

Handy Tricks 8: Island Handy Tricks

by [TimAnderson](#) on September 24, 2008

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Author: **PRO** [TimAnderson](#) [author's website](#)

Tim Anderson is the author of the "Heirloom Technology" column in Make Magazine. He is co-founder of www.zcorp.com, manufacturers of "3D Printer" output devices. His detailed drawings of traditional Pacific Island sailing canoes are at <http://www.mit.edu/people/robot>.

Tim's philosophy involves building minimum-consumption personal infrastructure from recycled scavenged materials. Redirecting the waste stream. Doing much with little. A reverse peace-corps to learn from poor people all over the world.

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Intro: Handy Tricks 8: Island Handy Tricks

Handy Tricks 8: Island Handy Tricks! Do stuff with stuff on an Island. I'm on Maui for a while yet, so watch this space for more tricks.

To see even more handy tricks, check out the rest of the saga at

- [Handy Tricks 9: Oodles of random tricks](#)
- and [Handy Tricks 7: Bike Mods and Projects](#)
- and [Fifty Handy Tricks](#).
- and [40 More Handy Tricks](#)
- and [Australian Handy Tricks](#)
- and [Guatemalan Handy Tricks](#)
- and [Yet More Handy Tricks](#)
- and [Handy Tricks Six!](#)

For a bunch of things that didn't work, check out [How Not To](#).

First Trick: Old tires are perfect to park a boat on.

These are the Maui Wailea Canoe club's 6 person racing canoes. The canoe never touches the ground. The paddlers pick it up in the water and carry it onto land. They set it on tires or in cradles lined with carpet scraps.



step 1: Canoe Dolly with Golf Cart Wheels

Wailea Canoe Club has this slick homemade dolly for putting boats in and out of the water. Purpose-made beach wheels are expensive. Wheels from junk golfcarts are free.



step 2: Wind Speed Flags

At Kite Beach Maui.

The flags are different lengths and possibly different weights.

If a flag is flying straight out, that makes it easy to read the number. That's the windspeed.

If a flag is hanging and wagging around, there's not that much wind.



step 3: Lazy Man's Cherry Picker

Johnny V the surfboard guru has a Surinam Cherry tree in his yard in Haiku Maui. The fruits look like little red pumpkins. They're really tasty like tart cherries. Here's how you harvest them, just put some sheets under the tree and let it dump cherries on them. He says "If I don't rake them up every day It's like walking through a pile of mush. And you can't kill these things. Want some saplings? Here's a hundred of them." He points to a forest of surinam cherry tree shoots sprouting under the tree.



step 4: Drink a Coconut

Even very young green coconuts are full of "coconut water" a.k.a. coconut juice. Before I knew anything I'd try to open them with a hammer, hatchet, banging on the ground. By the time I got them open all the juice had leaked out. I thought there was some kind of ornamental palm tree with empty hollow coconuts. Wrong. As far as I know there's no such thing.

Here's how to drink a coconut with a knife.

Step one: Take your shirt off. Coconut juice will stain your shirt yellow/brown. Sap from the coconut does the same thing.

2: Stab the side of the coconut. This is easier than it sounds, especially if it's a young coconut. Probably a little bit of juice will squirt out. The coconut is under pressure.

3: Make two more stabs to make a triangular hole. Rock the knife to connect the cuts and pry the plug out.

4: Drink it. If you have a straw use that. Otherwise arch your back and drink it like you're in a commercial.

5: More steps! There's some delicious jelly lining the inside of the nut. Here's how to get it.







step 5: Coconut Milk - Blender Style

"Coconut Juice" or "Coconut Water" is a clear liquid that comes as-is out of a coconut.

"Coconut Milk" is different. You make it from shredded coconut meat.

