

Podcast #212 Transcription – Urban Survival Food Procurement

Jeff Anderson:

Hey, everyone. Welcome back. This is Jeff Anderson, editor from Modern Combat And Survival magazine and executive director of the New World Patriot Alliance with another podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as a protector and a patriot. And as I've said, this is our third installment in our four-part series on urban survival tactics, because I really feel like urban survival as a prepping term is one of those areas that really is misunderstood, and a lot of people are overconfident with how their skills will transfer over into urban environments.

Now, even if you don't live in an urban environment, you might have to pass through urban environments to be able to get to another location if you can't go around it. Or it might be some reasons that you have to go into an urban area for major medical treatment or major resupplies for something that you might have, and you just be a little bit more conscious about how the laws of survival and how you're going to find ways to sustain yourself in that environment, how they're a little bit different maybe than if you're looking at like wilderness survival or just some place that's more rural, right?

So the laws do kind of change there, right? There's some dangerous there. There are also some additional opportunities for you there. And that's what this four-part series is all about. Now, in episode one we talked about finding shelter in urban environments. And last week in episode two, it was all about finding clean drinking water even if you're in toxic environments after a disaster. If you missed either of these episodes, make sure that you go back and listen to them. I highly recommend that you do that.

Now, this week, it's all about feeding yourself and other members of your family or your survival team if you're living or passing through in urban area during an extended crisis or a collapse. And you may actually find it surprising how quickly food resources in urban areas dry up way faster than they do in more rural areas where there's not as much of a population density, right? And there's reasons for this. We even saw this during like it was in Hurricane Sandy when it hit the East Coast in 2012, we saw normal people--not homeless people, we're talking about like just normal people that were diving into dumpsters, looking for food.

And New York City is about as urban as you can get. And you would see this same thing in other urban areas. It happens. So, look, people have to eat. But it was surprising how quickly a little bit of hunger, because we're used to not really being all that hungry, right? We have food readily available to us pretty much any time that we want. So when people start just feeling hungry, right, they haven't even gone like a full day, then they start to expand what they see as edible food, and that's why people that did not have any food stored up and rescue teams and re-supply was not set up yet in New York City, people were hungry. They started literally going into ... doing dumpster diving.

Of course you don't want to do that, but that's what happens in these types of environments. And that's why we have to really look at how do you get food in these environments? Because water is probably going to be more readily available for you, so it's not going to be as difficult. We went through several ways that you can either store water, find water, scavenge water in the last episode, right? Shelter, again, not too hard to accomplish, but food is that one thing, although you can live quite a while without it, it's the one thing that's going to be a little bit harder for you to get.

In our conversation about water, we did break it down into those three areas of stored, hidden, in other words, unknown ways that you might have something, in other words, water that might be hidden in your home or in other homes or buildings that people don't know is actually there and drinkable. And then the third one was scavenge. When you go through your storage or you don't have your storage anymore, you've gone through hidden areas, where can you find or scavenge water in urban areas? We're going to do the same thing for food.

So let's just go ahead and start with stored food. When we look at stored food, we look at basically what you could do ahead of time, what you can do before any sort of a crisis actually hits. But we're also going to talk about what you can do at the time of the incident as well. So, for stored food ahead of time, actually, I did a whole podcast episode on the differences in what you really need to know about dry goods, canned goods, survival foods, storage, and things like that. That was in podcast episode #206. And you can go ahead and get that ... You can go back to that podcast on our website. You can go listen to that.

You can also go, I believe that one is also set up for ... Yeah. It's also set up for you can get the free show notes for that, which will have the audio. It'll have the cheat sheet and the transcription in there. And you can go to www.mcsmagazine.com/206, and you can go grab all of that as well. So I'm not going to go into all of those different options there because it was covered in depth in that one podcast, episode #206. All right?

But there are some things I didn't really cover in there, one, in ways that you can do it. So like a garden is one example. So you might have a garden that you can go to outside, but especially if you're in an urban area, if you live in an urban area or even a suburban area, when food starts getting scarce, people that can see an outdoor garden are going to ravage it. You're going to wake up one morning, and all of your food has been picked dry. And it's going to take a while for that to come back.

So one way you can get around that is to do indoor gardening. Now, there are hydroponic systems that you can have set up. There are more elaborate systems that include using fish and your plants and water, and it's kind of this self-sustaining system. So those kinds of systems are pretty elaborate. They're awesome to have, right, because they can be indoors. They can be in a garage or something, and nobody really has to know that they're in there.

