



Here are a few things to add to your pack that won't take up too much space. (Submitted photo/Mark Rackay)

Add a few things to the pack

Twice a year, at the change of seasons, I have to empty all the contents of my pack on the floor. By floor, I mean something the size of a school gymnasium hardwood floor. All season long I add little things to the pack, until I reach the point, I can no longer lift it onto my shoulders.

My pack will get so heavy that it arrives in camp 15 minutes after I do. It will come crawling up the trail, grunting and groaning all the way. That's how I know it is time to clean out the pack.

My wife says she can find my pack by following her nose. Last fall, she accused me of having something "dead in there." "Nonsense," I exclaim, as I hurry off with the pack to another room. Upon close inspection, I discover the source of the foul smell is nothing more than a leftover salami sandwich. The sandwich had finally evolved into an intelligent life-form and was attempting to graze on an uneaten portion of a Snickers bar. I quickly hosed out the pack and all the evidence of the foul smell, in an attempt to avoid prosecution from the war department.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

I am always on the lookout for products or ideas that may be of some use in the outdoors. Readers, friends, and catalogs are a good source of ideas. Recently I discovered a few ideas that I thought I would share with you here.

One of them is to include a few of the binder clips, the kind you commonly use in offices. They range in sizes from a half-inch up to 2 inches wide. These clips weigh next to nothing and are relatively inexpensive.

If you ever have to hand a tarp for protection from the elements, as a wind break, or to cover some supplies, these little gems are worth their weight in gold. You can use them as a clothes pin to hang wet clothing to dry near the fire, or secure rope and cordage to a tree branch.

Some of the places I travel for hunting have strict weight limits and number of bags. One particular hunt near the arctic circle required us to sit on a helicopter and hold our hunting rifle. We were allowed a small backpack and one duffel bag but the overall weight of everything, including the gun, could not exceed 60 pounds.

Being forced to use small duffels and a small pack, it was difficult to pack the heavy clothing in the small bags. One tip I learned from an old timer in camp was to pack your clothes in a vacuum sealed bag. He had a clean set of socks, T-shirt and underwear in each little sealed bag that he would cut open at the start of each day.

I tried this technique and it really does reduce the bulk of cramming everything into a smaller bag. Packing up everything for the return trip home was not a problem because all the extra food and tangible supplies were not in the bag. Those that were not consumed on the trip were left behind for the next team of hunters. I also seal up my rain gear when

I carry it in my pack, thereby taking up very little space.

No matter where your trip takes you, there is down time. Even if you are stuck in a survival situation, there will be times that you twiddle your thumbs, bored to death. I now carry a simple deck of cards in my pack for just such times.

Cards are a great way to occupy your time, whether playing solitaire by yourself or poker with the others in your group. You can even find specialized decks of cards that will serve a dual purpose. Decks that have first aid information, knot tying, animal tracks or edible plants on the backs of the cards can educate and entertain.

I found another product, called Instafire, which is a military grade fire starter. This product sells for around a buck a bag, and one bag will start up four fires if you have fairly dry wood. Instafire burns at 1,000 degrees, burns in winds and will light up on snow. It even floats on water. Use 1/8 of a cup and it will burn for five to seven minutes.

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Using organic pesticides in the home garden

A lot of different types of insects are starting to pop up in the landscape, but before you reach for a spray let me offer a few tips. And remember, a few insects on a plant should be expected and may not be a bad thing.

My advice is always to start with the safest and simplest means of control first. Often times a pest or two can simply be picked off of the plant. In many cases a strong stream of water sprayed on the plant will dislodge the insects resulting in control. If this doesn't work, start with the safest products for the job. There are several great products that you can use but you should know a few things before using one.

Identifying the insect is really important! You don't want a one product that kills all. How the insects feed goes right along with the ID.

A product designed for killing insects that feed by chewing can increase your problem if you use it on insects that feed by sucking plant liquids. For example, using a something that kills chewing insects such as beneficial ladybeetles will kill them and not touch the aphids that you may be trying to kill. As you probably guessed, the result will be an increase in aphid populations.

When you're choosing a pesticide, look for "active ingredient" in small sprint on the front of the label, usually towards the bottom. Some of the more common available products are as follows.

An interesting product called Spinosad is derived from a naturally occurring, soil dwelling bacterium. It's reported that the bacterium was found and collected from an abandoned rum distillery on a Caribbean island in 1982 by a vacationing scientist. The pesticide must be eaten by the insect and will not affect insects such as aphids that feed by sucking. The insect will die within one to two days after eating the product and spinosad will not harm most beneficial insects.

