



## Contentment



Near the end of a successful harvest, the end of a year, or the end of a good life, we often pause to be thankful. What does the word “thankful” mean and to whom should we address our thankfulness?

Thankful is defined as the act of expressing or showing appreciation or gratitude that something has or has not happened. Most of us would express this feeling to a higher authority.

The concept of thankfulness is mentioned 102 times in the Old Testament and 71 times in the New Testament.

These writings encourage us to cultivate gratitude for others in our lives, for experiences that both create happiness and challenges. As we develop a greater state of gratitude, we move beyond “what’s in it for me” into a concern for all living beings. As you serve others, you become aware of a sense of joy. In addition, clinical trials indicate that the practice of gratitude has a dramatic and lasting effect on a person’s health.

To begin the search for gratitude, we need to look around and begin to count our blessings. What brings you joy? What makes you content - satisfied with what you have? Take a few moments and count all the good things in your life.

When I put a list of words synonymous with thanksgiving together into a “word cloud” [generator](#), I was surprised when the largest word in the generated cloud was “content.”

As I studied the cloud created, I realized that all of the other words boil down to this one word - CONTENT. Be there.

### Ask Billie

Q. How do Sun Ovens® work following a hurricane?  
A. We received an email from a victim of Hurricane Irma. Here is what she had to say:

*During Hurricane Irma, I used my All American Sun Oven, multiple times. My family was amazed with the wonderful meals we had while the hurricane knocked out our power for almost 2 weeks. I bought my oven a year ago . I am elated at its engineering every time I use it to cook. The meats come out tender, pasta dishes are perfect and my breads are moist. I LOVE IT!! Jill T.*

Do you know someone in hurricane devastated areas that you could help with a Sun Oven®?

What is your Most Burning Question about Food Storage or Emergency Preparedness?



Send your questions to [editor@sunoven.com](mailto:editor@sunoven.com)

Billie Nicholson



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## [Your Home Can Survive a Wildfire](#)



Photo: [NFPA](#)

### [National Fire Protection Association](#)

Every year thousands of wildfires burn millions of acres across the United States. It is only a matter of time that a wildfire may threaten your community. Wildfire fighters concentrate on removing and containing forest fires. They may not be able to attend to homes as well. The burden falls on home owners. Every home owner should do their part to help protect the community. A fire adapted community will be better able to reduce your risk during the next wildfire.

Dr. Jack Cohen, Fire Science Researcher with the USDA Forest Service, explains that flames 100 ft away from house can't ignite a house and there are things home owners can do to help minimize fire ignition.

Look around your house for potential igniters. Little things are what are destroying houses - firebrands or embers. In order for them to ignite a house, they have to ignite it directly or something around the house that can then spread to the house. Look for where dried leaves and pine needles are piled up around your house, i.e., mulch around the house in flower beds, in the gutters and on the roof. This is where the firebrands are. They burn with low intensity but can be critical factors to starting home fires.

Look at the roof and it's components. The most flammable roofs are constructed of wooden shingles. Firebrands landing on the roof can easily ignite the structure. Find safer, less flammable, composition roofing shingles.

Vents can allow embers into attic. Add a finer mesh screen. Don't need to have a metal roof to survive a fire.

Fiber cement siding is also non-flammable. Out buildings can also ignite. Be concerned with surroundings of them as well.

Flammable deck furniture, brooms left out can also ignite and if they're left close to house they can ignite it.

To avoid flame contact burning across your house make sure all dead wood is removed at least 5 feet from house.

The National Weather Service issues fire weather watches (issued when conditions will be present within 12-72 hours) or warnings (also known as red flag days when the conditions will be present within 24 hours) are issued when weather conditions will support increased wildfire activity and rapid fire growth.