One of the easiest ways for you to grow like a secret garden is with using earth buckets, and these are just five-gallon buckets. It's one inside of the other, and essentially there are hole ... Like, if you have figured out, the bucket on top, they're stacked together, but the bucket on top is going to have hole drilled in the bottom of it where water can go into the bottom bucket, and then you can also ... Then you just fill it up with soil. You go ahead and grow stuff right in there. You can have indoor grow lights that can go off of your battery. You could do a solar generator, something that these are LED grow lights specific to growing like vegetables and things. They're like usually red and blue. There's like a different light spectrum that vegetables feed off of, right?

So these grow lights allow those plants to grow indoors. And I'll probably do I think for our new real patriot members, we're going to be doing a video that shows how to put one of these together. They're really not that hard. We have some ways that we do it indoors to be a little bit more covert with it, but you can just look up online how to make earth buckets. And that's a really easy way to kind of grow something in your garage or even in a closet somewhere that you can have some fresh food that you can go to as well.

Also, if you're looking for any protein, we didn't cover chickens, and rabbits, and like raising those for food. I'm not really a homesteader, so I don't have chickens on my property. I'm not allowed to have it in my subdivision, even though I live in the country. A lot of people do have chickens out where I live, but my homeowner's associations does not allow it. So I don't have chickens or rabbits or anything like that.

A friend of mine, Marjory Wildcraft, does all of that stuff, and she's amazing with it. She has DVDs on it and stuff like that. I'll go ahead and put a link in the resources for this podcast so that you can see some of the stuff that she has over there as well. It's really, really good. But let's talk about what happens at the time of incident. So we did talk before when we were looking at water, that there are basically at the time of incident you want to fill up your bathtub with as much water as possible.

So there are things that you could do when you know something is coming that's going to take away your resources. So at the time of incident, we don't recommend, and I'm sure we'll probably talk about this again when we go into security in the fourth episode, but we don't recommend that you're going down to the local grocery store if it's being overrun. Now, of course if it's a small town or something like that and you live there, then I would absolutely recommend doing that. We'll talk more about that in security. But these are the places where people freak out because they realize that their resources are going to be limited, and if people are just basically just harvesting off of those shelves, and they're just dumping stuff in there, it's going to be an area that you don't necessarily want to go to.

So if you are in an area that the local grocery stores are being overrun and you're near an urban area, another option for it are ethnic stores, instead of the

neighborhood grocery store, so by that I mean if there's like an Italian deli. The one I like the most are any sort of an Asian market. These are not typically frequented by Average Joe white boy like me and other people in my neighborhood.

If you go into an Asian market, most likely what you're going to see there, especially the closer you get to urban areas, are that there are pretty much all Asians in there. Same thing goes for a lot of Indian markets. But these ethnic stores are often not frequented or even known about, for the most part, by other people. And we tend to go to the thing that's closest in our mind of where we're going to go and get food.

So if we're used to going to our local Piggly Wiggly, then we're going to go down to the local Piggly Wiggly, right? But so these are the things, these are the areas that most people don't think about, but there's lots of really good food there. What I like also about Asian markets and also Indian markets is that there is a lot of processed food, which will last longer than fresh food will. There's also a lot of dried food, like dried beans, dried fish. Especially in the Asian markets, there's dried protein there, a lot of dried fish that will last a long period of time, and you're not going to be dealing with the same crowds that you will at the local grocery store. So at that time of the incident, I recommend ethnic stores, things like that.

If you do have an outdoor garden, and we talked about how you could wake up one morning and all of that is gone, at the time of incident, I recommend that you go out there and harvest whatever you can immediately, and each day that stuff becomes harvestable, you go out and do it so that you are at least getting as much of that food and you can freeze it. Or if you're good at canning, you can can it. Or you can just eat it, since it's fresh, and it'll keep you from tapping into your other survival food storage that is going to last you longer. And that makes a big difference out there, okay? So that goes over stored food. Again, go back to podcast #206 to go get more in-depth details of what you can do ahead of time.

