



THE HOLY HOMESTEAD

SEASONAL PLANNER

A Faith-Centered Guide to Working Your Land Through the Seasons



Garden • Livestock • Sawmill • Wildlife Habitat

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”
— Genesis 2:15 (KJV)



A Personal Word From Jamie

Hey friend — welcome to The Holy Homestead Seasonal Planner. I'm Jamie Dingus, and this planner came from years of getting my hands dirty — running a sawmill, working food plots, managing wildlife habitat, growing gardens, and trying to do all of it with God as the foundation.

I built this planner because I needed it myself. There's a rhythm to homestead life that most people never teach you — a God-designed order to when you plant, when you cut timber, when you preserve, when you rest and plan. When you get in sync with that rhythm, everything gets easier. When you fight it, everything gets harder.

What you hold is the result of all those seasons of learning. I've tried to give you not just a checklist but the WHY behind every task — real-world knowledge that took me years to accumulate. Whether you're working a quarter-acre or 50 acres, these principles apply.

"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds."

— **Proverbs 27:23 (KJV)**

Let's get to work. May God bless every seed you plant, every board you mill, and every jar you fill.

— *Jamie Dingus, The Holy Homestead*



Scripture & Devotional: The Steward's Calling

"And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."

— **Genesis 2:15 (KJV)**

Stewardship of the Land: A Biblical Foundation

From the very beginning, God placed man in a garden — not as a mere observer, but as a faithful steward. The words ‘dress it and keep it’ carry enormous weight. To dress means to cultivate, to work, to improve. To keep means to guard, protect, and preserve. That calling hasn’t changed. Every acre you tend, every animal you care for, every timber stand you manage — you’re doing exactly what God put man on this earth to do.

"He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough."

— **Proverbs 28:19 (KJV)**

Hard work on good land, done in the right season, produces abundance. Neglect produces poverty. This planner is a tool to help you be the diligent tiller this verse describes.

"For every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted."

— **Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 (KJV)**

Jamie's Tip:

Start each season by reading the devotional section with your family. Let the Word set the tone before the work begins.



Spring Preparation Checklist

March – April – May | The Season of Renewal

"The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season."

— Deuteronomy 28:12 (KJV)

Spring is the most urgent season on the homestead. Test soil temperature before planting — 50°F minimum for cool-season crops, 60°F+ for warm-season transplants. Cold wet soil compacts easily and damages structure you've been building all winter.

Garden Tasks

- Test soil pH and nutrient levels — county extension office (\$10–15)
→ Target 6.0–7.0 for most vegetables. Low pH = add agricultural lime. High pH = add sulfur.
- Amend soil: compost for organic matter, bone meal for phosphorus, wood ash for potassium
- Start seeds indoors 6–8 weeks before last frost: tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, herbs
- Direct sow cool-season crops: lettuce, spinach, kale, peas, carrots, radishes, beets
- Prepare garden beds: till 4–6 inches shallow, add 2–3 inches compost, rake smooth
- Set up trellises and supports before plants need them — far easier than after
- Plan crop rotation BEFORE planting — see Garden Planning Worksheet at the back
- Plant potatoes once soil reaches 45–50°F — eyes up, 4 inches deep, 12 inches apart

Jamie's Tip:

Here in Southwest Virginia we make it a rule not to plant most transplants before May 10th. Even when it feels like spring has settled in, you can still get a frost or two after that. Better to wait a week than to lose everything you started and have to replant from scratch.

Livestock Care

- Monitor birthing season closely — lambing, calving, farrowing, kidding peak in spring
- Conduct spring health checks: vaccinations, deworming, hoof trimming
- Deep clean and sanitize barns, coops, shelters — remove all old bedding
- Transition livestock gradually to fresh pasture over 7–10 days
→ Sudden access to lush spring grass causes bloat and scours. Start with 1–2 hours per day and increase slowly.
- Check all fencing for winter damage — walk every line before turning animals out
- Reseed overgrazed pasture areas with appropriate forage grasses



- Order laying chicks if expanding flock — chicks ordered in spring lay by fall

Jamie's Tip:

With baby chicks, poults, ducklings, and guineas in the spring, the number one thing I've learned is keep them dry above everything else. A wet baby bird loses body heat fast and will go downhill quick. Dry bedding, good ventilation without drafts, and a clean water source they can drink from without soaking themselves makes all the difference in those first critical weeks.

