

**MaryJane's Farmgirl Sisterhood
Merit Badges**

Farmgirl Legends

1. Schoolmarm

- A Schoolmarm is a Farmgirl Sisterhood member who has completed all the badge requirements in any one section. For example, in Each Other, she 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 she has earned badges for a complete section, she must then send an e-mail to meritbadges@maryjanesfarm.org alerting us that she's eligible to become a Schoolmarm. When approved, she will be awarded a certificate and the title of Schoolmarm will be applied to her Farmgirl Connection chatroom I.D.
- To keep this status, a Schoolmarm will need to keep her Sisterhood membership up to date and complete any new badges created in that section within 6 months (new badges are added twice a year, on Jan. 1 and July 1).

Farmgirl Legends

2. Head Mistress

- A Head Mistress is a Sisterhood member who has obtained the Schoolmarm title in ALL sections.
- Once she has earned the Schoolmarm designation for all sections, she must then send an e-mail to meritbadges@maryjanesfarm.org alerting us that she's eligible to become a Head Mistress. When approved, she will be awarded a certificate and the title of Head Mistress will be applied to her Farmgirl Connection chatroom I.D.
- To keep this status, a Head Mistress will need to keep her Sisterhood membership up to date and complete any new badges created in that section within 6 months (new badges are added twice a year, on Jan. 1 and July 1).

Farmgirl Legends

3. Farmgirl Guide

- A Farmgirl Guide is a Sisterhood member who has mentored a Young Cultivator or Farmerette in earning badges.
- The Guide must help her Young Cultivator(s) complete up to 30 badges or their Farmerette(s) complete up to 50 badges to be eligible for the Farmgirl Guide title.
- Once she has fulfilled the above requirements, she must then send an e-mail to meritbadges@maryjanesfarm.org alerting us that she's eligible to become a Farmgirl Guide. When approved, she will be awarded a certificate and the title of Farmgirl Guide will be applied to her Farmgirl Connection chatroom ID.

Farmgirl Legends

4. Chapter Leader

- A Chapter Leader is a Farmgirl Sisterhood member who has started her own official Farmgirl Chapter and has recruited at least five new farmgirls to the Farmgirl Sisterhood. She must also complete the Farmgirl Spirit merit badge.
- Once she has fulfilled the above requirements, she must then send an e-mail to meritbadges@maryjanesfarm.org alerting us that she's eligible to become a Chapter Leader by listing the members she recruited and the name of her Chapter. When approved, she will be awarded a certificate and the title of Chapter Leader will be applied to her Farmgirl Connection chatroom ID.
- A Chapter Leader may retire from her position after a year, but the new Chapter Leader must recruit five new members to be eligible for the badge. The new Chapter Leader may begin recruiting before assuming the position.

Farmgirl Legends

5. Chapter Guru

- A Chapter Guru is a Farmgirl Sisterhood member who shares her expertise on at least three subjects at chapter meetings. She must create a lesson plan and projects for her Sisters to engage in to ensure her knowledge has been successfully conveyed. The Guru can teach projects that fulfill requirements for Merit Badges or create a lesson of her own devising.
- Once she has given her lessons, she must then send an e-mail to meritbadges@maryjanesfarm.org alerting us that she's eligible to become a Chapter Guru by describing the presentations she gave to her fellow Sisters. When approved, she will be awarded a certificate and the title of Chapter Guru will be applied to her Farmgirl Connection chatroom ID.

Cleaning Up

1. Going Green

Beginner Level

- Get rid of all cleaners in your house that are not “green.” Make sure to check your laundry detergent, bathroom, and kitchen cleaners.
- Write a mission statement for your house pledging to only use green cleaners in the future
- Keep a thrifty, nifty and green journal of recycle and green living ideas, recipes, plans and projects and share it with someone who wants to change their habits or share it with your Farmgirl Chapter if you are a member of one.
- If your household is already “green,” make a gift basket full of green products for a friend or to give away as a housewarming gift.

Intermediate Level

- Make your own laundry detergent.
- Make your own soap.
- Make your own all purpose cleaners, window cleaner, floor cleaner.
- Share your tried-n-true recipes wherever you see fit.

Expert Level

- Get your house totally organized around “green.”
- Install and use a clothesline for all drying. If not permitted, use an indoor drying rack instead of the dryer.
- Use non-toxic paint when repainting the interior of your house.
- Get carpets sealed against out-gassing or remove carpets from house.
- Donate six hours of your time to a girlfriend whose house needs “greening up.”
- Turn your books having to do with a hopeful future into a lending library with a check-out system. Give the list to friends and neighbors and invite them to visit.

Cleaning Up

2. Shopping Green

Beginner Level

- Collect six reusable bags for shopping.
- Commit to using them on your shopping trips.

Intermediate Level

- Research ways you can clean your home without the aid of toxic cleaners.
- Commit to using a product that you have found or that you have made for cleaning your home and laundry.

Expert Level

- If you belong to a local Farmgirl Chapter, organize a reusable bag swap or a bag making “sew in.”
- Give a talk on why this is something others should consider doing.
- If you do not belong to a local Farmgirl Chapter, post your thoughts on the farmgirl forum and see if other farmgirls would be interested in a bag swap.

Cleaning Up

3. Green Energy

Beginner Level

- Contact your local power company and find out how your power is generated.
- Compare and contrast different methods of energy production (natural gas, hydroelectric, coal, nuclear, or sustainable energy) and share some of your findings and thoughts with your local Farmgirl Chapter or on our Farmgirl Connection chatroom.

Intermediate Level

- In a journal, keep track of your energy expenditures for a month. Include all of your expenditures, from your monthly electric bill, gasoline and diesel fuel used (paying attention to average miles you drive and the average miles per gallon your vehicle gets), and any other fuel expenditures you may have from oil, natural gas, wood, or alternative energy source.
- If you use standard light bulbs, convert to energy-saving bulbs. Discover and use other methods to reduce your energy expenditures. Some things can include carpooling, mass transit, planting trees to shade your home, installing low-flow faucets and shower heads, or reducing use of major appliances like stoves and ovens by eating more raw foods or building an earth or solar oven.

Expert Level

- Continue to track your energy expenditures for an additional three months.
- Find additional ways to go green and commit to an even larger project, such as installing solar panels or helping a fellow farmgirl with a large energy-reducing project. Plan to spend at least 30 hours.

Cleaning Up

4. Water Conservation

Beginner Level

- Check all taps in your house for leaks and fix any you find.
- Research and make a list of simple ways to conserve water, like taking shorter showers or collecting in a pail the water wasted before it's hot or turning off the faucet while you're brushing your teeth. Measure the volume amount of water saved in one week.

Intermediate Level

- Research the concept of gray water, how to collect it and what you can use it for. (Find simple ways to reuse water in our Simple Solutions from the "Attitude of Gratitude" Oct/Nov 2010 issue of MaryJanesFarm magazine at www.maryjanesfarm.org/SimpleSolutions/#attitude-of-gratitude .)
- Devise a rain barrel system to collect rainwater to use for your garden or to wash your car.

Expert Level

- Calculate your household's water usage for an entire month.
- Over the next few weeks following, lower your household's monthly water usage by at least 10%.

Each Other

1. Community Service

Beginner Level

- Start a Community Service Journal.
- In your journal, research and write down three community organizations you could help by donating your time.
- Choose one organization from the three and find out how to volunteer.
- Each day that you volunteer, write a quick synopsis of what you did, and don't forget to record how many hours or minutes you volunteered.
- To complete this merit badge, you must donate 10 hours total of community service.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, give a report on what you have been doing and how it is positively impacting your community.

Intermediate Level

- Continue working with your chosen organization or choose a new one.
- Your time requirement for this level is an additional 20 hours of volunteer work.
- Talk with the volunteer director and the organizer of your chosen organization. Learn more about what it takes to accept volunteers and how the organization makes the most of its donated time.
- Continue to keep track of your progress in your Community Service Journal.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, give a report on what you have been doing and how it is positively impacting your community.

Expert Level

- Write in your journal at least five needs your community has that you could fill.
- Work with your chosen organization to expand their current abilities to serve the community better or start your own community service related organization. Work an additional 40 hours at your chosen organization.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, give a report on what you have been doing and how it is positively impacting your community.

Each Other

2. Community Action

Beginner Level

- Research an issue that is pertinent to your community.
- Find out which branch of the government is responsible for this issue.

