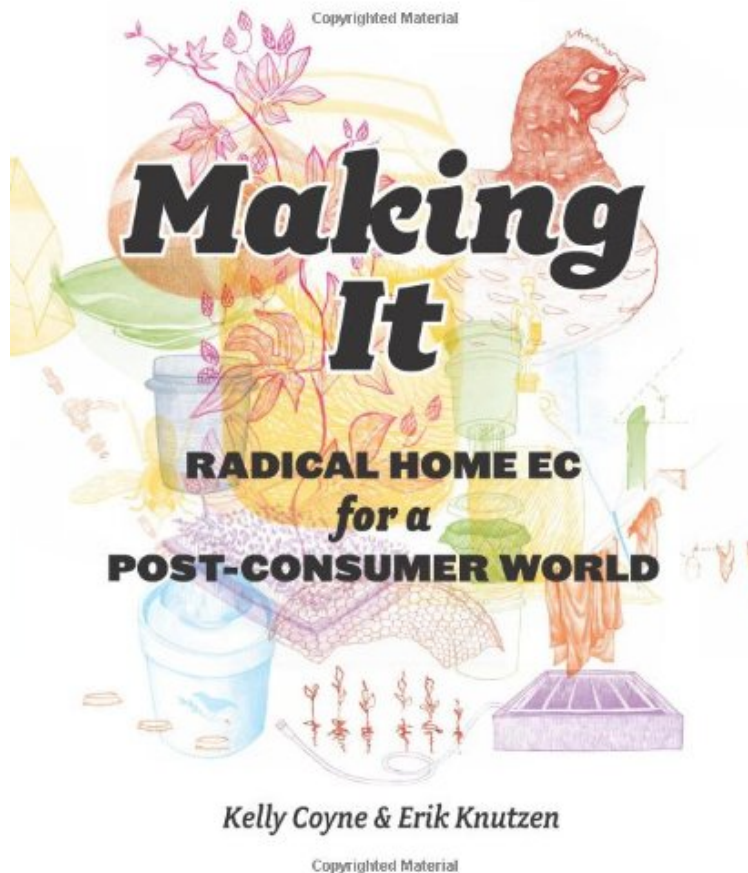


(Download) Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World

Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World

Kelly Coyne, Knutzen Erik

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Kelly Coyne, Knutzen Erik : Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Making It: Radical Home Ec for a Post-Consumer World:

446 of 455 people found the following review helpful. Finally stuff that worksBy Auntie ClausBy any chance, have you, like me, wanted to be able to make truly useful things for years? Intended to convert to cleaning in a cheap, responsible way? But just kept finding books of recipes and tips that didn't deliver, were overly complicated, called for such a wide variety of ingredients, many obscure and expensive, that you started to doubt it'd save any money at all, even if you didn't botch a single thing? I mean, what's the point of trading out my very long domestic shopping list of items I can find at Target with an equally long list of items that have to be gathered from the far-flung corners of the globe? This is not one of those books. This is brilliant in its simplicity. The recipes and ingredients are so elemental, the authors might be the Prometheus of Home Ec. I've had the book for five days. Not only do I not need to buy half that domestic list anymore (and I imagine that will only grow as I work my way through more projects), but I don't

