



# Starting a Homestead

FROM SCRATCH

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Starting a Homestead from Scratch  
by Jessica Quinn  
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A wire basket filled with brown and white eggs sits on a wooden surface. The text of the table of contents is overlaid on the image.

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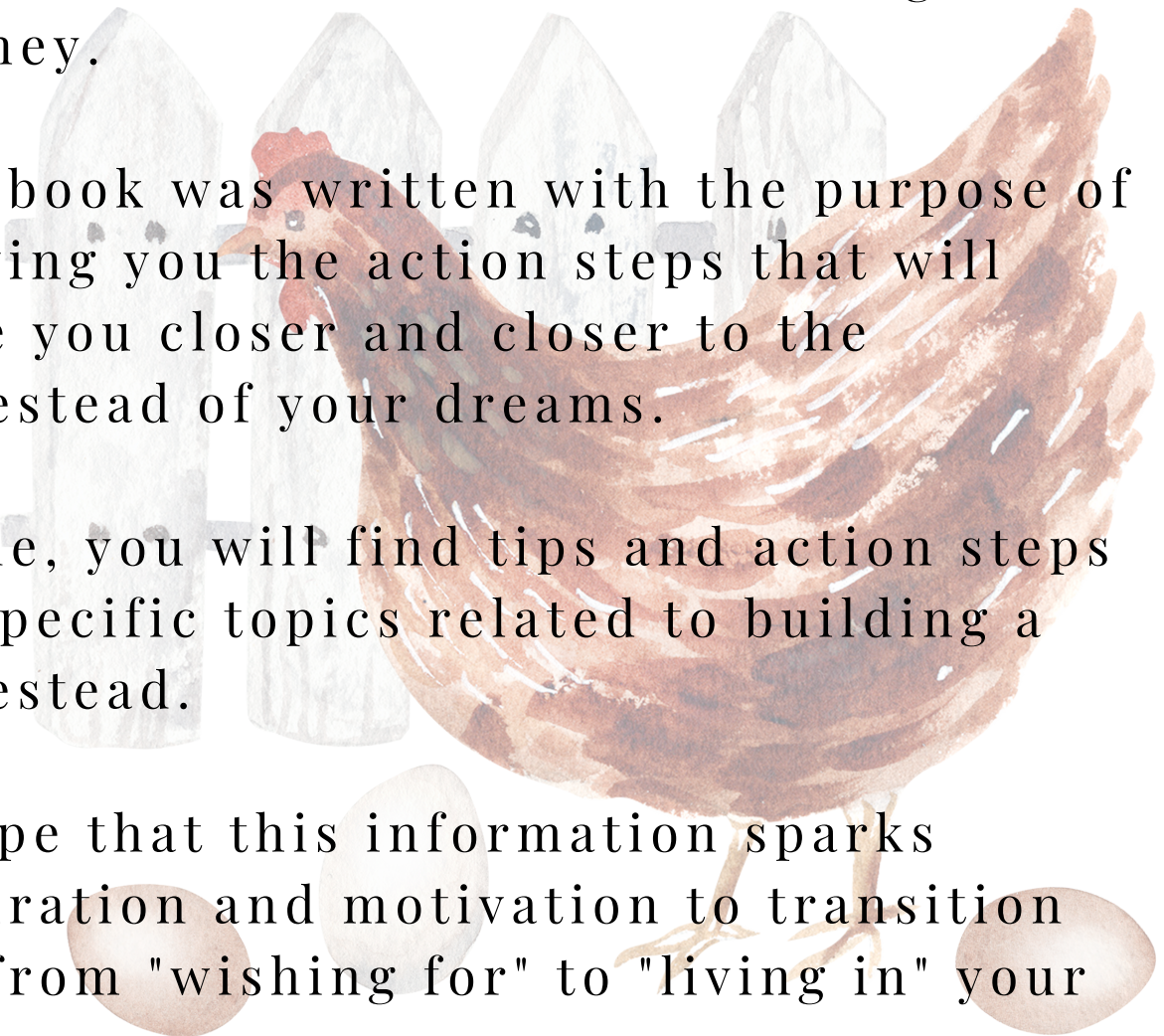
# Before You Dive In

I am Jessica from Mama on the Homestead and I am so incredibly excited that you are taking my little e-book along with you on your from-scratch homesteading journey.

This book was written with the purpose of showing you the action steps that will move you closer and closer to the homestead of your dreams.

Inside, you will find tips and action steps for specific topics related to building a homestead.