Intermediate Level

- Get involved!
- Ask what is being done about this issue and who else is involved.
- Donate your time towards helping to resolve the issue or informing the public. To complete this level, you must donate five hours total of community service.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, give a report on what you have been doing and how it is positively impacting your community.

Expert Level

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper to help spread the word.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, help inform your fellow farmgirls of this issue that affects your community and let them know what you are doing to help the situation.
- Your time requirement for this level is an additional 10 hours of volunteer work.

Each Other

3. Public Service

Beginner Level

- Attend a city or town council or school board meeting, or a municipal, county, or state session.
- When election time comes around, learn what the issues are that each officiate-elect is concerned about. Pay special attention to ballot initiatives and what they mean.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, give a report sharing what you've learned in a non-partisan way.
- Vote in five elections for city, state, and federal matters.

Intermediate Level

- Run for office or volunteer to work on the campaign for a candidate that you support.

Expert Level

- Win the election (either you or the person you helped win office)!
- For motivation about challenges ahead, read "Free Lunch" by David Cay Johnston.

Each Other

4. Lend a Hand to Families

Beginner Level

- Help an ailing farmgirl sister for 10 hours.
- Consider keeping a journal or diary of activities and hours spent working on this merit badge that include some sketches or artwork.

Intermediate Level

- Clean a pregnant woman's house while she is away having the baby or do this for someone who is ill or grieving the loss of a loved one.
- Cook for a family in need and provide a week's worth of frozen re-heatable meals or pots of soup and bread. Alternatively, coordinate several friends to make sure a hot supper is delivered every day at a pre-appointed time and be ready to fill in the gaps as needed.

Expert Level

- Visit two local homebound and elderly people; make sure they have food being delivered or bring fresh groceries.
- Offer to plant a flower garden where they can see it from their window or some indoor forced bulbs.
- Arrange to be the babysitter for a struggling family with young children so the parents can have a "date night."
- Sew or donate a dozen cloth diapers to the local Pregnancy Crisis Center or similar organization.

Each Other

5. Lend a Hand to Farm Families

Beginner Level

- Help a farm family in need by learning to feed their farm animals, or do some clean up for six hours total. Keep a journal of your activities and what you've learned.

Intermediate Level

- Find a farmer that could use a helping hand and donate 10 hours at their farm, especially at planting, lambing/kidding and harvest. If you bring at least one entire meal, you will be much appreciated!

Expert Level

- Help a farm family in crisis with whatever they say they need help with. Your time requirement for this level is an additional 20 hours of volunteer work.

Each Other

6. Little Squirts

Beginner Level

- In honor of MaryJane's father, no farmgirl should abide a squeaky door. Walk around your house and give each door and hinge a good oiling.
- Oil the chains to any bikes your family owns.
- Make sure all metal garden tools have been oiled before being stored for the winter or off-season.

Intermediate Level

- Sometimes a door squeaks even after it has been oiled, so with a screwdriver, sandpaper and a level, fix any stubborn doors you might have so all your doors swing freely and close easily. Make sure all locks are in good working order.

Expert Level

- Set up a bike repair day in your neighborhood and show the neighborhood kids how to properly oil and maintain their bikes and tricycles.

Each Other

7. Plant it Forward

Beginner Level

- Plant an extra row in your garden and donate its bounty to a local food bank.

Intermediate Level

- Plant a garden for the hungry that is at least half as big as the one you plant for your family. Donate all of your harvest from that garden to a food bank.
- Volunteer to work at a local soup kitchen or food bank for at least three hours.
- Spread the idea by encouraging others to follow your lead.

Expert Level

- Plant a garden for the hungry that is at least as big as the one you plant for your family. Donate all of your harvest from that garden to a food bank.
- Organize a gleaning party to collect the naturally growing food in the countryside. Donate what you gather to a needy single mother or to a food bank.
- Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food bank for at least five hours.

Each Other

8. Connecting Growers and Eaters

Beginner Level

- Volunteer to work in a local community garden or a neighbor's garden for at least six hours.

Intermediate Level

- Find a farmer or gardener who would be willing to let you glean the extras from their bounty for delivery to a local "Meals on Wheels" or food bank. Make the connection delivery ten times.

Expert Level

- Organize a "food bank garden" group and actively donate daily time to it during one growing season. If you have a community garden, you might create a gleaning program there or round up gardeners who want to participate. Record the group's progress and report it to your Farmgirl Chapter if you are a member of one. Consider organizing a "food for a cause" fund raiser or "adopt-a-row" party or event and have donors pay for the materials to keep the garden idea alive for another year.

Each Other

9. Farmgirl Gratitude

Beginner Level

- Write a gratitude journal every day for a month. Don't repeat the same gratitude more than once to qualify for this merit badge.
- Read, *The Book of Awesome* by Neil Pasricha, one entry, once a day, to help you appreciate the simple things.

Intermediate Level

- Express your gratitude in a letter to those in the service industry in your town:
 - Police
 - Fire
 - Ambulance
 - Hospital staff
 - Local government
 - Local military
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper encouraging other citizens of your community to express their appreciation to those in the service industries.
- Continue to read, *The Book of Awesome*, one entry per day.

Expert Level

- Continue to express your appreciation and gratitude, but this time on a national level. Write to a large newspaper or set up an open letter on a blog site and spread the word.
- Write 40 letters over the course of the next three months to those you appreciate most.
- If you have not yet finished the reading, complete *The Book of Awesome*.

Each Other

10. Get 'er Done

Beginner Level

- Create a team of farmgirls for the purpose of helping each other “get ‘er done” as you go from house to house on a regular basis, at least once per month for two hours at a time for three months.

Intermediate Level

- Help a farmgirl with a major “get ‘er done” project/move.
- There is an 8-hour minimum time investment required.

Expert Level

- Organize your fellow farmgirls for helping with a major “get ‘er done” project outside your circle. Consider “Adopting a Highway” or working for Habitat for Humanity or just volunteering time to help the needy in your community in some constructive way.
- If you are a farmgirl who is unable to help in the physical realm, consider donating time in the administrative functions of these projects.
- You must donate 12 hours to qualify for this level.

Each Other

11. Farmgirl Spirit

Beginner Level

- Host a farmgirl style bash to introduce friends and family members to farmgirl ideas. Help them catch the farmgirl fever!
- Document your party with photos.

Intermediate Level

- Welcome a new neighbor in true-blue farmgirl style. Bake a pie or cookies or offer to help with the move-in process. Also bring them a list of local critical phone numbers and addresses, like contact information for local CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture) and dairies or how to locate a farmers' market.

Expert Level

- Attend a community event where you distribute information about being a farmgirl. Contact meritbadges@maryjanesfarm.org for some “What’s a farmgirl?” cards to hand out.

Each Other

12. Families Forever

Beginner Level

- Host a game night for your family each week. Drag out the old favorites like Clue, Monopoly and Dominoes. But don't forget to look for new games. There are some fun new favorites waiting to be discovered. To qualify, the TV must be turned off. Do this for a minimum of eight game nights (two months).
- Take turns reading aloud to each other. If you have children old enough, let them have a turn.

Intermediate Level

- Start a journal record of how much time the TV is on in your house and record which shows your family watches. This should be done for every TV in the house for a week.
- At the end of the week, total up how much time was spent in front of the TV. Make a list of what else could have been accomplished during that time. Make a pact to reduce TV time by 20%. Also assess if the TV shows being watched are really the types of television that you want your family to be watching.
- Use the extra time to interact more with your children.
- If you don't own a TV, come up with 10 new ideas on how to engage more social time as an entire family and then do them!

Expert Level

- Get your family outside and moving. Plan a family weekend in the outdoors. Some suggestions are hiking, fishing, camping, and boating.
- Find five new and unusual ways to spend time together that you have never done before. Some suggestions are to go to historic spots in your local area and learn about history together, go horseback riding as a family, go berry picking, or go on a whitewater rapids excursion.

Each Other

13. Entrepreneurial Spirit

Beginner Level

- Go for it! Put your dream business down on paper by learning how to write a business plan. Put numbers to it and also a timeline. Pick out a name. Tuck it under your pillow for now and dream on it.

Intermediate Level

- Research and then tackle everything legal about your business that must be accomplished before your grand opening. Get your funding in place. Print up business cards.

Expert Level

- Launch (hatch) your business and then shout it from the rooftops. Tell it here. Tell it everywhere. Buy yourself flowers and celebrate. Remember always to support other farmgirl businesses as you grow your own. Think cross-pollination and co-opetition.

