

# MaryJane's Cluck™

Monthly Sisterhood Newsletter ... where the braggin' begins!

December 2011

Life made us FRIENDS, MaryJanesFarm made us SISTERS!

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{HELLO FROM SISTER #1} with MaryJane

## Merit Badge Ornaments

When Farmgirl of the Year 2011 Kristina Nelson (FieldsofThyme) posted on our chatroom that she'd finally figured out what to do with all the Merit Badges she'd earned, I hopped right on it. "Brilliant idea," I thought. I ran with her idea (straight to my crafting room), stopping along the way to pick up some used canning-jar lids. I not only drilled tiny holes in the top of each lid for a wire hook, but also in the bottoms, just in case I decided to attach extra baubles or maybe other ornaments or a string of popcorn, cranberries, or buttons. Oh my! Once I got started, it was hard to stop. The ideas flowed like spring rain off an ol' barn roof. To size (and color) your hexagon badges to fit a large or small lid, follow our tutorial on **page 32**, making them 2 5/8" and 2", respectively.

I feel an entire Merit Badge tree coming on. Tree decorating contest, anyone?

On another note, I have some fantastic news to share. We are finally ...

continued ...





## ... continued

... ready to launch **GirlGab.com** (opposite page). Here's how it will work. As a service to our Sisters, we started a **blog "roll call"** a few years ago. It was an impressive list initially, but since then, social media hubs like Facebook have exploded in popularity and updates to our list kinda went by-the-by. Well, not anymore. We're feeling like the dust has settled and it's time to find a place we can call our own.

Members of our Sisterhood who blog will be featured daily on GirlGab. All you have to do is send an e-mail to us at [girlgab@maryjanesfarm.com](mailto:girlgab@maryjanesfarm.com) requesting to participate by giving us your blog address.

VOILA! We'll go grab a teaser sentence or two and maybe a photograph and send readers your way. It's as simple as that. Eventually, we'll have an exhaustive list (official roster) of Sister bloggers that we'll send alerts out for daily using our master e-mail list. (Of course, CeeJay [CJ] Armstrong, Farmgirl of the Year 2010, was the first Sister to make sure we had her current blog address on file.)



We're here and READY for your blog addresses! [girlgab@maryjanesfarm.com](mailto:girlgab@maryjanesfarm.com)

Also, I'm feeling mighty grateful this morning for the women who have shared their knowledge and expertise over the years on our chatroom, launched in 2004. I can't tell you how many times I've learned MORE than a thing or two or laughed right out loud. I always start my day by checking in. With titles like Chicken Feet Broth, Difference Between Old Hay and Straw By Sight?, Fixing a Treadle Sewing Machine, Campaign Raw Milk, and more, I value immensely how much I've learned from you, the sheer volume of the important knowledge you've shared, and how many people you've impacted, making our world a whole lot better ... and smaller, and connected.

Have a grateful day,

*Mary Jane* 



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## Food styling. [Read more>>](#)

by author/blogger here | [GirlGab.com blogger](#)



We are **Sisters** — a sisterhood of farmgirls. We're country, we're city, and every texture and stripe in between. It's not all about where we live, but how we live. We get together to **Chat online**, form in-the-flesh **Farmgirl Chapters**, and even virtual chapters called **Hemhouses**. We love to share stories, to craft, to garden, and to nurture the next generation of **Farmerettes** and **Young Cultivators**. And when our work is done, we get together to go camping, fishing, and "glamping" as **Farmgirls on the Loose**.

*JOIN US. [Click Here.](#)*



## What's HOT on GirlGab.com

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### Today's GirlGab.com Featured Blogs



[Writing is Our Therapy](#)



[Enemy, Thine Name is Cake Pops](#)



[The Comfort of Apple Crisp](#)



[Single? Then You Know The Pity Face](#)



[Manicure Monday: Turquoise Crackle](#)



[End of Week 1: Human Lab Rat Testing](#)



[I Did Not Cause My Cancer](#)



**ChillOver. Recipes**

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MARYJANE'S SIGNATURE  
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**EDEN.**



# Each Other

In the Shelter of Each Other



According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:  
**EACH OTHER** | FARM KITCHEN | GARDEN GATE | STITCHING & CRAFTING ROOM | MAKE IT EASY | OUTPOST | CLEANING UP



Megan Rae (Sister #2) grew up “on the farm”—MaryJanesFarm. She attended Gonzaga University and received a bachelor’s degree in Journalism. After marrying her college sweetheart, they moved to Kansas and bought their first home on a cobblestone street. Her love for writing, editing, and well, her Mom, finally brought her back to the farm. Raising her 5-year-old and 2-year-old farmgirls and working alongside her husband, mother, and family is the perfect lifestyle mix for Megan. She rounds it out with travel across the country to visit her five dearest college girlfriends who she loves with all her heart (they’ve all been in each other’s weddings), and one of her favorite farmgirls that she met when she lived in Kansas (scheduled around working the cows, of course).

## I Sew Lucky

I’m getting there ... I may spend the rest of my evenings and weekends covered in glitter, paint, Mod Podge, fabric, yarn, etc., but I think I’ll be gifting everyone on my list something handmade! Even if a few of them might look a little like my 5-year-old made them.

And if we’re working on handmade, shouldn’t Santa be delivering some handmade items as well? I’m pretty sure that Santa loves Etsy too!

Here’s one last thought on a perfect gift for someone you love—either for the stocking hanging on the mantle, for garnishing the appetizer you’ve brought the hostess of the holiday party, or snuggled beneath the tree.

I don’t necessarily think any of my family or friends have a bookend or doorstopper on their list, but it’s one of those endlessly useful items, and running across some perfectly adorable ones make it even better!

April Foss has been making these precious owls and foxes for a little over three years. She started out as a stay-at-home mom in love with scrapbooking. But then she inherited a sewing machine, and with perfectly aligned seamstress skills, she began sharing her talents at craft shows. Her first six months at Etsy, she almost threw in the towel. But she persevered (a skill she may have learned from having five little ones at home) and her Etsy shop has flourished, thanks to the support of folks like us.

Doorstops and bookends aren’t her only owls and foxes. She also has an array of mini owl ornaments and banners for every holiday, as well as a great selection of plush stuffed animal owls and foxes. She picks the perfect combination of fabrics and really does sew them flawlessly.

I know I have an owl doorstop on my Christmas list, and I can’t wait to gift owl ornaments to a few friends very deserving of something handmade, well built, loved, and adorable!

If you’re feeling the same, visit April at [www.aprilfoss.etsy.com](http://www.aprilfoss.etsy.com) and [www.isewlucky.blogspot.com](http://www.isewlucky.blogspot.com) ... and happy, happy holidays!

Meg





{EACH OTHER} with Megan Rae | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {EACH OTHER} category, [CLICK HERE](#)

# MARYJANESFARM







According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:

EACH OTHER | **FARM KITCHEN** | GARDEN GATE | STITCHING & CRAFTING ROOM | MAKE IT EASY | OUTPOST | CLEANING UP

**{FARM KITCHEN}** with Alyson Oüten | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our **{FARM KITCHEN}** category, [CLICK HERE](#)



Alyson Oüten (Sister #100) is a farmgirl, trapped in a city-girl career. A two-time Emmy-award-winning reporter, Alyson spent 20 years in the hustle and bustle of television news. Alyson recently hung up her microphone and parlayed her professional experiences into a new career as Corporate Communication Strategist for the international semiconductor company, Micron Technology. Alyson lives in a 1910 Craftsman-style bungalow in downtown Boise. She spends as much time as possible cooking for friends and preening and pruning her cottage garden. Alyson is a regular guest at our wall-tent bed and breakfast, where she soaks up our little piece of paradise in a bath under the stars. "It's my happy place!" she says.

## Cookies and Martinis

What a perfect way to kick off the holidays! My friend hosts an annual all-female "Cookie and Martini" party. Not only is this the best of both worlds when it comes to life's simple pleasures, but the event benefits a different local organization each year—from a small-town fire department to a women's shelter to the Food Bank.

It's a \$25 donation per person, plus, you're required to bring three dozen cookies. Here's the beauty of the latter contribution: At the end of the night, you're given a to-go container and encouraged to collect dozens of cookies that fellow attendees brought. Bingo ... your holiday cookie baking is done in one fell swoop!

The collection of cookies brought to this event is varied and impressive. There is a competition component to the party as well, but it's usually overshadowed by the handsome bartenders making fruity martinis for the ladies.

This year, I didn't go for the glitz and glamour of a festively decorated cookie ... I went straight for flavor-packed, bite-sized morsels. While they didn't win a beauty contest, they certainly vied for Miss Congeniality.

I hate to give my holiday cookie secret away, because it's something for which I've become a bit famous, and to reveal the true motivation and simplicity of this secret is ... well ... a little embarrassing. Okay (deep breath) here it is: Take your favorite oatmeal cookie recipe and follow it precisely, *until* it asks you to put in the requisite nuts and/or raisins. At that point (or preferably sooner), go to your pantry or refrigerator and go crazy! Oatmeal cookies are the perfect palette on which to paint totally unique and original cookies.

For this event (and I am not just making this up for the sake of a story ... this is true), I opened my fridge and pulled out leftover ingredients from previous baking projects: coconut, chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, white chocolate chips, currants, walnuts, and a little baggie of crystalized ginger. Now, don't just dump it all in the oatmeal batter ... you have to be a little strategic here. I didn't like the idea of raisins and ginger and peanut butter chips mixing and mingling in one cookie.





## Featured Recipe

So I divided my batter and created two separate “special” recipes. In one: white chocolate chips, ginger, and coconut. In the other: chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, currants, and walnuts (which I toasted a bit in a skillet on the stove first).

One word: *delicious!*

Another tip, especially during the holidays: Make the cookies small. They look a little more charming and a little less sinful to those watching their calories.







