

# SimpleSolutions

for everyday ORGANIC™

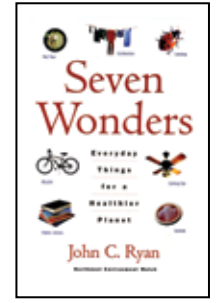
Here is where I'll share my ideas, gardening tips, crafting, sewing, carpentry, home decorating, entertaining ideas, and simple solutions for everyday organic. The inspiration for this magazine was born when a woman told me, "I wish I could have your life!" I thought, "Why not?"



## 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](http://MaryJanesFarm.org/SimpleSolutions).

## 7 solutions for food security

In our grandmothers' day, "food security" was simply a matter of growing, gathering, and storing for the seasons ahead. Today, the concept is a little more complicated. With harvest season at hand, here are seven ways to foster old-fashioned food security in your community.

### Save Your Seeds

Propagating your own seeds is crucial for food security. Sounds simple, but there are tricks to saving seeds that can make or break next year's harvest. Read all about seed-saving on p. 56, then get seed-specific information at [HowToSaveSeeds.com](http://HowToSaveSeeds.com).

## MaryJane's

**2 Share with Neighbors**  
The Local Food Security Project in Wendell, Massachusetts, is a neighbor-to-neighbor network that strives to bolster local production, support new gardeners, and encourage collaboration among established operations. Consider implementing some of their strategies—labor shares, work parties, mentorships, cooperative purchasing, materials recycling, seed swaps, seed banking, and community gardening—to seed this sort of effort in your area ([WendellMass.us/community/wendell-local-food-project.html](http://WendellMass.us/community/wendell-local-food-project.html)).

**3 Start a Coop Co-op**  
Food cooperatives needn't be limited to veggies. The Lafayette Community Garden near Oakwood, California, opened a "public" chicken coop in January. The coop's self-composting litter system requires minimal maintenance and helps fertilize the gardens. Project manager Maggie Archibald's team of volunteers tends the flock as needed. "We feed them grubs from the garden, they get leftover greens (that's how you get omega-3 yolks), and they give us eggs." Get the full scoop on the coop at [LafayetteCommunityGarden.org](http://LafayetteCommunityGarden.org).

**4 Compost as a Community**  
A collective composting effort builds a more sustainable future by feeding community plots, local farms, and individual gardens. In Rochester, New York, a group of garden-minded guys and gals launched Community Composting to meet the need. They supply bins for food scraps that are picked up weekly and delivered to a processing facility, where the food waste is turned into compost, animal feed, and biofuels. Visit [CommunityComposting.org](http://CommunityComposting.org) for more info.

# seven wonders

**5 Take the Pledge**  
As you'll read in our Newsroom section on p. 31, a group of sustainable agriculture advocates at the University of Wisconsin-Madison penned a pledge earlier this year to keep seeds patent-free for all people to grow, breed, and share for perpetuity. The pledge is now printed on all Open Source Seed Initiative certified-organic seed packets. Participate in the pledge by purchasing an introductory seed assortment (zucchini, kale, peppers, lettuce, and more) of 15 packets for \$25, [OpenSourceSeedInitiative.org/store](http://OpenSourceSeedInitiative.org/store).

**6 Swap Seeds Online**  
Food security is all about localizing food production, but it also helps to have a diverse supply of seeds to work with. You can help bring new varieties of heirloom crops into your community's seed pool by participating in online seed swaps. A free site called [HeirloomSeedSwap.com](http://HeirloomSeedSwap.com) hosts seed swapping plus sourdough starter, cheese culture, and egg swapping, too!

**7 Pass the Torch**  
Perhaps the most important factor in sustainable food security is preparing future generations for the task—and there's no app for that. Start by switching off electronics and plugging kids into gardens and kitchens. Given the opportunity, kids are gung-ho about growing and preserving food. Teach them hands-on skills with the free guide at [Extension.UMD.edu/Learn/Grow-it-Eat-it-Preserve-it-Food-Preservation-Curriculum](http://Extension.UMD.edu/Learn/Grow-it-Eat-it-Preserve-it-Food-Preservation-Curriculum).