Take steps ahead of time to prepare and put your plan into action:

1. Complete a home inventory - this will assist in talking with your insurance provider should you suffer a loss due to a wildfire. Consider making a video walk-through of your possessions and keep that in a safe off-site location.
2. Sign up for local Emergency Notifications/Alerts
3. Have an Evacuation plan and a designated meeting place where family members will reconnect after the evacuation. Ensure everyone in the household knows the plan and meeting place location.
4. Know where evacuation centers will be located in your community.
5. Have an off-site phone number where family members can check in and provide status information
6. Have a plan and supplies for your pets/animals

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## Materia Medica - Rosemary



Photo: [Wikimedia](#)

**Botanical Name:** *Rosmarinus officinalis* (*dew of the sea*)

**Common Name:** Rosemary

**Family:** Labiate (Lamiaceae)

**Ayurvedic/TCM Name:** Rusmari/mi die xiang

**Parts Used:** Herb leaves, stem and roots

**Native Region:** Native to Portugal and Mediterranean areas

**Geographic Distribution:** World wide

**Botanical Description:** Rosemary shrubs consist of stiff

branches with long, needle-like leaves that are dark green above and white and glandular underneath. Pale blue flowers grow on the ends of the leaves. The leaves and parts of the flowers contain a volatile oil and are used medicinally. This pungently aromatic odor somewhat camphoraceous. It is also used as a spice in cooking. [1] It can withstand droughts, surviving a severe lack of water for lengthy periods [2]

**Cultivation:** Propagate by seeds, cuttings, layers & division of roots. Rosemary prefers a light soil, a sandy soil will fully satisfy its meagre feeding needs. Having said that, rosemary is tolerant of most soil conditions as long as they are not water-logged. Rosemary prefers a slightly limey soil (the opposite of acid) because this results in smaller plants with more fragrant leaves. True to its origins, rosemary prefers sunny and sheltered conditions. It will stand severe frosts if conditions are not windy and wet as well. Seeds are slow to sprout (maybe up to 2 months), so the best method of propagating Rosemary is by taking cuttings. Select new growth tips. Take 3-4" cuttings. Strip off leaves on the lower 1". Place in sandy soil and keep moist. Rooting hormones could be beneficial. Once planted, don't move it. Rosemary doesn't like its roots disturbed. If planting in a pot, make it a deep one. Can tolerate being root bound. Rosemary can be grown outdoors in climates where the winter temperatures do not drop below 10°F. The plants can be brought indoors to over winter in colder climates.

**Harvesting Guidelines:** Can be cut and used fresh in culinary recipes. Cut twigs and hang to dry. Strip off leaves and store in a jar or plastic bag. Can be ground to powder.

**Constituents:** • Alpha- pinene - exhibits anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties, and acts as a broad-spectrum antibiotic

• 1,8-Cineole - increases the cerebral blood flow

• Camphor - used for its scent, in cooking and in medicine, also used as a pest deterrent and preservative, easily absorbed through the skin it can be used as a local anesthetic and antimicrobial substance, decongestant and cough suppressant

• Camphene - antibiotic and anti-fungal properties, insect repellent, treats coughs and colds and high blood pressure, anti-inflammation and analgesic

• Beta-pinene - owing to its woody-green pine-like smell, it has been used as a flavoring and a fragrance agent, anti-depressant, anti-bacterial, anti-parasitic and anti-fungal properties

**Continued**

## 5 Tips for Preparing Your Home for Winter



Have you taken time to give your home a winter-prep review? If you get to these projects before the weather gets nasty, you will enjoy the work more and help extend the life of your home's components and make your property safer as well. Here are a few suggestions.