Each Other

14. Farmgirl Shutterbugs

Beginner Level

- Research the following terms and how they relate to photography: f-stop, shutter speed, ISO (film speed), depth of field, framing, rule of thirds, and leading lines.
- Take at least 20 photos that demonstrate how you are living the farmgirl lifestyle and share some of them on our Farmgirl Connection chatroom or create an online photo album on a photo-sharing site.

Intermediate Level

- Look up some famous photographers and find one whose style you prefer. Take at least 50 photos emulating your chosen photographer's style and technique.
- Pick your 10 best photos to share and discuss how you emulated your chosen photographer with your local Farmgirl Chapter or upload them to a photo-sharing site and post links on our Farmgirl Connection chatroom.
- Read a basic book on photography techniques.

Expert Level

- Volunteer to take photos of a school event, community activity, or family reunion/get together. Take at least 100 photos, including at least 20 candid shots.
- Convert at least 12 photos into postcards or a calendar.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, share what you have learned with your group. If you don't belong to a Farmgirl Chapter, post your thoughts and experiences behind the lens on our Farmgirl Connection chatroom. Provide tips on how to take better photos.
- Read a current book on advanced photography techniques.

Each Other

15. I Should Have Been in the Movies

Beginner Level

- Either by choosing a new badge that you want to apply for, or by choosing a previous badge that you have been awarded, write down all the steps you took to receive the badge. Gather all the needed materials and place on a table for easy access.
- Sit in front of a mirror and rehearse teaching the steps that a sister would need to take to achieve this badge. Repeat your rehearsals until you feel confident in the process.
- If this is a new badge, you will want to go over all the required steps for that badge until you feel confident in that process as well.
- Write down your experiences in a journal — why you chose this badge and what you learned by watching yourself.

Intermediate Level

- With materials in hand, get a live audience to practice with. This audience can consist of friends, family, kids, co-workers, or your local Farmgirl Chapter. Once they have seen your presentation, ask them for some constructive criticism. Practice in front of them a couple of times until all the kinks are worked out.
- Write down any feedback you receive in your journal.

Expert Level

- Now it's time to get those cameras rolling. Either film yourself or have someone assist you in filming your rehearsed presentation about earning a merit badge.
- Once you have finished filming, send your video to us on a DVD as a .mpeg file (we cannot return the DVD, so be sure to make a copy for yourself as well). Sending in your video gives us permission to use it on our **MaryJanesFarm.tv** website. Send to: MaryJanesFarm/Merit Badge Video, Box 8691, Moscow, ID 83843. Include your e-mail address and the title of the badge you filmed. (Note: If this is a new merit badge, you will still need to apply online for the badge.)

Each Other

16. Farmgirl Grammar

Beginner Level

- Make an effort to improve your grammar and spelling. Refrain from using slang, abbreviations, or any form of text-messaging language.
- Using a dictionary, pick an unfamiliar word to be your word of the day, write down the word along with its meanings and uses, and try to incorporate the word into your daily activity. Continue to do this daily for two weeks.

Intermediate Level

- Create at least 10 posts or responses on the Farmgirl Chatroom, making sure to use excellent grammar and spelling.
- Keep discovering new words daily for an additional two weeks.
- Read the book *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English*, by Patricia T. O'Conner.

Expert Level

- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper discussing the importance of precise communication and syntax.
- Read the book *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* by Lynne Truss.
- Keep discovering new words daily for an additional two weeks.

Each Other

17. Know Your Roots

Beginner Level

- Sit down with your oldest living relative and ask them to share what they remember about your family history. If you can, videotape or record the interview so you can use it as a reference, and also a chance to capture some fond memories. (If you're fortunate to have two of your elders present, interview them both, since their shared memories will likely stir up others they may not have remembered on their own.)
- If you are the oldest member of your family, allow one of the younger members to interview you, and see what you can discover together.

Intermediate Level

- Now that you have some information, use resources available through the National Archives (www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/start-research/) to gain further information about your family history.

Expert Level

- Host a family reunion and possibly invite a newly discovered relative. Share the fruits of your research with your family at the reunion.

Each Other

18. Civic Heritage

Beginner Level

- 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 Level

- Use your trip to the local museum to inspire you to find a local figure or group of people 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 or people 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 Level

- 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.

Each Other

19. Blogging

Beginner Level

- Read *Blogging for Bliss: Crafting Your Own Online Journal: A Guide for Crafters, Artists & Creatives of all Kinds* by Tara Frey.
- Choose your topic. Pick something you are passionate about.

Intermediate Level

- Start your blog. Find a blogging host that works for you, or host your own.
- Pick out a name, and publish your first post.
- Don't forget to add your blog to MaryJanesFarm's **GirlGab.com**

Expert Level

- Learn how to add pictures and customize your blog.
- Publish at least 10 posts along with photos.
- Network! Create a blogging circle by visiting other blogs, writing comments, and leaving your blog's address so they can visit you, also. Remember, building a blog and finding readers takes time. Be patient and have fun.

Each Other

20. Greatest Generation

Beginner Level

- Spend time with your elders. Visit a retirement home, your local senior center, or a neighbor or family member.
- Spend at least 10 hours playing games, listening to music, or simply keeping good company.

Intermediate Level

- Continue to spend time with your new friend.
- Volunteer to help organize old photographs, or to record their favorite memories or experiences.
- If possible, cook them a favorite meal or family recipe.
- The time requirement for this badge is an additional 20 hours.

Expert Level

- Continue to spend an additional 40 hours in the company of your elders.
- Share your experience with your local Farmgirl Chapter. If you don't belong to a local Farmgirl Chapter, share your experience with the farmgirls on the chatroom.

Farm Kitchen

1. Know Your Food

Beginner Level

- Write a food journal for a month to observe more closely your eating habits. Do you know where your food was grown? Read labels. Read “Animal, Vegetable, Miracle” by Barbara Kingsolver.
- Become a sprout farmer. For further instructions, see “MaryJane’s Ideabook.”
- Find 10 new ways to incorporate more fresh fruit and veggies into your family’s diet on a regular basis like in school or office lunches.
- Eliminate all hydrogenated oils and artificial sweeteners from your diet.
- If you already do all of the above, find one person that you can help do likewise by inviting yourself to dinner in their home or yours and giving them an evening food/pantry lesson complete with dinner.

Intermediate Level

- Make a pact to increase how much organic food you eat by 25%.
- In your food journal, write down all the names of your local CSA’s, their phone numbers, and membership costs. Join one if possible.
- Replace a dessert a week with an unsweetened fruit dish. Help your family appreciate more natural and unprocessed food in your diet.
- Eliminate all High Fructose Corn Syrup from your diet.
- If you already do all of the above, find two different families that you can help do likewise by inviting yourself to dinner in their home (bringing all the ingredients) and giving them an evening food/pantry lesson complete with dinner. Read “Omnivore’s Dilemma” by Michael Pollan

(cont.)

Expert Level

- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, share information on how your local CSA, Farmer's Market, Food Co-op, Natural Market, etc., impact the local economy and your personal health. Some ideas to consider are: what pesticides are they helping you to avoid; how do genetically modified, hydrogenated, and synthetic ingredients adversely affect your health and what are local organizations doing to help people avoid these ingredients.
* Note: By the time a S.A.D. (Standard American Diet) child is five years old, she or he will have consumed more than seven pounds of food additives--preservatives, emulsifiers, lubricants, bleaching agents, synthetic sweeteners, flavor enhancers, and artificial colors and flavors.
- Buy organic and locally grown foods as much as possible. Shoot for a 50% LOCAL organic diet. Talk with local food growers and artisan food makers (bread, cheese...) and find out where your food comes from, from the ground up. See if they will let you interview them. Send the interview to local papers.
- Advertise and teach a free evening class offering your methods for how to "change your diet, change your life!"
- Read "In Defense of Food" by Michael Pollan.

Farm Kitchen

2. Forage for Food

Beginner Level

- Contact your local extension office to find out which plants in your area are edible, where they grow, and what season is peak to forage for each. For a variety of wild edible recipes, refer to “MaryJane’s Outpost Guidebook.”

Intermediate Level

- Spend time in the field finding places to forage before, during, and off season. Learn to identify the plants by location, leaves and stalk characteristics.

