

- Speaker 1: [00:01](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. I've said it before and I'll say it again, 40 acres and a cow are not requirements to be a modern day homesteader. To me, homesteading is about combining the best of two worlds. It gives us a chance to mix the best of modern convenience with the values of an old fashioned lifestyle. And this can be done no matter where you live. In today's episode, I'm going to be diving into some very practical ways you can start transforming your suburban home into a homestead you can be proud of.
- Speaker 1: [00:48](#) I'm your host Jill winger and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel a little disenchanting by modern life. I'll show you how to create the life you really want by growing your own food and mastering old fashioned skills. So I am super excited for this episode. I get questions and comments from so many of you who tell me you love this lifestyle. You're enchanted by the idea of old fashion on purpose living, but you live in the suburbs or you live in a city and you just don't have the capability or even the desire to move far from town. The good news is that's totally fine. And I love showing you how you can take the very best of this old fashioned lifestyle and weave it into where you live right this moment. So I want to give just a teeny word of warning before we dive into my suggestions.
- Speaker 1: [01:56](#) Homeowners associations, otherwise known as HOA's are very, very different in the sort of things that they allow or don't allow. So before you dive in and do something crazy like rip out your front lawn, make sure you've checked your rulebook and be sure that you're not violating any of the codes of where you live. Cause I would hate for you to start a project and then have to stop it and put everything back to the way it was because it happened to be against this HOA regulation. So check that before you get started. Otherwise you should be good to go. Okay, so these are some pretty practical tips. These are things I want you to be able to get started with like immediately or at the very least, get your creative juices flowing. So my number one suggestion for transforming your suburban home into a homestead would be to rethink your lawn.
- Speaker 1: [02:59](#) Now, of course, a garden in the backyard or maybe a small garden on the side if you don't have a big backyard. That's absolutely my first recommendation, but I'm going to encourage you to potentially take it a step further if your homeowners association will allow it. What if I'm just saying, what if you replaced your lawn with a garden? And I've seen some incredible pictures of folks who've done this. I think it is beyond beautiful to see this vegetable forest in the front yard.

The other benefit would be you won't have to be spending all your time mowing and watering and fertilizing and instead you can devote that time to tending your vegetables. Now I know this isn't for everyone and you do want to make this decision carefully with plenty of forethought and absolutely for the sake of your neighbors. If you do want to turn your front yard into a garden, do it in a way that's a statically pleasing because we want to be able to not burn any bridges with the people around us.

Speaker 1: [04:11](#) Make sure that it looks beautiful, maybe bribe them with some veggies once you get your first harvest and just keep it neat and tidy. But the cool thing is it does not take that much land to grow a whole lot of vegetables. And when I even look at my garden plot, you know I use raised beds, we have 20 beds, but even with the walkways in the alleyways between my beds, it's not a whole lot of land and we grow a lot of vegetables in that small space. So consider how much room you have in your front yard and what it would look like to be able to grow vegetables instead of grass there instead. Again, it's not for everyone, but imagine the possibilities now. If you can't take out your lawn, if it's not allowed or you're just not ready to go that far quite yet, consider landscaping with edible plants instead.

Speaker 1: [05:12](#) So instead of the shrubs that really do nothing but need trimmed all the time. What if you put perennials there instead like raspberries or other bushes that produce food or maybe you plant fruit trees instead of non-edible trees. Now I wouldn't recommend ripping out a bunch of trees to put in fruit trees in their place, but the next time you go to the garden store to get a new plant or to buy a new tree to plant in the backyard, consider if there is a food producing option instead, you can even go as far to put some annual herbs or things like strawberries in your flower beds and those can be beautiful as well as food producing. And if there are strict regulations where you live about what you can grow, I'm pretty sure that no one's going to object to some basil or some oregano mixed in with your flowers. So there's so much you can do with this space you have, even if it's just a small amount of space.

Speaker 1: [06:21](#) Okay. My second idea for you would be to start composting.

Speaker 1: [06:29](#) Now I compost on a large scale and I take our horse manure and our cow manure and we have a giant mountain in the backyard behind the barn and we use a tractor to move it around. And it's an ordeal. Composting does not have to be an ordeal. You can easily turn your kitchen waste or your yard waste into valuable fertilizer for your garden or your flower beds. It's not only going

to save you money at the garden store, so you're not buying the fertilizer there. It's also going to provide some incredible organic matter for your soil. It's going to be way better for it. Now, the one concern about composting is that it could get a little smelly or a little unsightly. So if you're concerned about that, there are all sorts of different tumblers and compost bins that you can get that conceal it very well and are still very much tidy and attractive.

Speaker 1: [07:27](#)

So look into those options. If you have neighbors in very close proximity that you afraid would not appreciate the idea of composting, otherwise if you have a little more space, I've seen people build some very functional compost piles or bins by just using pallets and you can put those on posts or wire them together and stick them in the corner so they stay tidy and neat and have a couple of different bins depending on the stages of compost and have a whole system out there, and be nourishing your soil in the process.

