

How to live off the land... in a major US city

AFP | Orlando

Rob Greenfield needs a lift. He often does, as he doesn't own a car.

Ride sharing is one of the many ways in which he tries to reduce his carbon footprint -- but the other is more extreme. For the past year, he hasn't spent a cent on food.

He only eats what he can grow in his own garden or nearby gardens, what he can fish for -- or what he can peel off the highway.

Yes, roadkill is an option for the 33-year-old Greenfield. He's an urban forager.

"Nature has been my garden, has been my pantry and it's been

my pharmacy," explains the environmental activist, whose one-year challenge to eat only what he can find himself ends on November 10.

Greenfield launched the project in Orlando, the theme park capital of the world in central Florida. The greater metropolitan area is home to about 2.5 million.

It seems like an unusual place to hunt and gather, but the subtropical climate has helped him offset the urban setting.

"For the last year, I've been growing and foraging 100 percent of my food -- no grocery stores, no restaurants, no beer

at a bar," Greenfield tells AFP.

"I want to inspire people to question their food and then to change their diets, to start to grow their own food, to support local farmers and eat in a way that is better for the Earth, our communities and ourselves."

Backyard cuisine

He's been living in a tiny home in someone else's backyard -- the owners said he could squat there for the purposes of the project.

He's usually barefoot and wears the clothes he's often seen in on YouTube, where's he documented his year of foraging.

"I think that the human body developed really well over tens of thousands of years and I don't believe that Nike has got it all figured out in the last blink of the eye of the human experience," he says.

Greenfield has transformed the yard into an urban farm -- papayas, bananas, sweet potatoes, eggplant, cucumbers and peppers are all thriving.

He put together an open-air kitchen of sorts, where he keeps his provisions and the honey he produces himself from four hives.

He's also built a toilet al fresco -- and uses leaves for toilet pa-

per, explaining: "This is softer than anything you can buy at the store."

During the interview, he feasts on a bowl of venison, sauerkraut, green papaya, turmeric, red pepper, coriander, garlic, dill and sea salt, cooked in coconut milk.

His breakfast is capped with some moringa leaves, which had numerous medicinal uses.

Greenfield found the dead deer on a road in his native Wisconsin, where he spent his summer vacation.

And the salt? "I go to the ocean and I collect the saltwater from the ocean. I just fill up a jar or a jug and then I put that onto a stove to boil it down. That makes good sea salt."

The simple life

Greenfield says that he first made the decision to live more "simply" in 2011.

Up until then, he was living what he called a "pretty typical American life." His goal: "To be a millionaire by the time I was 30."

In 2014, he dissolved his marketing company.

He first earned public attention in 2016, when he walked through New York wearing all of the garbage he produced -- an effort to call attention to the huge amount of waste generated

by Americans.

After that, he decided to start his experiment in urban foraging, to cast a spotlight on the

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possibilities of sustainable living.

He lives off public speaking fees and proceeds from his books, though he usually offers talks for free. This year so far, he has earned just \$9,760. In 2018, the total was \$8,000.

Both are well below the poverty level of about \$13,000 for an individual living alone.

"For me, this is about deeply exploring my food and understanding it and at the same time taking people along on this journey," Greenfield says.

He says he donates most of what he earns to non-profit organizations -- despite a fair bit of media coverage of his story, he says he wants to avoid getting rich from his projects.

"It's about the message, and I don't think I should get wealthy off of the message of helping others," he says.

"I've created a system to help myself not ever lose those good intentions. I believe in living humbly and I don't think it would be easy to live humbly with a lot of money."

Once he's finished on Sunday, Greenfield is not sure what comes next -- for now, he's planning on traveling around the world.



Vietnam deer rediscovered after nearly 30 years

● With no confirmed sightings since 1990, experts assumed the species must have been pushed to the brink of extinction by hunting

● Forests in southeast Asia are under tremendous pressure from growing populations

Paris

A very rare species of small, deer-like animal thought to be on the verge of extinction has been spotted in the north-western jungle of Vietnam for the first time in nearly 30 years. Known as the Silver-backed



A still from a remote camera shows the Silver-backed Chevrotain -- long considered to be near-extinct -- in a forest in central Vietnam

Chevrotain or Mouse deer, a specimen was last recorded in 1990, according to a study published Monday in the journal

Nature Ecology and Evolution. The species, *Tragulus versicolor*, was first described in 1910 based on several animals found

near Nha Trang, about 450 kilometres (280 miles) northeast of Ho Chi Minh City.

With no confirmed sightings since 1990, experts assumed the species must have been pushed to the brink of extinction by hunting.

However Vietnamese biologist An Nguyen, who works with Global Wildlife Conservation and is a PhD student at the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, had been wondering for years whether the Silver-backed Chevrotain might still be holding on somewhere.

Working with colleagues Barney Long and Andrew Tilker, the experts got together with local villagers to sift through reported sightings.

Some were consistent enough with the Silver-backed Chevrotain to justify putting up more

than 30 motion-activated cameras in nearby forested habitats.

"The results were amazing. I was overjoyed when we checked the camera traps and saw photographs of a chevrotain with silver flanks," said Nguyen.

Tilker cautioned in a blog post however that "just because we found this species relatively easily doesn't mean it is not threatened".

Forests in southeast Asia are under tremendous pressure from growing populations and development "so we need to get ahead of the curve" on conservation, Tilker added.

In May, a United Nations body of biodiversity experts, known as IPBES, issued a landmark report warning that up to one million species face the risk of extinction due to humanity's impact on the planet.

Cyclone death toll rises to 24

Khulna Bangladesh

The death toll from a cyclone that barreled into the coasts of Bangladesh and India has risen to 24, authorities said yesterday, as the two nations assess the scale of devastation wreaked by the powerful storm.

Cyclone Bulbul, packing winds of up to 120 kilometres per hour (75 mph) when it hit late Saturday, killed 12 people in Bangladesh -- 11 from falling trees -- and 12 in India's West Bengal and Odisha states.

Bangladesh's junior minister for disaster management Enamur Rahman said Bulbul left a trail of destruction, damaging some 10,000 mud, tin and bamboo homes and 200,000 hectares (494,000 acres) of crops.