Expert Level

- Forage for natural food in your area.
- Document your foraging with pictures. Take pictures of the area and of the plants themselves.
- Learn from a professional how to identify edible and non-edible fungi.
- Organize a wild mushroom hunt.

Farm Kitchen

3. ChillOver ComeOver

Beginner Level

- Order MaryJane’s ChillOver Powder.
- Explore some of the ChillOver recipes found in her “Ideabook” and in her magazines.
- Host a ChillOver taste test. Have your fellow farmgirls or neighbors or family create ChillOvers together and make an evening out of learning new recipes.

Intermediate Level

- Create a new ChillOver recipe and share it on the Farmgirl Connection chatroom.

Expert Level

- Create two additional new ChillOver recipes and bring them to your next Farmgirl Chapter meeting or present them online in the Farmgirl Connection chatroom along with take-home recipe “cards.”

Farm Kitchen

4. BakeOver MakeOver

Beginner Level

- Explore some of the BakeOver recipes found in “MaryJane’s Ideabook” and in her magazines. This is a good way to incorporate more vegetables in your diet and avoid the middle section of the grocery store, where all the denatured processed foods are found.
- Host a BakeOver taste test. Have your fellow farmgirls or neighbors or family create BakeOvers together and turn it into an evening to explore new recipes and try new vegetables like sunchokes or jicama.

Intermediate Level

- Create two additional new BakeOver recipes and bring them to your next Farmgirl Chapter meeting or present them online in the Farmgirl Connection chatroom along with take-home recipe “cards.” Use local or homegrown vegetables.

Expert Level

- Create one new recipe in the categories below for a:
 - Breakfast BakeOver
 - Lunch BakeOver
 - Dinner BakeOver
 - Dessert BakeOver
- Share your four new tried-and-true recipes online in the Farmgirl Connection chatroom, with your Farmgirl Chapter if you are a member of one, on your blog, at your next family reunion, or the next potluck you attend.

Farm Kitchen

5. Organic on a Budget

Beginner Level

- Order MaryJane’s Budget Mix in bulk either in wheat or gluten-free.
- Commit to shopping only the perimeter of a grocery store. Do not hit the middle section. If possible, either grow or buy your vegetables, eggs, meat, and dairy locally grown.
- Pencil out a budget and stick to it for one month using Budget Mix as the basis of your meals for creating everything from tortillas to pancakes to cakes to biscuits.

Intermediate Level

- Continue perfecting your eating plan using MaryJane’s Budget Mix as a basis for your meals. Crank down on your budget a notch while loosening and freeing up some money for a new book or crafting supplies—something you haven’t been able to afford until now.
- At this point, all your veggies and fruits should be organic. Congratulations! You are no longer dependent on chemicals.

Expert Level

- Teach two more families how to eat organic on a budget. Get their taste buds ready for more by gifting them your homemade crackers along with some organic peanut butter and jam or a plate full of warm biscuits just in time for their dinner or deliver a basket of cheese sticks for a sporting event. If they’re under the weather, show up with some chicken and dumplings—all organic of course!

Farm Kitchen

6. Pay it Forward

Beginner Level

- Figure out how much money you spend per person per meal each day of the week.
- Pick one day of the week; on that day, skip your lunch or dinner meal.
- Donate the saved money to your local food bank to help others who struggle daily to put food on their table.

Intermediate Level

- Organize a food round-up of non-perishable food items to donate to your local food bank/food shelf for the needy. Collect at least 50 items.

Expert Level

- Donate five hours to your local food bank.
- Write a letter to the editor about the hungry in America and what individuals can do to help. Give concrete ideas that are doable in your area.
- Help package food packs for charity.
- Help deliver food to homebound/elderly for at least five hours.

Farm Kitchen

7. Bustin' Out

Beginner Level

- Try a new organic food each week. Remember, it only takes 21 days to change your taste preferences. Here is your chance to encourage yourself to enjoy more fruits and vegetables.
- Do this for one month.
- If you already eat organic food, help convert someone who doesn't. But keep it playful and non-judgmental!

Intermediate Level

- Do step one in the Beginner Level for an additional two months.
- If you already eat organic food, help convert two families who don't. Make it fun!

Expert Level

- Do step one in the Beginner Level for an additional five months.
- If you already eat organic food, help convert five different families who don't. Be imaginative and generous! Show up with baskets of free food.

Farm Kitchen

8. Self-sufficiency

Beginner Level

- Learn how to dry herbs and spices.
- Create the spice blends in “MaryJane’s Ideabook.”
- Package them as a gift set. Think weddings!

Intermediate Level

- Learn how to can apple pie filling. MaryJane has simple-to-follow instructions for this in her Ideabook.
- Try canning something like spaghetti sauce that can form the basis of many quick meals.
- Learn how to pickle/ferment veggies for home use.

Expert Level

- Learn to dry fruit or make your own jerky.
- Host a “putting up” party or class to can, freeze, and dry fresh food.

Farm Kitchen

9. Get it Together

Beginner Level

- To truly be able to function on a high level in the kitchen, you need space and organization. Pull out all your storage containers. If you don't use them, toss or recycle. If they don't have a lid, toss or recycle (unless you really do use it lidless), and toss and recycle all those abandoned lids (we all have them!) that don't fit anything left in the cupboard.

Intermediate Level

- Make a kitchen needs list and add to it until you have everything you need for a complete working kitchen. Give extra un-needed items to a family in need or one just setting up a home for the first time.

Expert Level

- Learn how to sharpen your kitchen knives. Keep them razor sharp at all times.

Farm Kitchen

10. Unprocessed Kitchen

Beginner Level

- Pick out a guilty pleasure from the grocery store—anything from cereal, soda, potato chips, or snack cakes— and replicate them organically at home. For inspiration, see “Classic Favs Go Organic” in *MaryJanesFarm* April-May 2010 (Garden Secrets) issue.

Intermediate Level

- Continue your unprocessed journey and replicate two more items organically.

Expert Level

- Host an “unprocessed” party and help your guests discover ways to make some of their favorite processed foods organically.

Farm Kitchen

11. Icing on the Cake

Beginner Level

- Study and learn cake-decorating basics: filling the decorating bag, correct decorating bag position, using couplers, and all the other basics (find basics at 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 Level

- 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 Level

- 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.

Farm Kitchen

12. Recipes

Beginner Level

- Gather your family's favorite and well-loved recipes. Talk to your grandparents, parents, and aunts and uncles.
- If any are not written down, write them down now!

Intermediate Level

- Create a recipe box or book to keep all your heirloom recipes safe.
- Make three more to give to other family members.

Expert Level

- Host a family gathering featuring all your newly organized recipes.

Garden Gate

1. Bee Good to Your Mother Earth

Beginner Level

- Grow a vegetable garden, even if it's just one zucchini plant!
- Don't use any pesticides and synthetic fertilizers in your garden, or stop using them if you currently use them.
- Research and use organic pest control.
- If you already garden organically, help convert someone who doesn't. But keep it playful and non-judgmental!
- Read "Montrose: Life in a Garden" by Nancy Goodwin.

Intermediate Level

- Research and then plant native plants in your garden or yard to attract bees and butterflies.
- Maintain a complete habitat, including some sort of access to water, housing, and food for beneficial insects (remember, we need them for pollination).
- If you have a lawn, convert a section of it into a permanent wildflower garden using species native to your area.
- Learn to save a variety of wildflowers seeds and get them to sprout and grow. (This is more complicated than you think!)

Expert Level

- One of the hidden places for pollution in your garden is your hose! Make sure that all of your hoses are of the lead-free type. Usually this is denoted by a "potable water" notation on the packaging.
- If you have a fence and you paint it, switch to an environmentally safe paint product. Commercial paint is highly toxic and outgasses into our environment. Not to mention all those little paint chips that fall away as the paint ages.
- Research and consider planting a living fence instead of a constructed one. Learn about a technique called "Pleaching."
- Take your family's compost all the way from kitchen waste to soil again so that you end up with a total of 10 five-gallon buckets of new black soil. Think of it as money in the bank!

Garden Gate

2. Grow Where You're Planted

Beginner Level

- Collect five native flowers and press them. When dry, decoupage or in some way mount them onto a piece of paper. Next to the flower, write a brief description of their habitat and place in the ecosystem.
- Discover which plants and wildflowers are rare or endangered in your area and photograph or write a report on them. Don't pick these!