# Garden

Bloom Where You're Planted

# Gate



According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:  
EACH OTHER | FARM KITCHEN | **GARDEN GATE** | STITCHING & CRAFTING ROOM | MAKE IT EASY | OUTPOST | CLEANING UP

**{GARDEN GATE}** with Mary Ann Newcomer | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our **{GARDEN GATE}** category, [CLICK HERE](#)



Mary Ann Newcomer, (Sister #246) is a MaryJane Farmgirl, living in Boise, the capital of Idaho. Her great grandparents' homestead was established in 1899 on the Palouse prairie and is still in the family. She learned to cook, garden, can, and sew with her grandmother. Never without a garden or, at the very least, a shelf of plants in an apartment, she followed her passion to become an Advanced Master Gardener, a director of the Idaho Botanical Gardens, and a scribe, scout, and speaker for all things gardening.

## Mother Nature

Mother Nature is a fabulous decorator. Just look around you for inspiration. This last weekend, I came across bundles of wild rose hips for sale. It made me think of all the good stuff in the garden that can be used to decorate for the holidays. Here's a list:

Red twig dogwood branches

Dried branches/sprays of rosehips

Dried dark seed heads of black-eyed Susans

Curly willow branches

Dried hydrangea blossoms

Dried fruits: sliced quince, orange slices, limes, apples, lemons, depending on your color theme.

Branches pruned from evergreens and from broadleaf evergreens, such as bay laurel. If blue is your color, check out the boughs of junipers with their lovely clusters of frosted blue berries.

Berries of all kinds. I especially like the orange-red berries of heavenly bamboo, *nandina domestica*, for Thanksgiving, and then I change them out for Christmas. Orange does not say Christmas to me.

Apples and pomegranates: I poke a hole in the bottom of these, using a screwdriver, then I stick them on a piece of doweling or a sturdy branch and place them in the arrangement like a beautiful flower. You can do the same with the fantastic lime-green osage oranges.

Silvers: the soft velvet of artemesias such as Powis Castle or lamb's ears add a really lovely texture to arrangements. Dusty millers are good choices too.

Pheasant tail feathers are a dramatic addition to naturalistic arrangements and look especially good with bare branches and evergreen boughs.







{GARDEN GATE} with Mary Ann Newcomer | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {GARDEN GATE} category, [CLICK HERE](#)

Mosses and moss-covered branches in all shades of green.

I really like the long trailing garlands of ivy—green is good, or gather those that have taken on a bronze cast with the cold. You can keep these a little fresher by tucking the ends into corsage tubes with water. Tubes for corsages are available at craft stores and from your local florist. You will only need a few of them.

The added benefit of gleaned decorations from your garden? You are pruning as you go! So whether you are decorating your mantle, a holiday tree, the table, a sideboard, or the pots on your front porch, see what you can gather from your garden, the forest, or the field. Mother Nature just keeps on providing.



# MARYJANESFARM





According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:  
EACH OTHER | FARM KITCHEN | GARDEN GATE | **STITCHING & CRAFTING ROOM** | MAKE IT EASY | OUTPOST | CLEANING UP

{STITCHING & CRAFTING} with Rebekka Boysen-Taylor | to earn a Sisterhood badge in this category, [CLICK HERE](#)



Rebekka Boysen-Taylor, (Sister #40) was born in Spokane, Washington, right around the time Mount St. Helens blew her top. She studied Geography at Portland State University and taught grade school in the Bronx and inner-city Los Angeles. She lives with her family on the Palouse. As a stay-at-home mama to two organically growing little ones, Rebekka rounds out her organic lifestyle by volunteering at the Moscow Food Co-op, working as an instructor for MaryJane's Pay Dirt Farm School, embracing a DIY ethic, winning blue ribbons at the county fair, and living simply.

## My Forgotten Sampler

Three years ago, I began an embroidery sampler after seeing Meg's in the Raising Jane issue of *MaryJanesFarm* (Aug-Sept 2008). I love the colors that Meg used, and the beehive in the middle is a perfect symbol for her pleasantly busy family.

My sampler got off to a nice start when I found a piece of old linen and stitched the borders along with our family name. I left the sampler sitting on my bedside table for a few months, and then I must have tucked it away. Last year, I found the sampler in a pile of fabric, and late one fall evening, I added the rolling hills and apple tree. Being so close to finishing my sampler, I was perplexed as to what I would put in the remaining space.

On a late summer camping trip this year, I decided to finish it up. I embroidered our family and chickens along the top, and voila! The wonderful thing about my taking so long is that the sampler contains so much of what actually happened during the three years it took to complete. I improved my embroidery skills. We settled into our home here on the Palouse with its rolling hills and a forgotten apple tree dropping red fruit over the side fence. Our backyard became home to three sweet chickens, and you can see in the picture that Pippi was the first to lay an egg. The details contained in my sampler are there because I took my time. I am used to deadlines, and this project was quite the opposite.

As the hustle and bustle of another year's end keeps you busy, take some time to start your own sampler—with no completion date in mind. If you look at **Meg's Embroidery Sampler**, you will see her gorgeous needlework along with an easy to follow stitch guide. When you are finally ready to set your needle down and declare your sampler complete, frame it as a testament to your own patience—in these busy times, it is indeed a great virtue!

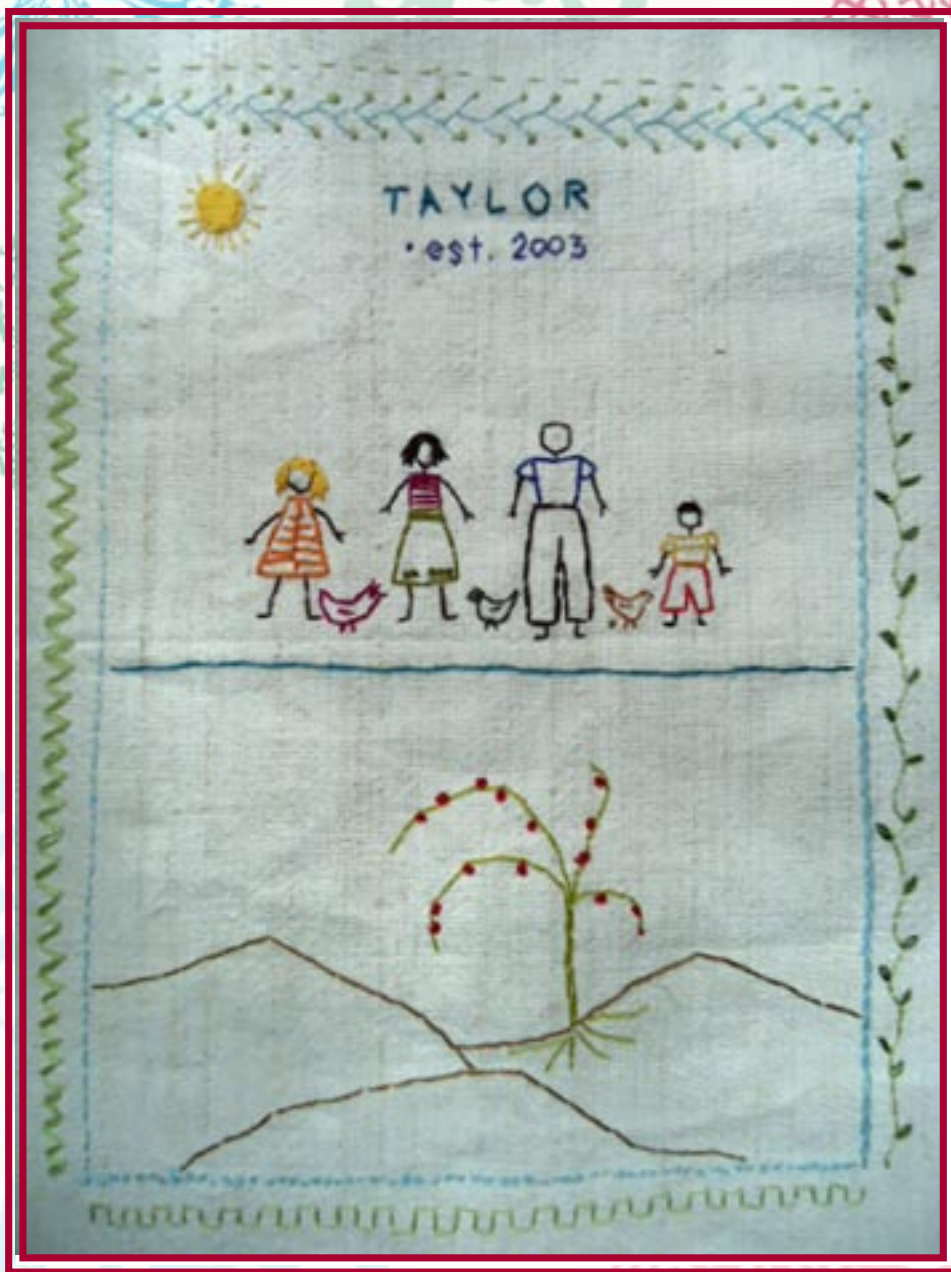






{STITCHING & CRAFTING} with Rebekka Boysen-Taylor | to earn a Sisterhood badge in this category, [CLICK HERE](#)

# MARYJANESFARM







According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:  
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**{MAKE IT EASY}** with Shery Jespersen | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our **{MAKE IT EASY}** category, [CLICK HERE](#)



Shery Jespersen (Sister #753) is a Wyoming cattle rancher who's been horse-crazy all of her life. Shery is a leather and lace cowgirl. Her other interests include "junktiques," creating eclectic "make do" arts and crafts, collecting antique china, and cultivating mirth.

## Decorative Skate

Once upon a time, kids played outside in the winter. We even liked it. I thought it was torture to be trapped inside because of rain. But, snow and cold, *that* was a different story! We bundled up and stayed out until we couldn't stand it any longer. We would then head into the house to warm up and wait for our mittens to dry (on the heat register). Then, we'd head back out.

What did we play? Well, there wasn't a name for most of our rollicking, as I recall, we just played! If the snow was deep and firm enough, we carved forts out of the drifts. Conditions had to be just right for that, though. However, here in the north country, we never had a problem with the ice-skating pond staying frozen. A local rancher dug out a nice, *big* one with heavy machinery. It was wide, shallow, and safe. The local fire department filled it. Us kids kept a close eye on the project, and just as soon as the ice was right, we were on it! Nobody gave us a ride to the pond. That was also back when kids walked to where they were going ... with our skates flung over our shoulders. Our snow pants went Zzz-Zzz-Zzz as we went.

