we get to that interview, I just 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 a farm fresh lifestyle without the farm. In my membership, we cover everything from how to grow heirloom tomatoes or raise chickens, to how to make your own cheese or ferment vegetables. Now I believe that living an organic farm fresh lifestyle is really just a journey in learning, and as we learn different skills, we have three distinct stages of growth. We start out just being curious, and then we go in to experimentation, and eventually we grow in to mastery of these different skills.

Now if you're looking to create your own farm fresh lifestyle, and you're curious where you may fall on that growth scale with your different skills, I have a free resource for you. It's my farm fresh success path, that my students use inside my membership, and it will help you decide where you are on your own journey. The characteristics of that particular stage, and some action steps and information that can take you to the next level. To get to the success path PDF, just go to [livinghomegrown.com/path](http://livinghomegrown.com/path), that's P-A-T-H, and you can download it there for free. Okay, so let's dive in to this interview with Alana Chernila, of Eating From The Ground Up. I know you're going to love it.

Hey Alana, thanks so much for coming back on the show.

Alana: Oh, thank you so much for having me back. I'm thrilled to be here.

Theresa: Oh good, I'm glad you're thrilled, 'cause I'm thrilled to have you. I really want to cover some of the other things that you talk about. Last time we had you on, you were on episode 150, and we talked about how to properly draw out the

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best flavors from our vegetables when we cook. And I got a huge response from my audience, and everyone kept saying, "Have her back. Have her back."

Alana: That's so sweet.

Theresa: Yeah, and so I was able-

Alana: Thanks guys.

Theresa: Yay. Yeah, and I was able to write back and say, "I already have her scheduled, people, so don't even worry." Yeah, so I'm glad about that. So today, I thought we could focus on some of the different ways that we can approach our relationship with food, because that's something that you talk a lot about on your blog, but also with your book *Homemade Kitchen*. And I wanted to focus on that today, if that's okay with you?

Alana: Oh, that sounds great.

Theresa: Okay.

Alana: I love talking about that.

Theresa: All right, awesome. Well before we dive in to that discussion, some people may not have heard you on episode 150, so let's backtrack just a little bit and have you give them a little bit of a backstory about how you got in to cooking, and the cooking the way you do today. What got you interested in food?

Alana: Yeah, it was definitely a winding journey, like I think many people have. But when I was a little kid, my grandparents had a bed and breakfast, and it was actually a vegetarian bed and breakfast, and they would use all the vegetables from their garden out back. And it was out in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts, which is actually where I live now. And I used to spend my weekends with them, making breakfast, picking vegetables. I was a super picky kid, so I wasn't in to it, but I was learning anyway. And I think that was the seed, when later on I was in my 20s, I had two young kids, and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life.

I was doing a bunch of different jobs, and one of them was working at the farmer's market. And in the midst of that work, in my tortured feelings of, "I just have to figure out my path," I had a really important conversation with a friend of mine, just saying ... I just said, "I just love talking about recipes." And it was a surprise to me, even as I said it out loud. I was about 28, and she said, "Well, why don't you start a blog and just start writing the recipes down?" And I did. I actually started the blog that night, and the funny part is that I left the restaurant where we were having a drink, and it took me five minutes to get

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home, and in the car I thought, "I'm gonna start a blog tonight, and it's gonna be called Eating From The Ground Up." It was the first thing that came to me, and I started it that night. And that ended up, that's still my blog 10 years later, and also ended up being the name of my third book. So it was an important combination of words.

Theresa: Wow.

Alana: Yeah, so it was pretty impulsive, and I was working for a film director at that time, and I thought maybe I'd go in to the film industry. It just was the only thing I really wanted to do, was to talk to people about what they were gonna have for dinner. I found that the shared world of cooking and eating and relating to food was the thing that turned me on. And what started as a little blog and my hobby, turned in to a book, which was actually the *Homemade Pantry*, which came out in 2012 and sort of been going on from there.

Theresa: Well I'm so glad it did. I'm so glad that you had that conversation, and I'm so glad that you just made the leap, you just jumped right in. Sometimes that little bit of inspiration is all we need to just push us in the right direction, and I feel like you really found your calling, because you can speak to all of us, who are cooks and gardeners and lovers of food, all kinds of food. And all of your writing always really speaks to me, so that's one of the reasons why I love having you on.

