



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. Gather Together

When family gathers around a table, something magic is born. Suddenly, as someone passes the potatoes, the stage is set for sharing far more than food alone. Perhaps for the first time all day, gazes meet, and loving ties are stitched anew. The sweet fulfillment of being fed seems to soften the callouses of work and school, creating a sense of safety and inspiring the exchange of news and ideas. Family meals fuel healthier eating habits and happier people. That's what I call celebration!

3. Forage for a Feast

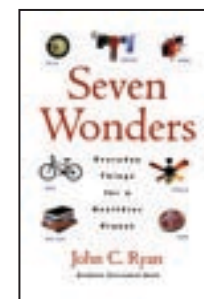
Bestow a woodland bounty upon your table this fall. Think local; think wild. You can create a truly traditional dish by harvesting ingredients that nature provides right outside your door. Autumn offers a cornucopia of wild possibility. Fruits are the perfect pickings for first-time foragers. They're easy to recognize, and they aren't easily confused with anything poisonous. Best of all, their yummy sweetness lends itself to simple baking projects. Gather ideas for how to find and prepare wild wonders at www.wildmanstevebrill.com.

4. Feed a Need

I'll never forget how eagerly Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* rallied when their mother suggested they sacrifice their own Christmas breakfast for the sake of another family in need. They bundled cream, muffins, and buckwheat, carrying them through the cold to neighbors who dearly needed sustenance. When they returned, Alcott wrote, the "angel" women left comfort behind. That's the spirit, isn't it? There really is no better way to pay reverence to food than to prepare it with a hearty dose of generosity.

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 in the magazine section of my website: www.maryjanesfarm.org/Recipes-Patterns-Instructions



seven wonders

5. Pause to Pray

Eating is the perfect opportunity to get in touch with gratitude as we acknowledge the gift of food. Instead of just sitting down and digging in (or worse yet, eating on the run), we can aspire to be fully present at mealtimes. Before taking a bite, pause a moment to appreciate the forces of nature and human effort that contributed to the contents of your meal. It's more than reciting a blessing; it's a deep awareness, spoken or silent, which we cultivate within.

6. Cook Over a Campfire

Eating outdoors tends to evoke a deep, instinctual appetite that makes food taste extraordinary. It's more than just a physical satisfaction; it's the emotion that arises. The deliberate preparation of food beneath open skies can kindle inspiration, romance, and reminiscence of bygone pleasures. From the feral dance of flames to the flavor that rises from food on tendrils of campfire smoke, this is culinary celebration at its purest.

7. Take Your Farm to School

Farm to School programs bring locally farmed food to school-children. They illuminate the path from farm to fork and instill healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. Supplying local produce for school meals and educational activities also provides a direct market for farmers and reduces the impact of transporting food long distances. Find out how to get involved at www.farmtoschool.org.

7 Ways to Celebrate Food

To eat is human; to embrace the art of carefully prepared food is divine! When imbued with love, even the simplest meal can nurture like nothing else. Let's celebrate food at its finest.

1. Challenge Yourself

Food blossoms into fabulous festivity when you dare to try a new recipe. It doesn't require a "special" occasion. Excitement will alight at the tip of your finger as you trace a list of inspiring ingredients. Gather up some fresh goodies and go. Oh, the suspense of the spices! Ah, the satisfaction of success!