



# Simple Solutions

for everyday ORGANIC™

## 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, Idaho, on their farm, headquarters of her mail-order dry-foods business. But even e-commerce hasn't tempered Butters' enthusiasm for simplicity.

## MaryJane's

### 2. Plant Flowers

Create a native flower garden in a sunny area using plants and flowers that pollinators love and that provide good nectar sources, such as red clover, foxglove, Russian sage, jasmine, and lavender. Honeybees like composite flowers—sunflowers, cosmos, and coneflowers—and culinary herbs like thyme, rosemary, mint, bee balm, and lemon balm. Cluster same-species flowers together, and try to have something blooming throughout the season. Bees tend to prefer blue, purple, white, and yellow flowers; while butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds like yellow, red, and orange flowers.

### 3. Avoid Pesticides

Pesticide misuse is one of the most significant threats to pollinators. Urban and suburban yards make up a large proportion of land undergoing regular pesticide application (often applied by untrained individuals unfamiliar with the chemicals). Avoid pesticides in your own yard, and encourage those getting their hands dirty in the green spaces outside your office, in public parks, or in the yards of your neighborhood to limit their pesticide use, too. It's not only better for pollinators, it's better for children, pets, and your water supply as well!

### 4. Use Honey

Support the honey industry and their research by substituting honey for sugar in the kitchen. For most recipes, use about half as much honey as sugar called for, then reduce liquid by ¼ cup and add ¼ t of baking soda for every cup honey. Honey-baked goods brown and crisp more rapidly than sugar batters, so lower the oven temperature by 25 degrees to compensate. For cookies that call for eggs but no liquid, try adding a bit more flour (about 2 T) and chill batter to retain its shape. And don't forget to buy local honey, available at farmers' markets or your local food co-op.

### 5. Eat Ice Cream!

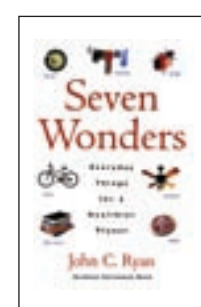
Okay, we'll twist your arm. Haagen Dazs recently launched a new limited-edition flavor of ice cream, Vanilla Honey Bee, dedicated to spreading awareness about the honeybee crisis. The company donates a portion of the proceeds from each pint of it and 11 other "honeybee-dependent flavors" to honeybee and sustainable pollination research. Find out more at their interactive website, [www.helpthehoneybee.com](http://www.helpthehoneybee.com), where you can even make your own animated honeybee, and then "use the little buzzer to help spread the word about the honeybee crisis."

### 6. Bug Someone Else

Pollinators are fragile and easily hurt by humans, but they generally won't bother you if you leave them alone. Instead, bug your family and friends about the importance of pollinators in our food chain. For more information on protecting America's pollinators, see the North American Pollinator Protection Campaign at [www.nappc.org](http://www.nappc.org), or join the pollinator action team at [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org) and get free regular updates on the issue.

### 7. Buy Organic

Organic farmers create pesticide-free, pollinator-friendly environments while providing their local communities with healthy, fresh produce. When you buy organic, you are helping pollinators by keeping pesticides off the fields and by reducing their exposure to genetically modified crops. Many organic farmers are also beekeepers because they know it improves their yields, so when you buy produce from an organic farmer, you're also helping bees.



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](http://www.maryjanesfarm.org)



# seven wonders

### Seven Ways to Help Our Pollinators

The plight of the European honeybee has garnered the public's attention largely because of its crucial role as a crop pollinator. Native bees may not make honey, but they do pollinate, along with bumblebees, beetles, birds, butterflies, and moths—even wasps, flies, and mosquitoes. Wild pollinator populations are also on the decline due to loss of healthy habitat in our overcrowded world. You can do your part to help these other pollinators pick up the slack. Here's how:

#### 1. Resist Perfection

Resist the idea of a totally manicured lawn and garden. Insects benefit from patches of bare ground and areas of brush, grasses, weeds, deadwood, or leaf litter. Allow a portion of your lawn or garden to return to its wild state, where pollinators find food, seek shelter, and breed.