

Teamwork On The Suburban Homestead

When you hear the word homesteading, even suburban homesteading, I'm sure one of the your first thoughts is of complete self-sufficiency. You dream of being able to completely provide for your family in all aspects of life, right? Unfortunately, that's just not realistic. You can't do everything yourself, whether you're on 40-acres or a little quarter acre suburban homestead.

You'll need to rely on *teamwork* to get it all done.

Teamwork On Different Levels

Anna Hess tells a great story in her book *The Weekend Homesteader* about how a lack of teamwork nearly wrecked her farm. She tried to do it all herself and found out the hard way that she couldn't. In the end, she found that teamwork not only helped her get farm up and running, but it also introduced her to her husband.

I'm not going to guarantee that teamwork around your suburban homestead is going to find you a spouse, but it will allow you to grow your network and skill set, as well as take some of the burden off your hands.

After Anna tells her little story about how teamwork, she goes on to describe the different kind of skills and traits that teamwork can help build within your community. Some of the more important ones to suburban homesteading are described below:

Strength and Stamina

I have no intention of starting a battle of the sexes here, but we can all admit that men and women have far different levels (and types) of strength. Personal experience has shown that men tend to be stronger in the upper body and women have more stamina for tasks like shovelling. Having a group of people with different levels of strength and stamina, regardless of gender, is always good to have when doing work around the suburban homestead.

Patience

I know this particular trait is something that I am short on. Having a wife who is patient and able to handle situations where either we're having difficulty getting a task done or we have a repetitive task certainly helps.

Record-Keeping

We keep records of just about everything on our little suburban homestead – what plants were planted where, how much of each crop we harvested, where we bought certain supplies and how much they cost, etc. Having someone with meticulous attention to detail is a great addition to the teamwork aspect of suburban homesteading.

Building Skills

You're invariably going to build something on your suburban homestead. There's not way around it – whether it's a new shed, raised bed, chicken tractor, or water collection system. Having someone on your team who can think in this manner is extremely helpful.

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As I've mentioned in the past, we have a little quarter acre lot on Long Island, NY. It's nothing special and, from the outside, doesn't look much different than your typical suburban plot. But, we do live a little differently and *need* to rely on teamwork to get it all done. Here's how we do it:

Immediate Family

My wife and twin girls are the main support system on our homestead. I wouldn't get half the work done without their teamwork. My wife is great at harvesting veggies and 'master planning' how we lay things out on our land so they are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. That's not to mention her amazing skills in the kitchen!

My twin five-year-old daughters are an awesome help as well. They help me plant, harvest and compost. They love seeing the worms in the compost pile! As time goes on, they'll acquire more skills and more responsibilities. For now, they're learning more than they're doing...and that's part of the teamwork aspect as well.

My role is multifaceted. I'm kind of the manager of the homestead (don't tell my wife I said that!). I manage when we're going to plant and how to harvest. I'm also responsible for a lot of high-intensity physical labor aspects such as rotating the compost, building/fixing items around the homestead and most of the heavy duty yard work.

In addition to the immediate family, we harness the knowledge of extended family members when needed. Two that come to mind are my father and brother. My father is a plumber with a great mind for construction. He has helped me do a ton of

work on the house and in the yard. My brother has a degree in plant and soil science and is my first call when I run into issue in both the garden and the yard.

It's a wonderful blend between the four of us and our extended family. The work is hard and, usually, we have fun doing it all.

Outside Resources

We have a lot of outside resources to help us with the homestead, some of whom don't even know they're part of our team. They include:

Security

I've hooked up with a great group of guys who I go to the range with on a fairly regular basis. While we always have a good time, we also spend a good amount of time working on our skills from a home defense perspective. The teamwork aspect of training – and making it fun – keeps me coming back for more.

Knowledge Base

I spend a good amount of time communicating with people online at places like The Survival Podcast Forums, When SHTF Forums, PermaEthos Forums and a private Facebook group for Preparedness & Homesteading bloggers. The people I meet in these places provide a great wealth of information for all aspects of suburban homesteading. Terrific teamwork mentality!

Local Support



I also have a good local support system in addition to all my 'virtual friends.' Most notable out of these folks is Mike over at The Backyard Pioneer. We regularly meet-up to discuss projects, bounce ideas off each other and discuss the challenges we are each facing. Sometimes just having an external sounding board and hearing that they're facing similar challenges is enough to keep you going. In addition to our semi-regular meetings, Mike and I also lend a hand to each other whenever we can. And, being that we have families roughly the same age, we're trying to get together more as a large group. I'm sure it'll be good for our kids to hang out...and our wives can commiserate about their crazy husbands!

Wrap Up

Teamwork is a key part to the suburban homesteading lifestyle. As much as you'd like to think you can, you cannot do it all yourself. You need some help and the sooner you start working on building your team, the happier you'll be. Remember that, as a suburban homesteader, you're even more exposed to the community lifestyle. Why not try to build on that exposure and develop a group around you that can help you achieve your goals?

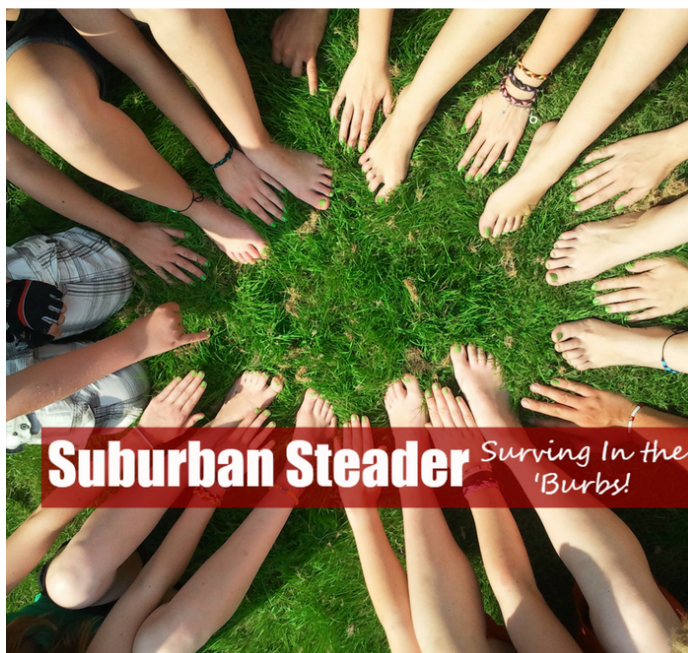
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