

Corn Cob Wisdom

By Joseph Parish

Many people grow field corn in their home gardens producing an abundance of the sweet, tasty vegetables. Have you ever wondered what to do with corn cobs after the harvest is finished? You have already frozen as much of the fresh corn as you could, you have canned umpteen dozens of jars with both whole, and creamed corn, and even made multiple jars of corn cob jelly. What more can you do?

With the year's harvest just about complete, we usually end up with a considerable amount of corn cobs. I am not one to waste anything if there is an alternate use for it, so I conducted some research into the uses for corn cobs, and this was my results:

- Biofuel
- Boiled cobs in water to extract thickeners for soups, stews, and corncob jelly
- Charcoal production
- Coarsely ground for use as a mild abrasive for cleaning
- Fire starters
- Ground up for addition as livestock feed
- Ground up for use as kitty litter
- Pot scrubbers
- Shredded as processed as livestock or pet bedding
- Shredded for adding to the compost pile or for worm bedding

As fire starters, or pot scrubbers they are excellent tools. They tend to work very well for each of these uses. Often people wonder how you can grind these cobs down to make useful applications for them. Perhaps the best solution for this is to employ one of those inexpensive grain mills, although you can look forward to an abundance of work. In the event you have access to a wood chipper, it could make short work of the job. Small units which can accept the thickness of corn cobs can be readily purchased for less than two hundred dollars.

As mentioned above, you could turn those corn cobs into charcoal, with coconut shells, peach pits, pine bark, and pine cones, etc. added which do not usually compost very well. Simply grind the finished charcoal to a fine texture, and add it to your soil as an amendment. So, there you have it folks. A perfect way to make the most of your post-season corn cobs. I always say, waste not, want not.