Sawmill & Wood Projects

- Select and mark trees for harvesting early spring while sap is still partially down
- Mill lumber for spring and summer construction before sap fully rises
- Stack and sticker fresh-cut lumber immediately
 - 1-inch stickers every 16–24 inches. Seal end grain with Anchorseal or latex paint within hours of cutting.
- Perform full maintenance on sawmill after winter storage: blade, belts, bearings, track
- Build or repair chicken coops, raised garden beds, fence posts, and outbuildings

Jamie's Tip:

Spring is CAUTION season for the sawmill. Muddy conditions compact soil and damage root systems. If you must work wet ground, minimize turns and use the widest tires available.

Wildlife Habitat

- Avoid disturbing nesting birds and birthing wildlife — give field edges a wide berth
- Clean and inspect birdhouses and bat boxes before residents return
- Plant native shrubs and wildflowers for pollinators: elderberry, buttonbush, coneflower
- Create brush piles from winter prunings — excellent small mammal and ground bird cover
- Check and clean all water sources: streams, waterholes, birdbaths, stock tanks



Summer Work Checklist

June – July – August / The Season of Growth & Tending

"He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame."

— Proverbs 10:5 (KJV)

Summer is the season of constant attention. Walk your garden every morning. A 10-minute daily walk is worth more than a 3-hour panic session once a week. The big enemies are weeds, pests, and inconsistent watering.

Garden Tasks

- Water deeply and infrequently — 1–1.5 inches per week
→ *Deep watering trains roots downward. Shallow daily watering creates surface roots vulnerable to heat.*
- Water in early morning — reduces fungal disease and evaporation losses significantly
- Mulch all garden beds 2–4 inches deep: straw, wood chips, or grass clippings
- Monitor and remove pests daily: squash bugs, hornworms, aphids, cucumber beetles
- Harvest continuously — overmature vegetables stop production
→ *Zucchini, beans, cucumbers: harvest every 2 days or they go to seed and the plant stops producing.*
- Plant succession crops every 2–3 weeks for continuous harvest
- Begin preservation: canning tomatoes, freezing corn, making pickles, dehydrating herbs

Jamie's Tip:

For tomatoes: once they start setting fruit heavily, remove the lower leaves up to the first fruit cluster. This improves air circulation and reduces soil-splash disease significantly.

Livestock Care

- Provide shade and fresh water at all times — heat kills livestock faster than cold
- Add electrolytes to water when temperatures exceed 85°F consistently
- Feed during cooler hours: early morning and evening
- Monitor all animals for heat stress: panting, lethargy, refusal to eat
- Implement rotational grazing — move animals to fresh pasture every 5–7 days
- Check water troughs twice daily — algae and heat affect water quality quickly

Jamie's Tip:



Free-choice loose minerals are something I keep out for my goats year-round, but especially in summer. Heat stress burns through minerals fast. A good loose goat mineral kept dry and accessible will do more for your herd's health than most other supplements you could buy.

Sawmill & Wood Projects

- Minimize fresh cutting in peak summer — high sap content makes drying difficult
- Focus energy on stacking, drying, and sorting previously cut lumber
- Build summer construction projects from dried lumber: fencing, sheds, trellises
- Sharpen blades and perform routine equipment maintenance

Jamie's Tip:

Summer is the best time to build with dried lumber. Cool mornings, long days, and dry conditions make for quality construction. Frame structures early and rough-in before fall.