Here's how to do it with a blender:

- 0: If raw coconut bothers you, cook the meat first in a microwave for a couple of minutes. The flavor is slightly different and maybe the protein is easier to absorb.
- 1: Cut the meat up into chunks your blender can handle.
- 2: Put the meat in the blender.
- 3: Cover it with enough water for your blender to be happy. If you saved the coconut juice, use that. But probably you drank that right away while fighting with the nut. It's like nature's gatorade, only better. It's got all the electrolytes you need in the tropical places where coconuts grow. It's also sterile if it's from a picked coconut. They used it in WW2 as IV fluid for wounded soldiers or soldiers sick from the wet kind of tropical diseases. So I've been told anyway. Probably a coconut on the ground is sterile also, but some of them crack and go sour after they hit the ground.
- 4: Blend it up. If the whole pitcher isn't churning stop and pulse the blades or add more water. When it stops getting thicker you're done.
- 5: Pour it into a piece of cloth. I used a pair of boxer shorts. Of course mine are always cleaner than the Pope's CPU factory in outer space.
- 6: Squeeze out the ambrosia. They call it milk but it's a lot like cream. Use it for cooking, making umbrella drinks. The mix of fats goes well with the deepwater fish you speared under that navigation buoy with your giant speargun.
- 7: What you have left is dry shredded coconut meat. Mix it with some eggs and fry it. It'll fluff up like a pancake and be really satisfying to eat. Just the thing for when you're done surfing, or on your way to surfing.





step 6: Prickly Pears

It's the fruit of the prickly pear cactus. The rest of the cactus is edible too. The green pads are a great vegetable served raw or cooked. They taste kind of like a cucumber-tomato cross. The pears sit on top for a long time. The darker the color of the pear the sweeter it is. These delicious things are covered with tiny hairy thorns called "glochids". You'll get them all over yourself the first time cuz they're hard to see and you won't believe any of the following.

Real method: Pick them using leather gloves or tongs. Put them in a bucket.

What I did: Pick with hands and put them in my shirt pocket. I got so many thorns in my chest I had a hairy chest for the first time in my life. That photo of my nipple full of thorns was taken after I'd already pulled out most of them. Jeez. The fuzz in the pocket is more of them.

Remove all the thorns. Rub them with dirt, gravel, or put them in a chicken plucking machine with a thousand pencil erasers. Wash them with cold water. Skin them while wearing gloves.

There are seeds in the fruit. Go ahead and swallow them like guava seeds, or chew them up if your teeth like doing that and are strong enough.

What we did: Rub them on your pants so you get thorns in your leg. Peel them barehanded so you get thorns in your hands. Eat them in such a way you get thorns all around your mouth.

Warning: Prickly Pears are a powerful aphrodisiac. Unfortunately when your hands and body are covered with thorns, well, you get the picture.







step 7: Pickup Bed Passengers and Hitchhiking

You see lots of people riding in the backs of pickup trucks in Hawaii. It's apparently legal. This pickup truck has some cushions installed semi-permanently just for that purpose.

In contrast, in the "birthplace of freedom" you're not allowed to do that. The weather isn't good there either.

Here on Maui I've seen many hitchhikers. I've been one myself and picked up others. On the mainland one party is expected to kidnap and/or murder the other. Here the customs are different. It's just a way to get from one place to another or help someone do that.

A pickup truck is good for hitching or picking up if you don't really believe the customs could be that different in a place that's officially the same country.



step 8: Instant Convertible Top

This Miata "roadster" in Kahului Maui has no top. No problem. Just open up your beach umbrella when you park the car. When you're driving, of course you want the top down, so put the umbrella away so it doesn't turn into a Christo-style wind-powered javelin of death.



step 9: Self-Service Fruit Stand

People have fruit trees in their yards that make way too much fruit. So they put up a self-service fruit stand. The money goes in a box or a coffee can.

Why don't people steal the money? Or the fruit? My dad's dad once gave him a lecture that caused him to lose all interest in stealing. Here's the lecture in it's entirety: "Stealing is easy."

