



A Few Tips for a Simple Life

by Michael Guilfoil, *The Spokesman-Review*

Organic farmer MaryJane Butters long ago embraced Thoreau's dictum to "simplify, simplify." As a Forest Service ranger in the 1970s, she spent two summers roaming Utah's Uinta Mountains with her home on her back. Later, she maintained the most remote wilderness ranger station in the Lower 48. Today, Butters and her family live eight miles outside Moscow on their farm, headquarters of her mail-order dry-foods business. But even e-commerce hasn't tempered Butters' enthusiasm for simplicity.

2. Visit your local used-goods or consignment shop.

Second-hand stores often buy outright; check to see if they offer pick-up services for larger items. For a nominal fee, a consignment shop will resell your things so you don't have to. The next time you stop in, you just might have cash waiting so you can pick up your next treasure!

3. Check with your local landfill.

Modern liability issues now prevent removing items from the city or county landfills, but when I was a kid, we loved to go with Dad to the dump and rarely came home empty handed. As an adult, I even found my kids' beautiful wooden high-chair on a trip to the dump! My local landfill has plans to add a separate building for items that are just too good to throw away. Items will recirculate through the warehouse—a real trash to treasure hunt!

4. Check out the classifieds.

Many papers have a "freebies" column in their classifieds, and most towns have at least one all-classifieds newspaper that has free or low-cost ads. They're a great place to find gems in the rough, too.

5. Hit the Web.

In addition to Freecycle, you'll find lots of free online sites where you can find or give away items. Craig's List (www.craigslist.org) now has listings for hundreds of cities, and a site called Handylist.org has lots of community forums where you can post free ads. Sites abound—my recent search for "free ads" on Google brought up 17 million results!

6. Swap it up!

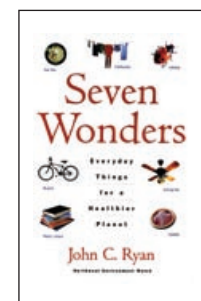
One of the most popular features on The Farmgirl Connection, my online chatroom (www.maryjanesfarm.org), is the Farmgirl Barter—chock full of fabulous farm collectibles. And check out other online sites like www.swapthing.com, which boasts 3.5 million items!

7. Donate to charity.

A great way to pass things on is to donate to your local charitable organizations. Organizations like Goodwill and The Salvation Army often arrange pickups for large items. If you have unwanted office-appropriate clothing, Dress for Success (www.dressforsuccess.org) helps disadvantaged women by providing professional attire for job interviews and as a foundation for ongoing job success.

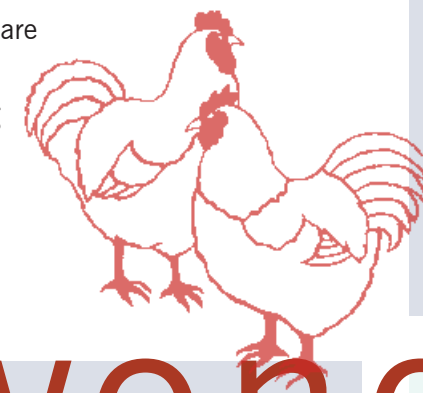
Simple Solutions

for everyday ORGANIC™



In December 1999, a newspaper reporter from Washington called. He was writing a review of the book *Seven Wonders: Everyday Things for a Healthier Planet* by John C. Ryan. Michael Guilfoil of *The Spokesman-Review* newspaper asked me if I had my own "seven wonders." The story that ensued was headlined "Simple Solutions." Here, then, is the continuation of that story. Each issue of *MaryJanesFarm* will feature in detail new solutions, and will give you all the information you need to make them your own.

Solutions from previous issues are available on my website:
www.maryjanesfarm.org



Momma said it best: "Make it do or do without." I'll give you lots of ideas for the modern-day "3 Rs" (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) on the following pages. But if you're finally ready to give that old thing a new home, you can add a new R to your to-do's: Recirculate! Here are seven ways to recirculate. Remember, one woman's trash just might be another woman's treasure!

1. "Freecycle"

(www.freecycle.org)

"CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?? I GOT AN ENTIRE SWING SET FOR FREE!"

There were a few screws to undo before we loaded it onto a trailer and hauled it home to set up in our own backyard. Yet another gas-saving score ... now "the park" is in our backyard! A sandbox is forthcoming and a teeter-totter (made from Freecycled wood). I love Freecycle!

Tasha-Rose, Farmgirl Sister #88

seven wonders