The rancher laid down a row of old tires for us so that we could sit down on them and put our skates on. Another pile of tires was left at the far end of the pond. A tire was set on fire each day or evening so that we could warm up. Ok, ya gotta remember that was back when folks could do such things—not that it was a good idea. They burned slow and we would rotisserie ourselves when we got cold ... turning the cold side to the heat and repeating the process until our clothing was hot. I remember arriving back home from skating on cold evenings and Mom would march me straight to the bathtub. The thick, black smoke from the tire fire made my hair look positively smudgy and left black rings around my nostrils. Ah yes, those were the good old days.

My old white skates came to me wrapped in shiny Christmas foil. I still have them, but they're in retirement. Such fond memories. I can remember shouting to Grandpa one cold Saturday to watch me skate-jump over a barrel stuck in the ice. He had come down to check on me in his old pickup truck. My skates used to hold small, often cold, feet. Now they hang on a wreath, dressed with a bow, filled with greens and warm memories.





{ MAKE IT EASY } with Shery Jespersen | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our { MAKE IT EASY } category, [CLICK HERE](#)

**You'll need:** One skate

A sprig of evergreens  
and holly (real or artificial)

A pair of old socks

Laces (if needed)

A ribbon bow (tied with wire)

Round bells (I used four 3/4" bells)

Fine florist wire

**Directions:**

1. Wire the bells together rather loosely; tie the end into a hole low in the skate, letting the bells cascade downward. Stuff the socks securely down into one of the skates, laying them to outside. Then, poke the greens and holly picks down into the skate also. Wire the ribbon bow down into and onto one of the sprigs of greens.
2. Lace up the skate, good and snug, tie in a knot, and leave the extra to make a hang-loop (you choose the length). It is ready to hang on a door, a wreath, or on an old sled.

If you don't want to scour secondhand shops for old skates, go online and try eBay. If you happen to have a useable pair on hand, this method of decorating them won't hinder their usage since there is no glue involved.

If your skate no longer has laces, use a length of 1/2" wide checkered ribbon instead. Be sure the ribbon is plenty long—it takes quite a bit more than you think. Tape the ends of the ribbon so that you can thread the ribbon through the holes.

*Oh So Cute!*







Irene Wolansky (Sister #1144) is the Marketing Director at Mountain Rose Herbs. Born and raised on the Oregon coast, Irene spent her childhood learning about beekeeping, growing and preserving fruits and vegetables, building forts in the forest, and going on adventures with her dog. She has many interests, which include making her own body care products, mushroom harvesting, gardening, arts and crafts projects, nature photography, mead and beer making, camping, herbal medicine, baking, traveling, hiking, and spending time with her boyfriend and friends. **Click here** to visit Mountain Rose Herbs on the Web.

## Herbal Culinary Infusions

The mere thought of oils, vinegars, butters, and salts infused with the essence of savory herbs is enough to make the taste buds swoon. Simple to concoct, these preparations are eminently useful for creating flavorful dressings, marinades, rubs, beverages, vinaigrettes, sauces, and so much more. When packaged into pretty glass bottles or jars with a label, they make a perfect gift that anyone is sure to enjoy. Just imagine giving a basket filled with herbal infused provisions for the holidays, or adorning your table with gorgeous bottles of infused vinegars, oils, herbal butters, and flavorful salts. What fun!

Almost any aromatic or flavorful organic herb can be used when making infusions. Popular choices are: allspice, Anise, Basil, Caraway seeds, Cardamom, Cayenne, Celery seeds, Chili Peppers, Chives, Chive blossoms, Cilantro, Cinnamon, Cloves, Coriander, Cumin, Dill, Fennel seeds, Garlic, Ginger root, Lavender flowers, Lemon Balm, Lemon peel, Lemon Verbena, Marjoram, Mustard seeds, Nasturtiums, Onion, Orange peel, Oregano, Parsley, Peppercorns, Peppermint, Rose petals, Rosemary, Summer or Winter Savory, Tarragon, or Thyme.

### Infused Vinegar

*When vinegar is infused with herbs, it adds a special twist to salad dressings, marinades, dipping sauces, vinaigrettes, and any other recipe utilizing vinegar.*

- Vinegar: Distilled white vinegar, apple cider vinegar, wine vinegar, or rice vinegar. Use milder vinegars when infusing delicate herbs and stronger flavored vinegars for robust herbs.
- Organic herbs, fresh or dried (see list above).



**How to:** Start by sanitizing a glass bottle or jar.

**Sanitizing glass containers:** Wash bottles or jars thoroughly in warm, soapy water. Place glass containers in a pot of hot water, bring to a boil, and gently boil for 10 minutes. Remove from boiling water and place inverted jars on a clean towel to dry.





Wash fresh herbs and pat dry (omit this step if using dried herbs). Place the herbs or spices into the sterilized glass container and fill with vinegar of your choice. 3 T dried herbs/spices or 3–4 sprigs of fresh herbs per pint of vinegar is usually a good amount. However, this depends upon the strength of the herb, spice, and vinegar used, so experiment with more or less. Cover the container tightly with a non-corrodible, nonmetallic lid, and place in a dark, cool place to steep. Allow the vinegar to infuse for 2–4 weeks, or until the desired flavor has developed. Once finished, strain the herbs out, and pour the infused vinegar into sterilized bottles or jars. Fresh sprigs of herbs, dried herbs, whole chili peppers, peppercorns, and berries can be added before sealing to make the bottle more attractive and to further enhance the flavor. Label with the ingredients and date, and you're finished! It's best to keep vinegars stored in a cool, dark place and use within 4–6 months or keep the vinegar refrigerated to retain the flavors longer. If you notice mold, cloudiness, signs of fermentation, or anything else that looks unusual, discard immediately. **Click here** for more information about making infused vinegar; this informational sheet from the Oregon State University Extension Service is wonderful.

## Infused Oil

*Herbal infused oils are so versatile! They are perfect for stir-fries, sautés, pasta dishes, salad dressings, marinades, roasted vegetables, dipping, and so much more.*

- Organic oils: Olive, Macadamia Nut, Sesame, or other culinary oil of your choice.
- Organic herbs, dried (see list above). Make sure to use dried herbs when infusing oil, as the water content naturally present in fresh herbs can cause botulism.

**How to:** Start by sanitizing a glass bottle or jar (see instructions below) and allow to air-dry completely. Just one drop of water can cause your oil to go rancid quickly. There are two methods that can be used to infuse the oil: cool or hot. For a cool preparation, fill sterilized bottles 1/4 of the way with dried organic herbs or spices and then top with oil. Allow the oil to infuse for 2–4 weeks, or until the desired flavor has developed. Oil infused utilizing the hot method can be used right away. For a hot preparation, heat the oil to 180 degrees, turn off the heat, and add spices or herbs while the oil is still hot. Once cool, the herbs can either be strained out or left in the oil for a stronger flavor. When finished, pour the infused oil into sterilized bottles or jars. Dried herbs and spices can be added before sealing to make the bottle more attractive and to further enhance the flavor. Label with the ingredients and date. Store infused oils in the refrigerator once ready and be sure to use within 1–3 months.



continued ...



## ... continued

### Infused Butter

*Infusing herbs into butter only takes a few minutes, but it is so tasty. Herbal butters are decadent on steamed vegetables, warm dinner rolls, grilled fish, baked potatoes, pasta dishes, or when incorporated into sautés and sauces. Rosemary and garlic butter atop warm, crusty homemade bread? Yes, please!*

- Butter, organic or homemade.
- Organic herbs, fresh or dried (see list above).

**How to:** Herbal infused butters are so easy and delicious to make. Simply place the butter in a bowl, allow it to soften, add dried herbs or spices, and blend together. If using fresh herbs, chop and then blend with the butter. The amount used will depend on how flavorful the herbs are, but a typical amount is 2–4 T of fresh herbs or 1 T dried herbs per 1/2 cup (1 stick) of butter. The butter will taste delicious right away, but will improve if the flavors are allowed to develop for 24 hours in the refrigerator before using. Store extra herb butter in the refrigerator or freezer.



### Infused Salt

*Herbal infused salts are a fun way to turn ordinary ingredients into something special! This versatile ingredient is absolutely delightful in soups, sauces, stews, roasted vegetables or meats, and as a finishing touch to any dish. Sprinkle savory Rosemary salt over homemade bread, Thyme salt on a bowl of steaming homemade stew, Sage-infused salt on roasted root vegetables, or enjoy a Margarita dressed up with a Chili Pepper salt rim. Yum!*

- Sea salt (coarse or fine).
- Organic herbs, dried (see list above).

**How to:** Use 1 part herb or spice to 4 parts salt. Crush the herbs in a mortar and pestle or whirl in a food processor or coffee grinder. Mix the herbs with salt. When using hard herbs and spices like Cinnamon sticks, Cardamom pods, or Star Anise, simply place into salt and allow to infuse for 2-4 weeks, then remove the herbs and spices. The salt will be infused with the delectable flavor and aroma of the herb. Package in pretty, airtight glass bottles, jars, or tins. Add labels and a bit of decorative ribbon or twine if desired. For a creative presentation, you can layer each herb separately into the jar, with instructions to mix the herbs together before using. To easily transform these into a memorable gift package, create a set of flavored salts and include recipe ideas, or pair the salts with jars of whole pink, green, white, smoked, or rainbow peppercorns.

*Happy holidays!*





# MARYJANES FARM





According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:

EACH OTHER | FARM KITCHEN | GARDEN GATE | STITCHING & CRAFTING ROOM | MAKE IT EASY | **OUTPOST** | CLEANING UP

{OUTPOST} with Shery Jespersen | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {OUTPOST} category, [CLICK HERE](#)



Shery Jespersen (Sister #753), Wyoming cattle rancher and outpost writer (rider), shares the “view from her saddle.” Her longtime love is Apple Pi “Dolly” Rose, a 20-year-old Morgan otherwise known as “The Best Darn Horse in the Universe.” In our Make It Easy section, Shery also shares her other love, “make do” arts and crafts.



### One Day, On a Hill

When we were about a month into calving (late May), I got off my horse to look at and take pictures of a pale pink Indian Paintbrush. I lingered. It was such a nice afternoon, and it isn't often that the wind isn't blowing that time of year, on a high ridge especially. But it was quiet ... just a hint of a breeze, enough to make the wildflowers dance. My thoughts wandered.