Alana: Thank you.

Theresa: Well, the reason why I'm really drawn to your book, *The Homemade Kitchen*, is that it's so much more than a cookbook, and I wanted to make sure that we talked about this, because it's really about, it has so much of you in it, and your philosophy about you approach your entire relationship with food. And you have so many words of wisdom, woven through the whole cookbook, and that's why I wanted to ask you for my very first question about this, was what sparked your idea to write this particular book?

Alana: Well, this book came about in a moment where I was looking at wanting to continue, but I didn't know what my second book would be. And I think second, I've heard often that second efforts, whether they're second books or second movies or second albums, they can often be a little bit of a struggle to find, because you've sort of gotten out that first thing. Like, "Ah, I wrote a book," and then there's that pressure to sort of figure out what's next. And this book went through a lot of incarnations, and I kinda got to a bit of a dark place with it. In that moment, that was when this list arrived, because I kind of decided if I was gonna put my whole self in to this book, it better be my whole self.

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What I was really feeling passionate about then, and still do, is just thinking about the way that we interact with food in our days, and feeling really troubles in a lot of ways, by the different kind of ways that we're getting all this information about food and health and weight loss, and what we're telling our children about how to eat, how to trust their instincts or not trust their instincts. And I felt like, if I was gonna write a second book, it had to be something that was worth the page for me. And that was where this list came out, just sort of thinking, "Okay, well how do I want to think about food in my life, and how do I want to teach my children to think about food and to develop a healthy relationship with their own cooking and their own eating and their own bodies?" And that was really how this book was born.

Theresa: I love that. Well, let's talk about that list, because you use it through the entire cookbook. So what is this list? It's something that you keep posted in your kitchen, that you live by.

Alana: Yeah. It's so helpful to see words, isn't it?

Theresa: Yeah, it is.

Alana: [crosstalk 00:18:44] to turn to.

Theresa: And I love it. I want everyone to make their own list. I think that is what, using your model, and make their own list of what's important. But I love your list, so let's talk about it. What is on your list or your motto's that you have in your kitchen?

Alana: So this list really creates the framework for the chapters in the book, and the first thing in the list is to start where you are. Which is often something I have to remind myself, which is like I get so critical of myself for not being a master at something, or I get frustrated with where I'm at with a skill or a place in my life. So to accept where I am, and to say, "Here I am, this is okay and this is where I'm going to begin." And so that's sort of the premise for the introduction, like how to just be okay with who you are and where you're at.

Theresa: Yeah, I think we're really hard on ourselves, and it's not just with cooking. I mean, it's with everything. But in the kitchen especially, we want to have ... We love to cook. Let's say we love to cook, but we also want to have time to cook. And you even say in there, that some days you're on it, and you create this awesome meal, and other days the family's standing there hungry, and you're panicking, trying to figure out what to throw together. And that's just ... It's okay. I mean, that's life. That's the way it is.

Alana: Right. It's okay. And I think especially, my first book *The Homemade Pantry* was all about making food from scratch, like making your own crackers, and making

your own yogurt, and especially for people who get excited about that, "I'm gonna make everything." These messages can be especially important, because you gotta go easy on yourself. It's like, perfectionism in the kitchen is just our worst enemy, so it's important.

Theresa: Absolutely important, and I love another important message that you had. I think it was the next chapter, which was Be A Beginner. Now why do you think being a beginner is important?

Alana: We're all beginners, until we're not, right?

Theresa: Yeah.

Alana: And even, I write cookbooks, and I can make a really good meal, and I can write a good recipe and still, often I'll start out with a new ingredient or looking for a new flavor, and I feel like I'm just starting absolutely from the beginning. And so I find, that chapter and that particular phrase really came about, as inspired by watching my children learn to cook, especially my older daughter Sadie, who's now 15, but at the time she was eight, nine. And my real tactic with them, because I'm low on the patience, and I get very controlling in the kitchen, is just when they want to cook, I leave the kitchen.

Theresa: That's good, yeah.