My Uncle "bird dog" used to love to steal vegetables. I was riding in his truck once when he slowed down, reached across and pushed his son out of the truck, saying "go get me some zucchini, boy. Meet you at the fence line." He drove slowly along. A moving vehicle is not suspected of anything in that region. A parked one might arouse suspicion. His kid jumped in with an armload of veggies. When we got back home I found out he had a few acres of his own garden with oodles of zucchini. I asked him why he went to all the trouble of stealing his friend's. He said "The stolen ones taste better." One of the stories about his youth was that he went with two friends to steal watermelons. The farmer had hung tin cans on the fence to make noise. The thieves jangled the cans by accident on their way out. The farmer came out with a shotgun and shot them with bird shot as they ran away. My uncle kept his two watermelons anyway but his friends dropped theirs. They stayed up all night picking the bbs out of each other's butts. My uncle ate both his watermelons and didn't let his friends have any. He was mad at them for dropping theirs. That's the story anyway. I guess he has the stolen food gene.

Well, none of that happened on an island.

My expert island informant says my information is wrong, people grow fruit on purpose and the lack of stealing is just because stealing is not "Aloha". So it violates the social norms on the island.



step 10: Trees Invade and Destroy Beach

Less than 2% of the original vegetation remains (.pdf) on Maui.

Australian Casuarina "Ironwood" grows on many beaches. That's bad. It displaces native species that trap sand in their roots and build beaches. The ironwood does this to a beach when it takes over. The beach those other plants built and retained washes away in storms.

If you feel like cutting down some ironwood, it's great stuff when you kill it. Very wet and easy to work when it's green. Put it in salt water and it gets really hard and turns a beautiful red color.



step 11: And as the Beach Recedes

The lifeguard hut is on skis, so as the ironwood makes the beach erode they can keep pulling it further back. It's almost in the parking lot now.

Don't bring any new species to the islands. 20 new ones show up every year, and that's way too many. Biotech firms do lots of R+D here so if they make triffids or some other monsters it'll only get loose in the islands and hopefully they can trap it here. Or nuke the islands some more. Obama is from Hawaii, among other places. Maybe he'll do something about that sort of shitontheislands idiocy.



step 12: Pineapple

To find out whether a pineapple is ripe, smell it. It will smell just like it will taste.

To plant a pineapple, twist the top off and put it in a glass of water in a sunny place.

After it grows roots, plant it in dirt and keep it watered. In a couple of years it will grow one or more new pineapples!



step 13: Stationary Van Air Conditioner

The aloha spirit means lots of people get to do what they want if it doesn't hurt someone else. That includes sleeping on beaches, living in vehicles, shopping while barefoot and having strange hair.

My local informant says: "Lifeguards check people asleep in parks during the day to make sure they're not dead. It's technically illegal to sleep on a beach but everyone does it."

Here's a van with a regular house window airconditioner in the back window.

I assume they were living in the van in a hot part of the island and had access to an extension cord. So they came up with this improvised source of cool.



step 14: Burn Things and Cause Disease

Sugar cane fields on fire. If you're hankering for a sugar fix, cut a cane, peel it, chew it, and spit out the pulp. It's pretty good, even tastes like it might have a vitamin or two in it. The lower part of the cane is sweeter than the top. Older cane is sweeter than the young stuff. It gets sweeter when they stop irrigating it prior to burning.

1/3 of the US sugar cane crop is grown on Maui. When the cane is ripe they set it on fire to burn off the leaves. When they do it right they choose a day when there's not much surface wind and the winds higher up blow out to sea. When they do it wrong the smoke blows into children's lungs and gives them asthma. Star is from Maui. She still has asthma she contracted here as a child.

The sugar industry wouldn't be nearly so profitable if they had to pay the medical costs of the people who have to breathe their smoke. Asthma is one of the 5 most expensive chronic conditions. That's just medical costs. Lost productivity, missed work and school make the [http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=8?=42 real costs even worse.] Not to mention the suffering it causes.



step 15: More Smoke

Here's the sugar factory. It always looks like this.

There's a big pile of coal next to the factory. They burn a lot of sugarcane waste for fuel, but I'm told they burn coal also.

The soil of Maui is mostly very porous. The water soaks down and then your yard is dry again. It takes a tremendous amount of water to irrigate the cane fields in the dry parts of the island. There used to be big rivers in the wet parts of the island. Now most of the water goes into canals and pipes going to the cane fields. The museum at the sugar factory has exhibits on the huge waterworks projects.