1. **Heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems** are first on the list. If you're using a fireplace or wood burning stove, inspect the firebox and flue system to ensure they're clean of soot, creosote and free of cracks or mortar voids that could be a fire hazard. If you have a gas or electric furnace, give it a run through before the temperature changes to catch any problems before you need to turn on the heat. Change the air filters to provide maximum efficiency and improve indoor air quality. Clean the whole house humidifier and replace the evaporator pad. Get a programmable thermostat and set it to click on every time the daytime temperature drops below your desired room temperature. By arranging your thermostat to come on only when you are home, you'll save money on your heating bill. Arrange furniture so that nothing is within three feet of heat ducts, space heaters or radiators. They block heat and can also be a fire hazard. Change batteries on smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Remove window air conditioners or cover them with insulated liners to prevent drafts. Make sure ceiling fans are moving in a clockwise direction to push warm air down. To prevent costly, damaging leaks to the bricks on your chimney, seal it every five years with a waterproofer. Check exposed ductwork in attic, basement and crawl spaces. Use a sealant to plug any leaks. Check all the weather stripping around windows and doors for drafts. Replace it as needed. Caulk any gaps. If you are not using the fireplace, block it off so warm air can't escape. Cardboard and foam sealant will work. Use a pretty fireplace screen in front of it and no one will see. Do you have an alternative heating system should the electricity fail? Service and test generator.

2. **Gutter, roof and drains** should be examined next. Look for missing, damaged or warped shingles and replace before they begin to leak. Check the flashing around chimney, walls, vent pipes and skylights for deterioration. Seal joints where water could leak in with roofing cement and a caulking gun. Also check for moss and algae growth on your roof. This growth keeps the roof area below them permanently wet and causes rot. If you see any, make a mixture of 5 parts water, 1 part bleach and heaping tablespoon of trisodium phosphate. Spray it on the moss to kill it. Check the gutters and downspout fasteners and secure if they're loose. Gutter covers help keep out debris. Clean your gutters if you don't have them. Make sure downspouts extend away from your foundation to prevent flooding and water damage. Cover all vents and openings to prevent insects, birds, rodents or other vermin from getting inside to make a warm nest for the winter.

3. **Outdoor plumbing parts** are susceptible to freezing during cold weather. Burst pipes can cause some of the most expensive repairs in your home. Insulate any exposed water or drain piping in any uninsulated space (like crawl space, attic, or outside walls) with electrical heating tape or foam insulation. Turn off the water supply to any exterior faucets and drain them. Adding an insulated cover can help, too. Disconnect and drain all garden hoses. If you are shutting down a seasonal property, be sure to turn off the water supply and drain the plumbing system.

**Continued**

## Winter Gardening

Want to extend your growing season for garden veggies? Consider these structures to protect vegetables and extend their growing season. For homesteaders who need to feed their family all year long, these are necessary to supplement canned and other stored food with fresh greens. Our ancestors used these techniques to survive.



Photo: [Bonnieplants.com](http://Bonnieplants.com)

**Cold frames** are simple box structures that utilize solar energy and insulation to create a micro climate in your garden. They can be used to extend the growing season beyond the natural frost time, they can be used to grow some cold loving plants during the winter months, to start seeds and to get young plants used to being outside gradually. They can be dug down into the soil a few inches to take advantage of the warm earth. They also need a cover of plexi or glass to allow sunlight to enter and provide both light and solar heat. Cold frames need to have a way for ventilation to let excess heat and humidity escape.[1] When planting in a cold frame be sure to have it in place about two weeks before seeding to warm the soil and enhance germination. Caleb Warnock, author of “Backyard Winter Gardening,” uses them to feed his family green plants during Utah’s bitter winters. His biggest challenge is getting into them when everything is iced up. He uses a claw hammer to tap gently around the box lids. Decisions on insulation will depend on your environment. You can choose from nothing to hay bales to help create a warm place for your plants. Some gardeners use manure and vegetable scraps buried 6-8 inches below the planting soil. As it decomposes this compost adds internal heat to the cold frame. Another gardener uses discarded tires stacked 2 high. The black tires absorb heat during the day warming the soil. Most cold frames are low, so plants that can be harvested a leaf or two at a time like lettuce, kale and Swiss chard work well.

