

Here is where I'll share my ideas, gardening tips, crafting, sewing, carpentry, home decorating, entertaining ideas, and simple solutions for everyday organic. The inspiration for this magazine was born when a woman told me, "I wish I could have your life!" I thought, "Why not?"



Simple Solutions
for everyday ORGANIC™

MaryJane's

2 Does it Dissolve?

Perform a quick test of your honey's purity by dropping a spoonful into a glass of cool water and watching what happens. Pure honey won't readily dissolve in water. It will stick together in a clump and sink to the bottom of the glass. However, if the honey is impure, it will start to dissolve almost immediately. Many honey imposters are watered down already, and common honey additives like syrup of jaggery (made from sugar cane, date palms, or coconut) will "melt" and give the water a cloudy appearance.

3 All Hail the Hexagon!

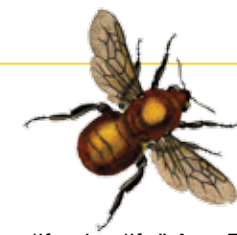
You know I love hexagons, and I've found yet another reason to be smitten with this six-sided shape: It reveals the purity of honey. Place a spoonful of honey (from a just-opened bottle so it's not contaminated) on a light-colored plate that will hold a bit of water. Cover the honey with cold water and swirl the plate for about 30 seconds. If the honey is pure, you will see a honeycomb pattern of hexagons begin to appear across the surface of the honey. Continue swirling, and the hexagonal cells will multiply. Hurray for hexagons!

4 The Color of Honey

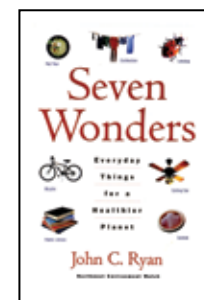
Americans tend to prefer light-colored honey, but color is not an indicator of purity or quality. "Honey color is a result of the floral nectars that go into it. For the most part, lighter honeys are mild flavored, while darker honeys are stronger," explains HoneyBeeSuite.com. "From a human health perspective, darker honey is usually higher in antioxidants than lighter honey. For example, in a study done at the University of Illinois, [dark] buckwheat honey was found to have 20 times as many antioxidants as [light] sage honey."

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.



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: MaryJanesFarm.org/SimpleSolutions.

honey ... facts, tips, and tests

There's nothing sweeter than a drizzle of honey, but is your go-to brand the real McCoy? Here are seven scam-busting facts, tips, and tests to make sure your honey is pure.

Honey Hacking

Last year, *Food Safety News* found that a third of all low-cost, mass-marketed honey on store shelves was imported from Asia and contaminated with lead and antibiotics. Cheap honey from dubious sources is also likely to contain fillers like sucrose syrup, sugar syrup, partial invert cane syrup, corn syrup, glucose syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, beet sugar, and artificial sweeteners. FoodSafetyNews.com

seven wonders

1 Labels Can Lie

Unfortunately, a label claiming "pure honey" doesn't guarantee that the contents aren't diluted with water, high-fructose corn syrup, or other additives. Companies aren't legally required to reveal how much "pure honey" their products contain. According to the FDA, the one test that authenticates commercial honey is the presence of pollen. How much pollen is present in the average container of honey? *Food Safety News* tested more than 60 samples of store-bought honey for pollen and found that 76% had no pollen in them at all!

2 Brands to Ban

Of the honey samples tested by *Food Safety News*, these brands contained no trace of pollen: Busy Bee Clover Honey, Great Value Clover Honey, Kroger Pure Clover Honey, MEL-O 100% Pure Honey, Rite Aid Honey, Safeway Clover Honey, Sue Bee Clover Honey, and Western Family Clover Honey. Find the complete list at FoodSafetyNews.com/honey-without-pollen-food-safety-news1.pdf.

3 Home Sweet Home

The best way to assure purity is to buy local, raw, organic honey. Because it's produced by nearby bees, you not only have the advantage of knowing your beekeeper, but you also reap the benefits of the immune-stimulating properties in honey that help your body adapt to your specific environment. Find local honey at LocalHarvest.org.