



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. Seek Out Simple Tools

Old-fashioned tools offer a sense of neat 'n' tidy that no disposable doodad on the market today can match. Why buy throwaway sweeper pads when a trusty cotton dust mop will work for years to come? Other traditional housecleaning tools include lambs'-wool dusters, metal dustpans, corn brooms, and wire rug beaters (try www.lehmans.com). When you're not using these tools, they can also add a touch of rustic decor to your home—you don't have to hide 'em like you do their plastic counterparts.

3. Clean without Chemicals

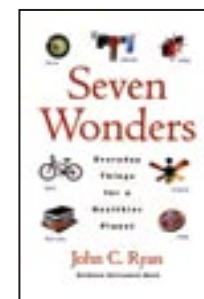
Chemical cleaners tempt us with catchy slogans that promise super-cleanliness and no-hassle convenience, but they have been linked to allergies, skin irritations, breathing problems, and even nerve damage—and children are at higher risk than adults. Your house can sparkle every bit as brightly (and much more safely) when you use natural products that remove stains, freshen, and sanitize without the warnings that come with a skull-and-crossbones label.

4. Pass the Vinegar, Please

Distilled white vinegar kills most mold, bacteria, and viruses. Fill a spray bottle to easily spritz countertops, handles, refrigerator shelves, shower doors, dishes, etc. If your towels start to exude a moldy smell, add a cup of vinegar to the wash. Unlike the dangerous fumes of commercial cleansers, vinegar's odor fades quickly as it dries, leaving the simple smell of clean. Get the nitty-gritty on using vinegar to clean every corner of your home at www.vinegartips.com/cleaning.

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

7 Ways to "GREEN" Your Spring Cleaning

Ah, the balmy tickle of spring is in the air. Time to throw open your windows and beat that dust from your rugs! Relishing the ritual of spring cleaning is a sure way to start fresh.

1. Love Your Laundry

Looking for a natural alternative to dryer sheets? Try Starwest Organic Lavender Dryer Bags. Toss one of these little lovelies in the dryer along with your laundry to control static cling and infuse clothing with the soothing scent of lavender. \$18 for a 24-pack at www.starwest-botanicals.com.

seven wonders

5. Get a Baking Soda Boost

As if vinegar alone isn't amazing enough, it can accomplish even more with a boost from another common kitchen staple: baking soda. When baking soda pairs up with white vinegar, the two form a feisty household cleaner that won't leave you choking on foul fumes. Baking soda is a gentle abrasive that works wonders on sinks, countertops, and even fine china. Try deodorizing drains and garbage disposals by pouring in 1 cup of baking soda followed by 2 cups of boiling vinegar.

6. Put Peroxide to Work

That brown bottle of hydrogen peroxide in your medicine cabinet is an undercover superhero when it comes to removing stains from carpets. Whether a stain is new or old, peroxide has the power to make it vanish. Simply soak stains with straight peroxide and let dry. If stains aren't completely gone, reapply. (Be sure to spot-test your carpet first, and keep peroxide in a dark bottle to retain its magic).

7. Mix Your Own Furniture Polish

Forget the smelly spray polishes you find at the store. Instead, clean and shine your wood furniture with a simple home concoction that's chemical-free and costs less. Mix ¼ cup white vinegar with 1 t jojoba oil. Add a few drops of lemon essential oil for fragrance, and apply with a soft cloth.