Trees, animals, birds, plants, forests, mountains, lakes and rivers — everything that exists in Nature are in desperate need of our kindness, of the compassionate care and protection of human beings. If we protect them, they in turn will protect us.

- Amma

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GreenFriends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

GreenFriends is one of the projects of Embracing the World, a not-for-profit international collective of charities founded by internationally known spiritual and humanitarian leader, Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

To join the Pacific Northwest GreenFriends Litter Project, write Karuna at pnwgreenfriends108@gmail.com

For The Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project write:
Ananya ammasananya@comcast.net
Dear GreenFriends,

While Amma showers her blessings across North America, we have returned to our garden and find her blessings overflowing with abundant life, right here at home.

Our garden is full of mandalas reminiscent of the sacred yantras. These beautiful and orderly geometric shapes appear in the natural growth patterns of plants - Wondrous in form, sublime in texture and color, vibrant with the Universal Prana (life force). Just another everyday miracle of Creation!

Remember that last month I wrote about the huge compost pile that we made with weeds from garden rehabilitation and kitchen scraps? Have a look at the “before” photos from the June Newsletter! Now take a look at these “after” photos of the volunteer forest of greens that has appeared there, even before we had time to transplant the squash plants that we intended would go there. We are now sharing these greens with all our friends. The Divine Mother gives back 1000 fold for each of our offerings.

Jai Bhuvaneshwari!

Mark Braaten – Cortes Island
Grass Cut for Mulch
Butterhead
Kale Forest
Pean Trellica
Living Compost Row
Yellow Lily
Nasturtian
Garlic Row
Mixed Greens
There are two hundred species of Plantago and this one tops my list: Herba Stella (Plantago coronopus). This year I inter-planted it, the sweetly edible plant, with its dentate, strap-like leaves and soaring seed heads, along with other water lovers like self heal, yerba del lobo and viola. Visitors are enticed by the rich textures. Breezes blowing across the garden are cooled and made aromatic. When we garden, all nature rejoices.

Article by Richo Cech, Horizon Herbs, Williams, Oregon

https://www.horizonherbs.com
As school gets out for the summer, I thought it would be a good time to share instructions for how to make a simple nature journal that children can use to record their summer nature adventures.

These nature journals can be made entirely out of reused or repurposed materials. For paper, check the scrap paper pile by your desk, and for the covers, check your recycling bin. The twine to hold the journals together can come used giftwrapping materials or your sewing kit. Really, all you need is some cardboard or plastic, a pile of recycled paper, and something to tie it together with.

You’ll need:

- Coroplast or corrugated cardboard
- A heavy duty hole punch
- Scrap paper (lined, blank, coloured, graph, printed on one side – anything you’ve got)
- Pen or pencil
- About 12” twine, string, or strong ribbon.

Start by cutting two pieces of corrugated cardboard or plastic to approximately half the size of a standard sheet of paper. This will make your journal covers about 5.5” x 8”. If you use corrugated plastic (the kind used for real estate signs, etc.) the journals will be somewhat water resistant, whereas corrugated cardboard will give a more natural look.

Use a heavy-duty hole punch to punch holes along the long side of one cover. Next, line the covers up so they match, and use a pen or pencil to mark their locations on the 2nd cover. Then, punch the holes in the second cover. This may take a fair bit of strength, so small children will need help with this.

Once the covers are made, choose paper for the inside of the journal. You can use fresh paper for this, but this is also a good opportunity to use up scrap paper that has been printed on one side. Fold 8.5” x 11” sheets in half.
TEACHING THE CHILDREN

Place one of your covers onto the top piece of paper, and again use a pen or pencil and the top cover as a template to determine where the holes should be before punching them.

Now, place the paper in between the two covers, and line up the holes – it’s time to put your journal together! Thread your piece of string or twine through the holes and tie it loosely. Open the journal to check that it lies flat before tying a permanent knot – if you tie it too tightly, the journal won’t open!

Once the journals are made, kids can decorate the covers, and then head out into the yard or nearby park to fill them up. Here are a few ideas for activities to do with these nature journals.

1) Collect textures in nature by doing crayon rubbings of bark or other natural objects
2) Keep a list of all the animals/plants/birds you see on a hike.
3) Draw a big picture of a small object – fill a whole page with a drawing of a tiny bug, and include lots of details.
4) Make a sound map. To do this, find a quiet place in nature. Choose a blank page and draw an x in the middle to show where you are sitting. Sit silently, and each time you hear a sound, draw a picture to represent it. For instance, if you hear a bird off to your left, draw a bird to the left of the ‘x’. As time passes you will end up with a ‘map’ of the sounds around you.

These journals will encourage younger kids to explore and engage with nature, and also support skills that budding naturalists will want to develop, such as making close observations, recording details, and keeping a field journal. They’re also a nice way of encouraging some quiet, reflective time in nature, and giving kids a way to share their discoveries and feelings with you following an outing in nature. Adults, you might even want to try making one for yourself so you can join in!
Saving the Earth’s Resources

They are the reason for making the world a kinder and safer place.

Every child is ours to care for and protect.

Cheers from South Africa’s precious future~

http://cindyknoke.com/2015/06/03/they-are-the-reason
River Flows
by Tournesol from Quebec

cleansing my feet
launching a new dawn
the river flows

© Clr '15 Richelieu River rapids
https://tracesofthesoul.wordpress.com/2015/06/04/river-flows-haibun
Near cedar trees I sit.

