



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.

2. Sleep Outdoors

When manmade walls and concerns close in on you, drag your bed outdoors. You'll get immediate relief from the small stuff that tends to loom larger than life when you're all boxed up. I'll show you how to make a glamping cot—it's a chair, it's a bed, it's portable comfort that goes wherever you go (p. 86). Find more ideas for backyard getaways, a permanent outdoors sleeping canopy, and even a luxurious outdoor bath in my *Outpost* book (p. 46). Let nature fill you with its sweepstakes. You'll wake up a winner.

3. Grow Wild

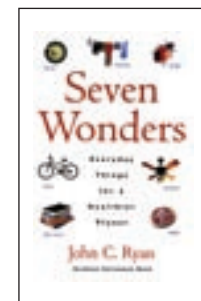
Okay, you eat organic, sleep organic, and wear organic. But your yard might still be a toxic wasteland. Did you know that American lawns use 10 times more chemical pesticides and fertilizers per acre than traditional farmland? Grow wild instead—low-maintenance ground covers, native wildflowers, and rock gardens are great options. Create bird, bee, butterfly, and wildlife habitats, www.nativeseedfarm.com. Or follow the example of green pioneers who are turning their front yards into edible landscapes, p. 64.

4. Dance as if No One Is Watching

I've always equated dancing with happiness. Think about it. On the dance floor, we abandon our cares, let down our defenses, and walk on the wild side. Life is hard work, and dancing pries us loose. At your child's sock hop when you see that banker guy—the one who turned you down for a loan—wiggling his fanny, you can't help but grin and like him. Letting go and dancing is a kind of legitimate intimacy that lingers. Put your left foot in ... do the hokey pokey and turn yourself around ... that's what it's all about.

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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

Seven Ways to Go Wild

Even if it's a settee on the porch, we need it—gotta have it. The wild, that is. Know it, grow it, show it—just let it out.

1. Get Out!

Head to the porch, the park, or the wilderness ... just get out the door. Plan a girlfriend picnic with my no-mess kit sushi bar (p. 95), park the camper in the back 40, get away from it all with Call of the Wild's women-only trips (p. 57), learn to fish with Sisters on the Fly (p. 50) ... all the while sporting "alluring" jewelry you make yourself from flashy fishing tackle (p. 56).

seven wonders

5. Kick Up a Little Sass

On our Farmgirl Connection chatroom, Kelley from Texas had this great idea: "Now that I have my beautiful little vintage travel trailer, I can put my plans in motion for Farmgirls on the Loose—farmgirls who get together for campin', cookin', junkin' ... but here's the kicker: I'd love for it to serve a good purpose!" Kelley goes on to suggest that at each gathering, farmgirls bring donations to food banks, or donate clothes to women's shelters, or pick up trash at campgrounds ... the possibilities are endless.

6. Wear Your Flair

Wear a fancy hat to town, throw on a pretty scarf with your waders, dig out a vintage party dress for your next girlfriend gathering, pin a splashy flower on your coveralls—you get the picture. You'll feel festive and make others smile to boot! See how Sisters on the Fly wear their flair on p. 52.

7. Buy a Glamper

You know you've always wanted one—maybe this is the year! Find an old camper, gut it out, and glamp it up. Frilly curtains, vintage tablecloths, real silver—it's the juxtaposition of rugged and pretty, grit and glam, diesel and darling! All girl, all glam, all grown up! If you have the inclination but not the time, buy one of my adorable little teardrop trailers (p. 91).