Alana: Okay fine, you have what you need? Just shout down the hallway if you need something. And so, just watching her learn skill by skill, and just figure out what it is that she loves and how to create it, and how to ask for help. That was super inspiring to me. And so I think it sort of goes with that whole idea of just wanting to be a master. It's like, we just are not and it's okay. And it's like, "Oh, well I've never made this thing, and it might fail and that's all right. But I'll figure it out." And just having a sense of humor about where we're at in the kitchen, it's just I found it to be my greatest tool.

Theresa: Absolutely. It's all about the journey, as they say. I like that, having a little humor, because boy, I've messed up some things, and sometimes it happens right when you have a room full of people, but that's okay. It's all a learning experience for sure.

Alana: Right, exactly.

Theresa: You also have in the book a lot of information about how we can utilize everything that we're cooking with, and I definitely want to touch on that, because there's this section about using your scraps, which I thought was so brilliant. You have these great tips inside there about even how to properly store our vegetables in the refrigerator, so that nothing goes to waste. So first, I

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would just love if you could just share a couple of your tips for how we should properly store our vegetables, so that we aren't throwing half of them away.

Alana: Yeah. I know, isn't it tragic when we have to throw away our beautiful vegetables?

Theresa: Yeah, well especially if we've grown them.

Alana: I know.

Theresa: Yeah.

Alana: So one trick that I found is so simple, but really makes a big difference, is that often when we grow vegetables or if we're buying them at the farmer's market or the supermarket even, we'll have root vegetables that are attached to their greens. And often people will just shove the whole thing in a bag, and then the greens wither, and then the roots ... Then they use the roots. But the truth is, is that if you separate the greens and the roots, then both of them will stay much more vibrant. So the roots won't get rubbery, and the greens won't get all wilted and sad. So cut off, if you have beets or something, cut off the greens, store those in a bag, and then use those with your cooked greens. And then the beets are gonna stay, their texture is gonna be way improved. So that's one thing.

Also, in terms of herbs, which is something people always are like, "How do I store herbs?" My favorite way to store herbs is to put them in a glass of water and then to put a plastic bag over them. And I often will store them this way in the refrigerator, and I find that this keeps them really fresh. I like to store things like parsley and more hardy herbs in the refrigerator like this. So you put it in water, you put the plastic over it, you put it in your fridge door. But something like basil likes to just be at room temperature, so I do the same thing. In water, a little plastic bag, on the counter. It's not so beautiful, but it keeps it really fresh, so you can keep pulling from it, which is really nice.

Theresa: Yeah, I actually do that myself. We keep some in the middle of the kitchen table, kind of like a bouquet.

Alana: Oh, that's so nice.

Theresa: Yeah, especially with basil, because it makes the whole room smell wonderful. It's kind of weird, as I do put a plastic bag on mine too, but if someone comes over, I'll just rip the plastic bag off and, "Oh, look. We have a bouquet of basil on our table."

Alana: They can just grab a leaf if you want it.

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- Theresa: Yeah. Exactly, exactly. Well, those are awesome tips. Those are really, really great. I love that. Now one of the other favorite things that I had to say about your book is that, a lot of times we throw things away in our kitchen, that are actually still packed with flavor. And I learned about this myself when I went through cooking school, and you had some really good tips in there, that were some of the things that we learned in school, but then you had a couple extras that I had never thought of before, and I'm like, "Oh, this is so good." So I'm gonna throw a couple things at you, and have you say what we can do with it instead of throwing it away. Does that sound good?
- Alana: Sounds good.
- Theresa: Okay, perfect. What about Parmesan rinds? If we have Parmesan cheese, and we get down to that rind, what do you tell everyone?
- Alana: Oh, so precious.
- Theresa: Yes, it is. And this is so good. Yeah.
- Alana: So Parmesan rinds are magic in soup. So if you put it in, and it kind of acts a little bit like, some people would use a little ham hock or something like that, where you put it in a broth, and it infuses the whole broth with this amazing, sort of funky, cheesy flavor. It's just, they are amazing. And you can put the rind right in the freezer when you're done, so that you can hang on to it till you're ready. So sometimes I'll keep a little container of Parmesan rinds, and I'll just grab one. And you can actually totally eat Parmesan rind, because the way Parmesan is made, it's a natural rind. There's nothing extra that's put on to create that rind. So you can also eat the gooey piece of cheese in the soup, which is delicious.
- Theresa: Yeah, that's a good point, 'cause someone might think, "Is it like preservatives on the end?" But it's not. No, not at all. And I love the tip of putting it in the freezer, 'cause maybe you're not making soup right now, but you might in a month. And it's still there for you. So really good.
- Alana: Yeah, they are gold. They're amazing.
- Theresa: Yes, absolutely, and takes your soup to a whole other level. Now the next one is one I had never thought of before, because I have chickens, so when I tear off my carrot tops, I might use them in something for my chickens or for my friend's bunnies. But you use the carrot tops, and so I want you to tell everybody, what should we do with our carrot tops?
- Alana: Yeah, carrot tops actually have really beautiful flavor. They're kind of brassy and wonderful. And especially, sometimes you'll get carrot tops that are just slimy and gross, and those I'll just compost. But if you get a great batch of carrot tops,