Speaker 1: [08:03](#)

Okay. Idea number three for you is a clothesline. Now, some homeowner's associations don't appreciate clotheslines. However, even if they will not allow you to string and actual clothesline across your backyard or to put up the posts with the line in the middle, you can get creative and use a drying rack. So there's portable drying racks. We had one for many, many years, all different sizes. And you can put that on out on your back patio or in your backyard and put your clothes up there and then you can bring the rack inside. So it's not a permanent fixture in your backyard. And this is gonna allow you to truly channel your inner Ma Ingles. You're out there, you know, putting clothes out the sun and they smell good when they come back inside. There's nothing as good as sheets that have been dried in the sun.

Speaker 1: [09:02](#)

They just are incredible. They smell so good and you're also going to save on electricity in the process. Now at the very least, if this absolutely not an option to put clothes outside, you could also dry clothes indoors on a drying rack. That's another option to still save electricity and keep it from being outside of your house. All right, idea number four, this will not be for everyone, but this is more possible than some of you might think you can keep animals. Now chickens are becoming more and more allowed and appropriate in more cities and towns across the country. So they used to be, you know, absolutely not. And now we're seeing a little bit more friendly legislature around chickens, which I think is fantastic. So you could get chickens depending on where you live, even if that is not an option, you could also look into bees.

Speaker 1: [10:03](#) Bees might be slightly more smiled upon or even composting worms. I doubt anyone's going to complain about a bin of composting worms and if chickens are a possibility for you, and even if you can only get a couple, because I know sometimes there are rules that you can only have three chickens or you can't have roosters. Like that's totally fine. Even just a couple chickens are going to help produce eggs for your family and you can use them to turn your kitchen waste into that manure which you can compost and is great for your garden. So another idea for you, if you absolutely, you know, keeping an animal of any sort or even a worm at your house is not a possibility. Consider partnering up with friends who have land or do have a little bit of a bigger backyard. If they have the ability to keep animals at their house.

Speaker 1: [11:03](#) You could split costs, you could split the eggs or the milk or the meat or whatever it is, and then you're getting a little bit of that taste of the farm life, the animal ownership, even if it's not a year at your own home. I have known of folks who share dairy goat herds with friends who have a couple of acres or chickens or you know, they will go in half on a steer or a hog to be raised for meat. So there's plenty of ways to get around this idea of not being able to have animals at your house. Okay. Number five, I'm saving my favorite for last. A great way to transform your suburban home into a homestead is to transform your kitchen. Now you can do this no matter how strict your homeowners association might be because you have full control of your kitchen.

Speaker 1: [12:03](#) I think it's really interesting that it is so trendy to have farmhouse decor in kitchens lately. I'm sure you've noticed that, right? You've got the white cabinets and the subway tiles and the chicken decor. It's really, really trendy to have all that in there. But what if we take it to the next level? What if we take it from farmhouse decor, which is awesome, and we actually make it farmhouse food as well. And so I have lots and lots of ideas for you on how to do this, but a few of them would be to start by ditching the processed food and maybe not all of it at once. In fact, I recommend that you don't try to get rid of all of it at once because it will drive you crazy. But start being mindful of what you're eating and start finding healthier alternatives for the foods that contain the more questionable ingredients like the trans fats or the MSG or the really junky stuff.

Speaker 1: [13:05](#) And then once you get into this idea of transforming, you can also then introduce new skills into your kitchen, whether that's making your own bread or learning how to can food from the farmer's markets, mastering the art of fermentation and things

like sauerkrauts. Maybe you start your own sourdough starter. You know the sky is really the limit, but it doesn't take a whole lot to take your average kitchen and turn it into this working homestead kitchen even in the heart of the city. And then the benefits of this are really, I think probably the most impactful of anything I've listed out in this episode thus far. Because not only will you be feeding your family higher quality food, their health will get better, you guys will feel better. But you also, there's this really rich satisfaction when you start creating and learning how to make things and kneading the dough and making the kombucha. And you don't have to do it all at once, but it's so satisfying and it really fulfills something. I think it like soul level, it just feels good. So there's a lot of reasons to start looking into your kitchen as a way to take your homestead to the next level in the suburbs.

Speaker 1: [14:30](#) So as we wrap up this episode, I just want you to keep in mind that a successful homesteader, no matter where they live and no matter what point in history they may have been homesteading in, but they know how to make, do with what they have and think outside of the box. And if there's one principle of homesteading that I think is the most important, that would be it. Now I know some of you may look at what we have created here on our homestead. You know, with the 67 acres, we don't have the, the covenants and we have the cows and the chickens in the garden. And you think that we've made it like we have the ultimate homestead and I just want to remind you or kind of bring to light that even though it may look like we have the ultimate homestead, it's still not perfect.

Speaker 1: [15:22](#) And there are plenty of things I would love to change about our homestead. And there are plenty of things that were here when we bought the place that needed a lot of work and a lot of fixing and changing and transforming to get them to the point where they are today, where they're actually usable and pretty and something that I'm proud of. So it's this idea of making the best with what you have continually learning and always improving your skills and that my friend is the mindset of the old time homesteaders that made them legendary in their time and will carry you forward on your own homesteading journey today.

Speaker 1: [16:06](#) So if you are falling in love with the idea of an old fashioned intentional kitchen full of nourishing food and good memories, you're going to love my heritage kitchen handbook. This is the little ebook that I have packed full of my very best tricks for cooking and eating like a farmer no matter where you live. And you can grab the whole thing for free over at www.heritagekitchenhandbook.com and that is it for today. If

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