

HEATING
WITH A
WATER
STOVE

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Back Home

YOUR HANDS-ON GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Protect Your Woodlot By
Horse Logging

Bring Back the
American **Chestnut**

Building the
Starter Home

Off-the-Grid
Single-Wide

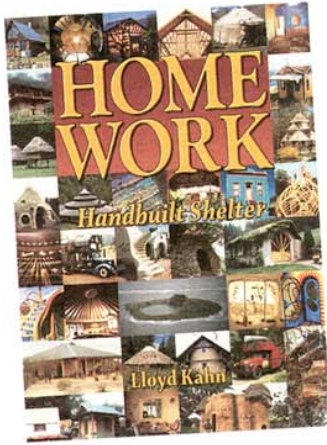
Vegetable and Perennial
Garden Cleanup



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Feed Back



Hand-Built Shelter

In the curious world of owner-built housing, few books have elicited as much comment as those of Lloyd Kahn, the holistic builder-turned-publisher who's given us such treasures as *Shelter*, *The Septic System Owner's Manual*, and the *Domebook* series of the 1970s. His newest book, *Home Work: Handbuilt Shelter*, continues in the original *Shelter* vein, highlighting the most imaginative and often arcane examples of owner-built and homemade architecture that the author could gather in the 30 years of travel, interviews, and documentation he spent putting the book together.

Home Work is not strictly a how-to book; that would probably spoil it. Rather, it is a palette of ideas and concepts born from creativity rather than social requirement. The 256-page large-format paperbound book is organized by category, running the gamut from builders' and photographers' profiles to overviews on homes, barns, old structures, and native designs such as tipis and yurts. It explores natural and indigenous materials, fantasy designs (tree and bottle houses, stone homes, and more), homes on wheels, and dwellings encountered on travels around the world.

Kahn's new work is an incredibly colorful and inspiring collection that includes more than 1,000 photos, several hundred illustrations, a further-reference book list, and a nice background appendix. It's also the kind of book that you'll wish you had bought

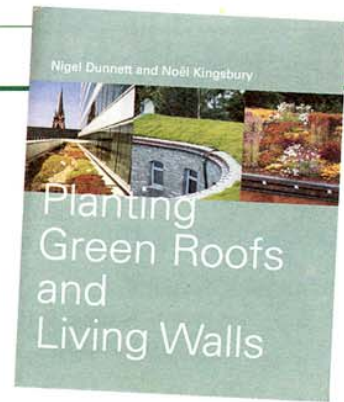
when you discover later that it may not be so easy to find. It's available now from BACKHOME BOOKS for \$26.95 plus \$5.50 shipping and handling; see the magazine's inside front cover or visit www.backhomemagazine.com.

Keeping Your Coal

If you have a woodstove or fireplace—or even if you spend time camping and enjoy cooking over an open fire—here's a specialty tool that you may be interested in. The Koal Keeper is a compact ash scoop that separates woodburning ash dust from live embers, allowing the embers to be used to rekindle a new fire.

It may not sound revolutionary, but for those who burn wood regularly, freedom from having to restart a fire every morning (or after an extended burn-down) is something to look forward to. The Koal Keeper, or “live ember recovery tool” as the manufacturer describes it, has expanded perforations stamped into the pan of its scoop, sized to allow the small dust particles to fall through while retaining the larger hot coals. The typical modus operandi is to slide the pile of burned-down ashes and embers to one side of the firebox or campfire; then, after taking a scoop of material, the shovel is lightly agitated to separate the dust from the hot coals, which remain in the scoop. They can then be set at the center of the firebox and used to reignite fresh kindling or dry starter wood. The discarded ash is removed with a regular scoop.

Simple? You bet. Effective? Ditto. For those wondering why they didn't think of it themselves, don't worry—you can get hold of a Koal Keeper through BACKHOME Mercantile. It's available for \$9.95 plus \$5.90 shipping and han-



dling in the U.S.; the ordering address is BACKHOME Mercantile, P.O. Box 70, Hendersonville, NC 28793; for credit card orders, call 800-992-2546 or visit www.backhomemagazine.com.

A Green Roof Handbook

Planting on roofs and walls may have gotten a start long before the popular advent of earth-sheltered housing a few decades ago, but finding a thorough source of contemporary information on green cover, or “ecorooft,” has been difficult at best. That is true no longer—Oregon publisher Timber Press has released *Planting Green Roofs and Living Walls*, an attractive hardcover book that addresses the subject completely, from historical development to environmental impact.

Coauthored by Nigel Dunnett, a lecturer in the Department of Landscape at University of Sheffield, and Noel Kingsbury, a sustainable-garden writer, the 254-page book looks at how the use of green roofs and walls reduces runoff and pollution, serves to temper heat and cold, and helps reduce maintenance needs of some structures. Examples of both residential and commercial buildings from all over the world are presented, and the authors cast an analytical look at the major aspects of roof greening, including structural considerations, substrate options, choice of materials, layering, drainage, and myriad planting alternatives. Two final chapters include details on façade greening (green cladding that depends on soil or other growing medium at the base of the wall) and living walls, in which plants are rooted within the structure or are chosen for their ability to survive independently of a growing medium.

Planting Green Roofs and Living