A couple of hundred years ago, someone else might have stopped to look for buffalo on this ridge—someone with brown skin ... and they might have ridden a painted pony. The people of the Plains back then, like me, depended on their steed to help them make a living here. How things have changed, and yet, there I sat on the same kind of hill where you can still find medicine wheels.

Native American stories, art, faith, poetry, and imagery have always fascinated me. The elderly man who played an old Indian chief in the movie *Little Big Man* remains one of my favorite character actors. His words were few, but full. He reminded me of my grandpa in that way. So many things remind me of him ... riding my horse, sitting to think and imagine on a hilltop.

Although native stories don't make heavy use of words, the storytelling is full of color and meaning. I remember one such story about a young girl and the wild horses she loved and spent time with. One day, she didn't return to the village and the people assumed that she had finally become one of the herd. On a good day, I feel “one” with my horse, and not a ride goes by that I'm not thankful for this most wondrous of creatures. I'm almost certain that when the cliché “poetry in motion” came into being, it had to have been the result of watching a horse ... running or just casting a long look off in the distance, flicking an ear and raising a brow. Every part of a horse can move, even its skin.

I'll never run off and become one of them, but I shall always and forever be grateful that when I stop to sit on a hill, most often a dear friend grazes next to me. She seems to understand why it is okay to look off in the distance at the great nothingness of the wide-open spaces. No need to explain to a creature made for this place.





{OUTPOST} with Shery Jespersen | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {OUTPOST} category, [CLICK HERE](#)

# MARYJANESFARM



## *Spirit Horse*

by Shery Jespersen *(written in the style of native lore)*

The sound of the drum,  
The sound of the drum,  
Over the dancing buffalo grass,  
Comes the sound of the drum.

She raises her head, her ears you see first,  
To the sound of the drum her ears turn,  
Searching for the drum song,  
The drum for the horses,

Her golden neck arches and swells,  
The wind carries her voice.

Her family is a rainbow,  
Their colors run together like sunset clouds,  
The horses stir to the sound of the drum,  
And to the call of the Sunflower.

She is the Sunflower, but she needs no name,  
For she knows who she is,  
She shines like a fish in sunny water.

The people look upon her,  
And behold a wonder,  
A spirit that lives in the moment.

Horses serve us in life and in death,  
They graze under the moon,  
And make the world ours by day.

Some will wear painted blessings,  
Some will never wear a bridle,  
Some will have songs sung about them.

Horses are travelers between places,  
In death, they run to the sky,  
Then, as Spirit Horses, they wait again for the call of the drum.

The sound of the drum sings them back,  
They run like water down banks of clouds,  
Coming to take souls to Heaven,  
Leaving as they came,  
They leap back over the rainbow.



According to MaryJane, the seven aspects for living the farmgirl life are:

EACH OTHER | FARM KITCHEN | GARDEN GATE | STITCHING & CRAFTING ROOM | MAKE IT EASY | OUTPOST | **CLEANING UP**

**{CLEANING UP}** with Toni Salerno | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our **{CLEANING UP}** category, [CLICK HERE](#)



Born and raised in Florida, Toni Salerno (Sister #197) left her city life as a Theatre Director/Teacher to live a more holistic, serene life in Idaho. Five years ago, she found her dream home in Troy, Idaho, and embraced the Palouse way of life. Now, Toni and her husband, Adam, and their four daughters own Clean Green, an organic cleaning service. This company specializes in chemical-free cleaning using their own line of environmentally safe products.

Make Mine  
GREEN

## Cookware Cleaning Tips

Nothing is worse than making a scrumptious dinner, then having to face a stack of pots and pans to clean at the end of the night. There are definitely ways around the pile with endless hours of scrubbing, but first you need to know what you are dealing with.

Foods that have burned or have stuck to your pots and pans will be easier to remove if they are first soaked for a few minutes in hot water with 4 T of baking soda. If food is really caked on, you might want to try and put the pan back on the stove and get it up to a boil to help loosen the debris. However, prevention is truly the key to avoid late hours of scrubbing.

Always keep hot dishwater in the sink as you work so you can soak and clean your pots and pans while you are cooking. However, no two pots are alike, and it is best to know what type you have and the best method for cleaning them.

For instance, if you are using cast-iron pans, you do not want to use soap or metal brushes to scrub them with. Instead, boil club soda right in the pan and use a wooden spatula to remove the excess debris, then rinse with hot water, dry, and apply cooking oil to the pan to prevent rusting.

When cooking with a non-stick pan, it is best to use plastic scrub brushes and hot water to avoid scratching the Teflon coating. I personally cook with stainless-steel or copper pots and pans, which have a tendency to be tougher to clean. However, I have found that boiling water and baking soda does help loosen the caked-on debris. Then, if there is still caked-on food, I can use a steel-wool brush or a steel scrub brush.

Glassware is great to cook in, but can get scratched easily, damaging the glass and making it weaker. The best way to clean glassware is with hot, sudsy water. If that doesn't work, there are two other alternatives. Fill the pot with water, add a squirt of liquid soap to the water, and bring to a rolling boil. Let it boil for 3–5 minutes and see if that works. If it doesn't, try boiling a pot of water with 4 T of baking soda. And if all else fails, put 2–4 tablets of Alka-Seltzer in the pot of water and let it sit for about an hour.

My personal favorite trick for cleaning all pots and pans is putting them in the freezer until the food has frozen and then removing it with a plastic putty knife. But remember, prevention is the key, and cleaning while you cook will cut your pot-scrubbing time in half. **Click here** for more tips for cleaning up your cookware.





{CLEANING UP} with Toni Salerno | to earn a Sisterhood badge in our {CLEANING UP} category, [CLICK HERE](#)

# MARYJANESFARM







# The Scoop

MaryJanesFarm News

## The Scoop from MaryJanesFarm

### Indexes Available!

*MaryJanesFarm* Magazine Index in pdf form available for searching and downloading! The index covers issues back to MAY/JUNE/JULY 2008 (She's A Keeper). New magazines will be indexed as they are released.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the *MaryJanesFarm* Magazine Index.

We also now have all the back issues of *MaryJane's Cluck* available for download on our website.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the back issues of *MaryJane's Cluck*.

**[TIP]** Use the search/find tool in your browser to look up keywords in the Magazine Index and the back issues of *The Cluck*.

### Farmgirls Unite!

If you are hosting a farmgirl event, open to all farmgirls, send the event description, date, location, and contact info to [megan@maryjanesfarm.org](mailto:megan@maryjanesfarm.org). Megan is going to start a calendar to keep Sisters up-to-date on upcoming gatherings.

If you're a Sisterhood member, [click here](#) to download a FREE Farmgirls on the Loose logo!

Enter your Sisterhood number;  
password is: FGLoose (case-sensitive)

(Fun logo ideas: frame it, use  
it for transfers on shopping  
bags, totes, and pillows, or  
make it into a sticker  
for your Airstream trailer!)





# December

## Farmgirl Sisterhood Special



# FREE SHIPPING!

on any order

(Offer applies to UPS Ground and Parcel Post only.)

Your free shipping is **ONLY** available by clicking on the link we've provided below. Good until December 16th, midnight.

**CLICK HERE** for free shipping.

*Give the gift of Sisterhood.*

Gift Sisterhood memberships are  
only **\$12** in December!



**CLICK HERE** for new gift memberships.  
**CLICK HERE** for gift membership renewals.





## Farmgirl Chatter

**What are farmgirls chatting about?**

Check it out at The Farmgirl Connection link [here!](#)

.....

### **A Farm of My Own: I want to live in a community like this! Submitted by Marigold**

Of course this little eco-village is in Wales, where I doubt they will let me immigrate just because I want to live off the land in a mild climate with like-minded people.

"The story of this project is the story of Ecovillage Pioneers—an obsession with community and low-impact living that began in Gower, Wales. We show the people growing their own food, building their own homes, and learning to be self-sufficient, so come and join us."

I just watched the first 12 episodes and am enchanted! I'd love for my future children to grow up in a place like this! **Click here** for more info on the show. Join the discussion **here**.

### **Across the Fence: Bringing Christmas Home, Submitted by Annika**

Christmas nowadays is becoming a completely frantic commercial nightmare. People rush through Halloween, pausing briefly to fortify themselves at Thanksgiving for Black Friday. Then it's non-stop shopping madness until Christmas. Where did the holidays go??? It is completely appalling that America has forgotten the meaning of Christmas in all ways. Farmgirls know the meaning of family and home. Please help me make a great big list of things to do with self, family, friends, and community to bring Christmas home again.

Here is my list ~

- 1.) Always take the time with family to make your home ready to welcome Christmas. To me, it's a ritual to run a quick clean and dust around the house. Get out your Christmas dishes, linens, and decorations and dust them off and freshen them up.
- 2.) Find community celebrations and performances to go to.
- 3.) Plan a cookie swap and send out invitations.
- 4.) Plan a Christmas caroling party, choose your songs, rehearse, and sing to your neighbors or ask if you can come sing in retirement homes, children's hospitals—anyplace that needs Christmas cheer.
- 5.) Plan several smaller Christmas parties, much less stressful than one ginormous one—and you actually get to spend more time with each guest.
- 6.) If you buy a tree each year, plan a party or celebration around finding and bringing your tree home. If you have an artificial tree, make setting it up special by planning a family celebration around the tree. Have treats, sing Christmas songs.



7.) We love to cook and bake, so Drew and I go through my many cooking and holiday books, choosing new treats and recipes to try each year.

8.) Drive around as a family and look at Christmas lights.

9.) Go to your town's Christmas parade.

10.) Decorate your home and tree as a family, or if you are living alone, invite friends.

11.) If you are a religious family, pray together for yourselves, family, friends, and good will and hope for the world. Prayer is always comforting and reaffirming when times are tough. If you are not part of a religion, a great big family hug and I-love-this-about-you time of family and/or friend togetherness is wonderful. Heck, I'm doing both!

12.) Make a family Christmas bucket list and do things that everyone has asked for.

13.) Be at home—yours or your family's, for Christmas. Celebrate together; try to make Christmas a celebration of the home, family, and spirit again. No fussin', no fightin', mind your manners, smile and laugh, no poutin', drink eggnog and hot chocolate, eat candy canes, make snow angels. Love one another. Comment [here](#).