The canals are everywhere.

The sugar company used to be the biggest employer on the island. They have grandfather exemptions to pollution laws. Most of the island's population is descended from contract laborers brought here by the sugar company.



step 16: Pandanus Key Paintbrushes

The Pandanus tree has many uses. Hawaiians made sails and sleeping mats by braiding the leaves. Hawaiian "Lauhala", lau = leaves, hala = pandanus. The tree is also called "screw pine" by obsolete botanists.

The fruit is a big thing that looks sort of like a giant pineapple. It comes apart into sections called "keys". Chew on the orange part and suck the juice from them. Or pound them and wring out the juice to dry into a sort of fruit leather. It tastes like um, mango/cantaloupe, but I don't like it. I don't like it. A lot, cuz I once got really sick after eating them. Probably a coincidence, but food aversions don't care about logic.

The old fruit make good paintbrushes. I especially like them for epoxy glue. I feel bad about throwing away a commercial brush every time I glue something. I picked up a bunch of old keys under this tree by the Mo'olele canoe shed in Lahaina, Maui. Rub them on a wire brush to soften up the bristles and dislodge any loose ones.

The best paintbrushes come from keys that get beaten by the surf and then wash up. Watch out for sand that comes out of the inner part of the key.







step 17: Design Hotbed

The islands have a cultural influence on the world that's far more than you'd expect from the small population. People come here from all over the world for conventions and vacations.

They take ideas they see here home with them.

For instance, ultra light, ultra strong high performance carbon-fiber toilet seats!

For EXTREME pooping! Perfect for pooping during high-g maneuvers in an F-22!

Design them into the stealth fighter and give a big donation to your congressman for funding the program! And you saw it here first!

Originally this step used that truck with a flame job as an example. It's a style of flame job I haven't seen before. But alert readers inform me it's common elsewhere.

So okay, scratch that. It turns out this didn't originate here.

I guess I wasn't noticing flame jobs so well til I came here and relaxed. Maybe that's a mode of cultural influence in itself.





step 18: Surfboard Shaper Art

Here's a nifty chair made from old windsurfing board and boom.

Seen outside the "Ding King" surfboard factory in Kahului Maui. Probably made by "Euroman".



step 19: Flower Pot made from Old Tire

You'll see these on the mainland also. Cut the sidewalls of a tire in a zigzag pattern. Turn the tire inside out. You'll get a graceful vase shape. If you leave the tire mounted on the rim the rim is an ornate base for the vase. That makes the vase even more graceful, and the cutoff chunk of sidewall adds to the ornate base.

Seen outside the "Ding King" surfboard factory in Kahului Maui. Probably made by "Euroman".



step 20: Pot Pot

Here's a flower pot made from a toilet. I guess that makes it a potty pot. If you planted a pot plant in it then it would be a potty pot pot.

Seen outside the "Ding King" surfboard factory in Kahului Maui. Probably made by "Euroman".



step 21: Spare Blade for Sabersaw

My pal's sabersaw has a spare blade taped to the handle. It's still in the original packaging, so when you break it and replace it with the spare, you have the label to buy the right replacement.

This "island trick" would work even on the mainland, but here I am so here it goes.



step 22: Cut Cake with a Wet Knife

Actually an ancient German trick, but Germans appreciate good climate too. Cut a cake with a wet knife to keep it from sticking to the knife. Demonstrated by Stephanie Simpson.



step 23: Fruit Picker

Everyone has one of these at their house. Ms. Dozer demonstrates. She put the picker on the end of one of her old windsurfer masts for extra length. The foam pad at the bottom is supposed to keep fruit from getting bruised. Usually it gets lost.



step 24: More Boat Cushions

No, not for you to sit on, these are for the boat to sit on. I didn't feel them to see how heavy they are. I have no idea what's inside them. Made from truck inertubes. Looks like the one on the bottom is made of cloth.



step 25: Thatch Meets Fire Code

Sprinkler heads protrude from a thatched roof. This is one of the canoe houses in Lahaina. Teams of carvers come here from all over the pacific to build boats at the International Festival of Canoes each may.



step 26: Maui Cruiser

This toyota stationwagon was made into a mini king-cab pickup truck. If you put enough surfboards on top rain won't fall in the back.

