

# 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.



To make card flowers, draw a spiral on an old card and cut along the lines. Roll the spiral around your finger, starting at the outside and working toward the inside. Insert a twig stem through the hole, and voilà ... a Valentine’s Day bouquet!



## MaryJane’s

### 2. Sow Seeds of Love

In Slovenia, Valentine’s Day is traditionally the first day of work in the fields. “St. Valentine brings the keys of roots,” says an old proverb. As seeds are sown on farms, birds are believed to mark the occasion with marriage, and children send handmade boats holding candles downstream to symbolize the end of winter. Celebrate the romance of spring’s impending arrival by sowing your own early garden seeds. For a little spice, try the organic Valentine’s Day mix of red, pink, purple, and white radishes from [www.highmowingseeds.com](http://www.highmowingseeds.com).

### 3. Chic Chocolate

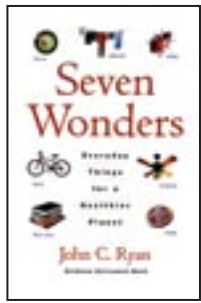
In Japan, a translation error led modern marketers to declare Valentine’s Day as a day women confess their love with a gift of chocolate. *Honmei choco* (“true-feeling chocolates”) are sold at department stores, but many women make their own in order to imbue their creations with handmade affection. To correct the error, candy companies declared March 14 “White Day,” when men are expected to reciprocate with gifts of white chocolate. Hone your own *honmei* with recipes from *Making Artisan Chocolates* by Andrew Garrison Shotts.

### 4. Gloves for Love

In 16th century England, men wore gloves to signify authority, but women soon took charge. If a girl fancied a fellow, she would request a pair of gloves on Valentine’s Day, then wear them on Easter to confirm her affection. Today’s liberal lady might craft a pair of gloves for her love (and one for herself, too). Knitters, search “Craft Hope: Handmade Crafts for a Cause” at [www.craftypod.com](http://www.craftypod.com), and follow the links to the free tutorial. For a simple cut-and-stitch project, try the Pencil-Pleated Wrist Warmers at [www.mayamade.blogspot.com](http://www.mayamade.blogspot.com).

# 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.

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



### 7 Ways to Celebrate

If greeting cards and boxed chocolates are leaving you feeling ho-hum about Valentine’s Day this year, get inspired by the celebratory customs of other countries around the world. Here are seven ways to put an international spin on this special day. Devote yourself to one, or flirt with them all!

#### 1. Put Passion to Paper

In Denmark, couples pen rhyming poems called *gaekkebrev*. The admirer writes a rhyme on a delicately decorated paper cut-out, but instead of signing her name, she leaves only a series of dots. If her intended guesses her identity, she might give him an egg for Easter. Experiment with the passionate paper-cutting techniques in *Paper Cuts* by Taylor Hagerty.

## seven wonders

### 5. Send Sweet Dreams

In rural England during the 1700s, women placed bay leaves in red sachets under their pillows on Valentine’s Eve in hopes of dreaming of future husbands. According to folklore, a woman should wear a clean nightgown turned inside out, lie down, and pray, “Good Valentine, be kind to me. In dreams, let me my true love see.” Create your own “No-Sew Sachets” with instructions at [www.casasugar.com](http://www.casasugar.com). Fill with dried bay leaves, attach a note about the English superstition, and give one to each of your single girlfriends.

### 6. Tie the Knot

In Scotland, Valentine’s Day has long been celebrated with a festival in which singles unite by drawing names from a hat. Lasting lovers might then offer one another “true love knots.” Tied with decorative cord or cast in metal, the intricate knots of the Scottish people symbolize unity, devotion, and everlasting love. Learn to tie your own love knots at [www.fusionknots.com](http://www.fusionknots.com).

### 7. Stitch with Sisters

In China, Valentine’s Day falls during *Qi Xi*, an ancient festival not only for lovers, but also for girls. Pursuing wisdom and dexterity, young women historically participated in needlework competitions to determine skill and intellect. Gather your girlfriends for a fiber fest and learn the art of silk embroidery with the help of *Painting with a Needle* by Young Yang Chung.