## **Across the Fence: Need Ideas for Storing Vintage Buttons, Submitted by melody**

I have amassed a HUGE amount of vintage buttons that I just started listing for sale in my [Etsy store](#), and for the life of me, I can't figure out the best way to store and display my buttons here at home. I need easy access to my sorted buttons, but they are so pretty I would like to see them, too, without having them hidden from sight. I need some good ideas from my farmgirls ... Talk to me ladies! Give advice [here](#).

## **Barnyard Buddies: Help! Chickens eating eggs! Submitted by retasos2**

Is there anything I can do to stop this? Share your answers [here](#).

## **Barnyard Buddies: Difference between old hay and straw by sight? Submitted by farmmilkmma**

The farm we are hopefully closing on this week has a big red barn and the hay loft is full of ... hay ... or straw? The first time my husband saw it, he said it was straw. The next time he saw it, he said it was old hay. It's a lot of rectangular bales ... with many of them busted open. Is there a way to tell (by looking) which they are? And if it's old hay, what do we use it for? (Um ... very \*new\* farmer here.) Give advice [here](#).



**continued ...**





{tips, inspiration, &  
just plain fun!}

## the chatter continues ...

### **Barnyard Buddies: Starting a beehive, Submitted by traildancer**

I am too lazy to page through all the topics here to find a beekeeping thread. Could anyone give me information on getting started? I checked some sites on the Internet, but I would rather “talk,” so to speak, with real people. I live in southwestern Oregon, if that is a factor. Thanks! Share your answers [here](#).

### **Barnyard Buddies: Cat Dementia? Submitted by Naked on a Mountain Top**

We have a tiny 18 1/2-year-old, 3 1/2-pound calico kitty (she never was big, about 8 1/2 lbs in her prime—now we call her “fur bag of bones.”) She has been on thyroid meds for about 3 years, and we recently started an arthritis shot. The shot seems to help her get around more fluidly (a good thing for the bone-stiffening winter).

Here’s the issue ... she no longer cares about the dogs sniffing her as she passes by, screams for us in the hall in the middle in the night, goes in her litter box and hangs her bottom outside (messing on the floor), sometimes just messes on the floor in the same room, screams to lead us to her food even though it’s full, often steps in her own waste and wanders the house with a “poop foot” unknowingly. She gave up on hygiene over a year ago, and we brush and clean her. Sometimes she wanders around like she’s lost in the house she’s lived in for over 12 years. But pop open a can of tuna, and she’s like a young kitten. (We still catch her up on the counter trying to eat the butter at times!)

Is it possible for cats to get dementia? And have moments of clarity? Kind of fade in and out? Share your thoughts [here](#).

### **Cleaning Up: Disposing of fire extinguishers? Submitted by FieldsofThyme**

Do you know where to expose of fire extinguishers? We are having the wood-burning stove chimney cleaned professionally today, and I double-checked my extinguishers as well. One says to dispose of when needle is pointing to red, but the other looks like it can be recharged. Share your answers [here](#).







## the chatter continues ...

### Family Matters: I'm a Mom! Submitted by YakLady

Well, I've officially been a Mom now for two days. It is definitely a HUGE change from being just a wife. I had my first baby on Thanksgiving at home with a midwife and my husband in the room and my parents just across the hall in the guest room. :) He was born at 11:24 a.m. on 11/24; 8 lbs 10 oz; 23 inches long with 3 1/2 inch FEET! Biggest darn baby feet I've ever seen. It was a super-intense, almost 5-hour labor, and I'm feeling much, much better today than I did yesterday! I will update the blog at some point today with the birth story and pictures for everyone. Click [here](#) to see post.

### Farm Kitchen: What's your favorite leftover? Submitted by texdane

What's your favorite Thanksgiving leftover? For me, it's the pumpkin pie! Yummm! I love, love, love pie (did you see my blog post about my love for pie?) MMMMmm...My favorite fall dessert is pumpkin pie. Course, you could wrap dirt in pumpkin and I'd probably eat it. I love pumpkin. This year, for my pie, I used MaryJane's butter pie crust that I won a pie contest with, and it was delicious and perfect for my pumpkin pie. I'm usually such a healthy eater, but I have been known to eat leftover pumpkin pie for breakfast! Breakfast of champions! I also love the old classic green bean casserole as a close second. What's your favorite leftover? How many days do you eat leftovers after Turkey day before you say enough is enough? Join the discussion [here](#).

### Garden Gate: Growing a living fence, any help? Submitted by small graces

Hi, I am planning our first living fence for our organic farm in Candor, NY. I am looking for plants that were recommended, and especially advice from others who have done this before. We are hoping to eventually fence our entire farm with living fencing. Plants we are looking for ... Osage Orange? What is this? Will it grow in NY? Tagasaste? Any knowledge? Dogwood, hazel, wisteria, hornbeam, willow, sycamore I would love to buy these from other farmgirls or barter, etc. All of these plants were recommended in *Mother Earth News* last year, but if you know they are not what I should be using, please let me know. I am looking for any and all kinds of comments, and plan to plant in Spring 2012. Thank you! Give advice [here](#).





# Farmgirl Sisterhood News

## NEW Merit Badges for Farmgirl Sisters!

### MAKE IT PRETTY for Make It Easy:

**Beginner:** Using pencil or colored pencils, reproduce an image by drawing it. Or design a simple collage.

**Intermediate:** Learn how to paint with watercolors or acrylics and produce at least four paintings. Visit an art museum or participate in an art walk.

**Expert:** Learn how to paint with oils. Learn how to frame and wire your own paintings. Enter your paintings in a gallery or a show or other public viewing venue.

### INK SLINGER for Stitching & Crafting:

**Beginner:** Read Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. Write a two-page story (500 words) utilizing correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Have a friend or family member edit the story and return it to you for corrections.

**Intermediate:** Read two how-to books regarding writing short stories, novels, or poetry. Choose your genre: children's literature, fantasy, mystery, nonfiction, woman's literary fiction, etc.

**Expert:** Read two books in the genre you chose and write a short human-interest piece in your chosen genre. Then write at least 20 pages in your chosen genre—this could be 20 pages of poetry, a 20-page short story, 20 pages of nonfiction, or the first 20 pages of your novel.

### CIVIC HERITAGE for Each Other:

**Beginner:** Travel to the city in which you were born or raised, or to the city you live in or near now, to tour a local museum. While you are there, think of how life was for those who came before you.

**Intermediate:** Use your trip to the local museum to inspire you to find a local figure to research. Visit where they lived or where they were active in the community. Give a presentation to your local Farmgirl Chapter about the person you chose. If you don't have a local chapter, share with Sisters on the chatroom or write a letter to the editor about how that person made a difference in your town.

**Expert:** Visit any re-enactment, or volunteer to be a part of a re-enactment. If there are no re-enactments nearby, find the oldest non-residential building in town. Then go to the public library and search through the microfiche files or old photo archives to find the oldest photo of the building. Compare and contrast the two buildings to see how the years have changed it. If you can go inside the building, make note of the differences, such as ceiling height, doorway size, knobs, and building materials.



## ICING ON THE CAKE for Farm Kitchen:

**Beginner:** Study and learn cake-decorating basics: filling the decorating bag, correct decorating bag position, using couplers, and all other basics (find basics at [www.wilton.com/decorating](http://www.wilton.com/decorating)). Using the same website, study and learn all categories under "Decorating Cakes" or read a Wilton cake-decorating beginner's guide or take a cake decorating class.

**Intermediate:** Create your own basic cake-decorating kit using the techniques you learned in the beginner badge. Use your cake decorating tools to bake and frost one cake for any occasion. This could be a chapter member, family member, or friend's birthday or other special occasion. Make your own frosting and use at least three different frosting tips or designs.

**Expert:** Enter a cake in your local fair or donate one for a cake auction. (Research the parameters for your local fair before beginning. There are often multiple categories, such as application of icing, difficulty of technique, theme, and flavor.) Get as creative as possible.

## CROSS-STITCH for Stitching & Crafting:

**Beginner:** Learn to cross-stitch. Start with a simple project like a bookmark or a border for a picture frame.

**Intermediate:** Learn about different fabrics to use for cross-stitching, and determine how many stitches per-inch you would like your project to contain. Cross-stitch a more advanced project like a pillowcase or seat cover.

**Expert:** Design your own template to cross-stitch for a large project, such as a comforter or wall hanging.

## We are almost done brainstorming new badge ideas for 2012. What kind of new badges would you like to see?

Here are a few of the ideas that we have received from you so far:

Wild Game Harvesting  
Family Recipes, Traditions  
Storing Food for Winter  
Music  
Basket Weaving  
Budgeting  
Sculpting

Jewelry Making  
Blogging  
Anything About Chickens  
Pets  
Quilling (paper art)  
Calligraphy

Post your ideas **here**. Thanks for your help! – Chelsea







## Merit Badge Details: Farmgirl Legend

### Become a Legend in Your Own Time!

There are now two ways to become a **Farmgirl Legend**. Become a "Schoolmarm" when you complete all the badge requirements in any one category. For example, in Each Other, you would need to complete the beginner, intermediate, and expert levels in Community Service, Community Action, Public Service, Lend a Hand to Families, Lend a Hand to Farm Families, Little Squirts, Plant It Forward, Connecting Growers and Eaters, Farmgirl Gratitude, Get 'er Done, Farmgirl Spirit, Families Forever, and Entrepreneurial Spirit.

Once you become a "Schoolmarm," the next step is to become a "Head Mistress" when you obtain the Schoolmarm title in **ALL** categories.

When you become a Schoolmarm or a Headmistress, you will be awarded a certificate and your new lofty title will be applied to your Farmgirl Connection chatroom I.D.







## Exclusive for Sisters!

### Sisterhood Necklace

We've partnered with Elaine Tolson of Washington to offer this lovely bit of vintage-style jewelry—for Sisterhood members only. Your necklace will be emblazoned with your own unique Sisterhood number, setting your braggin' rights in stone. Whether you wear it as a secret code for those in-the-know, or as a conversation starter about the Sisterhood, is up to you. **Click [here](#) to order yours.**



Hello Elaine!