I hope that this information sparks inspiration and motivation to transition you from "wishing for" to "living in" your dream.





# My Homestead Story

I didn't grow up on a farm or a homestead. We did have chickens and a garden now and then, but not for sustainability purposes.

In high school, I developed a love for agriculture and went on to earn a B.S. in Agriculture- Livestock Management from the University of Tennessee.

Shortly after my college graduation, I married my best friend. We bought 40 acres and started our homestead journey with pigs, goats, bees, chickens, and a full-acre garden (that failed incredibly). We learned a lot about ourselves, our abilities, and our goals.

We started having children and eventually made two more moves, ending up on a 100-acre secluded property where we raised Brangus and Ultrablack cattle along with chickens, bees, and horses... and of course the garden!

Due to a very unfortunate series of events, we divorced in 2021. He is still on the 100 acres with his cattle operation (that our 3-year-old LOVES to help run) and I am on a 1/2 acre in a little neighborhood.

# My Homestead Story

I am able to manage this spot on my own and focus on sustainability...but doing it without someone here to help while raising 5 kiddos has proven to be difficult.

I am currently raising chickens (for meat and eggs), honeybees, and a garden. This will change from year to year as our lives evolve, I'm sure.

I wanted to share a little glimpse of my story so you can understand the place that my homestead planning comes from. It comes from a place of necessity and a place of renewal.

My goal is for you to see that no matter what you are going through or where you currently live, you CAN start practicing homestead skills and planning for the property that you dream of!