Wildlife Habitat

- Maintain water sources — clean and refill every 2–3 days in heat
- Allow wildflower areas to bloom fully — do NOT mow until seeds are fully set
- Monitor food plots for weed pressure — mow cool-season plots at 6 inches
- Begin planning fall food plot establishment — order seed now while selection is best



Fall Harvest & Preservation Checklist

September – October – November | The Season of Abundance

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so."

— **Genesis 1:11 (KJV)**

Fall is what you worked for all year. Preservation is the other half of fall — growing food is only half the job. If you can't store it, you'll lose it. A full pantry going into winter is the goal.

Garden Tasks

- Harvest main crops before first hard frost: winter squash, pumpkins, sweet potatoes
→ Cure sweet potatoes at 85°F for 10 days before storing. Cure winter squash at 80–85°F for 2 weeks.
- Harvest potatoes after tops die back — cure in cool dark place 2 weeks before storage
- Braid and hang garlic and onions in dry, ventilated space — lasts 6–9 months stored properly
- Plant fall crops after summer heat breaks: kale, chard, spinach, turnips, radishes
- Plant garlic cloves in October for next year — best garlic comes from fall-planted stock
- Plant cover crops on empty beds: winter rye, crimson clover, hairy vetch
- Save seeds from your best heirloom plants — dry thoroughly before storing in paper envelopes
- Spread 2–3 inches of finished compost on all empty beds before winter

Jamie's Tip:

Your soil pH work in fall pays dividends next spring. Apply agricultural lime now so it has all winter to work before planting time. This is the single most-overlooked fall garden task.

Preservation

- Pressure can: green beans, tomatoes, corn, meat — NEVER water-bath low-acid vegetables
- Water-bath can: jams, jellies, pickles, tomatoes with added acid, fruit preserves
- Freeze: corn (blanch 4 min first), peppers (no blanching needed), squash (blanch 3 min)
- Dehydrate: herbs, apple slices, tomatoes, peppers
- Ferment: sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles — naturally preserved and probiotic-rich

Important:



Learn the difference between water-bath and pressure canning BEFORE you start. Low-acid vegetables MUST be pressure canned. This is non-negotiable food safety.

Livestock Care

- Increase feed rations 15–20% as temperatures drop below 50°F consistently
- Transition to energy-dense winter feeds: quality hay, corn, barley
- Schedule fall vet visits for health checks and vaccinations
- Trim hooves in late October before muddy winter conditions set in
- Stock up on winter hay — minimum 50+ bales per adult sheep/goat
- Prepare shelters: add extra bedding, install windbreaks, check roofing for leaks

Jamie's Tip:

Deep bedding packs in winter generate heat through composting and keep animals warmer without extra feed. Add layers rather than cleaning out completely until spring. I use this method regularly and it makes a real difference in keeping animals comfortable through cold snaps.

Sawmill & Wood Projects — PRIME SEASON

- BEGIN HEAVY TIMBER CUTTING — sap is down, ground is firm, leaves help identify dead trees
- Cut and split firewood now — wood needs 6–12 months to season properly
- Mill lumber for winter indoor projects and spring construction
- Complete all outdoor construction before first hard freeze

Jamie's Tip:

The old saying is true: cut timber in months ending in 'er' — September, October, November, December. Sap is down, wood is drier, it mills cleaner. Fall timber is your best timber.



Winter Readiness Checklist

December – January – February | The Season of Rest & Planning

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

— Proverbs 6:6-8 (KJV)

Winter is not idleness — it's strategic preparation. The homesteader who uses winter well comes out ahead come spring. Your most important winter work is done at the kitchen table.

Garden Tasks

- Complete full inventory of pantry, freezer, and root cellar — note what ran out and when
- Order seed catalogs: Baker Creek, Johnny's Seeds, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange
- Plan next year's complete garden layout before ordering seed
- Order seeds early — best varieties sell out by February every year
- Clean and sharpen all garden tools — oil wooden handles, sharpen hoe and spade edges
- Set up seed starting area and grow lights for February–March indoor starts
- Start microgreens and sprouts indoors for fresh winter greens: sunflower, pea, radish

Jamie's Tip:

Keeping a garden journal is one of the best habits a homesteader can build — recording planting dates, germination, first harvest, and yield each year. I'll be honest, I haven't always done this consistently, but the seasons I have tracked have been some of my most productive. Your land has its own patterns. Write them down.