I see beautiful alder trees in front of me.
Cedar branches are above and around me.

The birds are singing and a crow is crowing.

“Crow I hear you.” I say.

All is well.

I am content...
Thirty-five litter project members and their guests reported picking up 86 hours of litter in June 2015. The average pick up time was 2.5 hours; the range was 1 minute to 13 hours and the median was 1 hour.

Members of the project have picked up litter for 6571 hours since the project began in July 2011.

TerraCycle credited us with turning in 139,534 cigarette butts in 2013 and 55,200 in 2014. Our 2015 count stands at 46,600 butts, bringing us to a grand total of 250,324 butts since we started sending them to TerraCycle in January 2013. (In addition to the butts we turned into TerraCycle we also have a 5 gallon jar of cigarette butts we use for the litter project display)
There is a waterfront street in Tacoma, Washington, which is used for a festive 4th of July fair that draws thousands of people. The fair ends after dark with a rousing display of fireworks. Four years ago, when I was there walking the dogs the morning after the celebration, I was horrified to see heaps of trash on the street, the beach and in the water. It was much worse than on my daily walks when I routinely picked up trash while walking the dogs. That morning was the worst I had ever seen.

Along with other volunteers, I helped pick up trash for three hours. During that time I was saying my mantra and praying for the people who dropped all that junk. I believe Amma would have said that those revelers would not have dropped the trash if they had been conscious of what they were doing. She might have said that they needed our prayers, not our hate.

Looking around, I noticed that there were no recycle bins and very few garbage containers. Where could people have put their trash even if they’d wanted to? Of the few garbage containers available, most were overflowing. I had seen this regularly on Monday mornings, especially after weekends when the weather had been nice.

It was months later that I had a vision of banners to make and place down on the piers that go out over the water. For the next three years on July 4th, I went to the piers at 4 a.m. to place my banners before people came to set up the fair. Did that do any good? Had revelers reduced their littering? I wasn’t sure.

As this year’s 4th of July approached, I realized I’d be out of town on that day and therefore unable to put the banners up. I’d considered asking a friend to do it, but it just didn’t feel right. I prayed that this year would be different than the years in the past.

I haven’t been walking very far along the waterfront lately because the dogs and I are getting old and prefer shorter
outings. Still, about a month ago, I was drawn to walk all the way down to the fair area. I soon understood why. And I couldn’t have been more surprised and gratified.

I had let go and everything had worked out! I was excited that the Park Department had even used almost the same words that I had put on the original banner. Tears of joy and gratitude streamed down my face.

Amma teaches us to “Put in the effort and let go of the results.” I appreciate having had an opportunity to put that teaching into practice.

"If we approach Nature with love, it will serve us as our best friend, a friend that won’t let us down"

- Amma
Thank you for your commitment to keeping our planet clean.

Thanks to you and the Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company, 30 million pieces of cigarette waste have been diverted from landfill and they are no longer littering our roadways, streets, and environment.

We just wanted to take this moment to thank you for your commitment towards Eliminating the Idea of Waste and continuing to keep cigarette waste out of landfills. The impact your efforts will have on our planet is priceless.

Keep up the inspiring work.
TerraCycle and Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company
Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Saroja in Seattle:
Hi! Wanted you to see this. They are pole Bean starts in 4” pots sitting in a rain gutter that we attached to our fence at eye level. This keeps the young seedlings away from the garden beds or ground where there are bad bugs lying in wait. After I took the photo, we planted them in the ground, as they are big and strong now and can better handle what comes at them. Organic Gardening had come up with the idea of the gutter but for a little different application.

We started our snap pea seeds in pots and kept them in the greenhouse until they were about 10” high and then transplanted them into the ground. When they’re that tall, the pea weevils won’t chew on them. (We have pea weevils in our beds in early spring and they sit there waiting for little seedlings.)

From Shobana in Shoreline:
1) Someone just posted this article “I never knew you could do this with cinder blocks” on FB. I think I’m going to use one of the ideas. I need to make a divide between my house and next door. So I think I’ll stack some of these cinder blocks and then make the top a planter with succulents in them which need no watering. :-)


[I was fascinated by these beautiful cinder block ideas. I want to try them too. The picture with the Christmas lights at the top of the fence brought tears to my eyes. Karuna]

2) Netsah and Michael (and tons of volunteers) have created a working permaculture garden in Oak Harbor. Truly a labor of love! They’ve been at it for years. Anyway, they’ve just gotten the beginnings of a website for it started. I thought others would enjoy seeing it. http://www.imagineapercultureworld.org

3) Riet Schumack’s Brightmoor Youth Garden inspired residents to start hundreds of gardens in Brightmoor, a Detroit suburb. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/04/riet-schumack-detroit-gardens_n_7506352.html
Interesting Information from Our Readers

4) Jessi Bloom, an ex-roller derby star is now devoted to permaculture. Be sure to look at the picture of her garden.


From Marla in Bellevue:

It is now illegal for supermarkets to throw away edible food even if it has passed its sell-by date.

“As in Britain, food that can no longer be sold on French supermarket shelves is often destroyed by pouring chemicals on it - destroying food that could help hungry people - but this is now banned.”

Under the new law supermarkets must give the food to a charity or to be made into compost, energy or animal feed. Article and Video: [Link](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/05/22/france-food-waste-supermarkets-illegal-bans_n_7422686.html)