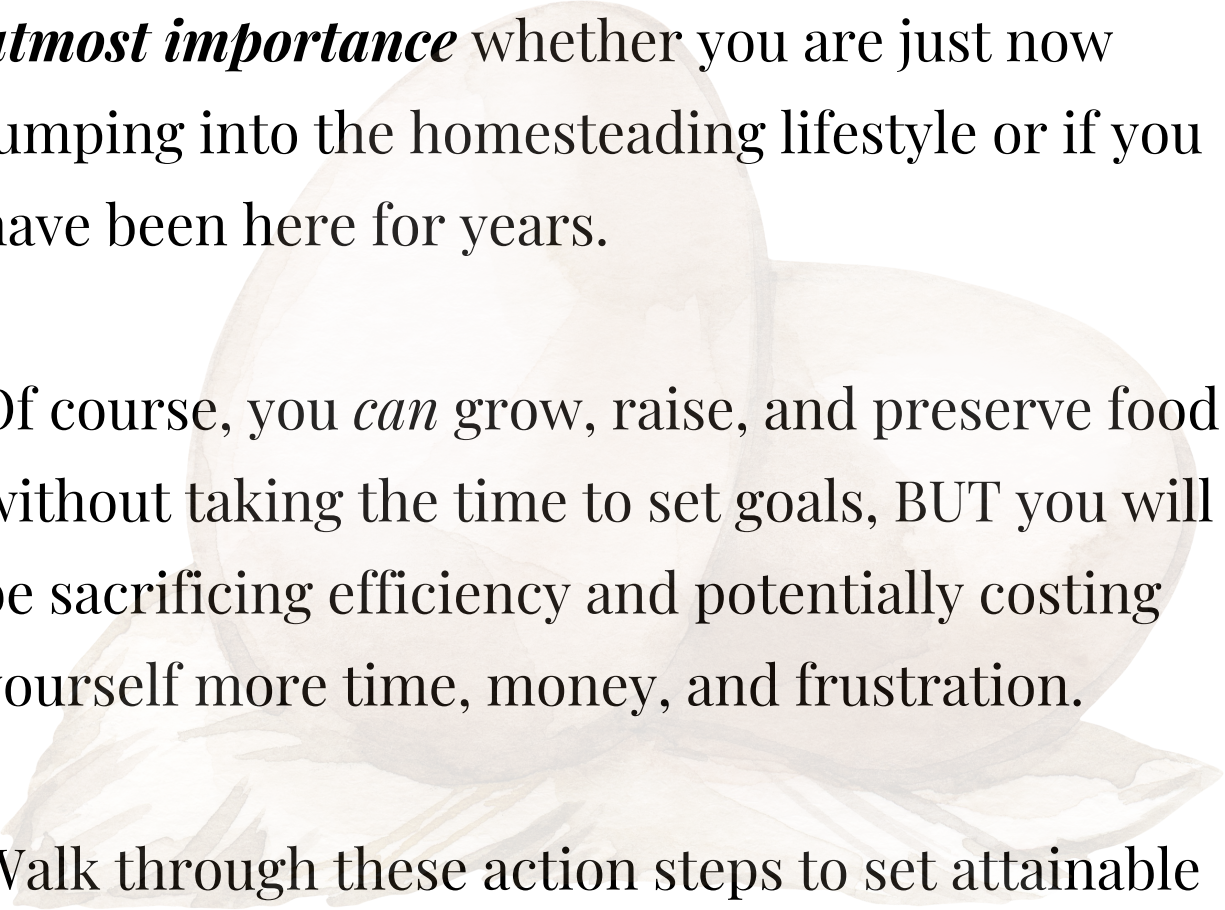


Jessica Quinn



A watercolor illustration of two light beige, rounded stones. The stones are rendered with soft, blended colors and visible brushstrokes, giving them a textured, organic appearance. They are positioned behind the text, with one stone slightly behind and to the right of the other.

SET YOUR  
Goals



***Setting actionable goals for your homestead is of utmost importance*** whether you are just now jumping into the homesteading lifestyle or if you have been here for years.

Of course, you *can* grow, raise, and preserve food without taking the time to set goals, BUT you will be sacrificing efficiency and potentially costing yourself more time, money, and frustration.

Walk through these action steps to set attainable goals for the next 5 years.



# Action Steps

## **DETERMINE YOUR END-GOAL**

1

What is the overall goal with your homestead?  
Sustainability and food security for your family?  
The old-fashioned lifestyle? An income generator?  
Setting the overall purpose will help you to be more intentional as your homestead grows.

2

## **BRAIN DUMP**

Dump out all of your goals and dreams on a sheet of paper. Get it all out so you can sort through it.

## **CREATE TERM PLANS**

3

Separate these goals from your brain dump into 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year plans. Place goals into their plans based on the amount of time that you believe it will take to see them realized.

# Action Steps

## **MAKE EACH GOAL SPECIFIC**

4

Take each goal and add relevant numbers, dates, and details. For example, if you want to add dairy goats in year 3 write- "Add 5 Nubian dairy goats by May 2026".

## **BE WILLING TO EVOLVE**

5

Your homestead will evolve with time and your methods will evolve right along with it. Shift around as needed, and continue to research to make these shifts a little smoother.

## **START PLANNING**

6

Use The Homestead Goal Setting Course and/or The Homestead Goal & Project Planner to organize your goals and lay out your term plans.



FIND THE RIGHT

Land



***Let me preface this section with this- You do NOT need land to start homesteading.***

Ownership of land opens up more opportunities for sustainability, but it is not a requirement for growing and raising your own food.

If you are looking to purchase property, however, you need to be intentional about it. Don't choose the first property that pops up out of excitement. The land will be your largest investment so choose wisely.

These action steps will help you decide exactly what you need in a property before you start your search.



# Action Steps

## DEFINE THE LAND'S PURPOSE

1

Determine what you will be doing with the property that you purchase.

- Will you be raising livestock? If so, what kind?
- Will you be gardening?
- Will you be renting to a row crop farmer?
- Selling value-added products?

## KNOW YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLES

Research the requirements of each aspect of your dream homestead.

2

- Livestock: water source, forage type, soil type, fencing
- Garden: water source, topography, soil type
- Crops: Topography, equipment access, local row crop farmers willing to rent
- Value Added Products: near a marketable area

# Action Steps

## **RESEARCH FUNDING OPTIONS**

3

You might have more options than you think. Ask around at local banks, credit unions, and the Farm Service Agency to see what is available to you.

## **SEARCH PROPERTIES**

4

Use Land Watch, Realtor, and other property search engines to locate land that interests you.

Don't forget to ask local farmers. You may find the perfect property that isn't listed yet.

## **CONTACT REALTORS**

5

Reach out to the realtors who listed the properties that caught your eye. Request more information and a tour of the land. Be objective when you look at these properties.



# SET UP YOUR *Finances*

***It is important to set your homestead up for financial success from the start.***

A huge part of sustainability is financial independence. If you owe debtors and have your disposable income tied up in monthly payments, you will not be able to fund your homestead projects that require a financial investment.

Tight finances will lead to cutting corners and a lot of frustration... *just ask me how I know.*

This doesn't mean that homesteading is only for the wealthy- remember, I am a single mother with five kids living on one income- but it does require you to be intentional with your finances.

The following action steps can help you set up your finances from the get-go.

FINANCES



# Action Steps

1

## **DETERMINE START-UP COSTS**

Make a list of the big purchases you will need to make to reach your first set of goals.