Let's talk about hidden food now. Hidden food isn't like water. In water we talked about how the back of toilets in their reservoir, that water can be made drinkable, hot water heaters. We talked about places in your home, or apartment building, or other buildings where water is, but most people don't know that it's there, that you can tap into. Well, food is a little bit different. There's not like a lot of hidden food in your home that you don't know about, other than like there might be some M&Ms in your couch cushions or something. Right? But there's really not like a lot of hidden food.

But there are some things potentially like even on your property, there might be edible plants that are out there. And if you've listened to me before, you know that I'm not like a big wilderness survival plant guy because plants really don't usually give you a lot of calories. It's not usually ... You got to eat a whole bunch of dandelion leaves to really get enough food there, right? There are some

exceptions to that, and I'll talk about that here in just a minute. But edible plants are a way that you can also kind of supplement whatever your other food plant is. So it does allow you to put like fresh food, like fresh greens, or fresh wild plants that you can eat that will help you get a more balanced diet first of all. It will also help you to just have a varied diet so you're not just eating macaroni and cheese the whole time, right?

So get to know the edible plants that are on your property. Just go ahead and get a plant book for your region and just start taking a tour around your property and looking at different plants in there. You also want to potentially look at planting these wild plants on your property. So if you do find edible plants that are in there, maybe you can order some of those. Maybe you can get them from a local nursery.

If you go and look at herbs, you can get those typically at a local nursery, right? So there are things that you can get there that will add more flavor to your food, maybe not be ... Like, basil is very easy to grow. Chives--super easy to grow. Those things can help you to make your current food more palatable, and you can plant those so that they look like wild plants on your property. You can just plant them in the ground somewhere and just tend to them there.

You can also look at other things that you can plant on your property like berries, like bushes for berries, nut trees. And, again, these don't have to look like you have a garden. So you don't have to put a fence around them where somebody walking down the street would say, "Hey, I'm hungry. That person has a garden. I'm coming back after dark and going ahead and harvesting that garden."

A berry bush can be off on your property somewhere and nobody even really knows that it's there. You don't want these to look like a garden. Same thing can go for nut trees. I live here in Texas. One home that I did have was a pecan tree right outside of my back door, which was awesome, right? Free pecans. It was awesome.

Get to know where there might be other trees in your area that are nut trees, and be able to harvest those. Either plant one on your property, whatever will grow in your area. So that is an option as well. You could also do some sort of a fruit tree if they will grow in your area. Other things that you might be able to plant as plants on your property but not inside of a garden that could still grown well, it could be things like potatoes, where you can't tell it's a vegetable from on top of the ground, but there is potatoes growing in there, sweet potatoes, any sort of tuber, anything that doesn't look like it's bearing vegetables or fruit on top of the ground that somebody might look at and notice that it's there. You can grow other things that are there. Those are some examples of hidden food or how you can plan for hidden food.

So now let's talk about the final one, which is scavenged food. How do you go out there and find food in urban areas when your storage is gone or when other

people have already raided all of the places for like the grocery stores and things like that? So there are some places that might actually have hidden food in there. What I'm talking about here are kind of like abandoned buildings or buildings that ... or maybe in service. Like, a church is a really good example. So there might be a small church that is opening up its food ... A lot of churches have a food pantry for members or for the public that are low income. So they can go there for having some sort of a charitable giving of theirs. So that's an option right there.

You could look at, so you might be able to go to like a church that is open and giving out food. So the people, even from around the country, because a lot of people, if there is like a local, or even like it's a large disaster, but it's affected a wide, a large area, like we got a hurricane that's getting ready to hit the East Coast here. And so when it happens, a giant chunk of area is going to be hit catastrophically.

So what happens is that people from around the country, sometimes even around the world, start sending food, not realizing that that's not what people need. What they really need is money in the area. But people will send clothes, and food, and all kinds of stuff there. And so a lot of times FEMA can't take that food. And so it ends up going out to churches or on the outskirts. A lot of it ends up going back bad, but some churches might get it. And so these churches might open up kitchens, or they might open up food distribution points just within that church to be able to do their part.

So that is an area that a lot of people might not even know about. But even if the church isn't open, a lot of them do have kitchens for doing banquets or brunches for their ... or for those, for giving out. So if it is an abandoned church or a church that's not open, you can look and see if there's any signs there that they will be giving out resources. I'm not saying beak into churches on day two of a crisis, but if we are talking about an SHTF event, and it's an extended crisis, going in and trying to scavenge food from church kitchens is one opportunity. The basements of these types of buildings might have it.