Sabadilla is a pesticide derived from the seeds of the Sabadilla lily (*Schoenocaulon officinale*). It's sold as either a dust or a liquid. It's considered one of the least toxic of all the botanical, or "safe" pesticides.

However, it can be highly irritating to your eyes and can produce sneezing if



Gardening A to Z

By Linda Corvine McIntosh

inhaled, so caution must still be used. Sabadilla works as a stomach poison to insects, effectively killing caterpillars, leafhoppers, thrips, stink bugs and squash bugs. It breaks down very rapidly in sunlight which may be considered both a pro and a con.

Neem oil is another product that's become almost the go to for many gardeners. Neem is derived from the seeds of the neem tree, a native of India.

The Indians and Africans have been using neem for more than 4,000 years as both a pesticide and a medicine. Today, it can be found under several names such as Azatin, or Bio-neem. It can be used to control leafhoppers, thrips, caterpillars, and mealybugs.

Neem works as a growth regulator by inhibiting the insect's ability to molt to its next life stage. It will not harm earthworms, honeybees, or ladybugs. It even helps to control some fungus.

Diatomaceous Earth is a nontoxic insecticide mined from the fossilized silica shell remains of diatoms. Diatoms are single-celled or colonial algae in the class Bacillariophyceae. Just think how impressed your friends will be when you share that with them!

DE contains sharp edges that cut the soft bodies of pests, dehydrating and killing them. It is labeled to control slugs, aphids, grasshoppers, millipedes and sow bugs. However, it must be reapplied after a rain or watering.

Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is a natural occurring bacteria often sold under the trade name Dipel or Thuricide. There are several strains of Bt. One is a wonderful product used for killing caterpillars that may be munching on your tasty vegetables, trees or shrubs. The toxins are not poisonous to birds, people, or pets. However, keep in mind, butterflies begin life as caterpillars and it can target them as well.

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PACK

FROM PAGE A10

I have used it for several fires, and it works as advertised. The entire package weighs only 2 ounces, so it does not take up much space. The only gripe I have is there is no way to reseal the waterproof package once you have opened it. You either have to carry a small Ziploc bag or have the contents spill out in your pack. I have even used it to start fires in our wood stove at home and have no complaints.

I still believe in a road flare for emergency use. When you are stranded, cold, wet and tired, a road flare can be magic. Instafire has a place in your pack and it is an excellent starter for normal camping trips. It does not contain any harmful chemicals and has a five-year shelf life. There is a note on the package that says to use the whole pack if the wood you are trying to light is wet.

I know we have talked about it many times before but add a couple zip

ties and some duct tape to your kit if you have not already. Both of these items have countless uses from repairs, first aid, and general survival craft. When needed, they are indispensable.

I like to share ideas and new products with you, and appreciate you sharing any tips like this with me. I am going to send this off to my editor now because I hear a bunch of moaning and groaning. My pack must be just about back in camp.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

PESTICIDES

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There's a Bt strain for controlling mosquitoes. You simply place the product in your bird-bath, pond, or whatever water source is a breeding ground for the pesky skeeters. The product will not harm birds, children, or animals that may be using the water.

Bt works by killing the larvae in the water, so it may take a few days to see the results. I usually buy more of the Bt dunks than I need so I'm ready if those irritating little fungus gnats appear around my houseplants. I break off about a quarter of the "doughnut" dunk and place it in a gallon of water and water it into my plants to control the gnats. It works great!

Insecticidal Soap can give quick results for the control of aphids, scale, thrips and several other insects but be aware that the product has the potential to damage plants. Soap products should be applied in the cool of the day and must be sprayed on the insect to achieve results. Some plants can be sensitive to soaps so it's a good idea to test

it on a small area of the plant before using it extensively.

There are a lot of great pesticide oil products available. Orange, peppermint, and clove oil not only smell great but can repel or kill a variety of insects.

One word of caution, though, if you live around bears. The morning after I applied clove oil to one of my plants, a bear dug it up during the night and my plant was gone. Hence, I'm cautious when using these scented oils on my plants and I never put any products that smells like food in my vehicles.

Keep in mind even organic pesticides usually come with the word caution on the label. Always read the entire label before applying it and follow the directions! Also, know that organic pesticides may need to be applied more frequently than alternative synthetic products. But if you've never tried organic products, you should give them a try. They might surprise you.