know what I'm going to do with the stuff -the shaving cream, the detangler, the toilet cleaner, the windex- that's already in the house because this homemade stuff is BETTER than the store bought junk. What I like best about this book might be how it's changed the feel of my whole place. There's life and processes everywhere: soap is curing, the hair rinse is steeping, seedlings are sprouting, herbs are growing. I look at things around my home and see new uses for them. I see something I typically buy and think "I could make that." There's something peacefully reassuring about this but more so it's a loud humming of anticipation, excitement, and almost manic creativity. After about 8 projects, I started thinking "There needs to be a recipe for solid perfume! I'd really love a recipe for throat lozenges! With honey! Oh, and ginger! And something to freshen the front loading washing machine so I don't have to buy those Tide packets!" Before this book, it wouldn't have even occurred to me to think that it was possible. So thank you. A few more thoughts: If you are an apartment dweller, and tired of being completely overlooked by other DIY books that assume everyone can compost and keep a few chickens, then you will especially appreciate projects 49 (Free Fertilizer from Weeds) and 61 (Worm Farming), neither of which require composting or manure. Worms will break down your apartment's kitchen prep scraps -your coffee grounds, spent tea, egg shells, carrot peels, the lettuce you forgot about in the produce drawer; they are an especially elegant solution if you happen to have a garbage disposal that regurgitates ground up food into your dishwasher during the rinse cycle (your landlord may insist it's because you don't clean off your plates well enough, but s/he's wrong). For apartment livestock, you might borrow from their other book *The Urban Homestead (Expanded Revised Edition): Your Guide to Self-Sufficient Living in the Heart of the City* (Process Self-reliance Series) and consider pets with benefits, such as a rabbit or a few quail. Like chickens, rabbit manure is wonderful for plants. Unlike chickens, theirs doesn't have to be composted first but can be used as is or passed through the worms first (it's like they were designed with renters in mind; some people even attach a worm bin underneath the rabbit's hutch so the waste transfers itself). A few quail will keep you supplied in adorable eggs for your Bento box lunches. But back to this book: You may also get good use out of Project 56 (making your own seedling flats); they make a compelling case for seeds ("cheap", "disease-free", and "better variety") and I appreciate that the flats are wood (I'm squeamish about growing food in plastic). There isn't anything I've found on container planting in here; they do discuss pots and self-watering containers in *The Urban Homestead*. At the moment, after gleaned a few tidbits from the book *Apartment Gardening* but otherwise not getting much out of it, I am using *Grow Great Grub: Organic Food from Small Spaces* to keep my newly acquired herbs alive and I love it; it covers companion planting, mulching, various DIY fertilizers, and more. If that is an aspect of *Making It* that turns out to really get you going, I so far enthusiastically recommend it (and will post an update if some disastrously bad advice emerges one day). Essentially, the book FOR apartment farmers still has yet to be written, but *Making It* does more than the other homesteading books presently on my shelf and adds a few more pieces to my collection of apartment solutions. Martha Stewart has a simple system for watering your plants when you're out of town involving just a bucket of water and one piece of rope per pot; the Windowfarms Project, which I only just saw today (May 28, 2011) in *Urban Farm* magazine, is jaw-dropping. An expanded section of more of these kinds of innovative no-yard ideas would be wonderful in a second edition of this book. For the home brewing and mead making sections, I handed the book off to my husband. He said it was as thorough as something this brief can be -the technicals are all there. To give you a specific example of what he means, Step 18 ends with "Keep the end of the hose at the bottom of the carboy to minimize splashing the beer around." That's perfectly true, but it might be helpful to know that they're not just talking about minimizing mess; splashing and sloshing will make the beer taste (in my husband's words) "like cardboard." So, if you are good about reading through a project before you begin and diligently following the instructions (like my husband), you'll have no trouble. If (like me) you usually have to be told "No, really, this is important and here's why", you may need a book or mentor that allows for that kind of expanded information. For the chicken sections, I sent a copy of the book to my father-in-law, who already keeps chickens and built his own coop. He said the guidelines are solid and the diagram on pages 264-265 is very much like his chicken coop. It is worth noting that Project 65 Build A Chicken Coop is just guidelines by which to build a chicken coop, not step by step instructions of the Tab A Slot 1 nature; for floor plans, we would suggest BackyardChickens.com. June 20, 2011 Update: Now that we are looking at building a chicken coop ourselves, I'm finding their guidelines extremely helpful. I can use their "what we like about ours, what we'd design differently if we had to do it over again" insightful as I look at the many 'floor plans' available online. I can weed out duds easily instead of having to learn about their flaws the hard way. July 7, 2011: A Tuff Shed fell into our laps recently, which we will be modifying into a hen house, making me further realize the wisdom behind Project 65 being advice rather than a single one-size-fits-no-one floor plan. Only 1 suggestion for the next edition: Multiple Indexes. I like the way the book is organized; arranging projects from easiest to hardest really does let you try several things the moment you get the book and they are every bit the "gateway projects that may addict you to a more homegrown lifestyle." But after that initial introduction, an index that organizes projects by utility (Medicine Comfort, Cleaning Laundry, Kitchen Entertaining, Grow It) and an index of materials and ingredients (I bought, say, coconut oil for laundry soap and it would be nice to see at a glance that I can also use coconut oil for lip balm, creams, and the shampoo bar) would be very helpful. This would also show potential book buyers exactly where these projects will save them money, direct them to the projects that might be of greatest interest to them, and show them that if they

were thinking about buying, say, some beeswax for a lip balm it will have many other uses to justify the purchase. Consider getting a notebook in which to record prices (I suggest a notebook because as of July 25, 2011 the few pages I'd started with no longer keep up with the homesteading renaissance going on over here). Take soap for example. I can write down what price per ounce my body wash or bar currently costs in one column and then record the price per ounce of each ingredient (then divide by the number of ingredients to get the per ounce cost of the finished soap) in the soap recipe I'd like to try. Instantly, I can see how much money I'm saving or, if I don't quite like the margin, I can, say, look for a cheaper lye before I begin. If you want a head start on gathering supplies for projects 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 24, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 42 (for projects 6 and 35, add fresh herbs; for project 25, add Borax; additionally, Borax is optional with some of the 16 recipes contained in project 24) while you wait for your copy to arrive in the mail, I would suggest the following (much of which you may already have):

