

# BUSHCRAFT

*Builder Level*

## Purpose

To help you appreciate God's creation and at the same time help you to survive in the bush for at least one night finding natural resources.

## Exploring

### 1. HOW TO FIND WATER

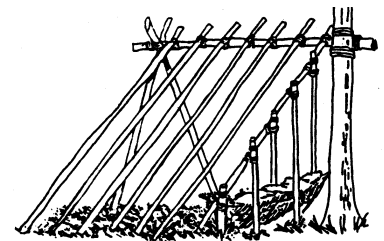
- From a running creek or water hole.
- Purifying stagnant or salt water.  
Place water in container or lined hole in the ground. Light a fire and heat up some stones. When the stones are very hot, place them in water. Holding a towel or other suitable material in a horizontal position over the water, the steam is condensed. When the towel is saturated, it can be wrung out. Once the cloth is damp, the collection of water vapour is fairly rapid.
- Distilling water from the ground.  
A damp area is preferred, with as much sunlight as possible. Dig a hole in the ground about 75 cm diameter and 50 cm deep. If green material, such as shrubs, is available, line the hole with these, pressing them against the sides and bottom. Place a billy can or other suitable container in the centre of the hole and cover the hole with a piece of plastic sheeting. Put stones around the perimeter of the hole on the plastic and seal the plastic with sand or soil. Place a small stone in the centre of the plastic to form an inverted cone, with the apex over the container. Moisture in the soil and in the greenery placed in the hole will be drawn off by the heat of the sun and will condense on the underside of the plastic and will run into the container. Body wastes, such as urine, and waste food, moist tea leaves, salt or stagnant water, etc. can be put in the hole and only pure water will condense on the plastic sheet. In this manner, one or two litres per day can be collected.

### 2. HOW TO FIND SHELTER

It is essential to get protection from the cold, rain, wind, etc.

- a. Find a natural shelter,  
e.g., a cave, or an umbrella tree.

A variety of shelters can be built on simple arrangements of logs and branches. Use ones that are dead before cutting of live ones.



- b. Make a shelter, lean to, or self-supporting shelter. If a shelter is made, place it in fairly open country, but within easy distance of water so that you may be found easily if you are lost.

### 3. FIRE

This has a two-fold purpose.

- a. Fire for signals.  
If you are lost, a fire should be kept going all the time, being continually fed with green wood in order to produce smoke to enable searchers to find you. Take care to feed sufficient dry wood to maintain the fire.

- b. Fire for cooking and warmth.

For further information including descriptions and illustrations, see **FIRE BUILDING BADGE** in this section.

#### 4. HOW TO FIND FOOD

The bush is plentiful in food, such as leaves, plants, berries, animals, fish, roots, insects, etc. However, there are some dangers.

##### a. **RED SPELLS DANGER**

Any plant which shows red in any part of its growth, in its fruit or in its stalks should be regarded with suspicion. There are exceptions, such as rhubarb (stalks only; leaves are deadly!), strawberries, but always be careful with red.

- b. The leaves of many trees, shrubs and ground plants are edible and very palatable and can comfortably sustain life. The only test is to taste the leaf. Break the leaf and taste. If it is tender and pleasant to the palate and the danger tastes of bitter, almond or acid are absent, you can eat small quantities. Then, if there are no ill effects within one hour, the leaves of that particular plant are probably good for food. **Beware** of all trees which have coloured sap - white, red or black. Do not even touch these, especially the white, for it can cause blindness.

- c. **Fungi.** Leave **all** fungus growths alone. This includes **all mushrooms**.

- d. **Seeds and nuts.** A few seeds contain deadly poison. Taste for bitter, almond, strongly acidic or burning hot taste. These are signs of poison. When you taste this, spit out the lot. Under no circumstances swallow, and the poison will not affect you. Always be careful, unless you know for certain that the nuts are safe to eat. Regard them with some suspicion and test first by tasting. If there are no ill effects within an hour, the nut will be safe. Another sign of probable poison is any fruit which is divided into five divisions. This is a generalisation, but it is better to be cautious than to be poisoned.

- e. **Roots and tubers.** Most of the roots and tubers are safe, but almost all must be either boiled or heat-treated before they are made digestible.

#### 5. HYGIENE

Latrine (if needed) – Locate at least 30 m from the camp site at a lower level if possible. Dig a narrow ditch at least 2 m deep.

Leave a spade nearby to throw in a couple of shovels of dirt after each use

Whatever happens, do not pollute your own resources such as water or food supply.

And remember: **“Carry it in - Carry it out”**. Do not bury tins, glass or plastics.

Arrange for a plastic bag to carry your waste out with you.

### Doing

On an Overnight Camp-out demonstrate to your Counsellor how to:

1. Condense water.
2. Make a simple water still.
3. Build a fire to give off smoke.
4. Go into the bush, find three edible items, then prepare and eat these.
5. Dig a latrine, about 1 m long, 1.5 m deep, for disposal of body and food wastes.

### Reflection

Discuss with your Counsellor what you have learned about God’s creation in the bush as well as the resources He has given you to look after yourself.

Ask your Counsellor to arrange for the presentation of your badge.

### References

*Stay Alive* by M. Dunlevy.

*The 10 Bushcraft Books* by R. Graves.

*Your Own Resources* by M. Richardson.