Linda Corwine McIntosh is a licensed pesticide applicator, ISA-certified arborist and advanced master gardener.



With so many great products available, you may want to give organic pesticides a try. (Submitted photo/Linda Corwine McIntosh)



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OUTDOORS



Cody Davis is a long-time participant in Grand Valley Adaptive Climbing Club, and has helped to create community with newer participants. (Courtesy photo/Sloane Milstein/via FOYAN)

Adaptive outdoor programs for kids

Friends of Youth and Nature

By Abram Herman

Playing outside is an important part of growing up — there's a wealth of evidence that time spent outdoors increases resiliency, promotes mental health, and teaches children skills that will help them grow into happy and healthy adults.

If your child has a disability, though, it can be challenging to find outdoor activities that are accessible to their needs, and especially group activities that allow opportunities for important social connections and peer support.

We are fortunate to have a number of organizations serving the Grand Junction area that specialize in facilitating affordable activities for kids with disabilities, and their families. This is not an exhaustive list; as you get involved with the local community of adaptive athletes, you'll find many more opportunities beyond those listed below. Here are a few places to start:

Colorado Discover Ability (CDA) is a well-known local nonprofit that specializes in year-round adaptive outdoor recreation programs. In summer it organizes rafting trips, cycling, and summer camps that are accessible to all.

In winter CDA pivots to adaptive snowsports with well-qualified instructors who can teach kids to use a sit ski, ski with a vision impairment, and many other types of adaptive snowsports. More information is available at cdagj.org, and CDA also has numerous volunteer



Participants, both young and old, gather to climb, socialize, and have fun at GVACC. (Courtesy photo/Karen Kiefer/via FOYAN)

opportunities available if you'd like to help out.

Ever heard of hippotherapy? No, there are no hippos involved — it's actually therapeutic horseback riding, and local organization Harmony Acres Equestrian Center offers this service to both kids and adults with disabilities from their location in Loma.

Through therapeutic horseback riding programs, Harmony Acres uses "specially trained instructors and well-trained horses, along with a team of volunteers, [to] work with individuals to target goals that improve physical movements and development, speech, emotional/behavioral regulation, core strength, and mood."

Harmony Acres offers services on a sliding scale, with the goal of making this unique and wonderful recreation/therapy available to all who might need it. Visit harmonyacresec.org to learn more.

Other local providers include Grand Valley Equine Assisted Learning Center in Fruita (gvequineassistedlearningcenter.org), Metaphorse in Montrose (metaphorse.com), Dare to Dream in Delta County (daretodreamincorporated.com), and 4 Leg Adventures in Delta County (4legadventures.com) also offer various equine therapy sessions.

Sports are an important part of growing up for a lot of kids, and the social skills and support received through team sports can help your children grow into well-rounded adults.

Our local Challenger Baseball team makes the sport of baseball accessible to all kids ages 8 to 18 (or up to 21 if still enrolled in school), with any type of developmental or physical disability. They also get to hang out with the JUCO players once a year, which is a big deal for the baseball fans! Find out more at challengerbaseball.net

If you're looking for an adventurous (but safe!) activity, check out the Grand Valley Adaptive Climbing Club (GVACC).

Accessible to kids and adults of all abilities, this climbing program is prepared with the equipment and expertise necessary to get anyone to the top of the climbing wall.

While the events take place indoors, once you and your child are more comfortable with climbing it will allow you to pursue outdoor climbing programs through organizations like Adaptive Adventures, which usually organizes at least one ice climbing trip each year in Ouray.

GVACC typically meets on the third Thursday of every month at the Grand Valley Climbing gym on 25 Road, but the schedule can fluctuate—check the Facebook page for the exact date each month: facebook.com/GrandValleyAdaptiveClimbingClub

Regardless of the type of activity your children are interested in, we're very lucky to have a lot of organizations doing great work in our community to make athletics and the outdoors available to every kid, of any ability level. Take advantage of all that's offered, and help your kids grow into happy and healthy adults surrounded by a network of their peers!

Abram Herman is a board member of the Friends of Youth and Nature, a nonprofit that promotes opportunities for youth and families to get outside, experience outdoor activities, and explore nature. Follow our outdoor news blog and receive monthly tips on connecting your children to nature. Learn more, visit www.friendsofyouthandnature.org

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