Intermediate Level

- Research and plant at least five native non-invasive grasses or ground covers in your garden or lawn. Grab some ideas for lawn alternatives from MaryJanesFarm "Shoulder to the Wheel" issue.
- If you are a member of a Farmgirl Chapter, present a brief lecture on how your chosen native plants were once a vital part of the ecosystem and how they are incorporated into your garden space or yard.

Expert Level

- Plant at least one (more is better!) native tree or shrub in your yard. Try to find a species that is threatened or that will supply much-needed habitat for your neighborhood insects and birds.
- Complete a Master Gardeners program through your Extension Office.
- Find and read a book called "Roots Demystified" by Robert Kourik.

Garden Gate

3. Gaining Ground

Beginner Level

- Start a compost heap for your yard. Maintain it for at least three months.
OR
- Create a worm ranch for in-house composting.
- Read “The Earth Moved” by Amy Stewart or “Worms Eat My Garbage” by Mary Appelhof.

Intermediate Level

- Research types of compost bins and then build a permanent one in your yard. Continue to add to your compost heap and reap the rewards of composted soil to enrich your garden and lawn. Keep track of how many gallons of new black your compost bin gives back to you over the course of a year.
- Find out if your community has a composting program already in place in conjunction with recycling or waste management and encourage them to do so if they don’t already. Write a letter to the editor about it one way or the other. Think waste reduction and spread your passion for composting by helping another family follow your lead and start a compost heap of their own. Keep checking in with them until they have their first bucket of black gold.

Expert Level

- Check with your local extension office and recycling depot to see if the Master Composter training course is available in your area. If so, enroll and complete.
- If not, read the book “Secrets to Great Soil: A Grower’s Guide to Composting, Mulching, and Creating Healthy, Fertile Soil for your Lawn and Garden” by Elizabeth P. Stell. Donate the book to your library and teach a class on composting.

Garden Gate

4. Backyard Farmer

Beginner Level

- Start your own chicken flock or become a patron of farm-fresh eggs or raise some backyard rabbits for fresh meat and learn how to butcher them.
- Feed your animals organically as much as possible.

Intermediate Level

- Find a way to learn to milk a dairy animal. Many farmers will be glad to teach you if you offer to do the milking when they need a day off, as this is often a problem for dairy animal owners. If you already know how to milk, teach someone else how to.
- Become involved in raising or supporting rare and/or heritage breeds.

Expert Level

- Stop buying mainstream non-organic grocery store meats. Buy from a local meat locker or straight from a farmer or rancher. If you raise your own meats, write a letter to the editor explaining the benefits of knowing where your meat comes from.
- Learn to make your own cheese or butter.
- Enter your animals in a county fair or take artistic photos of farm animals and turn them into greeting cards.

Garden Gate

5. Heirlooms Forever!

Beginner Level

- As you plan your garden in the spring, look over heirloom varieties of seeds.
- Read the book “Gardening with Heirloom Seeds” by Lynn Coulter.
- Replace 5% of your plantings with heirloom varieties.

Intermediate Level

- Learn how to save seeds.
- Save the seeds of your heirloom plantings.
- Plant at least 25% of your garden to heirloom varieties.

Expert Level

- Continue to save the seeds of your heirloom varieties and plant them in your garden.
- Plant 50% heirloom varieties.
- Offer your excess saved seeds to friends, relatives and other farmgirls.
Explain the need behind saving the heirloom varieties that you have chosen.

Garden Gate

6.3 R's Rule (Reuse, Recycle, Revive!)

Beginner Level

- Make row markers out of tin can lids using the punched tin method. For stakes, scavenge strong sticks native to your area or come up with some creative recycled stakes.
- Learn to sharpen your own garden tools.
- Get into the habit of wiping down your tools and putting them away properly. Don't forget to care for and regularly oil wooden handles. To get into this habit, practice good tool care for at least three months.

Intermediate Level

- Make a female scarecrow. Use old clothes and stuff her with real straw. Take pictures and share them with your Farmgirl Chapter if you are a member of one, or post a photo on the Farmgirl Connection chatroom.

Expert Level

- Find ways to use your broken equipment and gardening supplies in creative ways. Use old plates as a garden border or embed broken bits of clay pots into homemade stepping stones. Use your imagination. Use old watering cans as planters or even old boots.
- Contact your state's Adopt-a-Highway program. Get your family or your Farmgirl Chapter involved in cleaning up around your town.

Garden Gate

7. What's Your Beef?

Beginner Level

- Research the difference between grass-fed beef and that which is corporately raised. www.eatwild.com
- Write down what you learned and how, if at all, it has changed your mind about the meat you eat.

Intermediate Level

- Read the book “BEEF: The untold Story of How Milk, Meat, and Muscle Shaped the World,” by Andrew Rimas and Evan D.G. Fraser.
- Find a local rancher who sells locally raised meats (you can use places like www.localharvest.org and www.eatwild.com) to help in your search.

Expert Level

- Raise a beef cow of your own. When it comes time to harvest it share it with someone along with the info you have learned.
OR
- Find a local rancher and buy direct from him/her.
- Contact the rancher you located in the above search and ask if you can come out and interview him and tour his/her ranch.
- Share what you have learned with your local Farmgirl Chapter or online on our [Farmgirl Connection](#)

Garden Gate

8. Horse Dreams

Beginner Level

- Drive around your city, community or town and admire any horses you may find.
- Try to identify the breed, making a mental note if one becomes more of a favorite and why.
- Give yourself the opportunity to “meet” one up close and personal. Either through a neighbor, farmgirl, or local riding stable or boarder.

Intermediate Level

- Research a breed. What did you discover about its origin and history?
- Read “The Soul of a Horse,” by Joe Camp. Also check out his website at www.thesoulofahorse.com

Expert Level

- Research horse rescues in your area.
- Donate 5 hours to the care of a horse, either at a local stable, or neighbor, or with a farmgirl, learning all the ins and outs of caring for the animal.
- Once you have located a horse rescue, get involved. Let us know how you chose to make a difference in the life of these amazing animals or those that care for them.

Garden Gate

9. The Secret Life of Bees

Beginner Level

- Watch the trailer of the movie at www.vanishingbees.com
- Plant bee-friendly flowers in your garden.
- Read Sue Monk Kidd’s “Secret Life of Bees.”

Intermediate Level

- Research the health difference between raw honey and processed honey.
- Find a local honey vendor.
- Read “Bees: Nature’s Little Wonders,” by Candace Savage.

Expert Level

- Raise your own bees and harvest the honey, sharing with others.
- Visit a local beekeeper and help harvest the honey.
- Share your experience with your local Farmgirl Chapter.

Garden Gate

10. Birds

Beginner Level

- Research birds native to your area.
- Make a bird “wish list” of birds you’d like to observe in the wild.

Intermediate Level

- Build a bird house, bath, or feeder for your yard or garden.
- Watch and identify the kind of birds it attracts, recording your observations. Observe the type of bird, the time of year, time of day, and the bird’s behavior.

Expert Level

- Go on a bird watching expedition.
- Identify at least 10 different species of birds and record your observations.
- If you are able, try to photograph each one.

Make It Easy

1. In the Garden

Beginner Level

- Make your own garden trellis with string, wire and scrap wood instead of buying a trellis from the store.
- Make your own bean teepee or ladder.

Intermediate Level

- Find a way to use your tin cans in your garden. Use at least 15 cans.
- Make a bird house, butterfly house, or bat house using flattened cans for a roof.
- Make a raised flower or vegetable bed.

Expert Level

- Make your own garden gate, even if it's a decoration in your house!
- Make your own cold frame or hoop house to extend your growing season.

Make It Easy

2. Light the Way

Beginner Level

- Make the chandelier featured in the Make It Easy section of “MaryJane’s Ideabook.”

Intermediate Level

- Learn to split wood using MaryJane’s “Brains, Not Brawn” method available in her Ideabook.

Expert Level

- Split a cord of wood by yourself for use as firewood. Stack it in style enough so that at least one neighbor says, “Nice stack of wood you got there.”

Make It Easy

3. Make It!

Beginner Level

- Organize your tools in such a way that you will always know where they are (or should be). Consider “shadowing” them the way MaryJane suggests in her “Ideabook.”
- Make a planter out of wood.

Intermediate Level

- Make a piece of outdoor furniture like a bench or small table.
- Make a portable tool caddy for your tools for keeping them handy as you work.

Expert Level

- If you have a dairy animal, make your own milking stanchion or make it to use as a conversational piece—farmstyle furniture indoors! Or make it for a friend that does milk an animal.
- Lay a brick or stone walkway or small patio area.