I love to turn them in to pesto. And I love them especially paired with arugula. That's something a friend of mine, who's a farmer, who grows the most amazing carrots, she's the one who taught me the carrot top and arugula pesto. Because she had so many carrot tops to deal with. And it makes a great pesto.

And I also love the combination of the carrot top pesto with carrots. I'll often do roasted carrots with the carrot top pesto, because so often, if you're using two sides of a vegetable, or if you're using two parts of it, the two elements go together really well. You're sort of getting two different flavors coming together, it's like they're related. And so, that's a really lovely way to serve it.

Theresa: That's so cool. I'm definitely gonna try that. So poor chickens, they're not gonna get them anymore.

Alana: I'm sure your chickens have a lot of great things to eat.

Theresa: Oh yeah. They're spoiled, for sure. Okay, and here's another one that really surprised me, that I thought this was so good, was strawberry hulls. We have these wonderful, summertime strawberries, and you have something we can do with the hulls.

Alana: Yes, this was another trick that came from a friend of mine. She and I were making strawberry jam together, and she was throwing all the hulls in to this jar, and I thought, "Oh, we're just gonna compost them." Then she filled the jar with water, and let it sit for a little bit, and then poured me some strawberry hull water. Which turns out is totally unique and amazing and delicious. It tastes a little bit like strawberries, but more just like really delicious water. It's hard to even explain it. Especially if you're processing strawberries, if you're making jam and you have a lot of strawberry hulls, and especially if you pick strawberries and if they're beautiful, put them in to water and then you can even just keep a jar of strawberry hull water in your refrigerator. It's fine, it'll last for a couple days, and drink it and it's just like a lovely summertime beverage. So beautiful.

Theresa: Yeah, that sounds really good. And such a great way to just get that last little bit of flavor.

Alana: It's so good.

Theresa: Yeah. Okay, so there is another one that you had, about what we should do with leek tops and other vegetable scraps. And this is something that I do, but I think a lot of people just throw those leek tops away. So what do you tell everybody to do?

Alana: So I keep a big zip lock bag in my freezer, and I put all of my leek tops and other vegetable scraps in to that bag, and I also put my chicken bones in the freezer.

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So then anytime I want to make chicken stock, I can just pour the contents of those bags in to the pot, these days in to my pressure cooker. That's how I do it, or in to your stock pot. And you're making amazing stock. So leek tops, leeks are often so expensive. There's so much beautiful matter to those leek tops, so to throw those away is a huge waste. Both of money and of beautiful vegetable. So I like to save them and they impart such a nice flavor to your stock. It's a really classic, wonderful vegetable to have in chicken stock. Or vegetable stock for that matter.

Theresa: I agree, and I love that you tell everybody to make sure you label all of this, 'cause I did this one time and I didn't label it. And my husband was trying to figure out what it was and if it was edible. Like he thought it was like a side dish or something, and he wanted to-

Alana: Right, defrost it.

Theresa: Yeah. So make sure you label it, so that [crosstalk 00:31:11].

Alana: It's always a good idea.

Theresa: So that everybody knows what it is. Unless you're the only one in there, but yeah. If I had been out of town, he might have served it to the kids. I have no idea. So all right, the last one that I wanted you to talk about was orange rinds. Now, we get a friend who brings us these wonderful bags of fresh oranges from a local farm, and we have all these wonderful orange rinds. And this is such a great tip of what we should do with them.

