

# BE READY



## Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

One peaceful afternoon of May of 2022 found me with nothing more on my mind than deciding what I was going to put on the grill for dinner. As I looked to the south from my patio, I noticed a fair-sized column of smoke. I knew it was burning season but decided to call and check anyway.

I called my partner Jerry from the posse about the smoke, and he told me it was part of a prescribed burn that started a few days ago by the U.S. Forest Service. As we were talking on the phone, the column of smoke really blew up. Within minutes the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse was called

into action to report to the fire.

This time, the posse was not sent to fight the fire, they were sent to evacuate people from their homes. The wind had changed direction and increased its speed, threatening about 70 homes and structures in the area.

Our team handling the evacs were not the winner of the "most popular person" award that day, as we roused people from their homes in the middle of their dinnertime. Most people were less than enthusiastic to be told to grab their loved ones and pets, and scam, now, as the fire is on our heels.

Colorado residents face mandatory evacuations every year. Everything from wildfires, suspicious packages, accidents, power outages or gas line breaks can cause an evacuation. The point is you must be ready to bug out at a moment's notice in an emergency.

In a different scenario, you could be told you can't leave your home, such as during a blizzard or as in the case of a pandemic, like the Covid 19

days. Either of these could cause us to not be able to leave our homes, forcing us to "shelter in place."

The idea is to be ready for the crisis before it hits. Start with building a plan for you and your family. The plan should include a 72-hour kit, containing enough supplies for you, family, and pets to survive for 72 hours. This kit needs to be accessible in a moment's notice, by every member of the household.

Remember the 5 P's when making your plan and kit. Prescription drugs, people, pets, photos, and personal computers. I would personally add to that, insurance documents, cell phone and important phone numbers, and have a plan to take care of horses, chickens, and other livestock that you can't take with you.

Your kit should be assembled well in advance of an emergency. For an event such as a gas leak, you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take the supplies with you. You may not have time to search for the supplies you need or to go shop for

them. I have always been a "last minute packer" but this is not the time to be tardy.

The kit should be stored in a designated place in your home where every member of the household knows where it is and can grab it in an emergency. I like to assemble the kit in backpacks and duffel bags. This makes it easier to carry and protects the contents from the elements.

You might consider having multiple kits made up. I would keep one in the vehicle or at work in case an emergency prevents me from getting home. Imagine being at work when a disaster strikes, and you can't get back home. If your kids are home, make sure they understand what to do, perhaps head to a trusted neighbor's house with the kit and pets.

You and your family need to do some planning together, so everyone is on the same page when an emergency strikes. Everyone should know of a designated meeting place in case you can't get to your home. Have a family action plan in place and be certain everyone understands it.

On the home front you should be prepared to shelter in place. Something like a blizzard or pandemic could cause you to not be able to leave your home. Consider storing extra food items, paper goods, drinking water and necessary medications at home. Foods that are canned or dehydrated, survival foods, are best in the event power is lost. We keep these foods in stock and rotate the inventory, so nothing goes out of date.

Here is a list to get you started on your family 72-hour kit:

- Water-allow a gallon a day per person, more in the summer months
- Food-non-perishable, high protein



Your ready bag can be a backpack or duffel bag. Just make sure it is strong and handy. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

foods, energy bars, Meals-Ready-to-Eat (MRE) dehydrated foods, items that do not require cooking or refrigeration

- Flashlight-headlamps and lots of extra batteries
  - First aid kit-be sure to include any needed prescription medicines needed
  - Cell phone-keep off to conserve power, portable radio or battery tv
  - Tools-basic kit to include pliers, screwdrivers, vise grips, handsaw, hammer, knives, multi-tool etc.
  - Tarp-garbage bags, blankets
  - Clothing-extra change of clothes, underwear, socks, for everyone, footwear
  - Personal items-passport, insurance papers, eyeglasses, important papers
  - Sanitary-toilet paper, feminine supplies, soap etc.
  - Money and credit cards, cash because ATM may not be working
  - Contact information-numbers and email addresses of family members
  - Special items-for formula, toys, needed items for kids and pets.
- Remember, your furry

family members will want to eat as well

The website of www.ready.gov has a great deal of additional information you might find helpful. Colorado has a website also that is worth looking at: [www.readycolorado.com](http://www.readycolorado.com).

You should also sign up for emergency alerts at <https://montrose.genasys.com/portal/en>.

We hope the kit will never be needed. After living in the crosshairs of hurricanes for 20 years, I have learned to be ready to bugout and shelter in place. In the event there is a knock on your door asking you to evacuate, please don't kill the messenger, they are just trying to keep folks safe.

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 970-765-7033 (leave a message) or email [info@mcspi.org](mailto:info@mcspi.org)



This fire, south of Montrose, forced 70 homes to be immediately evacuated. Be sure you are ready for such an emergency. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

# Keeping May momentum in the garden



## Gardening From A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

I hope your gardening season has gotten off to a great start. I love seeing the colors of spring, the

scent of blooming flowers and the warmth of the sun. The feeling that it brings is almost like May magic.

Have you noticed the hummingbirds have returned? If you would like to provide food for these amazing little birds the standard formula is four parts water to one part sugar. Adding the sugar to boiling water will dissolve the sugar. Just be sure to cool it before serving it to the birds. I often substitute honey in place of sugar when I'm baking but this isn't

baking. Never use honey in place of sugar because honey contains naturally occurring bacteria and fungus that can actually be deadly to the birds! Remember to clean your feeder out thoroughly from time to time to prevent disease problems. And above all, take time to sit and watch the birds as they visit you feeder.

I wonder if you've seen any European paper wasps out and about yet. There's a bit of a controversy concerning whether these guys are beneficial or a problem.

These are the wasps that build a paper nest under the eaves of your house or sometimes in shrubs or some other hiding place. You can recognize these wasps because they fly with their legs hanging down. I suppose when it comes right down to it they can be considered both beneficial and a problem. European paper wasps are not native and are notorious for eating caterpillars, including butterfly larva. True, they can kill tomato hornworm larva and other troublesome

caterpillars but they also kill butterfly larva and they're not considered a good pollinator. They can cause havoc when large populations show up at your picnics, especially towards the end of summer. Locating the nest and spraying it with a wasp spray now, before the colonies establish and grow larger, may be a good idea. The hornet traps will not catch these wasps.

However, if hornets were a problem last summer it's time to get those traps out to cap-

ture the queens before they begin building nests and growing a colony. I think the Western yellow jacket hornets are the real bad guys of the garden. They will make a nest in dark secluded places, including an old mouse hole in the ground. And they will definitely try to chase the hummingbirds away from your feeders and they have no qualms about stinging you. So don't let them become your summer spoilers.

See GARDEN page B3

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