

ORGANIC LIVING

By

Robert Rodale

**Don't Use Unnecessary
Kitchen Energy**
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Someone once said, "The only sure things in life are death and taxes." Well, add rising prices for just about everything to that small list. And one of the biggest jumps the consumer now must face is rising cost of energy—be it electricity, natural gas or oil.

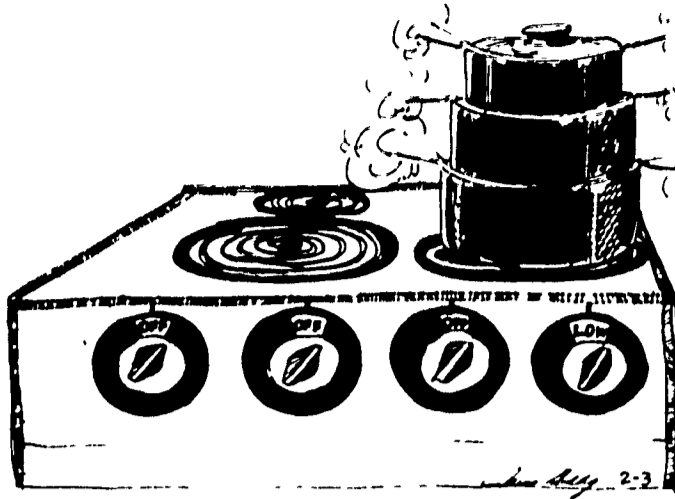
Many of us have become adept at saving money. We walk a little more. We've turned down our thermostats to save money on fuel. Some of us—but unfortunately not enough—have even continued the car pool that we started last year during the gas crisis.

Since a lot of time is put into cooking in the kitchen, why not save money by using waterless cookware?

It's not a new idea. Waterless cookware has been around for at least 15 years, but, in the parlance of modern vocabulary, it's an idea whose time has come.

Nancy Albright, author of "The Rodale Cookbook," and food editor of "Organic Gardening and Farming" magazine, recently attended a demonstration dinner prepared using the waterless cookware. She came away enthusiastic about what she saw.

"I was impressed by the look and taste of the food," she said. "And as I watched the actual cooking of the meal, I realized how much less energy was being used than with



conventional methods—an important consideration these days."

The most impressive thing about waterless cookware is the small amount of energy used to cook a meal. A beef roast was cooked in an hour and a half on the top of a stove. Besides that, the pots containing potatoes and other vegetables were stacked on top of the meat Dutch oven, utilizing as an energy source the heat under the oven.

A similar meal cooked with conventional pots, pans and an oven would require eight times the energy to do the same job.

Even for cooking vegetables alone, the savings in expended energy can be considerable. For example, all you need is from four to six tablespoons of water (the cookware isn't completely waterless). Then the pot is covered and placed over a medium-high heat until vapor comes out in a steady stream from the vent in the lid.

When the vapor starts to come out, you close the vent, shut off the heat and wait. Three to 30 minutes later, depending upon the vegetable, it'll be cooked. Potatoes might take longer. Spinach will be done quickly.

The finished product almost defies comparison. As Nancy Albright says: "There's very little vegetable water left in the pot. Valuable nutrients aren't poured down the drain. The flavor of the cooked food is so good that little or no salting is necessary."

Of course, the one drawback is cost. Waterless cookware is expensive. A set of 21 pieces might cost as much as \$400. There are two primary reasons for the high cost. The pots are of high quality, and they cost more to market.

There is no comparison between the waterless cookware and something you pick up on sale at a local department store. Only the best quality steel—and a lot of it—goes into those pieces. And, because they must form an airtight seal, they're machined to perfection.

Personalized marketing is another big contributor to cost. A salesman demonstrates the pans in your home. He comes, cooks a dinner, then tries to sell you a whole set of utensils. You cannot buy one pot and a cover, or two, or even three. You've got to buy the whole set. And that's where much of the expense occurs. You might never need a 21-piece set of waterless cookware, but that's what you're going to buy—if you want any at all.

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I can understand why a salesman is needed. Waterless cookware would probably not sell if it were placed on the shelf next to a cheaper brand. Take two pots that look alike, feel the same and actually seem the same, and the buyer will probably opt for the cheaper brand.

Waterless cookware is a fine investment in energy-saving and in nutritious, delicious cooking. I'd like some. But I don't know if I'd like 21 pieces. Would you?

(Editor's Note: The opinions appearing in "Organic Living" are those of its author, Robert Rodale, an independent columnist. Rodale's comments do not necessarily reflect the thinking of the Lancaster Farming editor or anyone else on the Lancaster Farming staff.)

Tomato Day Slated

A special Tomato Day — with emphasis on processing tomatoes and mechanization — will be held for commercial growers on February 12 at The Pennsylvania State University.

This program, starting at 9:30 a.m. in the University's J. O. Keller Building, is part of the three-day Vegetable Conference, Dr. Ernest L. Bergman, Penn State professor of plant nutrition and conference chairman, points out.

Topics on February 12 will deal with a variety evaluation; report of 1974 fertilizer trials; insect, disease, and weed control; the use of ethrel; pesticide applicator certification; mechanical harvesting; and the economics of machine harvesting.

"Those planning to attend the Tomato Day should make luncheon reservations by February 7," Dr. Bergman said. This may be done by contacting Dr. Bergman in 206 Tyson

Building, University Park, PA 16802, or by writing to the Agricultural Conference Coordinator, 410 J. O. Keller Building, University Park, PA 16802.

Robert F. Fletcher, Penn State Extension vegetable crops specialist, notes that there currently are 30 mechanical tomato harvesters in Pennsylvania and predicts an increase in acreage by 22 percent in 1975. This interest in mechanical harvesting prompted the organization of this special one-day program.

"In sharp contrast to previous years, more tomatoes were machine harvested during 1974 in the state than in any previous year," Professor Fletcher said. "Growers have not been totally discouraged by the below normal temperatures and relatively high levels of rainfall during the past harvest season."

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