



Practical Projects for Self-Sufficiency: DIY Projects to Get Your Self-Reliant Lifestyle Started

By Chris Peterson

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Complete plans, instructions, and color photos show precisely how to make 30 original projects to help you live a more self-sufficient lifestyle.

Have you ever wanted to build your own chicken coop, cider press, or herb-drying rack? How about a clever two-bin composter, horse-blanket washing machine, or genuine Langstroth beehive? In *Practical Projects for Self-Sufficiency*, you'll find these projects and a couple of dozen more to help you develop and grow your self-reliant lifestyle. Where most books in the popular self-sufficiency category give you pages of words and a couple of small drawings by way of explanation, this book shows you exactly how to do things, employing beautiful photos and complete plans in the best Cool Springs Press tradition. The book's projects are organized into four categories: Food Prep & Preservation, Homestead, Garden, and Animals. Within these categories we've carefully chosen a broad range of popular projects, often with a creative touch or two to make them easier to build or more efficient to use. A simple brooder box for chicks, a jumbo cold frame, a basic loom, a large-capacity soil sifter that won't give you a backache, fencing, trellises, and even a solar oven are included in the list of dynamic project plans. So whether you're a longtime do-it-yourselfer looking to complete your skill set or a newcomer taking your first step toward sustainability, *Practical Projects for Self-Sufficiency* is the book to get you there.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review



A pet door gives your pets freedom and can make life easier for you as well.

Pet Door

Pet doors are available in a variety of styles, colors, materials, and mechanisms. Install one and your dog can go outside whenever he wishes with nary a lift of a finger from you. But don't even consider installing a dog door to the outdoors if you don't have a securely fenced-in yard. To avoid the potential for someone opening the gate in your yard and unintentionally letting your dog loose, locked gates are also a must.

One of your biggest decisions when faced with the plethora of dog door styles will be choosing between the electronic and the manual dog door. If cost is a factor, you're going to lean toward the manual; if security is your greatest concern, then your best bet is the electronic door. The electronic door is made of hard plastic or Plexiglas, and it responds to an infrared signal from a key attached to the dog's collar. It can emit a hum when activated, which is disconcerting to some dogs at first. When shopping for an electronic dog door, pay attention to the specs; some electronic doors open in only one direction.

the specs; some electronic doors open in only one direction. Some dogs will go through the door right away without a problem, but most need to have so

Before you install the ap, take the one item that is most irresistible to your dog and go to the other side of the door. Slowly wave the goody just under your dog's nose and lure him toward you through the door. Give your dog the come command in a cheerful and encouraging manner. Once your dog is stepping through the dog door like it's no big deal, install the ap. Go to the side of the door opposite your dog, pull the ap toward you just a bit, and lure your dog as you did when the door was wide open. Do this a few times so your dog gets used to the feel of the ap against his body, then just call your dog to go through the door, ap and all. Any time you hit a snag, go back to the last point your dog behaved reliably, and train slowly from there.



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Step 1

Measure the largest animal that will be using your door and purchase a pet door that is a little larger. Measure a dog's breadth across the shoulders and depth between shoulder and bottom of rib cage. Center the template that comes with the pet door on the lower middle of the human door. The ideal height of a dog door top is about 2" above the standing dog's shoulders. For structural reasons, the cutout should not fall below 3" from the bottom of the human door. Center the template with a measuring tape. Level with a torpedo level, tape in place, and draw cutout lines and bolt hole locations. Remove the template.



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Step 2

Drill the prescribed bolt holes. Next, drill starter holes just inside the corners of the cutout rectangle for the jigsaw blade. If the door is metal, pound a dimple into the surface at each hole location with a nail, and then drill through with progressively larger bits until you can fit your saw blade through. Cut along the side and bottom cutout lines with a jigsaw. Cut the top side last. Tape the cutout in the door as you go to support it, and to keep it from splintering or tearing.



Step 3

f the pet door straddles a rail and a recessed panel or panels, you'll need to even out the opening so the door has a flat installation surface. Measure the depth of the panel relative to the rails with a ruler and a board held across the rails of the door. Rip-cut strips of blocking to this thickness out of ¾"-thick stock. Measure and cut the blocking to length to fill low panel areas and glue pieces of blocking around the opening. Put blocking on each side of the opening for pet doors with both an interior and an exterior trim kit.



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Step 4

Insert inside and outside door components and bolt it together through the bolt holes. Trim the bolts and attach the flap according to manufacturer's instructions. The exact installation requirements will vary. If needed, tape the pet door flap up until your pet becomes accustomed to using the door.

Review

"If you are one of the many backyard farmers, this book has 30 projects to help you enjoy the fruits of your labors. Peterson (*Building with Secondhand Stuff*) and Schmidt (*The Complete Guide to Greenhouses & Garden Projects*) lend their considerable expertise to these plans. Clear, step-by-step instructions are paired with large photos. The projects are very doable, even for beginners. Sections cover food prep and storage, outdoor building projects, and small animal enclosures. However, this collection has odd choices. Some projects really stand out, such as the cider press, manual laundry washer, solar still, loom, and strawberry planter with mesh cover, but others appear less related?"doggy-door installation, kit shed, fire pit, etc. The designs related to raising bees or chickens are better covered by specialized books, such as Kim Flottum's *Backyard Beekeeper* or Storey Publishing's *The Backyard Homestead Guide to Raising Farm Animals*. VERDICT This is a well-organized book with great instructions, but unless one is hunting actively for these particular projects, it falls a little flat. Recommended where variety is desired." ?" Library Journal

About the Author

Chris Peterson is a veteran home improvement and design author. Among the many books he has written are *5-Gallon Bucket Book*, *Building with Secondhand Stuff*, *Manskills*, four books in the *Ideas You Can Use* series, and many *Black & Decker Complete Guides*. He has also co-authored numerous home design books with noted media celebrities. He lives in Ashland, Oregon.

Philip Schmidt (Golden, CO) is an avid environmentalist and a home improvement expert who has written many successful DIY books, including *Build Your Kids a Treehouse*, *The Complete Guide to Patios* and *The*

Complete Guide to Contemporary Sheds.. He lives in Golden, CO

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Floyd:

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Meredith Daugherty:

Playing with family in a park, coming to see the ocean world or hanging out with pals is thing that usually you will have done when you have spare time, then why you don't try point that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not sense tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition of knowledge. Even you love Practical Projects for Self-Sufficiency: DIY Projects to Get Your Self-Reliant Lifestyle Started, you are able to enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still would like to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh can occur its mind hangout people. What? Still don't have it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

Effie Steger:

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