2

## **CREATE A DEBT-PAYOFF PLAN**

If you have debt, make a plan to get it paid off. Homesteading sustainably is much more difficult when you are tied to debt.

3


## **CREATE A SAVINGS ACCOUNT**

Start saving money to put toward your homestead goals. Keep this money separate from your personal account.

4

## **TRACK YOUR FINANCES**

Start tracking your finances (personal and homestead) so that you can stay on budget and out of debt. Check out [The Homestead Finance Tracker](#) for this.



CHOOSE QUALITY  
*Livestock*



*It is very easy to want to add all the animals that you can get your hands on when starting a homestead.*

Instead of jumping into all of the different species, choose one animal to start with. This will allow you to learn about that specific species' needs in order to "master" the husbandry of that type of livestock before adding more.

Be sure that the livestock that you choose will serve your family and not just be an expense that doesn't give anything back.

Work through these action steps to plan out the livestock that would serve your homestead the best.

LIVESTOCK

# Action Steps

## **CHOOSE WISELY**

1

Determine which species of livestock you want on your homestead. Which animals would serve your family the best? Which will do the best in your climate? What do you have space for?

## **DETERMINE EXPECTED COSTS**

2

Write down the expected costs per year of the livestock that you chose. Consider feed, shelter, medical treatments, etc.

## **RESEARCH HUSBANDRY & CARE**

3

Find out what is required to care for the species that you chose. Familiarize yourself with common ailments so you can quickly identify and treat sick animals.



# Action Steps

## **KEEP DETAILED RECORDS**

4

Use spreadsheets or planners to keep track of all pertinent information about your livestock and related expenses. This will help you track productivity and give you more credibility with customers. Check out [The Livestock Management Binder](#) for this.

5

## **SET UP INFRASTRUCTURE**

Set up facilities, pastures, pens, etc. BEFORE purchasing your animals.

