

The Weekend Homesteader Review

Are you interested in suburban homesteading but aren't quite sure where to start? Anna Hess' book *The Weekend Homesteader* may be just what you're looking for!

The Weekend Homesteader Overview

The Weekend Homesteader is an interesting book because it is broken out into monthly chapters with each month having many little sub-projects. Interestingly, the chapters start in April and conclude in (yup, you guessed it) March. The idea is that, if you follow the book, you'll have a project lined up for every weekend and they'll be specific to that point in the year. For instance, the projects for August (February in Australia) include:

- Seeding Saving
- Food Drying
- Build A Chicken Coop or Tractor
- Install A Rain Barrel System

Not all these projects can be completed in one weekend – creating and managing a budget in July is an on-going activity – while others can be completed in a few hours – mulching your garden is fairly simple if you have enough material.

The Weekend Homesteader – The

Good

Anna obviously put a lot of thought into *The Weekend Homesteader*. There is a large attention to detail in this book shown by the continuity of projects – there’s instruction on soil management one month and planting the next – to the simple but aesthetically pleasing way it is laid out. To me, the pictures are what really make the book.



The Weekend Homesteader – Building A Chicken Coop



The Weekend Homesteader – Planting Trees

Anna also spent a good amount of time upfront defining the estimated cost, time, difficulty and ‘kid-friendliness’ of each project. This information is quite useful to those of us with families who might require a bit more up-front planning

when beginning projects.

***The Weekend Homesteader* – The Bad**

Well, these aren't really bad, but the heading goes with the theme (spoiler alert: we won't have a section title The Ugly).

My first disappointment with *The Weekend Homesteader* is that the monthly tasks don't really line up with my area of the country. Anna and her husband live in southwest Virginia (according to her website). Let's just say that southwest Virginia and Long Island have **very** different weather patterns and some of the timing she suggests doesn't line up with what's feasible where I live. I imagine many others will find the same problem.

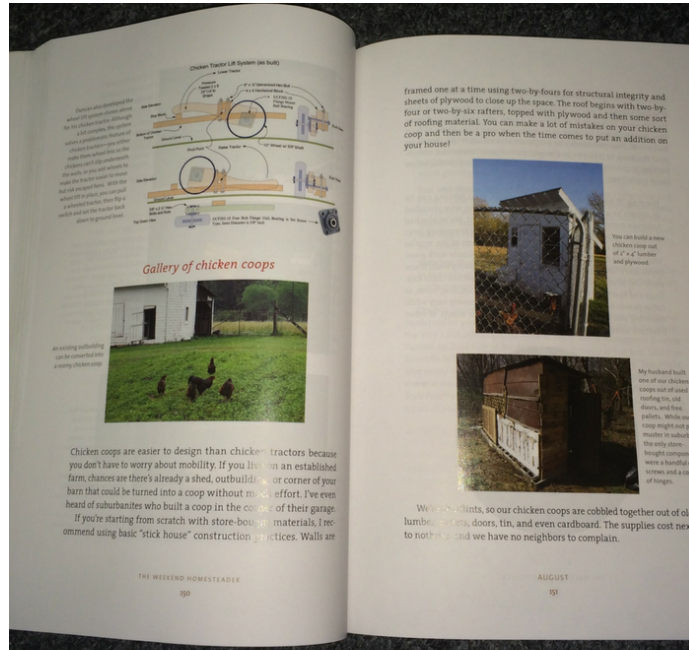
Second, Anna and her husband are full time homesteaders. They bought their 58-acre homestead in 2006 and have been working the land ever since. The fact that a full time homesteader is giving advice to weekend homesteaders is a bit odd. I don't believe the information is necessarily bad, but the general impression of "look, we did it, you can too with only a few hours every weekend" seems a bit misleading to me.

***The Weekend Homesteader* Wrap-Up**

Overall, I recommend *The Weekend Homesteader* to anyone, especially suburban homesteading newbies, who are looking to set a course of action for their first year. The general timeline may need to be tweaked for your hardiness zone (you can read more about that topic in our previous article) but the overall message is solid. There are good projects – some

simple, some not simple – that will bring you from scratch up to a good level of self-sufficiency in a short amount of time.

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