Hi, my name is Veronica and you made a charm for me. It is a Farmgirl Sisterhood charm necklace and I just had to e-mail you.

First off, I never expected such quality and attention to detail. When I saw my name on the package, I thought it was from someone I knew! Then when I opened the package and saw the little burlap pouch, I smiled and my daughter (who is 3) said, "Mama, what's that?" Then, when I pulled out the necklace, I literally gasped.

It's so beautiful! I knew what it would look like from a photo on the MaryJanesFarm website, but this necklace exceeded my expectations. I loved the length of the chain. I have bought some necklaces on Etsy.com and I'm always disappointed that the ball chains are soooo short. The charm looks small to me on the website, so when I saw it, I was like, this is the perfect size!

I just wanted to thank you personally for such detail and the obvious love you put into your craft. Are you on Etsy? I'm definitely sharing your website with all of my friends. And I am most definitely going to be buying another charm(s) from you in the future.

Thank you again, and I feel like I got a bargain for this necklace.

Sincerely,  
Veronica Laviolette



# MAKE YOUR OWN Farmgirl Sisterhood

MERIT BADGE

## Jewelry



Farmgirl sisters have earned a whopping 4,563 Merit Badges to date, and their Young Cultivators have earned 338 (see a complete list of our Merit Badge Awardees at [www.farmgirlsisterhood.org](http://www.farmgirlsisterhood.org)). (Already, we have some “sharpshooters” who’ve earned more than 200 badges!) Here’s how I turned my badge insignias into jewelry—you can make necklaces, bracelets, chest medals, ring or earring signets, or even aglets and stampede straps! Using a few basic jewelry tools, the Internet, and a visit to my local craft store, I took my badges (that arrive in an e-mail when earned/approved) and sized them down. You can size your badges yourself using this step-by-step process, or take your jpeg files to your local copy shop and have them do it for you. If you have other ideas on how you like to resize and color your badges, feel free to share your ideas on our **Farmgirl Connection™ Chatroom**.

1. Download your jpeg badge file (right-click (PC) or command-click (Mac) the image, then choose “Save Picture As...” or “Save Image As...”). Save them to your computer somewhere you can find them again (like the desktop).
2. My design team knew how to color them on the computer using Paint or Photoshop, but when left to my own devices, colored pencils worked just fine. I left many of mine black and white, aiming for that vintage, somewhat industrial, frugal, farmish look.
3. Open Microsoft Word. Click “Insert,” “Picture,” “From File,” and select the badge image to insert. Select one of the corners of the badge image. Using Word’s rulers for size reference (under toolbars), resize your badge the desired amount by clicking, holding, and dragging. If you make a mistake while resizing, simply hit the “Reset Picture” button on the picture editing toolbar and start over (“View,” “Toolbars,” “Picture”).
4. To make a circle cutting template around your badge, you will need to again select “View,” “Toolbars,” “Drawing.” Select the oval shape, and while holding your shift key down, drag until the circle is the correct size for your badge. Click the paint bucket on the drawing toolbar while your circle is selected, and click “no fill” to make your badge visible through the circle.
5. Print and enjoy!







For Scrabble tiles, I found the best quality and most reliable gear on **Etsy**. First, I brushed the paper badge with a thin layer of matte-finish Mod Podge to seal the paper, then I let it dry. You will use Mod Podge for all of these jewelry crafting projects; it works as both a glue and a sealer. Next I cut out my paper badge insignia and brushed the blank side of the Scrabble tile with Mod Podge and placed the paper badge onto it, gently working out any air bubbles with my bone folder (find at your local craft store.)

After it dried, I placed a self-adhesive square epoxy dome on top of the badge insignia and used a bone folder to remove the air bubbles. Next, I glued a metal bail (see left) on the lettered side using a 24-hour clear epoxy. Finally, I attached it to my chain necklace using a jump ring.



Bone Folder



For smaller, round bezel cups (my favorite), I turned to scrapbooking supplies for the most economical source. Idea-ology™ "Type Charms" (the stickers that come in the package look like typewriter keys, but I used my badge insignias instead) are sold in packages of 16 that include self-adhesive round epoxy domes that insert into each cup and sell for around \$8 (50¢ each). Available at **Michael's** or [online here](#).

I think the 1/2" diameter size of this charm is good because of the price and availability. Soon, we'll all be *charming*! (You can go a more expensive route using bezel cups made from sterling silver and filled with liquid clear casting epoxy. You can **purchase supplies here**, or **Google** "sterling bezel cups.")



Sterling Silver Bezel Cup



continued...



... continued



Look to **Jill Schwartz** for a line of jewelry embellishments for adding non-badge charms to your necklace. I used a variety of charms from her line, as well as Industrial Chic, Lost & Found, Pearls & Pumps, Bella Boho, Forged, Blue Moon, and Black Lace. If you haven't discovered the jewelry aisle in your local craft store yet, head on out. There may be other lines or new lines available online or in stores near you by the time you read this.



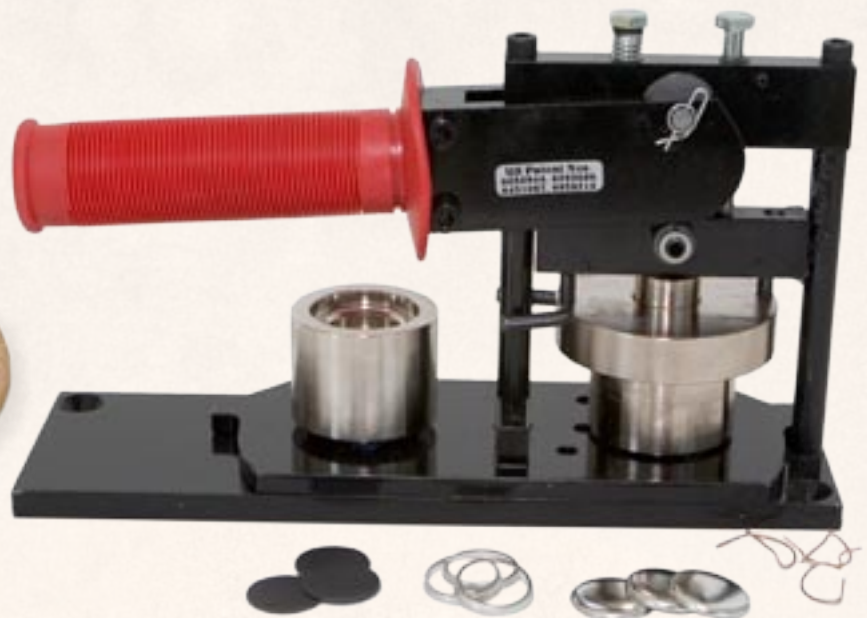
Picking through the above lines of jewelry makings, I also Mod Podged my badge insignias onto any flat surface I could find, adjusting the size accordingly. I even used a locket from the Industrial Chic line for my main hexagonal Sisterhood Badge (inside are photos of my grandchildren). Note the cool safety pins you can buy that don't have the bottom double curl.





Or buy a button-making machine.

Merit Badge  
Buttons



Industrial Chic's ring blank didn't come with a self-adhesive resin dome, so I picked up some EasyCast to make my own. First, I followed the Mod Podge steps and gave the badge an extra coat to protect it from losing color and let it dry. I chose a well-ventilated area and covered the surface I was working on with wax paper. Next, I put on gloves and eye protection. Following the EasyCast instructions that come with the kit, I mixed my EasyCast and poured it into a squeezable condiment bottle with a spout (like a mustard container). I put the ring upright in a vise and gently squeezed the EasyCast onto my "bee kind to mother earth" badge that was nestled inside. (If you don't have a vise, you could use a bowl of uncooked rice or make jigs out of foam-core board or styrofoam.) Lastly, I covered the ring with a box while the EasyCast was hardening to protect it and followed the EasyCast instructions for proper clean up.





## Merit Badge Awardees

**Amanda Henning**, Mamahenning #2492  
Beginner badge: Quilting / Stitching & Crafting  
Beginner badge: Buttoned Up / Stitching & Crafting

**Anneke Penn**, Annekepenn #3391  
Beginner badge: Farmgirl Gratitude / Each Other  
Beginner badge: Grease Chicks / Make It Easy  
Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up  
Beginner badge: What's Your Beef? / Garden Gate  
Intermediate badge: Farmgirl Gratitude / Each Other

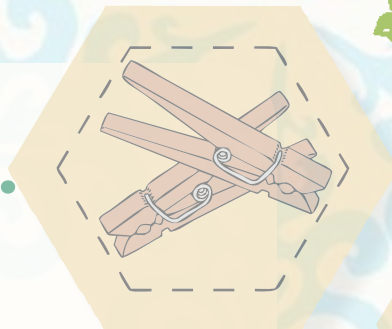
**Barbara Roberts**, Healthy Eating #2237  
Beginner badge: Let's Get Physical / Make It Easy  
Beginner badge: Self-sufficiency / Farm Kitchen  
Beginner badge: Safe Toys / Stitching & Crafting  
Intermediate badge: Let's Get Physical / Make It Easy  
Intermediate badge: Lend a Hand to Families / Each Other  
Intermediate badge: Horse Dreams / Garden Gate  
Intermediate badge: Families Forever / Each Other  
Expert badge: Unprocessed Kitchen / Farm Kitchen  
Expert badge: Entrepreneurial Spirit / Each Other  
Expert badge: What's Your Beef? / Garden Gate

**Carrie Goad**, Homestead Dreams #3027  
Beginner badge: Make It Pretty / Make It Easy  
Beginner badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up  
Beginner badge: Sew Wonderful / Stitching & Crafting

**Carrie Vernieuw**, Quickchick #3220  
Beginner badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up  
Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up  
Intermediate badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

**Cathy Pyatt**, Cottagefarmgirl #2655  
Beginner badge: Embroidery / Stitching & Crafting

**Cheryl Severeide**, K\_Fallsfarmgirl #309  
Farmgirl Legends / Chapter Leader  
Beginner badge: Farmgirl Spirit / Each Other  
Beginner badge: Disconnect to Reconnect / Outpost  
Beginner badge: Farmgirl Shutterbugs / Each Other  
Beginner badge: Little Squirts / Each Other  
Beginner badge: Bustin' Out / Farm Kitchen  
Beginner badge: The Secret Life of Bees / Garden Gate





“ Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home. ”

– Edith Sitwell

## Merit Badge Awardees

**Cindy Neel, #3070**

Beginner badge: Sew Wonderful / Stitching & Crafting

**CJ Armstrong, #665**

Beginner badge: Dyeing for Color / Stitching & Crafting

**Crystal Koelzer, Crystal Koelzer #3539**

Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

**Deborah Carr, Debi Carr #1983**

Beginner badge: Little Squirts / Each Other

**Emily Hack, alterationsbyemily #2951**

Beginner badge: Build It Green / Make It Easy

Intermediate badge: Build It Green / Make It Easy

**Emily Race, Simply satisfied #3591**

Beginner badge: Get It Together / Farm Kitchen

Beginner badge: What's Your Beef? / Garden Gate

Beginner badge: Disconnect to Reconnect / Outpost

Beginner badge: Gaining Ground / Garden Gate

Beginner badge: Farmgirl Gratitude / Each Other

Intermediate badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

**Erika Endler, Apache Lady #3628**

Beginner badge: Know Your Roots / Each Other

**Faith Butler, Pugmama #547**

Beginner badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up

Intermediate badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up

Expert badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up

**Gail Springman, Gspringman #486**

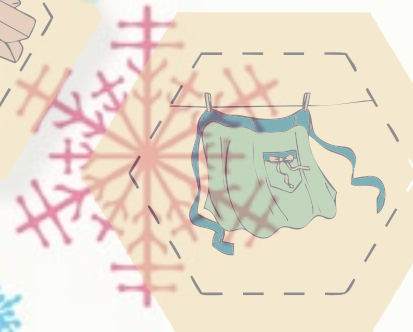
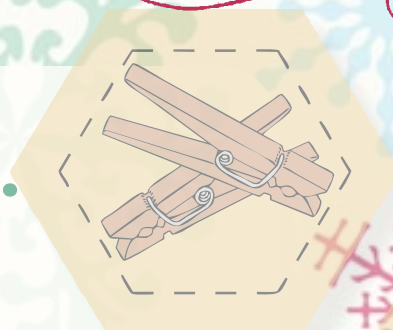
Beginner badge: Light the Way / Make It Easy

**Jamie Ray, Glitter Girl #3574**

Beginner badge: First Aid / Outpost

**Jamie Sweeney, SunnyJam #2504**

Intermediate badge: Farmgirl Grammar / Each Other



continued ...

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## Merit Badge Awardees

### Jennifer Greenfield, Draiodoirmna #752

Beginner badge: Unprocessed Kitchen / Farm Kitchen  
 Beginner badge: Get It Together / Farm Kitchen  
 Beginner badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up  
 Intermediate badge: Unprocessed Kitchen / Farm Kitchen  
 Intermediate badge: Get It Together / Farm Kitchen  
 Intermediate badge: Organic on a Budget / Farm Kitchen

### Justine Thompson, JThomp #2904

Beginner badge: Disconnect to Reconnect / Outpost  
 Beginner badge: Farmgirl Gratitude / Each Other  
 Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up  
 Intermediate badge: Aprons / Stitching & Crafting  
 Intermediate badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

### Kristina Nelson, FieldsofThyme #800

Intermediate badge: Know Your Roots / Each Other

### Loyce Krogel, Traildancer #1272

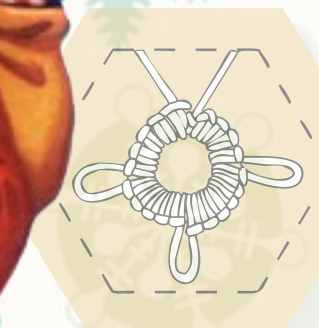
Beginner badge: Community Service / Each Other  
 Intermediate badge: Horse Dreams / Garden Gate

### Marie Westphal, #2732

Beginner badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up  
 Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up  
 Beginner badge: Farmgirl Gratitude / Each Other  
 Beginner badge: Families Forever / Each Other  
 Beginner badge: Farmgirl Grammar / Each Other  
 Beginner badge: Know Your Food / Farm Kitchen  
 Beginner badge: Forage for Food / Farm Kitchen  
 Beginner badge: ChillOver ComeOver / Farm Kitchen  
 Beginner badge: Get It Together / Farm Kitchen  
 Beginner badge: Bee Good to Your Mother Earth / Garden Gate  
 Intermediate badge: ChillOver ComeOver / Farm Kitchen

### Miranda Pace, Miss Miranda #3535

Beginner badge: Aprons / Stitching & Crafting  
 Beginner badge: Buttoned Up / Stitching & Crafting  
 Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up  
 Beginner badge: Sew Wonderful / Stitching & Crafting





*“When I learned how to sew, I forgot how to cook.”*

— Author Unknown

## Merit Badge Awardees

**Norma Santiago**, Nvstgo #3579

Beginner badge: Pay It Forward / Farm Kitchen

Beginner badge: Sew Wonderful / Stitching & Crafting

Beginner badge: Make It Pretty / Make It Easy

**Paula Black**, Sheepless in Seattle #2953

Beginner badge: Carp-hen-try / Make It Easy

**Peggy Smith**, Forever Young #1815

Beginner badge: Bustin' Out / Farm Kitchen

Intermediate badge: Let's Get Physical / Make It Easy

Intermediate badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

**Rain Klepper**, Rain K #3381

Beginner badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up

Beginner badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

Beginner badge: Heirlooms Forever! / Garden Gate

Beginner badge: Woman-at-Arms / Outpost

Beginner badge: Backyard Farmer / Garden Gate

Intermediate badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up

Intermediate badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

Intermediate badge: Heirlooms Forever! / Garden Gate

Intermediate badge: Woman-at-Arms / Outpost

Intermediate badge: Backyard Farmer / Garden Gate

Expert badge: Going Green / Cleaning Up

Expert badge: Shopping Green / Cleaning Up

Expert badge: Heirlooms Forever! / Garden Gate

Expert badge: Woman-at-Arms / Outpost

Expert badge: Backyard Farmer / Garden Gate

**Tamara Burger**, GrammyTammy #2495

Beginner badge: Safe Toys / Stitching & Crafting

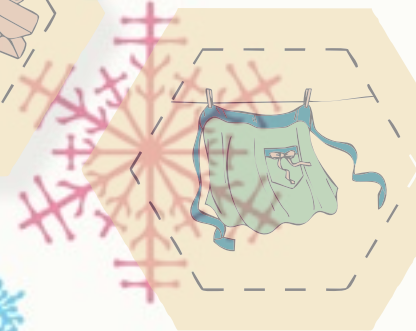
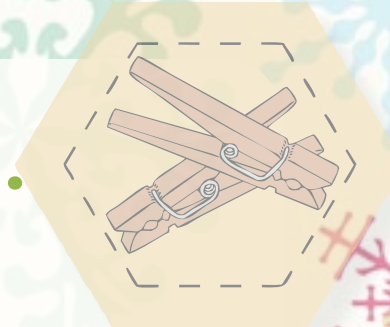
Beginner badge: Embroidery / Stitching & Crafting

Intermediate badge: Safe Toys / Stitching & Crafting

Intermediate badge: Embroidery / Stitching & Crafting

**Tracy Gossoo**, DaisyMom #3577

Beginner badge: Backyard Farmer / Garden Gate







## NEW Merit Badges for Young Cultivators!

### ENERGIZE ME for Cleaning Up:

**Beginner:** Count the things in and around your house that rely on energy for use. Make a list of how your food is kept cold, how the car starts, and how you stay warm. Not only do cars and light bulbs need energy, you do too! What gives you energy and keeps you working?

**Intermediate:** Visit a dam or a wind farm with your mentoring Sister. Take a tour with a guide that can explain the way the power of water supplies electricity.

**Expert:** Conduct your own energy experiment at home. Some suggestions are: build a model of a dam, make a battery using lemons, or “bend” running water with static electricity. You can find instructions for many science projects at your local library or through the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency’s websites.

### BIG KID NOW for Each Other:

**Beginner:** Research what you want to be when you grow up. Go to the library and pick out a book that explains what a day-in-the-life of that profession is like.

**Intermediate:** Dress up as what you want to be when you grow up and give a presentation to your family on what you learned and why it is the best job. (You can keep your costume for Halloween.)

**Expert:** Shadow a family member, friend, or person that works in the career path you want when you grow up. Hang out with them for a day or visit them with your mentoring Sister to see what they do. Can you see yourself doing their job? What is your favorite part about what they do?

### MAKE IT FRUITY for Farm Kitchen:

**Beginner:** With your mentoring Sister, go berry picking at a local farm or CSA.

**Intermediate:** Find out how to preserve whole fruit by drying it. Look up ways to store it in airtight containers, and make room in a cool, dry, dark place for storing.

**Expert:** Make your own fruit leather.







# Farmerettes & Young Cultivators

## **GREEN THUMB KIDS** for Garden Gate:

**Beginner:** Try a fruit or vegetable that you would not normally eat. Talk with your mentoring Sister about why you do or don't like it. Identify your favorite fruit or vegetable.

**Intermediate:** Visit a local u-pick farm or a farmers' market. Look for your favorite fruit or vegetable. Discuss why it is or isn't there and why the organic version is better for you.

**Expert:** Plant your favorite fruit or vegetable in a garden or in a container (strawberries, peas, and spinach are all easy to grow). Learn how to take care of your plant organically. Your reward? Yummy, healthy vegetables!

## **PUT ME IN COACH!** for Make It Easy:

**Beginner:** Cut out TV time by joining a sports team for a season or taking lessons in baseball, soccer, horseback riding, karate, bowling, or tennis.

**Intermediate:** Go to a game of your favorite sport (high school, college, or professional) with a parent. Discuss the discipline and practice that it takes to get to that level in your sport.

**Expert:** Continue with your sports team or lessons for a second season and get a friend to join or participate with you.

## **PARK PLACE** for Outpost:

**Beginner:** Go to a local park and pick up a bag full of trash or weed any areas that need maintenance.

**Intermediate:** Identify 3–5 indigenous trees or plants in your park by both their common and Latin names.

**Expert:** Contact your local park service and ask where you could plant a tree in your area. (This would be great activity for Arbor Day or Earth Day.)

