

It's Pack Time



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

One summer of my youth, my grandmother asked me if I wanted to spend a couple weeks at summer camp. I was in the middle of baseball season, so my answer was an emphatic and resounding "NO." We compromised, and I was off to camp for 2 weeks.

I was sure that the 2 weeks were for my grandparents benefit and not mine, especially when my grandmother packed for my trip. She was an early "prepper" of sorts, making sure I had everything necessary, for any type of situation that might arise.

If a hurricane blew through, I had a hurricane lamp. Should a freak July blizzard strike, not to worry; I have a snowsuit and snowshoes. She even sent extra food with me in case the camp kitchen ran out.

My Grandmother packed so much stuff for me that I was convinced she was moving me out. My Grandfather dropped me off at camp with a U-Haul to carry my stuff. I was the only kid to arrive at camp with 5 duffel bags, 3 suitcases and a double hernia, but I was ready for anything.

Hunting season is finally upon us, and over 300,000 people will take to the mountains of Colorado over the next several months, in pursuit of

big game. Some may not come home, and in most cases, it could have been prevented.

Looking back over the last 20 years, and countless rescue missions for lost or injured hunters, I would hazard a guess that 4 out of 5 people we rescued did not have a survival pack. Keep in mind that people don't get lost or injured on nice warm sunny days, close to town. Disaster always strikes 300 hundred miles Northwest of nowhere, in the middle of a blizzard. Murphy of Murphy's Law fame sees to that.

Regular readers of this column know that I annually write about the importance of a survival pack. The survival pack should be standard equipment for just about all outdoor excursions. It astonishes me, that every year, people are stranded in the woods without equipment or skills to stay alive, even though it is preached at them endlessly ad nauseum.

What I have assembled here is a list of the things you should start with. Feel free to add other things as you see fit. Medications, extra prescription glasses, dry clothes and many other things can be added for the type of trip, and the possible emergencies you may face.

Here is a list to get you started:

- Compass and GPS-It is most important to take a waypoint for your starting place on the GPS. This way, you always have a Lat/Lon number to head home to.

- Signal mirror and whistle-these are great for helping searchers locate you in the event of an emergency

- Knife and Leatherman tool

- Flashlight, headlamp, and extra batteries

- Waterproof matches, lighter, fire starter-fire can be used for signaling and warmth

- Drinking water-some packs come with a hydration bladder built in.

- Food-power bars, trail mix, jerky etc. High energy snacks with protein.

- Cell Phone-keep power off to save battery. The battery power will run out quickly searching for service. Carry a portable battery pack to recharge the phone.

- Small First Aid Kit-carry only essential items, such as a tourniquet, Israeli Bandage, couple band-aids, etc. keeping weight in mind. Be sure that you have any essential prescription drugs you may require.

- Rain Poncho

- Space blanket bivvy. You can crawl in one of these to keep warm.

- Toilet paper, a must

- Duct tape - for first aid and repairs, wrap some around an old credit card

- Pencil and Paper, pens never work outdoors when you want them to

Carry extra ammunition for your firearm. I have seen many cases where a hunter was able to signal for help firing the universal three well-spaced shots, and we were able to respond. Much better than a whistle.

One other item that you should carry is extra warm clothing. In the mountains, the temperature can drop 30 or more degrees in a matter of minutes. Having some dry clothes along will help in case you get wet.

I change packs throughout the year to match the conditions and the type of trip or hunt I am going on. My winter pack is obviously larger, and



You don't have to carry enough stuff to survive the winter, think 48 hours or so. (Courtesy photo/Mark Rackay)

has much more stuff, because of the harsher environment I will be in, compared to my summer daypack I use for a hike with the wife.

Admittedly, I am one of those people who will constantly add new items to their pack. Every time I see something that will be useful, it gets added to the pack. This gets out of hand when the pack gets too heavy to lift, and I am forced to remove all the contents and reassess their importance. Sometimes, the pack gets so heavy it arrives at camp 20 minutes after I do, that's how I know it is time to clean it out.

You don't need to lug around enough stuff to get you through until the

spring thaw. If the pack is too heavy, you will be tempted to leave it in camp or in the truck, which does you no good when you need it. Most people, who are lost or stranded, are rescued within 24 to 36 hours. It is not necessary to pack enough equipment to survive the 100-year war, as my grandmother did, just enough to see you through the emergency.

The woods are not the place to give Murphy's Law a test and Mother Nature, Murphy's close associate, has no sense of humor. She will change the weather in an instant, hide your visual reference points, and partner with Murphy to throw an injury at you. While you are

fighting for your life, the two of them are laughing themselves silly and eating the last of the cookies in your pack.

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What's happening in your early autumn garden?



Gardening From A to Z

By Linda Corwine McIntosh

Even though fall is upon us, there's still some growing we can do. Our average frost date for the Montrose area is around

October 7th, so why not get out there and enjoy the early days of the autumn season.

This is a fantastic time of year to plant trees, shrubs, perennials, and spring blooming bulbs! I know, we usually think spring is the time to plant most things, but late summer and early fall shouldn't be overlooked as a great time plant. You may not give it much thought but the soil is warmer than it is in the spring and the air is cooler which is great for helping plants establish. In fact, fall planting actually gives your new plants time

to overcome transplant shock without the added demands of producing leaves and flowers. Plants can establish a bit more easily than they would in the spring and they will hit the ground running when spring rolls around. That is, if you provide the needed extra moisture throughout the winter months. Because our winters can be dry, watering them every month or so is important!

If you're planning on sodding, seeding, or replacing some problem areas in your lawn this is a great time to do so. Just do it soon! It needs to be

established before you shut off your irrigation for the season. You may also want to consider core aerating the lawn if it has thatch or if the lawn is compacted.

Plan to fertilize your lawn one last time before the irrigation is shut off for the winter. This will help ensure a healthier, greener, lush lawn next summer. One to two pounds of nitrogen to 1,000 square feet is recommended. However, don't fertilize perennials, shrubs, trees, and roses at this time! The extra fertilizer that they get if they're growing in the lawn is OK, but you don't

want to stimulate new growth in your plants by fertilizing right now.

September or early October is also a great time to plant spring flowering bulbs and garlic. You may want to add a little phosphorous or bone meal to the soil when you plant. Just don't breathe the bone meal dust when you're using it. Also note, bone meal might attract bears if they're a problem in your area.

Garlic is sold in the spring, but it's also sold in the fall and rightly so. You may be surprised to learn that fall is an excellent

time to plant garlic for next year's harvest! To plant it, separate the garlic cloves from the bulb and plant each little piece about 12 inches apart in loose soil with added organic matter. Garlic will do best if you plant it when soil temperatures are 40°F, but before the ground freezes. I guess since we kind of associate garlic with keeping vampires away, planting your garlic during Halloween season might be a good way to remind yourself to plant some.

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