Any sort of a business building that has cafeterias in it, whether it's truly like a business or it could even be a school cafeteria area, and school is not in session because it is a collapsed environment or something like that, well, they have these giant cans. They have giant canned good, giant cans of beans, giant cans of fruit cocktail--all the things that you hated as a kid getting at school. There often times are these large cans that can be used.

So you want to look inside of schools, lunchrooms inside of business buildings that have cafeterias, hospitals, vending machines in these areas, candy--a source of food as well. So those are some areas that people might not necessarily know about, or they might be the next thing to be looted when it looks like it is going to be a long-term collapse. And you might want to get there before other people do.

And, again, I'm not talking about, "Hey, yay, the storm just hit yesterday. Let's go and bust into this school and grab all their canned beans." I'm not saying that. We're talking about true collapse, shit hits the fan, life as we know it has changed. These are the type places that you might be able to find it, right? Or if you're traveling through an urban area and it looks like it's pretty much decimated, those are the types of areas that you can look for, and they are on a map. So you can find schools, churches, and those will be on typically like roadmaps and also on topographical maps as well, right? So you can use those.

But now let's talk about urban foraging for plants. Now, again, I said that it's not really easy to do this. Plants don't give you a lot of calories, but there are certain plants or weeds, in fact, that will grow in urban areas that people might notice but not really recognize that they are food. An example of that, as I said before, are dandelions. And you could pretty much eat the whole thing of the dandelion, all the way down to the roots, yes, even the yellow flower, although the buds are much better to eat like before they become a flower. But dandelions, every part of it can be eaten.

The greens themselves, the leaves are used in the salads. I've seen them in restaurants in salads. So you can use dandelion greens. You can either use them as a salad, or you can cook them up. You can saute them, and they're delicious, so a little bit bitter, but they are edible. They are beneficial for you. Another thing you can do is you can look for nut trees. We talked about that. Acorns are something that you would normally find in most urban areas, especially if you're in the north or even I'm in Texas; we have oak trees here.

And acorns can be eaten. And if you ever stick one in your mouth right off the tree, and don't get them off the tree, get them right from the ground, actually. The ones that have dropped are still good. As long as you pop that little like cap off of it, as long as it doesn't feel rotted or hollowed out, if it's a firm acorn, well, you can use that as well. And it doesn't matter if it's brown. The brown ones are more ... They're riper, if you will. The green ones are going to be bitter for a little while longer. The brown ones are going to be easier to use later on.

So with these, basically what you want to do is you want to keep ... you want to soak them, because they're very bitter. If you ever try eating one, they're very bitter. So what you want to do is really soak them, and you want to change that. The water is going to get bitter. So, again, now that you know how to find water and get water, and assuming that water is not an issue for you, you can soak acorns, changing the water several times until you taste it and the nut is no longer bitter.

And the reason why I highlight acorns is because a pound of acorns is about 2,000 calories, and they're very versatile. You can eat ... Once they are truly nut ... you've gotten all the bitterness out of them, you can just dry them in the sun, eat them as they are right there, or you can even grind them down into a flour and use them to make other things. I've never had anything made with acorn flour. I'd be curious if any of you have ever had anything made with acorns. If

you have, please leave me a comment on the blog for this podcast episode and let me know. If you know more about acorns, let me know. But I do know that they are high caloric. They are like a nut, so they can be used.

The last thing we'll talk about is urban hunting because there are going to be animals that hopefully will be available in these types of urban environments. So certainly you can go off into more rural areas and be able to catch some game there, go fishing there. We talked about ... Well, maybe we didn't talk about that. We talked about water in different areas like in areas for graveyards. A lot of them will have these ponds there. Golf courses are another area that we haven't really talked about that can have water resources there, so those types of places. But also they might have fish stocked in some of those ponds that are in those different areas.

So you can certainly go fishing in those areas, but we can talk about different animals that are available even in urban areas here. So squirrels are a very common thing that you see in urban areas, right? Rabbits are another thing. You might not see them running around the area all that much, but at night, if you have any sort of night vision goggles or anything like that, you can pretty ... Or if you have a game camera, you're going to find that there are a amazing number of rabbits in urban areas that come out looking for food, especially in suburban areas.