A "Maui Cruiser" is any cheap car that still runs. Unlike the mainland, lots of people are proud to drive junky cars. Slowly. A popular bumpersticker reads "Slow Down, This ain't the Mainland".

Search for "maui Cruiser" on Maui craigslist to find cars like this.

I called about this one. 200k+ miles, there's no reverse gear or top gear. Other than that it's a great car.

If car prices were based on fractions of remaining function, this car would be a bargain.



step 27: Personal Surf Shower

When Dozer goes surfing, she takes jugs of hot water wrapped in a towel. After the session, this is her hot shower in the parking lot. She demonstrates how to wring out her rashguard inside a towel to get it extra dry.

A "rashguard" is a stretchy shirt that keeps the board wax and sand from ripping up your belly. It's also good sunburn protection. Shirtless surfers in the good old days must have developed belly calluses.

Star demonstrates the "Statue of Liberty" bathing technique. Put your thumb in the bottle and use it for a valve. Let the water run down your arm and the rest of your body. Bathe as normal with your free hand.



step 28: World's Heaviest Ashtray

At Haleakela volcano. They filled trashcans with cement and put a grating over the top to make ashtrays.

Why?

To keep smokers from dragging them into unapproved smoking locations?

To keep them from digging butts out?

To keep Nene geese from eating the butts?

To keep the whole thing from blowing away in fierce mountaintop winds?

if you know, please post comments with the answer



step 29: Free Batteries

Although Hawaii is very close to China, no one is buying up old batteries. You can get pretty good golfcart and car batteries for free outside an auto parts store. Make welders!

Three car batteries = 36 volts, plenty for a stick welder.

Two car batteries = 24 volts, plenty for a wirefeed welder.



step 30: Portable Garden

Most of the soil here is really porous. Water just soaks down into it and disappears.

Stephanie and JC made this "portable garden". First they put down plastic tarp, then piled black dirt on it. If they ever need to they can drag the garden to a new location. When it rains the water pools in the low parts between the rows. If it rains really hard the water filters out through the gravel around the edge.

The plastic also stops the grass from growing up from under the garden and taking over.

It's less work to put down plastic than to till the grass under.



Image Notes
1. bent canoe rib
2. instant hammock



Image Notes
1. rooted pineapple top

step 31: Free Fruit on the Ground

Here are some free mangos laying in the road.

Locals usually won't eat fruit that's been on the ground. If you see some, ask the owner if you can have it. You could just pick it up, but if you ask first, they'll probably give you some from the trees also, and show you more trees, and teach you stuff about fruit.

For instance, protect your eyes when picking mangos. The sap squirts out of the stem, and it can cause inflammation. The tree is a distant relative of poison ivy.

To hear some interesting ranting, say something about mangos from Mexico.



step 32: Safety Fence Bags

A lot of people ride motorcycles and ATVs on the rough roads around here. Someone hung bags on the wire across this road to make it more visible. Hopefully that will keep the local kids from beheading themselves on it.



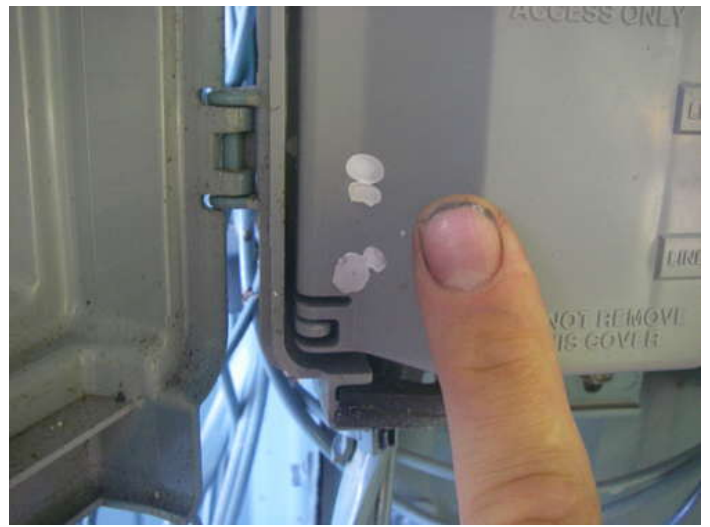
step 33: Fruit Juice Icecubes

Don't want your icecubes to dilute your drink when they melt?
Try making your icecubes from fruit juice.
You can also lay sticks in each cube-bowl, to make popsicles.