Livestock Care

- Increase feed 7–10% for every 10°F below the critical temperature
- Provide quality hay — target 60%+ TDN (Total Digestible Nutrients) for wintering animals
- Feed larger rations in the evening to generate overnight body heat from digestion
- Keep water ice-free with tank heaters or break ice 2–3 times daily
- Provide ample dry bedding — wet bedding is the #1 cause of winter respiratory illness
- Ensure barns have ventilation WITHOUT drafts — moisture buildup causes pneumonia
- Monitor newborn animals closely during cold snaps — hypothermia sets in fast
- Check hooves monthly and treat for thrush — wet winter conditions cause it quickly



Jamie's Tip:

I'd steer clear of hanging heat lamps over waterers or bedding areas — they are a serious fire hazard and have burned down more barns than most people realize. A quality submersible tank heater on a dedicated circuit is a much safer investment. If budget is tight, breaking ice twice a day is safer than a heat lamp you're not watching around the clock.

Sawmill & Wood Projects — OPTIMAL SEASON

- OPTIMAL CUTTING: frozen ground = best equipment access and lowest moisture content
- Mill frozen logs carefully — slower feed speed and check blade tension more frequently
- Focus on indoor woodworking: furniture, cabinetry, trim, tool handles, shop projects
- Perform major equipment overhaul: replace worn blades, bearings, belts before spring

Jamie's Tip:

Winter is the best time to fell large timber. Frozen ground supports equipment weight, reduced undergrowth improves visibility, and sap-free wood mills cleaner and dries faster.

Wildlife Habitat

- Stock bird feeders with high-energy seeds: black-oil sunflower, suet, nyjer thistle
- Maintain unfrozen water sources for year-round wildlife
- Leave standing dead trees (snags) — critical cavity-nesting habitat for many species
- Plan and order spring food plot seed — best varieties sell out early

Jamie's Tip:

When is the best time to improve wildlife habitat? When you're not hunting it. Winter is the perfect time to hinge-cut bedding cover, clear shooting lanes, and make habitat improvements — the disturbance has months to settle before hunting season.



Livestock Care Calendar

Use this calendar as a quick-reference guide for monthly livestock priorities.

Month	Key Livestock Activities
January	Plan breeding strategies • Maintain winter feed schedules • Monitor for cold stress • Keep water ice-free
February	Early lambing/kidding begins • Calving preparation • Order spring chicks now • Clean coops and add fresh bedding
March	Peak lambing and calving • Spring health checks and tagging • Deworming as needed • Begin gradual pasture transition
April	Transition to fresh pasture slowly • Spring vaccinations • Hoof trimming • Begin rotational grazing
May	Shearing sheep • Implement rotational grazing • Monitor for internal parasites • First fecal egg count
June	Monitor for heat stress • Provide shade and water • Feed during cooler hours • Add electrolytes above 85°F
July	Water consumption doubles in heat • Parasite control peak season • Check pasture condition
August	Continue heat management • Plan fall breeding schedules • Assess body condition scores
September	Begin increasing feed rations 15-20% • Wean spring-born animals • Fall vet health checks
October	Transition to energy-dense feeds • Hoof trimming • Stock up on winter hay • Begin breeding season
November	Prepare shelters with windbreaks • Deep bedding pack • Final pasture assessment • Confirm hay supply
December	Full winter feeding schedule • Keep water ice-free • Monitor closely for illness • Increase evening rations

Jamie's Tip:

Body condition scoring your animals quarterly is one of the most important health management tools you have. A BCS of 3 out of 5 is ideal for most livestock going into winter. Animals too thin going into cold weather burn through reserves quickly.



