



## 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

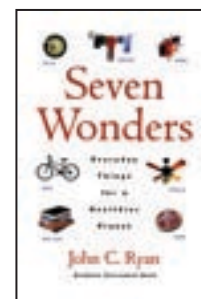
### 7 Ways to Save Water

Conserving water when I worked for the Forest Service on a fire lookout tower wasn't a choice, it was a requirement. Fetching water by hand taught me in no uncertain terms how to make every drop count. I used my bath water to wash my clothes by hand, then I cleaned with it, and after that, I watered my garden with it. Up until the time my children were teenagers, I washed our clothes in a wringer washing machine parked next to our bathtub because I could use a bucket to transfer the still warm, soapy bath water into the wringer's tub to give our clothes a bath. If you want a lesson in gratitude, haul all the water you'll need in a week. The invention of piped water improved our lives, but it also allows us to take water for granted.

This issue's seven solutions came from my friend, Gail Taber, a water saver extraordinaire. Gail says, "My household water conservation began simply, with a five-gallon bucket by the bathtub. One morning, after watching gallons of fresh, clean water go down the drain while waiting for warm water to arrive for my shower, I decided to capture and reuse this precious resource. Next came a kitchen sink water bucket to save water from rinsed or cooked vegetables and fruits. I was stunned to see the amount of water that had previously gone down the drain. My kitchen conservation system now consists of two buckets: one for 'pre-use water,' or water collected directly from the tap while rinsing or waiting for warm water, and one for 're-use water,' like water from boiling pasta or corn on the cob." Following are seven ways Gail puts her water-saving efforts to use. If you have young children in the house, get them involved too, by creating a family "bucket brigade." Each child can have their own color-coded bucket and an assigned task for using their saved water.

# SimpleSolutions

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.

"We never know the worth of water until the well is dry."  
— Thomas Fuller, 1732

### 1. Rinse veggies & fruits

in pre-use water, then re-use the water to give outdoor perennials a drink—double dipping!

### 2. Water container plants

with re-use water. Plants will get the added nutrients from whatever you cooked. Use the "pyramid" watering method (hold or hang small plants over larger ones) to save even more water. Little ones especially enjoy watering their very own plants and get a sense of accomplishment by doing it themselves.

### 3. Wash dainties.

Use pre-use water to hand-wash delicates or refresh a favorite garment, then air-dry. (If you have an abundance of pre-use water, you can also pour it directly into the washing machine to save water on fill-up.)

# seven wonders

Solutions from previous issues are available in the magazine section of my website: [www.maryjanesfarm.org/Recipes-Patterns-Instructions](http://www.maryjanesfarm.org/Recipes-Patterns-Instructions).

**4. Soak feet** in pre-use water for a home-style spa treatment after a long day on your feet. For added benefits, mix in 1 cup epsom salts (magnesium sulfate) and a few drops of your favorite essential oils. According to the Epsom Salt Council, magnesium can ease stress, improve sleep and concentration, help muscles and nerves function properly, regulate the activity of 325+ enzymes, help prevent artery hardening and blood clots, reduce inflammation to relieve pain and muscle cramps, and improve the body's oxygen use. Sulfates help flush toxins, improve absorption of nutrients, form joint proteins and brain tissue, and prevent or ease migraines.

### 5. Wet a face cloth

with pre-use water, then microwave for 20 seconds—you'll have a warm cloth for washing your face without running a drop of water.



### 6. Soak dirty garden gloves or shoes

in pre-use water before throwing them in the washing machine, then re-use the water on outdoor plants.

### 7. Refresh your bird bath.

Re-use bird bath water on non-edible garden plants, then refresh the bird bath with pre-use water from inside.

Find more water-saving tips in *The Green Blue Book: The Simple Water-Savings Guide to Everything in Your Life* by Thomas M. Kostigen (Rodale Books, 2010, \$16.99).