Pigeons are something that are very common in urban environments, any sort of bird, but pigeons especially are easier to catch because they're used to coming closer to people. You could even feed them. They can get right up close to you. You can get them. So how you find these or how you get these, now, one thing I haven't talked about here is cats and dogs. You might find that there could actually be a lot of feral dogs and a lot of feral cats during a collapse because either, one thing, FEMA does not allow animals to come into any sort of a aide area, a relief area, a FEMA camp. Animals are not allowed in there, so a lot of people have to abandon their animals, so they can't feed them, they can't take care of them.

Or people die, and the animals end up becoming wild animals. But dogs will tend to pack together. Cats typically won't. So you won't necessarily see a bunch of cats together, but dogs can be a real threat in an urban environment. So it's not like you say, "Here, Fido. Here, Fido," and he comes up to you. They're going to be hungry too, and they will go in packs. They could be very dangerous, but certainly cats and dogs, I'm going to just throw it out there, yes, they can be food.

But we're talking about the smaller things that are a little bit easier to catch here. You'll find a lot of people in survival scenarios will talk about using like a rat trap. Yes, rat traps will catch rats, and, yes, you can eat rats. You can eat rats. The more toxic the environment, the more likely that they could be infested. I mean, it's kind of a common myth that they're all rabies-infested and they're all

carrying the plague and everything else. That comes back from the days of the plague.

But they certainly can be toxic. Again, you want to make sure that you are cooking any meat that you get completely. Now, the longer you cook this thing, the safer it's going to be, but you can eat rats. You can eat squirrels, which are essentially rodents also, right? Rabbits, another thing that especially down here in Texas, things like possums and just all kinds of stuff floating around out here, foxes. We got tons of deer even in my town. You go through my town, there is deer there in the middle of the road.

So those are certainly out there. So you can look for people that are raising those, any sort of animal on the outskirts, whether there are farms that are close to the urban areas that you might be able to go and talk with the farmer about anything that they have there, so you might have to venture out of the city to be able to go see if there's any possibilities there. But there are possibilities. But instead of using a rat trap, I recommend that people use a #110 Conibear Trap. These are very small traps, but they are much, much more powerful than a rat trap. In fact, I used to put out that you could use a rat trap on squirrels, but I have seen videos where it does not really work that well on squirrels. A Conibear Trap is a very inexpensive trap. It fits right inside of your bug-out bag. In fact, it's one of the things that we tell people to put inside of your bug-out bag. And it is powerful enough to catch rats, squirrels.

I've caught birds with it, so pigeons, rabbits, anything like that. So it's much more versatile as a trap for catching something because a rat trap is not really going to do a lot of damage to something as big as like a rabbit or something like that. The other option you have is to be able to shoot something. With using a firearm, even like a 22, it's not really well-recommended. I recommend that you use something more like a 22-caliber pellet gun that you can use. I'd recommend the Crosman Pellet Pistol. There is a 22-caliber version of that, which is a better hunting weapon than like the 177-caliber. So you can get that. It fits right inside of a bug-out bag. You can easily conceal it on your person. But that will also, it's very good for getting things like birds that will come close to you or anything like chipmunks, things that you would be able to get closer to you and get an easier shot on.

Pigeons actually are easier to shoot with that type of a pellet gun, but also, there's a way to catch pigeons with a hanger. This was actually taught to me by Kevin Reeve of onpointtactical.com. And there was something they had learned in their urban survival course, that you could basically just have a hanger, and you make a little loop at the end of it as if you were going to unlock your locked car. Remember how you make that little loop at the end of it. And essentially all you do is when there are pigeons near you, you wrap it around their foot, and they don't pull their foot out. I guess pigeons are pretty stupid or whatever, but they found that you could easily catch pigeons this way, just kind of roping them by the feet. This lasso on there with this little hook on the end of a coat hanger works really well.

So those are some options that you have for urban hunting as well. So that wraps up our stored, hidden, and scavenged food in urban areas. What I'd like to do now is hear your best urban survival food tips. So please, please, please go to the blog and leave a comment for some other ideas that you have for ways of finding food, whether it's stored, or it's hidden, or you can scavenge it or hunt it inside of urban areas.

I would love to get your tips as well. Just go ahead and leave a comment on the blog. And next week we're going to finish up our four-part series as we dive into the security element and how to protect yourself and those you love from the chaos and violence that can be a very real threat in and around urban areas. And until then, this is Jeff Anderson saying prepare, train, and survive.