INGREDIENTS liquid castile soap (a little will last you a while) baking soda (the biggest, cheapest per ounce box you can find) white distilled vinegar (biggest, cheapest per ounce you can find) beeswax (5 oz should cover deodorant, salves, creams, lip balm, and furniture polish at least, as well as a solid perfume if you're interested. Provided it isn't more expensive, get it in bead form rather than 1 oz or 1 lb bricks -it'll be easier to measure and melt.) lye (7 oz will make a batch of olive oil soap, a batch of shampoo bars, and a batch of laundry soap bars) olive oil (biggest, cheapest per ounce you can find), extra virgin olive oil (just what's already probably in your pantry should be fine), coconut oil for shampoo and laundry bars, castor oil for the shampoo bar, rosemary, peppermint, and tea tree essential oils to start if you want to make the shampoo bar and deodorant. Otherwise, everything turns out lovely even unscented. As the essential oils are the most expensive thing (though they at least go a long ways), it's nice that they're entirely optional. 100 proof alcohol (for bug repellent, making medicines by tincturing herbs, and 151 proof or higher making quicker herbal infusions) cream of tartar a little powdered sugar (ONLY for the mints)

EQUIPMENT a blender (necessary for soap making and quick herbal infusions, very convenient for skin cream) a digital scale (for soap making, though I use it for beeswax too since my beeswax is not in bead form) a stir stick, like a spare disposable chop stick or a paint stirring stick from a hardware store (necessary for soap making, convenient for balms and lotions/creams) dishwashing gloves (only for soap making) something to act as a mold, like an empty milk carton (half gallon, quart, even just a few creamer cartons; only for soap making) a little pot with which to boil water (in which, for some recipes, you can fit a pyrex measuring cup) a pyrex liquid measuring cup (soap, balms)

USEFUL JUNK I've begun setting aside one or two containers of various types as I run out of things - Mrs Meyers spray bottles and one or two empty canisters that previously held Mrs Meyers counter scrub, a mint tin, a pump top spritzer bottle that used to be full of California Baby Detangler, and a few small tubs that were once The Body Shop's Body Butter, Burts' Bees Belly Balm, Badger Winter Wonder Balm - even pint-sized gelato tubs - to hold lotions and lip balm. You can also refill chapsticks and deodorant sticks.

55 of 56 people found the following review helpful. So Far - So Good
By Liisa
I bought this book about a month ago and just yesterday made the "Herbal Stick Deodorant" for my husband. He has tried a few of the store bought "natural" brands and they all gave him a rash. I'm happy to say he loves the home made herbal stick deodorant. No rash and it really works!
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Incredibly Useful!
By Jeremy F. Winstead
Wow! This is a great book! It wasn't really what I expected, but I wasn't sure what to expect. This book contains all kinds of recipes for homemade personal care products, such as making your own soap, deodorant, toothpaste, laundry soap, chap stick, lotions, salves, medicines, bug repellent, etc, etc. After getting this book, I now know how to make the things I need out of cheap, wholesome ingredients and I don't buy expensive and toxic chemicals to put on my body or clean my house! This book contains much more than even the personal care and cleaning recipes I've mentioned though - those are just the recipes I turn to again and again. It contains all kinds of projects, such as building a chicken coop, making beer, and keeping bees. Also, for when the time may come, it contains, very sensitive, thoughtful, respectful instructions on how to slaughter, clean and butcher a chicken. It really comes through the writing that the authors are truly caring and respectful animal guardians. Excellent, informative, and useful book, if you want to save money and/or reduce the toxins on your body and in your home environment, get this book! I highly recommend it!

Spending money is the last thing anyone wants to do right now. We are in the midst of a massive cultural shift away from consumerism and toward a vibrant and very active countermovement that has been thriving on the outskirts for quite some time - do-it-yourselfers who make frugal, homemade living hip are challenging the notion that true wealth has anything to do with money. In *Making It*, Coyne and Knutzen, who are at the forefront of this movement, provide readers with all the tools they need for this radical shift in home economics. The projects range from simple to ambitious and include activities done in the home, in the garden, and out in the streets. With step-by-step instructions for a wide range of projects from growing food in an apartment and building a ninety-nine-cent solar oven to creating safe, effective laundry soap for pennies a gallon and fishing in urban waterways *Making It* will be the go-to source for post-consumer living activities that are fun, inexpensive, and eminently doable. Within hours of buying this book, readers will be able to start transitioning into a creative, sustainable mode of living that is not just a temporary fad but a cultural revolution.

About the Author KELLY COYNE and ERIK KNUTZEN grow food, keep chickens, brew, bike, bake, and plot revolution from their 1/12-acre farm in the heart of Los Angeles. They are the keepers of the popular DIY blog, Root Simple, and the authors of *The Urban Homestead*, which the New York Times describes as "home economics as our great-grandparents knew it...the contemporary bible on the subject."