Alana: Oh yeah. Lucky you first of all.

Theresa: Yeah.

Alana: But yeah. I have a couple of things I love to do with orange rinds. One of them is that I'll put them in a jar with just some distilled white vinegar, and I'll let them sit and infuse that vinegar. And then I use that vinegar in my cleaning. Many people clean with white vinegar, it's a great tool and this infuses it with a really nice orange scent. And I love to do that with my orange rinds. And then another thing I like to do is to boil them on the stove, and maybe I'll throw a little cinnamon stick, or maybe some ginger, and it creates a natural potpourri for the kitchen. So especially around the holidays, when I'm sort of craving to have my house smell like oranges and cinnamon. It's really nice. So I can just keep it boiling, or if you have a wood stove, you can keep it boiling on your wood stove. And it just, it infuses the whole house. It's lovely.

Theresa: Yeah, that's a good one. Now I have something to add to that, that might help some people. I do that too, I do the boiling of the water at Christmas time

especially. So you know how if you have a Christmas tree, and all the pine needles get on the floor?

Alana: Yeah.

Theresa: Well, we collect those and we boil those, with a little bit of-

Alana: Brilliant.

Theresa: Yeah. With a little bit of cinnamon, and a little bit of orange. Sometimes I put in some apple peel, if I'm making a pie or something like that. But here's a trick, because one time I was doing that, and I forgot about the pan. 'Cause it's simmering, and it's really easy to forget. All you have to do is put a couple of marbles in to the pan with this, and as it boils down, if it gets down to where there's only like a quarter inch of water, the marbles start making a rattle that will grab your attention.

Alana: That is brilliant.

Theresa: Yeah, so definitely, if you're gonna do it, I always tell people, "Put some of your kid's marbles in there." Not plastic, they have to be glass, but it totally works. Yeah.

Alana: And I have definitely boiled through a pan or two in my day. And then it gets all buckled and it's very sad.

Theresa: It's very sad, especially if it's a special pan, and I try to use one that maybe it's not one that I use all the time. I just use it for something like this, but still. And it makes a terrible smell, 'cause everything starts burning. Yeah, yeah. Cool. Well, now in your book you also talk about taking care of our kitchen equipment, and that's what I want people to realize. You have recipes in there too. This is a cookbook.

Alana: Oh yeah.

Theresa: But these, I'm pulling out some of these little tid bits, because all of these philosophies and tid bits and notes and everything is just woven through the book. You can read it like a novel, and get all this little knowledge that you can use. And you had something in there called spoon butter. Now I had never heard the term spoon butter, but then when I started reading it, I'm like, "Oh, it's cutting board cream." Which is what I always called it, cutting board cream. But you have an actual recipe, so that we can make this ourselves, to keep our wood tools in pristine condition.

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Now, when I first got married, my husband kept trying to take my wooden spoons and put them through the dishwasher, and I'm like, "No."

Alana: Oh no.

Theresa: You never put a wooden spoon through the dishwasher. These have to be ... These have been hand washed since I first moved out of the home, and I've had them forever and they're my favorite things, and they have the [inaudible 00:34:56] and I love my wooden spoons. So if anyone has wooden spoons, don't put them in the dishwasher. Do this to keep them in pristine condition, and you can have them for a lifetime. So tell us about this spoon butter.

Alana: So yeah, spoon butter is really simple to make. Essentially, it's just a combination of oil, and I use either walnut oil or mineral oil, and beeswax. And you can buy beeswax online or sometimes at your natural food store, they'll often have beeswax. So I melt it together in a jar that's essentially in a double boiler, or like in water. And just to heat it together. And stir it and stir it, until it sort of combines in to one really sweet smelling beeswaxy, lovely cream. And then it solidifies up a bit, and then I use that for my spoons, for my cutting boards. I have butcher block counters, so I need to give those some love.