step 34: Gecko Eggs

House geckos are nice little lizards that run around on the ceiling and walls and eat insects. They make a loud nose "geck! geck!".
Star points out some gecko eggs in the electrical box.
You could put them somewhere and watch the little geckos hatch.
When the eggs hatch and the geckos depart, they leave little white marks where the eggs used to be.



step 35: Sawed Off Boogieboard

Bert made his daughter a boogieboard from the nose of an old longboard. He sawed off the nose, smoothed the tail, glassed, sanded, and waxed it.

She's too little to use it in waves this big, but Bert demonstrated some skillful moves with the board. Seen here at the beach in front of the Paia youth center, Maui.



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Comments

28 comments [Add Comment](#)


 **mikaelthemycologist** says: Nov 20, 2009. 3:38 PM [REPLY](#)
When I made prickly pear jelly a few weeks ago I boiled the fruit before I peeled them to soften the glochids.


 **CapnChkn** says: Sep 28, 2008. 12:26 PM [REPLY](#)
Prickly Pears are one of the most cosmopolitan cactuses in the world. As cactus goes, fairly mundane, some of the species are downright evil! Cactus is common here in Florida, and I can tell you getting a spine in your flesh is not a fun project. The hairs are a nuisance at best.

All of the hairy spiny things that come from a cactus are barbed, and not meant to be pleasant by any means. I remember one drunk night where I finally laid down only to wake with the hairs from a cactus all down my back.


Euell Gibbons, and who remebers him? He says in one of his books (Stalking the healthful herbs?) to use some heavy gloves, slit the pear down the side, and peel the skin from it "untouched by human hands."


 **erosser** says: May 12, 2009. 6:23 PM [REPLY](#)
"Stalking the Wild Asparagus"! Amazing book, and an amazing guy...


 **Johenix** says: Oct 20, 2009. 10:40 PM [REPLY](#)
"Stalking the Blue Eyed Scallops" and "Stalking the Good Life" too. All three need a reprinting, maybe in a single volume.

 **Lego man** says: Oct 18, 2008. 1:35 PM [REPLY](#)
Here in Kingman, Arizona jumping cholla is notorious. You barely touch it and it hooks on to you and gives a painful sting

 **pyrotechnical** says: Oct 12, 2008. 7:49 PM [REPLY](#)
TO take the hairs off you can take a bucket of sand put your pears in it cover them with some sand then shake away, and the hairs come off after a lil.

 **andresm** says: Sep 29, 2008. 1:05 PM [REPLY](#)
aren't prickly pears called "dragon fruit"?
in Mexico in only one small town going thats between Guzman and Guadalajara is the only place in the world that you can find different colored "prickly pears" or dragon fruit or the spanish name "pitayas". they are white, yellow, red, purple. the white ones are the sweetest.


 **Legion** says: Oct 20, 2009. 8:52 PM [REPLY](#)
I believe it is legal so long as the cab of the truck is full. I seem to recall that in the driver's manual. Hawaiian hitchhiking is a wonderful way to get around and meet interesting people though.


 **Tobita** says: Aug 27, 2009. 1:00 AM [REPLY](#)
I used to want to open a coconut plantation. Then I thought of coconut crabs....


