



## Life is a Picnic Purse

### YOU'LL NEED:

2 rattan paper plate holders  
spray paint  
long belt  
needle and thread  
vintage costume jewelry  
glue gun

1. Spray-paint plate holders and let dry (this will strengthen rattan).
2. Lay belt edge along one plate holder rim. Determine desired buckle placement, then hand-stitch belt edge to plate holder rim, two-thirds of the way around. Knot thread ends securely.
3. Place second plate holder on opposite edge of belt and attach in the same manner as the first.
4. Gussy up the outside of the purse by gluing on embellishments.



## 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. Check Your Closet

The easiest place to look for vintage patterns, tantalizing textures, and gorgeous garnishes is within the depths of your very own closet. "Shop" for items that you haven't worn in years, or those that you tend to try on but hang right back up because they just don't fit right. These garments may not feel flattering as-is, but imagine how they could be reconstructed. Don't be afraid to snip and sew your way to transformation. Experimenting with unwanted clothing is the first step to becoming a deconstructed design diva.

### 3. Sweaters to Skeins

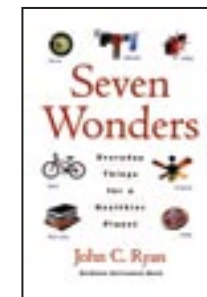
Who among the fashion-fevered doesn't have an unquenchable yearning for yarn? Delightfully dyed cottons, wondrously warm wools—you know you love 'em. But you might not have considered old sweaters as a source for some of the most beautiful (and economical) skeins of yarn. With a smidgen of effort, you can unravel an outdated or secondhand sweater and end up with an array of yarn to put toward new and exciting projects. For instructions and detailed photos, check out "How to Unravel a Sweater to Recycle Yarn" at [handspunartyarn.com](http://handspunartyarn.com).

### 4. Bring on the Bling

Reconstructed fashion is no longer restricted to the sewing rooms of frugal moms and old-fashioned farmgirls. Runway models and celebrities are buzzing about "upcycling" ditched duds into haute couture. At the 2010 Golden Globe Awards, Livia Giuggioli, wife of actor Colin Firth, walked the red carpet in a stunning upcycled wedding dress, redesigned to suit the occasion. Want to try? Design darling costume jewelry from crystal chandeliers or create beautifully bejeweled purses from old cowboy boots (see our "Sentimental Journeys" June/July 2010 issue).

# 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 Upcycle Your Wardrobe

Newfangled "eco" fabrics are all the rage, but if you'd like to get in on the ground floor of the greenest fashion trend going, think UPCYCLE! Reconstruct your own retro-style wardrobe or design clothing to sell on the green market with these 7 simple ideas for upcycling with flair ...

#### 1. Shop Secondhand

Embark on your upcycling adventure by heading for your local thrift store, where you will discover an untapped wealth of textiles. Picture the potential in abandoned curtains, dust ruffles, boots, belts, and clothing galore. Stitch cotton or lacy tablecloths into adorable summer skirts (see our "Raising Jane" Aug/Sept 2008 issue). Socks can become stuffed animals, and belts are reborn as bracelets.

# seven wonders

### 5. Waste Not, Want Not

During WWI, clothing manufacturers condensed production and urged designers to create styles using less fabric and extraneous decoration. Government campaigns encouraged citizens to "Make economy fashionable, lest it become obligatory." In today's economy, we can relate. But that doesn't mean we have to downgrade to dowdy. Many accessories needed to doll-up your handmade designs are right at your fingertips. Look to existing garments for lace, elastic, zippers, pockets, buttons, embroidered patches, tassels, beads, and beyond.

### 6. Save Your Scraps

The average American throws away more than 68 pounds of textiles per year, but just a generation ago, it was a different story. Clothes that were too weathered to be worn were recycled within the home. Save your fabric scraps and repurpose them as quilts, rag rugs, pillow stuffing, and cleaning cloths. Another idea: sell "pre-cut quilting squares" on eBay.

### 7. Get Inspired

There are many ways to repurpose fabrics and fibers, and it can be overwhelming to pin down your first project. Find ideas, resources, and DIY tutorials at [threadbanger.com](http://threadbanger.com), [craftingagreenworld.com](http://craftingagreenworld.com), [upcycleyourclothes.com](http://upcycleyourclothes.com), and [love2upcycle.blogspot.com](http://love2upcycle.blogspot.com). If you're looking to upcycle your hobby into a lucrative business, check out "Upcycling Becomes a Treasure Trove for Green Business Ideas" at [www.entrepreneur.com/article/219310](http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/219310).