

I needed a five gallon food-safe pail with a cover to store the organic rye berries I had ordered some time ago. The grain was perfectly okay in its paper sack, at least for the time being, but a sturdier container is better for a longer period. But, all of the suitable pails already held staple foods for the months ahead—flour, kamut grain, wheat berries, salt, etc. So, I looked around to see what I could find.

There was one good pail left, but it was occupied by several items we want to keep together. Since they were not comestibles, I realized I could find them another pail that I wouldn't consider using for food. And, so, I reused a large plastic kitty litter pail, one that had a good lid.

Before I could use the food safe pail for the rye, though, the writing on the inside of the cover had to be scrubbed off. Runo did that after I had copied those instructions to the inside of the kitty litter cover.

I took all of the contents of the big pail and transferred them to their new home—two bottles of hydrogen peroxide, a box of baking soda, a bottle of Dawn dishwashing liquid, and a jug of white vinegar.

The inside of the lid now held the proportions for the potion that was the goal of the user: 1/2 cup baking soda, 1 quart warm water, 1 quart peroxide, and a squirt of dish liquid. The vinegar might or might not be needed, but, if so, not until after the first preparation was used.

I closed the lid and printed on the top—in bold black letters—SKUNK KIT!!!

This is the family remedy to be used if a dog has a close encounter with our little black and white, fragrant neighbor who passes through now and then, and for whom dogs seem to have a particular affinity.

We haven't used the skunk kit for quite a while. All of the family members in our area know that the skunk kit is here, ready for use by whoever needs it. A "skunked" dog retains the odor for a long time, especially if it gets wet. And, most people find the smell of skunks offensive.

There is probably no cuter animal than a skunk, especially a line of baby skunks following mama around. For a couple of summers, a skunk was frequently in the barn here, and when we went down to milk our "house cow," we would sometimes meet it coming out as we walked in. And, one summer, she had babies in the vicinity.

Years ago, we were running one night after dark. Tutsy, the family border collie at the time, was with us. All of a sudden, Runo darted ahead of me, calling back—"watch out for the skunk." I stopped in my tracks, and then realized that Tutsy was nose to nose with a skunk. They sniffed each other, I didn't say a word, and the dog and I cautiously moved away. "Nose to nose" isn't an issue!

Still, every now and then, a family dog will have the bad judgement too incautiously chase that animal which should be left to its own devices. And when that time comes, it is very handy to have a neighborhood "skunk kit." The kitty litter pail came in handy, and I have a good food safe pail for the whole rye grain.

Note: I am one of the minority of humans who actually like the smell of

skunk, unless it is so strong that the “perfume” changes to an aroma of burnt rubber.