Make It Easy

4. Build It Green

Beginner Level

- Familiarize yourself with ways to decorate your home that are green.
- Find ways that you can make subtle changes in the way you are decorating your home.

Intermediate Level

- Share with your local Farmgirl Chapter what you have discovered. If you don't belong to a local Farmgirl Chapter, share with the farmgirls on the forum.

Expert Level

- Dedicate 10 hours to a “build” — either Habitat for Humanity or some other organization of your choice that helps families get into homes. Try to find a green build.
- Utilize one of the skills you learned at the build in your own home or in assisting someone in a home repair.

Make It Easy

5. Carp-hen-try

Beginner Level

- Find a simple project around the home, such as installing shelving or repainting a room, and complete it.
- Read the book *Dare to Repair*, by Julie Sussman and Stephanie Glakasten.

Intermediate Level

- This time, tackle a more difficult project like remodeling an entire room or crafting something for the home or your property like a picnic table. A minimum of 20 hours is required to earn this badge.

Expert Level

- Undertake a major project such as building your own workshop. If you lack the space or resources for a project such as this, you can also donate your time to a group like Habitat for Humanity. A minimum of 40 hours is required to earn this badge.

Make It Easy

6. Grease Chicks

Beginner Level

- Become more familiar with auto maintenance by getting in the habit of checking your fluids. When you fill up at a service station, take time to check your oil level, coolant in the overflow tank (take care not to burn yourself), brake fluid, power steering fluid, and windshield washer fluid. Once a week, you should also check that your tires are sufficiently inflated. Finally, keep track of your mileage and fuel usage for one month.

Intermediate Level

- Now that you've become more familiar with your engine fluids, it's time to get your hands dirty. Learn how to change the oil in your vehicle and do so. Make sure to bring your waste oil to a recycling center; the American Petroleum Institute has information for finding a center near you (www.recycleoil.org).

Expert Level

- Find other ways to challenge yourself with your vehicle's maintenance. Learn to change a tire, replace spark plugs, flush and change the engine coolant (taking care to recycle the fluid properly), or any similar task. You must complete three different tasks to earn this badge.

Make It Easy

7. Let's Get Physical

Beginner Level

- Set goals, whether they are weight-loss goals, exercise goals, or diet goals, and stick to them for one month.

Intermediate Level

- Take care to eat more organic foods and pay attention to portion sizes. Continue your exercise journey for an additional month.

Expert Level

- Set an even greater challenge for yourself, like participating in a 5k run or joining a women's softball team. In addition, keep to your exercise regimen for two more months.

Make It Easy

8. Make It Pretty

Beginner Level

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

Intermediate Level

- 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 Level

- 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.

Make It Easy

9. Music

Beginner Level

- Learn about three of the basic elements of music: rhythm, melody, and harmony.
- Listen to three songs from three different genres of music and identify the elements in each.

Intermediate Level

- Research one classical composer and one musician from the last 100 years.
- Compare and contrast each, identifying the similarities and the differences between their music.
- Share what you have learned with your Farmgirl Chapter, or with the farmgirls on the chatroom.

Expert Level

- Learn to play an instrument, or choose an instrument to research and attend a concert or recital featuring that instrument.
- Join a local choir, or support your local singers by attending at least two open mic nights or choir concerts in your town.

Outpost

1. “Out There” Women

Beginner Level

- Make your own survival pack in a small bag to take with you on day-hikes. Include:
 - Matches in a waterproof container
 - Unbreakable mirror or something shiny to signal rescuers
 - Whistle
 - High energy bar or candy
 - Rainproof poncho and space blanket
 - First Aid supplies
 - reflective nylon cord
 - Knife
- Identify 10 native plants and their properties as food, medicine or poison.

Intermediate Level

- Make your own trail mix and/or pemmican using the recipe in “MaryJane’s Ideabook.”
- Cook a full meal: appetizer, main course, and dessert, over just a campfire.

Expert Level

- Build your own wall tent or buy a vintage camp trailer.
- Learn to catch and then cook the catch of the day.

Outpost

2. Outstepping

Beginner Level

- Go day hiking and visit three places that you have never seen before.
- Identify in the wild your state's bird, tree and flower. Take photos of them.
- Learn how to make a safe campfire, even if it's in your own backyard.

Intermediate Level

- Photo document all the watchtowers, lighthouses, old mines, and other historic locations in your area in a 100-mile radius.
- Go overnight camping away from it all (campground camping doesn't count).
- Learn how to read maps with a compass and landmarks.

Expert Level

- Strap on the backpacking frame. Go backpacking for a weekend. Take only what you can carry on your back.
- Go backpacking with only organic food.
- Practice low-impact camping.

Outpost

3. Disconnect to Reconnect

Beginner Level

- Unplug for the weekend. Turn off your computer, your phone, your TV, radio, stereo, cell phone, and other electronic gadgets from Friday night at 5 pm to Sunday night at 9 pm. Enjoy activities such as sewing, reading, and cooking outdoors.

Intermediate Level

- Gather up a few close farmgirl friends and head for the hills. Stay in a rustic camping cabin or even go tent camping for a weekend. Do not take cell phones or other gadgets with you. Enjoy the beauty that the natural world provides without distraction. Be safe. Don't get lost.

Expert Level

- Head for the hills again, but this time take only YOU. Pets are allowed.

*Note- if you are a mom and cannot leave your child behind, it is okay to bring them along. Help them learn how to appreciate nature without all the electronic background noise that is so much a part of our lives.

- Rejuvenate yourself by reading, writing in a journal or working on a book. Take extra pride in yourself as a self-sufficient farmgirl. If you can, go two days without needing to speak to another person.

Outpost

4. Knotty Farmgirls

Beginner Level

- Gear up for an outdoor adventure by learning to tie some knotty basics: a square knot, two half hitches, and a bowline knot. Practice them on a piece of rope or cord. Research three uses for each.
- When you can build stable and secure knots, build a tree swing (as in MaryJane's Outpost, p.68), to demonstrate your knotty knowledge.

Intermediate Level

- Learn the difference between a knot, a splice, and a hitch. Familiarize yourself with any three other knots, splices, or hitches of your choosing.
- Make your own rope and learn to splice it. Using your knowledge of rope making, make at least six feet of rope.
- Teach a friend or a Farmerette or Young Cultivator how to tie knots, or involve them in your rope-making project.

Expert Level

- You are one Knotty Farmgirl! Learn three new rope-making or knotting techniques and their uses.
- Make your own knotted hammock (as in MaryJane's Ideabook, p.282) or similar project of expert level. There is a 30-hour time investment required.
- Teach at least two other people how to use a rope.

Outpost

5. First Aid

Beginner Level

- Assemble first-aid kits for all of your vehicles, as well as for your kitchen, garage, and bathrooms. Be sure to include fire extinguishers where applicable and make a note to periodically check your smoke detectors.

Intermediate Level

- Find a first-aid class in your area and enroll. Once you've passed the course, share the importance of first-aid training with farmgirl Sisters in your Chapter or on the Farmgirl Chatroom.

Expert Level

- In the following year, re-enroll in a First Aid course to renew your card or become a first-aid instructor.

Outpost

6. Stargazing Chicks

Beginner Level

- Observe the night sky for several days and see which of the five brightest objects in the night sky you can pinpoint. How can you tell the difference between a planet and a star?
- Learn to identify a constellation like *Ursa Major* and its major stars. Take pictures of the night sky or diagram your favorite constellation. *A Field Guide to the Stars and Planets* by Jay M. Pasachoff or a similar book may help. Learn about degrees of arc and how to measure and estimate them.

Intermediate Level

- Start a stargazing log from your back porch. Note which nights are cloudy and which are clear, how well you can see the Milky Way (if it's even visible), and how much the stars twinkle, as well as where and how much light pollution there is in the sky.
- Use binoculars and a star chart to find Jupiter on a clear, moonless night. Follow in Galileo's footsteps by diagramming the positions of Jupiter's moons over several consecutive nights in your log. While you have your binoculars out, check out M31, the Andromeda galaxy.
- Attend or host a star party.
- If you want to learn more about stargazing, check out *Seeing in the Dark: How Backyard Stargazers Are Probing Deep Space and Guarding Earth from Interplanetary Peril* by Timothy Ferris.

