

The Oil Drum: Campfire

Discussions about Energy and Our Future

Root Cellar 101 - Help Wanted

Posted by [Nate Hagens](#) on July 22, 2009 - 7:11pm in [The Oil Drum: Campfire](#)

Topic: [Demand/Consumption](#)

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Below the fold is a guest submission from TheOilDrum.com reader [mnborn](#), a data analyst living in rural Minnesota. It is more of a request for knowledge/advice than our usual essays but food storage in northern (or southern) climes certainly is one basic necessity that is largely supported by fossil fuel powered JIT inventory systems. (Currently most of us use grocery stores as our winter storage caches).

Below the fold are her questions. Old-timers please help her out...;-)



I have read with interest your Campfire posts pertaining to discussions of acquiring practical skills and techniques particularly focused on food production, preservation and storage. Perhaps this would be an appropriate forum to gain feedback from some of your readers on a few ideas I have for the construction of a root cellar. Below is a picture of the spot I have chosen in which to build this. The soil is heavy clay, slope faces northeast and 'elevation gain' is approximately 6 feet. My dog marks the spot where I intend on building a root cellar.



Site for root cellar - vertical drop of 6-7 feet. (German Shepherd shown for scale)



Photoshop 'cube' intended place for root cellar, placed back in hillside - roughly 6x8x8

After looking at many designs online, and having one bid (\$6000) for a cinderblock constructed cellar, I am thinking an easier and possibly cheaper alternative might be to use 8 ft bunker silo sections. See link attached. <http://www.hansonsilo.com/precast.php> These precast sections of concrete come in various sizes but I'm considering 6'(H) x 8'(L) for an 8x8 root cellar. Other options I'm considering are poured concrete (pricey no doubt), another old farmer told me 'in the old days' they would dig out a cave and line the wall with a thin layer of cement. Additional ideas are greatly appreciated; especially those that cost less and/or are simple enough that I can assist in the construction.



Something like the above would be grand, but likely undoable without premium labor. I'm willing to spend in the \$4,000-\$6,000 range for a quality permanent cellar and will add my own labor/time to the effort (and possibly my internet addicted boyfriend)

I am also curious to know how many of these skills related to basic needs (e.g. food storage) are still around or if two+ generations of oil/electricity have erased them culturally -even the Amish workers near me didn't know what to make of my cellar request.)

Thanks in advance,
MNB



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