 **rsakamaki** says: Jul 18, 2009. 2:58 AM [REPLY](#)
got it wrong here. Lau is leaf, hala is pandanus.

 **TimAnderson** says: Jul 18, 2009. 9:54 AM [REPLY](#)
Mahalo Nui!
My mistake, it's fixed now


 **BoeroBoy** says: Jun 30, 2009. 7:15 AM [REPLY](#)
And yet MORE toilet worship. That makes 4! :-)


 **BoeroBoy** says: Jun 30, 2009. 7:13 AM [REPLY](#)
Star seems to have a toilet fetish. Rage against the Latrine and now this? Hmph.


 **dmdeford** says: Jun 9, 2009. 4:25 PM [REPLY](#)
I plan on moving to Hawaii someday, if only for a short while. Which island/city do you all recommend? I was thinking either Hilo or Kona on the big island.... Thanks!


 **SG1Oniell** says: May 19, 2009. 4:37 PM [REPLY](#)
Slow down this aint the mainland, that's great, Island Time was so relaxed.


 **SG1Oniell** says: May 19, 2009. 4:34 PM [REPLY](#)
Nice, I used to live on Maui at Makena for a while, I loved it there. Beautiful work, reminds me of the good days. And the sugar cane, reminded me of how badly it smells when they burn it. Driving from Makena to Lahaina town was a pain whenever they were burning. The Coral fort and Banyan tree still there?


 **ninja cat 09** says: Apr 14, 2009. 7:09 PM [REPLY](#)
I Here in Mexico they sell sugar cane cut up in bags, and they even sell cane juice. Yum!

 **ramedia** says: Oct 20, 2008. 5:39 PM [REPLY](#)
The life guard station is on skids because it needs to move back in the winter and forward in the summer. That is the same here in Los Angeles. Not to say that your beach isn't eroding.


 **scafool** says: Oct 20, 2008. 11:52 AM [REPLY](#)
We used to pick them with tin cans, we used to scorch them with a quick fire (grass, straw) to get rid of the spines.


 **Grey_Wolfe** says: Sep 29, 2008. 1:25 PM [REPLY](#)
Excellent nipple-thorn removal technique. lol
Though for anyone with actual hair on their chest, it might be a debate as to which is worse. lol


 **jwilliam** says: Sep 26, 2008. 1:48 PM [REPLY](#)
Not sure it's really worth the comment, but that style of flame has been around the custom paint scene for quite a while. There are online tutorials and books on how to do that. I think it came from a Californian, but it's been a while...


 **dchall8** says: Sep 26, 2008. 6:03 AM [REPLY](#)
I drive past about 1,000 bushels of pear fruit every weekend. My aunt used to make pp jelly that was amazing with a very delicate pink color. I have always been tempted to pick some of the fruit and make some, but now I'm glad I didn't. I've had those tiny thorns in my hands from cleaning up my mother's cactus garden as a kid. It is NOT pretty and is definitely something you remember for the rest of your life.
I like the canoe dolly and the umbrella ideas, too.

 **Lithium Rain** says: Sep 25, 2008. 8:55 PM [REPLY](#)
Ich, we have people who use toilets for planters here, too... :/

 **BigD145** says: Sep 25, 2008. 6:40 PM [REPLY](#)
Or maybe give Hawaii back to its people.... Unfortunately, I doubt that.

 **Hoopajoo** says: Sep 25, 2008. 5:45 AM [REPLY](#)
The best way to get the barbs out of your skin is to coat the affected area with white school glue, let it dry and carefully peel it off. It carries the thorns with it. Seconding Sleighbedguy, singing them is the best way to avoid the barbs. I use a pair of heavy leather gloves with a thick fleece lining to pull the pads and pods. then I get a good bed of coals going and burn the thorns off. Also, a potato peeler is perfect for skinning the pads and pods.

 **sleighbedguy** says: Sep 25, 2008. 2:53 AM [REPLY](#)
Try singeing the fruit before you pick it. This removes the cactus spines(thorns) before they get in your skin.

 **shooby** says: Sep 24, 2008. 10:40 PM [REPLY](#)
That coconut milk blending islander was pretty pasty looking. Maybe spend more time climbing coconut trees, less time in the kitchen.



LinuxH4x0r says:

Good tips! I'm looking forward to picking some of those prickly pears this year

Sep 24, 2008. 8:54 PM [REPLY](#)