Expert Level

- Spend time seeking the more elusive objects in the sky. Try to observe the planets Mercury and Uranus, a variable star, a very young and a very old moon, a meteor shower, and a lunar eclipse.
- If you're feeling really lucky, challenge yourself to observe a satellite, asteroid or comet; the zodiacal light; or the earth's shadow.

Outpost

7. Woman-at-Arms

Beginner Level

- Familiarize yourself with gun-safety rules and gun regulations in your state. Find a hunter-safety course in your area and enroll in it.

Intermediate Level

- After completing your hunter safety course, further familiarize yourself with your gun and spend at least 20 hours at a firing range to earn this badge.

Expert Level

- Get together with another Farmgirl and go hunting together. Make sure to observe the rules and guidelines you learned in your hunter safety course.

Outpost

8. Rocks and Minerals

Beginner Level

- Research the difference between rocks and minerals.
- Learn about the characteristics of minerals and identify the three types of rocks.
- Research the ways rocks and minerals are used in our everyday life.

Intermediate Level

- Find a museum near you that has a rock, mineral, or gemstone display. See how many you can identify.
- If there isn't a museum near you, find pictures of rocks and minerals online and create your own display to share with your Farmgirl Chapter or family.
- Become a rockhound! Collect at least 10 different rocks or minerals.

Expert Level

- Identify if each is either rock or mineral, and write your observations down.
- Keep an eye out for fossils or gemstones.

Outpost

9. Fishing

Beginner Level

- Learn how to tie the following knots commonly used in fishing: clinch, Palomar, turle, barrel knot, and double surgeons loop.

Intermediate Level

- Obtain a copy of the fishing regulations near you. Check out your state's Department of Fish & Game website.
- Familiarize yourself with the types of fish in your area, and how each are caught.
- Research the different types of bait used to catch fish in your area.

Expert Level

- Buy a fishing license and gear up.
- Catch a fish! Or two!
- If your area's regulations permit you to keep it, clean and cook it.

Outpost

10. Wild Game

Beginner Level

- Research different types of wild game.
- Research safe handling of wild game meats.
- Research the laws in your area concerning wild game. A good place to start is your state's Department of Fish & Game website.

Intermediate Level

- Successfully complete a hunter safety program.
- Go hunting with someone who has a license.
- Make your own jerky or sausage.

Expert Level

- Buy a hunting license and go hunting.
- Follow proper care in the field while dressing.
- Process your game or visit a local processor to learn about the following:
 - importance of temperature control
 - aging
 - cutting and the location of various cuts
 - curing and smoking
- Use as much of the animal as possible for culinary purposes and otherwise.

Stitching & Crafting

1. Sew Wonderful

Beginner Level

- Put together a beginner’s sewing kit with a homemade pinkeeper. Include:
 - Several different colors of thread
 - Buttons
 - Scissors
 - Needles
 - Straight pins
 - Safety pins

Intermediate Level

- Learn how to sew a straight seam both by hand and by machine.
- Learn several different types of seams, including French and flat seams.

Expert Level

- Sew a BakeOver TakeOver from “MaryJane’s Ideabook” and gift it to the hostess of the next potluck you attend—with a BakeOver inside for the potluck, of course!
- Sew your own set of hot pads and embroider them using design ideas from “MaryJane’s Ideabook.”

Stitching & Crafting

2. Aprons

Beginner Level

- Sew a half apron of your choice from a pattern or a kit. There is a two-hour minimum time investment required. Wear an apron whenever you are in the kitchen.

Intermediate Level

- Sew a full apron of your choice from a pattern or a kit. Try one with gathering and/or ruffling. There is a three-hour minimum time investment required. Wear an apron to a friend's house.

Expert Level

- Design your own new go-to-town apron pattern. Think frilly.
- Sew two versions of your new apron pattern and give one away as a gift.
- For the frill of it, put on your lipstick and wear it to town.

Stitching & Crafting

3. Embroidery

Beginner Level

- Learn to embroidery or cross-stitch. “MaryJane’s Ideabook” and her “Stitching Room” book have basic tutorials.
- Make a sampler for future reference and future generations. Frame it. Turn-of-the-century embroidery samplers are now collector’s items. Practice each stitch until you are happy with it.

Intermediate Level

- Embroider you own set of “Days of the Week” tea towels from “MaryJane’s Ideabook”, or embroider all of your badges onto a jacket, quilt, or tote! For instructions on how to embroider your badges, go to **farmgirlsisterhood.org/merit-badges.asp?opt=embroider#instructions**

Expert Level

- Embroider all of the “Vitamin Ball” patterns from “MaryJane’s Ideabook” on a set of tea towels, a quilt or a wall hanging.
- Embroider a set of pillowcases with a pattern of your choice.

Stitching & Crafting

4. Crochet

Beginner Level

- If you don't know how to crochet, learn. MaryJane has excellent instructions in her "Stitching Room" book.
- If you are just learning how to crochet, start with a simple straight scarf. If you already know how to crochet, pick a simple project like a rag rug or dishcloth. Finish your crochet project. There is a three-hour minimum time investment required.
- Teach someone else how to crochet a simple project.

Intermediate Level

- Continue on your crochet journey, but step up the pace by picking a harder project this time. Learn how to do some new moves with that hook.
- Start and finish a new crochet project of intermediate status like a granny square afghan. There is a 20-hour minimum time investment required.
- Crochet in the company of a friend for a total of five hours.

Expert Level

- You are ready to be called a crochet doyenne now! Learn three more hook maneuvers to add jazz to your projects.
- Start and finish a new project of Expert Level. There is a 50-hour minimum time investment required.
- Teach at least five other people how to crochet.

Stitching & Crafting

5. Knitting

Beginner Level

- If you don't know how to knit, learn.
- If you are just learning how to knit, start with a simple straight scarf. If you already know how to knit, pick a simple project like a dishcloth.
- Finish your knitting project. There is a three-hour minimum time investment required.
- Teach someone else how to knit a simple project.

Intermediate Level

- Continue on your knitting journey, but step up the pace by picking a harder project this time. Learn how to do some new moves with those needles!
- Start and finish a new knitting project of intermediate status like a granny square afghan. There is a 20-hour minimum time investment required.
- Knit in the company of a friend for a total of five hours.

Expert Level

- You are ready to be called a knitting addict now! Learn three more maneuvers to add jazz to your projects.
- Start and finish a new project of Expert Level. There is a 50-hour minimum time investment required.
- Teach at least five other people how to knit.

Stitching & Crafting

6. Tatting

Beginning Level

- Take a class or teach yourself how to do basic tatting motions. Learn:
 - Double Stitch
 - Picot
 - Ring
 - Chain
- Now combine your knowledge to make a length of tatting at least three feet long. “MaryJane’s Stitching Room” has a tutorial for needle tatting.

Intermediate Level

- Continue on your tatting journey, but pick up the pace using several different types of thread.
- Learn how to join your picots to make new projects.
- Tat an edging onto a hankie.

Expert Level

- Find a tatting pattern and complete the project ... baby bonnet, booties, apron pocket, etc., all made only from tatting. There is a 10-hour minimum time investment required.
- Host a teach-in to share the knowledge you gained in achieving this badge to this level. Promote a discussion about the therapy of handwork.

Stitching & Crafting

7. Quilting

Beginner Level

- If you don't know how to quilt, learn.
- Pick a simple pattern like a doll-sized quilt that will help you learn the basics, even just sewing squares together.
- Learn how to add a backing and batting and do simple quilting stitches to hold everything in place.
- Finish your quilting project. There is a three-hour minimum time investment required.

Intermediate Level

- Continue on your quilting journey, but step up the pace by picking a harder project this time. Try new patterns that tax your sewing ability and push you to new limits.
- Start and finish a new quilting project of intermediate status. There is a 20-hour minimum time investment required.
- Quilt in the company of a friend for a total of five hours.

Expert Level

- You are ready to learn how to be called a quilting queen now! Learn three new techniques and/or patterns.
- Start a new project of Expert Level. There is a 50-hour time investment required.
- This section of the badge can not be earned until you finish your project.
- Teach at least five other people how to quilt.

Stitching & Crafting

8. Homespun Christmas

Beginner Level

- Make at least 25% of your Christmas presents as well as 25% of the Christmas ornaments used in your home in a given calendar year.

Intermediate Level

- Deliver and decorate a Christmas tree to someone that is unable to put one up on their own. Use at least 25% handmade (made by you) Christmas ornaments on the tree.