## **LITTLE SCRAPPERS** for Stitching & Crafting:

**Beginner:** Take pictures on a family vacation or a day trip with parents or grandparents and print them out to scrapbook later.

**Intermediate:** Gather the materials for putting together a scrapbook (minimum of three pages), including your photos, markers, and paper. Include the favorite things you did on your family vacation or day trip.

**Expert:** Share your scrapbook with the people you went on your trip with. Teach a friend how to scrapbook.



# Farmerettes & Young Cultivators

## Merit Badge Awardees

**Elizabata Wilbur**, Young Cultivator of Tamara Burger, #2495  
Beginner badge: Let's Go To Town / Each Other

**Emma Yochim**, Young Cultivator of Elna Yochim, #2983  
Beginner badge: All Buttoned Up / Stitching & Crafting  
Intermediate badge: All Buttoned Up / Stitching & Crafting  
Expert badge: All Buttoned Up / Stitching & Crafting

**Nancy Gossoo**, Young Cultivator of Tracy Gossoo, #3577  
Beginner badge: Families Forever / Each Other

### What's a Farmerette?

Farmerettes are young farmgirls-in-training between the ages 14–18. They can earn the same Merit Badges as adult Sisters, so long as there is a Farmgirl Sisterhood member nearby to work with them. **Click here to find out more.**

### What's a Young Cultivator?

Young Cultivators are girls and boys between the ages 6 and 13. They can work with Farmgirl Sisterhood members to earn badges, but have their own unique program. **Click here to find out more.**

*Waa-Hoo!*







## Young Cultivators Group . . . . .

Rebekka Boysen coordinates a Young Cultivators group and reports on their activities here and in future issues.

### *Egg Carton Sewing Kits*

Last month, I introduced you to our newest Young Cultivator. It is such a pleasure to see our meetings through a new member's eyes.

Long ago, the original girls ordered their official Young Cultivators badges. They have been trying to decide what to do with them ever since they arrived. One girl wants hers on a fancy apron, another thinks a farmgirl tote bag would be perfect. After much ado, the girls have decided to make their badges into pins by adding a felt layer behind the badge and a pin back so that they can attach to anything.

Detailed embroidery and quilting are skills the kids have yet to master, so we are starting small with a new sewing kit for each child and a lesson in simple stitching. To celebrate this new skill, I gathered up a few clean egg cartons and filled them with the basics: embroidery scissors, a few shades of embroidery thread, ribbon, a tape measure, buttons, a pincushion, and a little needle keeper. At our next meeting, I will give each child their kit and the girls can practice stitching a straight line, a curve, and perhaps an initial on scrap fabric.

When teaching kids to sew, it is a great idea to start with a small piece of felt because it's much easier to handle than thinner cotton material. The next step is to practice sewing with a small embroidery hoop. As the girls become comfortable with a needle and thread, we will move on to embellishing the fabric Young Cultivators badge. To finish each badge, I will add a felt backing with my sewing machine or fusible webbing, attach the pin back, and help the kids finish the outside edge. As with any new skill, it is important to break this project up into manageable chunks. If we aimed for a finished badge in one meeting, frustration would certainly follow. Perhaps the girls will surprise me and finish at lightning speed, but I am quite content to take lots of hot cocoa breaks along the way.





# meet our bloggers

Farmgirls are tapping away at their keyboards to bring you news from the homefront, no matter where you live or what your interests. Rebekah Teal, a former judge, writes about being a farmgirl in the city; Libbie Zenger blogs from the rural perspective; Nicole Christensen gives you the suburban viewpoint; Cathi Belcher shouts-out from her mountain top, Shery Jespersen shares the ranch view from Wyoming, and Debbie Bosworth writes from the beach. You can click to our farmgirl blogs right on our home page ([www.maryjanesfarm.org](http://www.maryjanesfarm.org)). While you're there, sign up for our e-mail blog alerts and recipe of the week.

## city FARMGIRL



Rebekah Teal is a farmgirl who lives in a large metropolitan area and brings you our **City Farmgirl Blog**. She's a lawyer who has worked in both criminal defense and prosecution, and she has been a judge, a business woman, and a stay-at-home mom. She's not only "down-home" citified, she's a true-blue farmgirl ... in a pair of stilettos!

"Mustering up the courage to do the things you dream about," she says, "is the essence of being a farmgirl." Learning to live more organically and closer to nature is Rebekah's current pursuit.

## rural FARMGIRL



Libbie Zenger is a small-town farmgirl who writes our **Rural Farmgirl Blog** and lives in the high-desert Sevier Valley of Central Utah with her husband and two little farmboys—as well as 30 ewes, 60 lambs, a handful of rams, a milk cow, an old horse, two dogs, a bunch o' chickens and two cats. She lives on a 140-year-old farm, in a farmhouse built by her great-great-grandfather, and tries to channel her grandmothers.

Libbie says, "When I found MaryJanesFarm, I found a new sort of sisterhood—one in which hard work, 'heart' work and handwork are truly valued, appreciated, and shared."

## suburban FARMGIRL



Nicole Christensen, our current **Suburban Farmgirl Blogger**, calls herself a "knitter, jam-maker, and mom extraordinaire". Born and raised in the great state of Texas, she now resides in suburban New England in picturesque Connecticut, just a stone's throw from New York state.

Married for 18 years to her Danish-born sweetheart, Nicole has worked in various fields and has been a world-traveler, entrepreneur, knitting teacher, and homemaker, but considers being a mom her greatest job of all. Loving all things creative and domestic, Nicole considers her life's motto to be "Bloom where you are planted."

## mountain FARMGIRL



Cathi Belcher, who pens our **Mountain Farmgirl Blog**, lives in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. As a "lifelong learner," she fiercely values self-reliance, independence, freedom, and fresh mountain air. She's also a multi-media artist, with an obsession for off-grid living and alternative housing. Cathi is married to her childhood sweetheart, and owns and operates a 32-room mountain lodge.

"Mountains speak to my soul, and farming is an important part of my heritage," says Cathi. "I want to pass on my love of these things to others through my writing."

Being a farmgirl isn't *where* you live, but *how* you live!

[www.maryjanesfarm.org](http://www.maryjanesfarm.org)



NEWS FROM THE HOMEFRONT ...

whether that home is

city, rural, suburban,  
mountain, ranch, or beach



ranch

FARMGIRL



**Shery Jespersen**, Wyoming cattle rancher and outpost writer, shares the view from her saddle in our **Ranch Farmgirl Blog**. Shery is a "leather and lace cowgirl" who's been horse-crazy all of her life. Her longtime love is Apple Pi "Dolly" Rose, a 20-year-old Morgan otherwise known as "The Best Darn Horse in the Universe."

Her other interests include "junktiques," creating eclectic "make do" arts and crafts, collecting antique china, and cultivating mirth.



beach

FARMGIRL



**Debbie Bosworth** left her lifelong home in the high desert of northern Nevada 10 years ago and washed up on the shore of America's hometown, Plymouth, Massachusetts, where she, her "beach-bum Yankee" husband of 20 years, and her two homeschooled kids are now firmly planted.

"I found a piece of my farmgirl heart when I discovered MaryJanesFarm. Suddenly, everything I loved just made more sense! I enjoy unwinding at the beach, writing, gardening, and turning yard-sale furniture into 'Painted Ladies'! I'm passionate about living a creative life and encouraging others to 'Make Each Day their Masterpiece.'"

# Happy WINTER





# Magazines, Books, & More



Our Dec/Jan issue, "Come All Ye," hit newsstands on Nov. 8. In it, you'll read about a "farm to fork" dinner, find out how Equal Exchange is working to create a more just food system, make homemade soap, craft wild wreaths, create dinners with leftover ham, and more.

[Click here](#) to subscribe to *MaryJanesFarm* magazine.

If you have a subscription, you should have received your magazine by about Nov. 5. (Those of you near postal hubs get faster delivery; rural delivery takes a little longer.) If you didn't receive your magazine, you can call our publisher's subscription department at 800-476-4611 to check on your delivery.

## MaryJanesFarm 2012 Calendar

**AVAILABLE NOW!** Our 2012 Calendar is available for purchase. Each month's top page features a full-color image from our farm and each calendar page includes dates, holidays, inspirational sayings, lunar phases, and fabulous farmgirl culture. This is a Project F.A.R.M. (First-class American Rural Made) product. All 26 pages are printed here at the farm on 8 1/2" x 11" card stock and are bound with black spiral wire, unfolding to 11" x 17".

### Current Holidays:

- December 10 ~ Human Rights Day
- December 15 ~ Cat Herders' Day
- December 16 ~ National Chocolate-Covered Anything Day
- December 20 ~ Hanukkah Begins
- December 22 ~ Winter Solstice: First Day of Winter
- December 24 ~ Christmas Eve
- December 25 ~ Christmas Day
- December 26 ~ Kwanzaa
- December 28 ~ Hanukkah Ends
- December 31 ~ New Year's Eve

### Magazine "Goodies" on the MJF Website

"For those who are looking for the magazine portion of the website, here is the place to find additional patterns, instructions, recipes and such! Yum!" – Alee, Farmgirl Sister #8

To find the goodies, [click here!](#)







## Magazines, Books, and More continues ...

### *Gift Items*

Inspire yourself or inspire a friend with tote bags, Sisterhood memberships, candles, dolls, and other gifts from MaryJane. From the kitchen to the campfire, there's something special here for every farmgirl-at-heart. **Click here** to shop our gift items.

### *Product Shop*

Don't forget to visit our "Product Shop" ...

**Click Here.** You will find everything from beautiful organic bed sheets and bed sets to aprons, chocolate and over 60 organic instant or quick-prep meals and desserts as well as much, much more!



If you know of someone who may be interested in receiving this newsletter, send their e-mail(s) to us at [sisterhoodhopeful@maryjanesfarm.org](mailto:sisterhoodhopeful@maryjanesfarm.org) and we'll e-mail them a sample issue.

For other questions or general inquiries, e-mail [FarmgirlSisterhood@maryjanesfarm.org](mailto:FarmgirlSisterhood@maryjanesfarm.org).

Over 1,334 Farmgirl Chapters have been started in all 50 states  
and 8 countries with 3,675 Sisterhood members —  
growing stronger every day!