**Hoop Houses**, also known as high and low tunnel houses, can cover in-ground plants or rows of raised planters. Made from metal, plastic pipe or wood and covered with heavy greenhouse plastic, gardeners can grow vegetables all winter long. Depending on your budget, you can make them tall enough to stand under or removable for access. They are heated by the sun and cooled by the wind. Locate it in the sunniest area of your yard in winter, facing east to west long side to maximize the amount of sun that hits it as the sun arcs through the sky each day. Plant in raised beds or in the ground rather than containers. Pot soil freezes quicker. Also plant in succession to assure crops to

harvest all winter. Be sure to keep an eye on the temperature. It should stay under 80°F. Water only when necessary to minimize plant diseases. Root crops like carrots, beets and radishes grow slowly because of the reduced temperature and daylight, but they will certainly be ready for an early spring harvest if started in the late fall. Hoop houses can also be used to grow heat-tolerant varieties of lettuce during the summer by converting the hoop house into a shade house with shade cloth. Remove the plastic cover and replace with 50% shade cloth. Cool and irrigate with sprinklers. [3] You can change a zone 5 planting area to zone 8 by making a [double hoop house](#).

### References

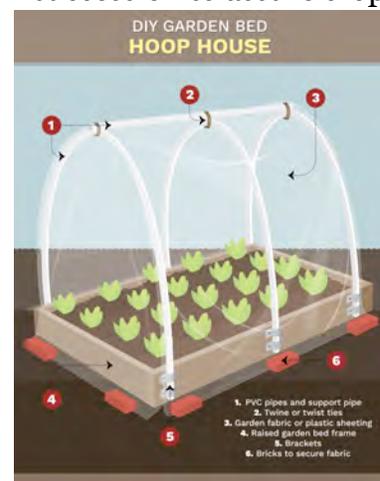


Photo: [Fixit.com](http://Fixit.com)

## [19 Ways to Heat Your Greenhouse](#)

The folks at [Living the Good Life](#) shared a video discussing 10 ways to heat your greenhouse. One big tip is to not plant right up next to the wall. Leave some space. [1]

1. Use plastic bottles filled with water left sitting in the sun. Dark bottles hold heat longer and don't allow gunk to grow in them. You can minimize the gunk (algae and water mold) by adding bleach. If you have a large greenhouse, black 55 gallon drums placed along the north side work well.
2. Make a composting area using manure and kitchen scraps mixed with leaves and shredded paper. While the composting process is taking place, heat is released. Some greenhouse gardeners in other countries keep animals and plants together in their houses, you just need to watch where you step. Don't plant directly in the composting material unless there is 6-8" of soil on top of the working mixture.
3. Terra cotta (AKA Clay) pots stacked with tea lights will add warmth.
4. Heat lamps can be used but you will want to add a fan to circulate the air to keep them from overheating and the closest plants from parching.
5. Electric space heaters can also be used, but need to be away from wetness. Get one with a thermostat so you can control heating temperature.
6. Ceramic space heater tile uses less electricity and is safe to touch; may still need a fan to spread heat around greenhouse
7. Propane space heaters give off CO and needs to have an outside vent; you can boil large pots of water and leave them in the greenhouse overnight
8. Geothermal heating elements are probably the most complicated. They require water circulation underground to transfer heating and cooling.
9. Solar panels can be set up to create the electricity needed to run a heater.
10. Wood stove will give off the most heat for little cost, but you must have wood available

Sue Sanderson of [Thompson-Morgan](#) has additional suggestions. [2]

1. Insulate with horticultural bubble wrap. The larger bubbles let in more light.
2. Use a thermostat on any heater so you only heat when necessary
3. Choose the right temperature - 45°F to 55°F is adequate to keep young plants growing
4. Use a thermometer to record maximum and minimum temperatures to work more efficiently
5. Position heaters carefully - not so close as to dry out plants foliage
6. Only heat the area you need. If you are not using the entire area make a cluster grouping and bubble wrap around them to make a partition
7. Use horticultural fleece on extra cold nights; don't forget to take it off in the morning
8. Ventilation is important to keep air moving to prevent diseases; open vents during warm days, close before the sun goes down
9. Use a seed germinator heating pad to stimulate seed sprouting and keep young seedlings warm