Expert Level

- In a separate calendar year from above, decorate a full-size Christmas tree using the ornaments from your Beginner Level, but this time decorate the entire tree in your own hand-made ornaments. Make ALL the Christmas presents that you give.

Stitching & Crafting

9. Safe Toys

Beginner Level

- Make five different creative bean bags for turning children's chores into play based on "MaryJane's Stitching Room."
- Make them for the children in your life or for donation to your local women's shelter.

Intermediate Level

- Sew a handmade doll.
- Make it for a child in your life or for donation to your local women's shelter.

Expert Level

- Sew an heirloom doll like a topsy-turvy doll.
- Sew a children's sized apron and a matching doll-sized apron.
- Make them for the children in your life or for donation to your local women's shelter.

Stitching & Crafting

10. Buttoned Up

Beginner Level

- Start your own button collection, 50 button minimum. You never know when you will need them! Take extra pride in your collection if they are all found and not bought.

Intermediate Level

- Make a button bracelet, necklace or charm string and wear it.

Expert Level

- Research the history of buttons (in the era of your choice) and the kinds of buttons that were worn in that time period. Collect at least 10 different kinds of antique buttons and include one of each made from metal, wood, china, and rubber.

Stitching & Crafting

11. Nellie Will-do

For this badge, you can pick any kind of fiber art not required for any of the other badges. This includes about anything you can dream up—everything from felting and locker hooking to postcard quilts to curtain and clothing construction to upholstery or slipcovers. Projects must be completed and photographed.

- **Beginner Level** requires a 25-hour investment of time.
- **Intermediate Level** requires a 50-hour investment of time.
- **Expert Level** requires a 100-hour investment of time.

Stitching & Crafting

12. Nellie Make-do

For this badge you will create fiber projects that use ONLY recycled fabric goods—with the exception of sewing machine or embroidery thread. Anything knitted or crocheted must be made from sweaters that have been unraveled, etc. Think “next life” in all that is fiber. Projects must be completed and photographed.

- **Beginner Level** requires a 25-hour investment of time.
- **Intermediate Level** requires a 50-hour investment of time.
- **Expert Level** requires a 100-hour investment of time.

Stitching & Crafting

13. Scrapbooking

Beginner Level

- Make a scrapbook to commemorate a special event for a friend. Include pictures and mementos from the special day. Wrap it up and surprise your friend with this special gift.

Intermediate Level

- Try incorporating different elements into your scrapbook like fabrics, tatting, or dried flowers.
- Make an heirloom scrapbook on a topic like “Day in the Life” or “I Remember When” to give to a young person you care about. Learn about how fibers and photographs age and how to care for them. Read chapters 1, 3, and 11 of *Saving Stuff: How to Care for and Preserve Your Collectibles, Heirlooms, and Other Prized Possessions* by Don Williams and Louisa Jaggar. Find out about scrapbooking terms like vellum and lignin. Include journaling or storytelling in your scrapbook to give your reader a sense of context or what’s going on behind the scenes. This is a great opportunity to try different styles of penmanship.
- Take a picture or scan one of your scrapbooks or scrapbook pages and share it with your farmgirl Sisters.

Expert Level

- Look up a fine art book and take note of the design elements. Look at the composition of the subjects and the colors in paintings you find especially beautiful. Look for relationships between where the artist places important subjects. Try using a composition or color palette from a favorite painting in your scrapbook pages.
- Make a historical scrapbook. Read *Organizing and Preserving Your Heirloom Documents* by Katherine Scott Sturdevant. Use your historical scrapbook to tell a family history or an interesting story from your town’s past.
- Share your scrapbooking expertise.

Stitching & Crafting

14. Spinning

Beginner Level

- Get your hands on some wool fiber and learn to card it. Card fibers while watching a movie or reading a book (extra points if it's a fiber-themed one). Learn to spin with your fingers. If you already know how to spin, teach someone to spin with the fingers or a simple spindle.

Intermediate Level

- Learn different ways of preparing fiber for spinning. Learn to spin with a simple spindle like a drop spindle. Spin two or more balls of single-ply yarn. Learn to ply different kinds of yarn together to make a novelty yarn. Learn how to set the twist in your yarns.
- There is a 20-hour time commitment for this badge. Once you're feeling confident with your spinning, teach a friend or a Farmerette what you've learned.

Expert Level

- Ply your yarn and learn to spin a balanced yarn. Spin enough yarn to give to a friend who knits or crochets. Learn to spin different fibers like angora and silk. For a challenge, try something slippery or with a short fiber length or a bast fiber. Give your jealous knitting friends handspun skeins. Spin at least three skeins with different plies. There is a 40-hour time commitment for this badge.
- Host a spinning party to raise awareness for fiber skills. Invite your farmgirl Sisters to join you for storytelling and to spin a few good yarns.

Stitching & Crafting

15. Dyeing for Color

Beginner Level

- Learn to dye safely. Write an article or presentation on dyeing safety to present on the Farmgirl Connection chatroom or to your Chapter or a craft group. Be sure to compare natural and historical dyes and their mordants as well as modern dyeing practices. Discuss safety and disposal considerations for each.
- Do one project using safe products around the house or dyes you can easily dispose of. Try a tea- or coffee-staining project and use your fiber for a finished product like a quilt or pillow. Show off your project and ask yourself whether you've caught "the dye bug."

Intermediate Level

- Start a dye journal and swatch-card file. Dye both plant and protein fibers (for example, cotton, hemp, or rayon, and wool or silk). Save the recipes and a swatch in your journal. Share your recipes and results on the Farmgirl Chatroom.
- Dye yarn, fabric, and roving. Spin and knit or crochet the roving or give to a local Sister who spins. Show off your finished hand-dyed pieces ... you're on your way to color mastery.

Expert Level

- Try a new dye technique: fabric painting, stamping, silk screen, batik, tie-dye, etc. Find out about basic color theory. Use dye baths to create your own fiber color wheels and palettes. Complete another expert-level project using a new dye technique. Consider a challenging technique such as Katazome.
- If you haven't already, learn two ways to dye multiple colors in the same piece. Consider yourself a dyeing diva!

Stitching & Crafting

16. Weaving

Beginner Level

- Fibers have comforted humankind for millennia. Read up on how knit and woven fabrics are made.
- Weave gifts for at least five friends on a handmade loom. Try weaving bookmarks with special threads, yarns, and found objects. For ideas on beginner projects, see “Weaving Made Easy” in *MaryJanesFarm* magazine, April-May 2010 “Garden Secrets” issue, pp. 70-71.

Intermediate Level

- Learn about different types of looms and how to make patterns on looms. Teach yourself card weaving. Make a belt or scarf with a challenging pattern you like. After you’ve completed your project, teach a friend what you’ve learned.

Expert Level

- Learn to weave different types of fibers. Complete a project with a challenging fiber like silk or linen.
- Teach yourself about different weaving technologies. If you can, try to see different types of looms in person. Learn about the history of the backstrap loom and how it is used today.
- Make a backstrap loom and help a fellow farmgirl make one of her own, then throw a fabulous outdoor weaving party. Use your backstrap loom to make a piece of wearable fiber art.

Stitching & Crafting

17. Ink Slinger

Beginner Level

- 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 Level

- 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 Level

- Read two books in the genre you chose.
- 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.

Stitching & Crafting

18. Cross-Stitch

Beginner Level

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

Intermediate Level

- 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 Level

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

Stitching & Crafting

19. Basketry

Beginner Level

- Take a class or research the four types of basket weaving: plaited, coiled, ribbed, and wicker.
- Start with a simple pattern and weave your first basket.
- Spend at least three hours on this badge.

Intermediate Level

- Take some time to research Native American basket weaving.
- With your next basket, take a step up and weave a basket with a handle.
- A minimum of 10 hours is required for this badge.

Expert Level

- Start and finish a basket of expert level.
- Create a gift basket for a friend, using one of your homemade baskets.
- A minimum of 20 hours is required for this badge.

Stitching & Crafting

20. Quilling

Beginner Level

- Quilling has been around for hundreds of years. Research quilling and the materials used.
- Start by becoming familiar with the different shapes, coils, and scrolls used in quilling.
- Create a small design to put in a picture frame or on a card for a friend.

Intermediate Level

- Start and finish an intermediate level quilling project.
- This project should take minimum of three hours.

Expert Level

- Start and finish a project of expert level using three-dimensional quilling.
- For this merit badge, you need a time investment of at least 5 hours.