Annual Garden Notes — What Worked / What Failed / Changes for Next Year

What Worked Well	What Failed	Changes for Next Year



Sawmill & Wood Projects Schedule

"By wisdom a house is builded; and by understanding it is established."

— Proverbs 24:3 (KJV)

The sawmill is one of the most valuable assets on a working homestead. Knowing when to cut, when to dry, and when to build is the difference between quality lumber and wasted wood.

Seasonal Timber Cutting Guide

Season	Rating	Best Practices
Winter (Dec–Feb)	OPTIMAL	Frozen ground = best access • Lowest sap content • Wood dries faster • Slower feed on frozen logs
Spring (Mar–May)	CAUTION	Wet muddy ground compacts soil • High sap flow • Wait for ground to firm up
Summer (Jun–Aug)	AVOID	Highest sap content • Difficult to dry • Focus on drying and building, not fresh cutting
Fall (Sep–Nov)	EXCELLENT	Sap is dropping • Firm ground • Leaves = easy dead tree ID • Best lumber quality

Lumber Drying Guidelines

- Cut lumber while logs are still green — don't let felled logs sit unsealed
- Stack on level surface with 1-inch stickers between every layer — stickers every 16 inches
- Cover the top only — allow full air circulation on all four sides
- Seal end grain immediately with Anchorseal or latex paint — prevents checking
- Target moisture content: below 10% for furniture, 12–15% for framing and construction
- Use a moisture meter — don't guess. Wet lumber in walls causes mold and structural failure

Jamie's Tip:

The best lumber stack location is off the ground, good airflow on all sides, and a metal roof on top protecting from rain. A simple lean-to roof over your lumber stack is one of the best investments you can make at the mill.

Annual Project Planner



Wildlife Habitat Management Notes

Stewarding God's Creatures on Your Land

"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine."

— Psalm 50:10-11 (KJV)

Wildlife habitat management is stewardship in its purest form. Healthy habitat means better hunting, better pest control, cleaner water, and richer biodiversity.

1. Food Sources

- Native berry bushes: elderberry, blackberry, blueberry, serviceberry
- Mast-producing trees: white oak, hickory, persimmon, wild apple
- Native wildflowers: milkweed, coneflower, black-eyed Susan, wild bergamot
- Warm-season native grasses: switchgrass, big bluestem, little bluestem
- Food plots: brassicas, turnips, winter rye, clover — establish in September for fall/winter use

Jamie's Tip:

White oak acorns are the #1 food source for white-tailed deer in the eastern US. If you have white oaks, protect them. If you don't, plant them.

2. Water Sources

- Natural stream crossings and spring seeps — most reliable year-round water sources
- Shaded waterholes in strategic locations — reduces EHD midge pressure vs open sunny ponds
- Seasonal wet areas and natural drainages that hold water after rains
- Maintain unfrozen water sources through winter

3. Shelter & Cover

- Brush piles from prunings and slash — prime habitat for rabbits, quail, and native sparrows
- Standing dead trees (snags) — leave them for woodpeckers, owls, and cavity nesters
- Dense shrub thickets — native hawthorn, wild plum, rose provide nesting cover
- Edge habitat — the transition zone between forest and field holds more wildlife than either alone

Seasonal Wildlife Management



Date	Species Observed	Location on Property	Behavior / Notes



Annual Homestead Planning Page

Use this page at the start of each year to set your top priorities, goals, and commitments.

This Year's Top 5 Goals

#	Goal	How I'll Know I Achieved It	Target Date

Major Purchases & Investments Planned

Item	Est. Cost	When Needed	Priority (H/M/L)

Homestead Income Goals



Income Source	Current Monthly	Goal Monthly	Action to Get There

A Final Word

"The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."

— Psalm 24:1 (KJV)

Every tool in your barn, every seed in your pantry, every acre under your feet — it belongs to the Lord. We're just the stewards. Use this planner. Work your land. Love your family. Keep the faith.

— Jamie Dingus, *The Holy Homestead* | TheHolyHomestead.com

This product was created with AI assistance and reviewed and edited by the author.