Then there is the Chinese greenhouse. This passive greenhouse style has three walls of brick, clay or earth that make up the north, east and west sides. Only the south side, covered with a transparent material, allows the sunshine in. The walls capture solar energy during the day into the thermal mass walls, which release it during the night as heat. At sunset, an insulating sheet, usually made of straw, pressed grass or canvas, can be rolled out over the plastic to further slow heat loss. These features keep the temperature inside up to 45degrees higher than the outdoors. [3]

### [REFERENCES](#)

## Solar Root Vegetable Soup from our Solar Chef



*Use all those stored root crops to make this soul warming vegetable soup.*

### Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil

3 leeks (white and pale green parts only),  
chopped

1 large stalk celery, chopped

1 glove garlic, minced

1 large turnip, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch  
pieces (about 2 cups)

1 large rutabaga, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch  
pieces (about 2 cups)

1 large russet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-  
inch pieces (about 2 cups)

2 large carrots, peeled, halved lengthwise,  
and sliced

1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes with their juice

4 cups vegetable broth, plus extra as needed

### Directions

Set Sun Oven out to preheat.

Heat oil in a large pot. Add leek, celery, and garlic. Saute until the vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients, stir, cover, and transfer the the Sun Oven. Cook until the vegetables are fork tender, about 1 hour. Transfer 4 cups of the soup to a blender and puree until smooth. Return to pot, add additional broth if the soup is too thick. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Makes 6 servings.

## Tips for Winter Wellness



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Winter is often the most sickly time of the year with folks suffering from colds, coughs, sniffles, achy joints and cold sores. There are many reasons blamed: confinement with others, cold weather, depression, stress, weak immune system or lack of exercise. Depending on whom you ask, all of them can be a part of the problem.

Here are some guidelines for winter wellness.

- Eat healthy and don't over indulge. A healthy diet will keep your gut microbiome in order, preventing harmful bacteria from taking over. Consuming lactic acid consuming bacteria naturally found in

raw food like fruits and vegetables support gut and respiratory health. Consumption of traditional comfort foods high in glucose causes oxidative stress in the blood and compromises your immune defenses. Eat plenty of leafy greens, beans and citrus. [1] In addition, including your own sprouts of alfalfa, broccoli, lentil and red clover in your daily diet are extremely beneficial. Don't forget garlic, "nature's penicillin," which has been used to fight infections for thousands of years. [2]

- Get more sunshine. It's easy to stay inside during winter. Get outside often, dressing appropriately, it will make you feel better, stimulate your metabolism (your body burns more calories keeping warm), and enhance your absorption of vitamin D. Remember to be careful about excessive exercise. It can be bad for your heart. Use a small shovel, and move small amounts of snow at a time. Take any chest pain seriously and seek medical help immediately. [3]
- Manage your stress level. Winter activities and obligations can get overwhelming. Spend sometime alone in meditation. It will help you refocus and be more mindful of your blessings. [4]
- Keep up your fluid intake. Avoid dryness both internally and externally. Apply extra lotion, moisturizer, turn on that humidifier you cleaned when [prepping your home for winter](#), and drink lots of water. Include herbs in your water like lemon and mint, use a straw and limit your alcoholic drink consumption. [4]
- Practice standard hygiene techniques. Cover your cough with your arm, wash your hands, gargle with salt water, and discard used tissues. Limit the length of time you spend closed up with other people. Steer clear of those you hear coughing and hacking.
- Consider herbal supplements to stimulate your immune system. Herbs like elderberry extract can be a preventative tonic, [5] oil from peppermint will open sinuses and help some headaches, sage mixed with honey helps sore throats. [6]
- Find ways to serve others. When you change the vibrational rate in your body, by focusing on positive gratitude, it creates a dynamic energy and powerful healer. [2]
- Get plenty of sleep. Nothing restores the body more than getting seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Immune cells are most active during the sleep cycle. [1] Good sleep banishes depression, curbs junk food cravings, eliminates extra amounts of cortisol, the stress hormone, and burns calories. [2]
- Does a flu shot work for you? Flu symptoms include fever, chills, and body aches. You can catch it by droplet transmissions from up to 6 feet away. If you get sick, stay home don't spread it around.

### References