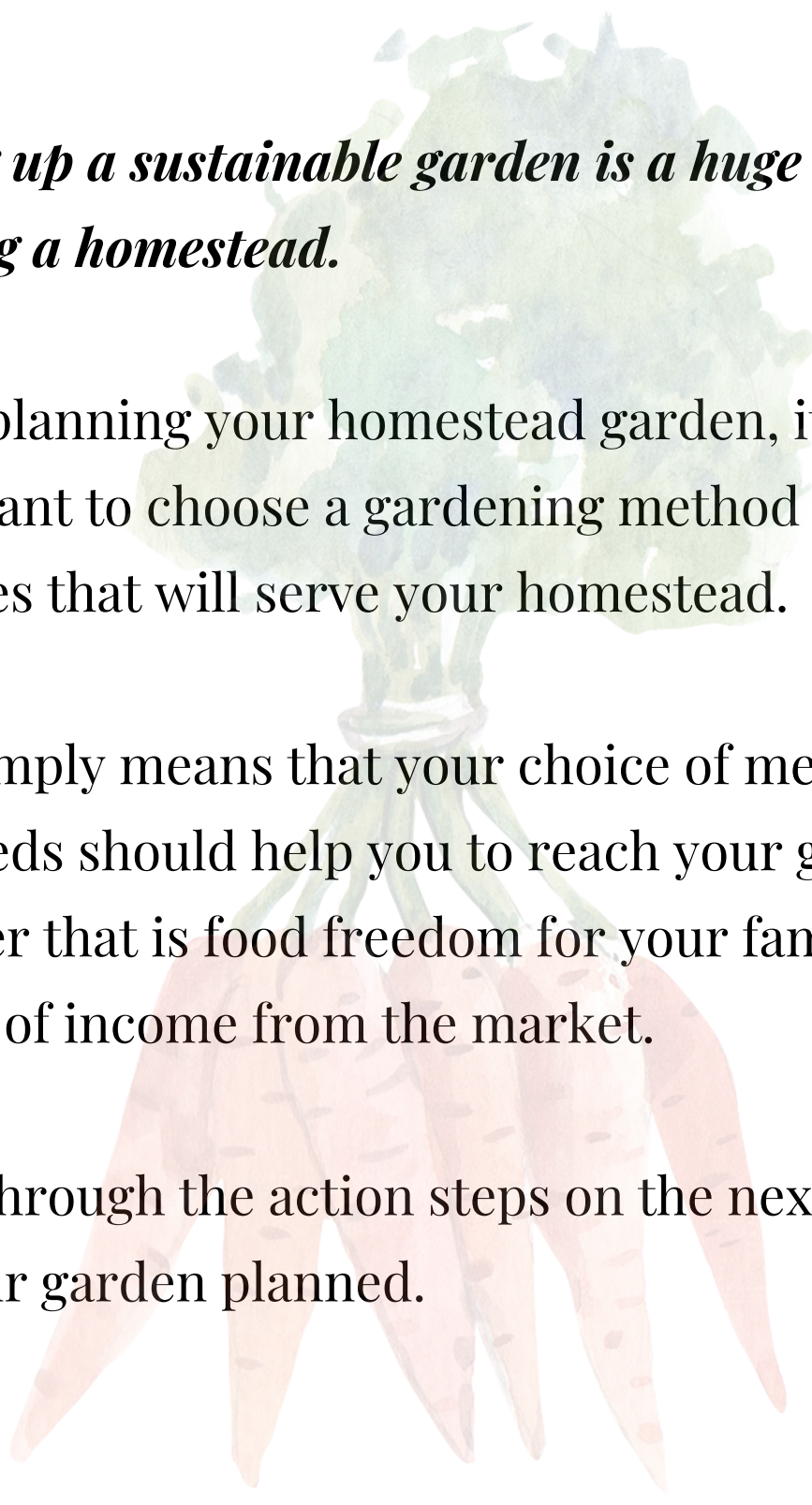
## **PURCHASE ANIMALS**

6

Find a reputable farm to purchase animals from. Avoid sale barns where cull animals are often sent.

A watercolor illustration of a bouquet of flowers and several carrots. The flowers are in shades of green and blue, and the carrots are in shades of orange and pink. The text "PLAN YOUR Garden" is overlaid on the illustration.

# PLAN YOUR Garden



***Setting up a sustainable garden is a huge step in starting a homestead.***

When planning your homestead garden, it is important to choose a gardening method and seed varieties that will serve your homestead.

This simply means that your choice of method and seeds should help you to reach your goals—whether that is food freedom for your family or a source of income from the market.

Work through the action steps on the next page to get your garden planned.

# Action Steps

## DEFINE THE GARDEN'S PURPOSE

1

Determine the use for your garden produce. Will it be primarily for fresh home use, selling at the market, preserving?

## CHOOSE A GARDENING METHOD

2

Research multiple gardening methods. Watch videos, scan articles, and read books so that you can pinpoint what you want.

*Examples- Back to Eden, Till, No-till, Container, Raised Bed, Hydroponic, Organic, Conventional*

## CHOOSE SEED VARIETIES

3

Research the varieties that would work best for your purposes. If you wish to save seeds, be sure to choose heirloom varieties. Purchase seeds from a reputable farm/seed store or a local seed swap.

GARDEN



# Action Steps

## **DISEASES AND PESTS**

4

Research common diseases and pests so you can easily detect when something is wrong with your plants.

## **CHOOSE PEST AND WEED CONTROL**

5

Once you know what pests, diseases, and weeds you may be facing, you should decide how you want to handle them- organically or conventionally. Make or purchase products to keep your plants healthy.

## **PREP THE GROUND**

6

Prepare your garden area according to the method that you chose. A tilled garden is going to have different preparations than a Back to Eden garden, so research before starting.

# Action Steps

7

## **RECORD KEEPING & PLANNING**

Set up a record-keeping system to plan your planting and harvest times, plant placement, productivity, and more. Check out [The Homestead Garden Planner](#) for this.



LEARN NEW  
Skills





***Homesteading isn't just about raising livestock and growing a garden.***

Homesteading can begin when you don't have the space/money/time to do either of those.

Consider learning some new homesteading skills right where you are whether that is on an established farm or in an apartment complex.

SKILLS

# Action Steps

## DETERMINE YOUR GOAL

1

Is your goal with homesteading to attain food freedom? To feel a sense of self-sufficiency? To live an old-fashioned life? Knowing your overarching goal can help you choose the most helpful skills.

## CHOOSE ONE SKILL

Choose one new skill at a time to learn. Research and get started with your own trial and error.

*Some good skills to consider include:*

2

- Cooking from scratch
- Sewing
- Budgeting
- Canning, fermenting, & dehydrating food
- Making your own cleaning supplies
- Using herbal medicine
- Cheese & butter making
- And so much more

SKILLS

# Additional Resources

The Homestead Goal Setting Mini Course

The Homestead Goal + Project Planner

The Livestock Management Binder

The Homestead Garden Planner

The Homestead Finance Tracker

The Homestead Management Binder

Cultivating Your Dream Homestead Course