And the reason why that recipe is in that particular chapter, that chapter is called Do The Work. So I feel like I often get kind of lazy, and I forget that I need to take care of my space and myself, and how that impacts my life. To really put the work in to keeping my things happy around me. And that's why I find the process of taking care of my spoons and my cutting boards and my counters to be really therapeutic. I feel like it's a bit of self-care. It smells good, I'm maintaining the things that I love so that they can stay with me longer. And so many of my spoons have been given to me by people that I love, and mean so much to me. So I feel like I'm taking care of my memories, and it's just a really important experience for me, and I don't do it enough as I'm talking about it. Like, "Oh, I haven't done that in a while. I think it's time."

And especially when I make my own spoon butter, it inspires me more to take care of my woodens.

Theresa: Yeah, and so when we do this, we rub it on and then we just let it sit for a while, right?

Alana: Mm-hmm (affirmative). And then you can just buff out the extra, and it's really nice. You can rub it in to your hands. It's a really lovely thing to work with, and totally food safe and everything. And you can make it, I've made many, many jars of spoon butter as gifts. It's a really nice holiday gift. I feel like I'm talking about the holidays so much, even though-

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- Theresa: I know, it's so funny. It's June really, but that's okay. It's on our mind. Yeah.
- Alana: But yeah, it's a really ... It's a nice gift to give someone a little spoon butter, and maybe a beautiful wooden spoon, and then they can have that and they can take care of their spoon.
- Theresa: You know, that would make a wonderful housewarming gift as well.
- Alana: Yeah.
- Theresa: Yeah.
- Alana: It's actually, I've been told that it's good luck to give someone a wooden spoon for their housewarming gift.
- Theresa: Really? Okay, well then we definitely should do that. Yeah, I love what you're saying though, about that and the memories. Especially things that have been passed down through the family. That just makes it extra special and it gives you a chance to have that moment to remember the person who gave it to you, and your relationship with them. So in closing of our time together, I'd love for you to talk about something else in the book that is kind of related to that, and it's the art of slowing down. You have that as one of your chapters, about taking notice of our food, and taking notice of the day. So is that one of your main philosophies?
- Alana: Oh yeah, that's one that I work towards so much, because I find that it just makes a huge difference for me. And one of the things that I write about in that chapter, are kind of ... I almost have to play little tricks on myself to get myself to slow down. So I will often, I love to have flowers in the house, and I will often walk out in to my yard and spend a few minutes just picking ... They might be weeds, things that are flowery. And I take a few minutes to just walk around the perimeter of my yard, and take a few minutes to put together in a way that I love in a jar, and just those few minutes, they will enhance my day, even if I feel like I can't.
- Especially in those days where I'm like, "Oh, I can't even catch my breath." That's always a sign that I need to catch my breath. And that there's always a moment. It's like, we just have to create it. We have to make time ourselves. So I have to always remember that I can always be five minutes late to something, and spend those five minutes just sitting out under my apple tree, just enjoying it. And it will change the whole course of the day. Especially around cooking, and eating. I am so often just banging around the kitchen, trying to get dinner out quickly, criticizing myself for there's dishes everywhere, and I'm moving quickly and it's just like, "Okay, take a breath. It's okay. The world I not ending. Just slow down."

So those are often lessons that I need in the day, and these little tricks, they really help. They really do.

Theresa: Yeah, well I just so appreciate you thinking of these lessons for yourself, and then sharing them with us, because it does help all of us. Not just in the kitchen, but in life in general. So thank you so much Alana for coming on, and coming back to share everything that you did today.

Alana: Oh, thank you so much for having me back. I love talking with you, so really, it's been really wonderful.

Theresa: Okay, so that was my interview with Alana Chernila of Eating From the Ground Up. I hope you loved that as much as I did. That was a really fun interview. Now remember that the recipe that she talked about for making spoon butter, that we can use on our wooden spoons, that is in the show notes for today's episode. You can print it out there, plus all of the links for Alana's books and her website, and everything that we talked about. To get all of that, just go to [livinghomegrown.com/154](http://livinghomegrown.com/154). And as a reminder, today's podcast episode was brought to you by my Living Homegrown Institute, which is my membership site.

And if you'd like to get the free PDF success path that my students use inside the membership, then just go to [livinghomegrown.com/path](http://livinghomegrown.com/path), and I'll have it there for you for free. So that's it for today's episode. I hope it gave you some new inspiration, 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](http://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.

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