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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Interesting Information from our Readers

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 karunap108@comcast.net
"When we see Mother Nature as the embodiment of God we will automatically serve and protect her." - Amma

Dear friends in Amma,

Amma is calling us, the future MA Center-PNW, to a close relationship with the land through farming and growing our own food. What if we could grow enough food to seasonally support the Amma community? What if through our efforts we were able to raise organic vegetables on our land while preserving and creating habitat for wildlife? What if children, families, and the elderly came together in Maltby to celebrate in community around fresh food prepared from the farm? NOW is our opportunity to DREAM, and PLAN! Due to the amount of wetlands and critical areas on the property, we will have to check all of planning against wetlands regulations. Once that review is completed then we will begin to CREATE that DREAM!

We recently held a permaculture consultation at the Maltby property with the legendary Michael Pilarski. Devotees from around the region who had expressed interest in participating walked the property with Michael, analyzing the land through a variety of lenses: soil composition and structure, water flow and pooling, slope and aspect (where the sun is in relation to our land), as well as the flora and fauna currently on the land.
PNW Gardening

We are looking at a variety of designs that will meet the wetlands requirements and will also yield highest productivity, beauty, and feasibility in our first year. We are also developing a list of volunteers who would like to be a part of the Maltby farm and see the property "grow"! Please contact Rachael if you would like to become a volunteer at the future MA Center-PNW. Contact Rachael at burstingjoy@gmail.com or 206.388.7621.

Below is a transcript of Michael's words concluding and summarizing the consultation:

It was a pleasure to meet everybody. What a wonderful group! As with any property, the possibilities are endless. It can become a Garden of Eden—beautiful, colorful, fragrant, welcoming, and productive both economically and ecologically. We need more models.

I want to re-emphasize the importance of creating mounds and hugelkulturs for growing areas. These gardens create aerated rooting depth, warm up earlier in the season and become a sponge over time.

Here is a video to watch about the raised beds of Emilia Hazelip, legendary French permaculturist.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oy_x5rXq19g

This is just one kind of raised bed system, but certainly I would recommend doing some like hers.

If you haven’t done so, watch about twenty or so YouTube videos on different kinds of hugelkulturs. You will see there is lots of diversity. No one size fits all: large, small, medium, linear, convoluted, tall, squat, buried in trenches, built atop the ground, consisting of fresh plant material, decaying plant material, etc, etc.

Here is a YouTube about a quick “hugel” installation by Javan Kerby Bernakevitch. Only one minute, time-lapse. You might want to turn the volume down.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLINSDPKNm0

Most hugelkulturs you will see are tall and often steep-sided. For Amma’s place some tall ones would be good, but I would place more emphasis on low ones which look more like raised beds. A constraining factor in your case is a shortage of “hugel” biomass on site. If we rounded everything up on site possible, it would still be a drop in the bucket. So this means bringing biomass in (which is expensive) and growing extra biomass on the
property over time.

*Hugelkultur* raised beds are only one strategy, and they need to be combined with improving soil at this site and by selecting plants that can do well in the current situation.

After careful research on regulations, corrugating the surface on create drained areas, wet areas and seasonal ponds we will incorporate these major themes into the design:

- Fencing
- Hedges, placement and composition.
- Roof water catchment and storage.
- Grand entrance: flowers, color and art.
- List of fragrant plants and season of fragrance, daytime and/or nighttime.
- List of Ayurvedic plants we can grow here. (There will be several Ayurvedic farmers and herbalists at my April Conference.)
- Putting in this year a Mother Nursery of perennial herbs, berries, trees, etc.
- Corrugating the surface on various part of the land to create drained areas, wet areas, and seasonal ponds—after careful research on regulations.
- Locating local wood chips, topsoil, *hugelkulture* biomass, composted manure. You’ll want quality at a reasonable price.

I would like to stay involved, visit periodically, do some research and perhaps offer workshops or courses in the future. I’m happy to donate my time for much of this. I am also hosting a permaculture course in the Spring held in Seattle. Check out [www.friendsofthetrees.net](http://www.friendsofthetrees.net) for more information.

Namah Shivaya

Michael "Skeeter" Pilarski

Permaculture - Wildcrafting - Medicinal Herbs & Seeds
Growing gardens of diversity for the sake of the plants and for our own sake, a deep breath, the green so soothing to the eye, an unexpected flower, like a whispered word of love.

https://www.facebook.com/Strictly-Medicinal-Seeds-348837717347/timeline

Article by Richo Cech from Strictly Medicinal Seeds, formally Horizon Herbs.
Can We Make a Difference?

Looking at evidence that grass-roots involvement is increasing in recycling and consumer awareness, I’ve concluded that we can indeed make a difference. For example, it seems to me an average family without a dish washer could go through at least a bottle of Eco dish detergent a month. Let’s say their intention is to be environmentally friendly, so they buy Eco Dish Soap, one of the main brands. They probably don’t notice that it contains SLS (Sodium Laurel Sulphite), which is harmful to humans and the environment. And they don’t consider that they will be tossing out 12 single-use plastic bottles a year which took oil and water to produce, and requires in some cases considerable energy to recycle, thereby adding to atmospheric CO2.

Some critics wondered if, far from being an environmental panacea, recycling is actually a giant placebo that makes us feel virtuous but wastes both money and resources. Take the much-maligned plastic water bottle. It's almost always made from petroleum, a resource that certainly seems worth conserving, and if you chuck it in the trash, the container will live on in a landfill for centuries. But how much diesel fuel does the truck that col-
Saving the Earth’s Resources

lects these bottles burn? How much energy does the recycling plant consume; what fumes does it emit into the atmosphere? And what does it all cost, anyway?

Excerpt from article by Alex Hutchinson written for http://www.popularmechanics.com
this is the link: http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/environment/a3752/4291566

A solution I’ve adopted and like to suggest to others is to avoid single-use plastic by refilling existing containers. It’s one way to slow the use of resources and the amount of waste plastic. For example, there is a store in Vancouver, BC (http://thesoapdispensary.com) that makes eco-friendly dish soap, laundry detergent, and more. You can take your used containers, and they fill them with their excellent products. I highly recommend that you check into similar stores in your own city. It’s so much better for the environment than buying single-use plastic. Or if there is not a store like this near you, you can make your own products and it’s easier than you think.

Is There a Personal Benefit?

Yes. Re-using your containers saves money, and it also gives you a sense of satisfaction that you’re doing your part for the environment. In addition, you’ll have peace of mind knowing the ingredients are 100% supportive of your health and well-being.

An even better way to save money and ensure that ingredients are up to your standards is to make your own dish soap. Read on to find out more about this.

Making Dish Soap

By Vandita Smith

As a pretty busy Mum with a 3 year old girl, not to mention always having lots to do, it wasn’t until I completely ran out of the usual dish soap that I decided to make my own. It was a lot less labour intensive than I expected. I made it with my daughter, and she had a lot of fun getting involved.
Saving the Earth’s Resources

Here are the ingredients I used:

![Ingredients](image)

By Vandita Smith

Here is the recipe and also the link I used:

http://naturesnurtureblog.com/homemade-dish-soap-that-actually-works

**Ingredients**

1. 1 1/4 cups boiling water
2. 1/4 cup (tightly packed) castile bar soap, grated
3. 1 tablespoon washing soda (use a little more for a thicker soap)
4. 1/4 cup liquid castile soap
5. 10-30 drops essential oils (optional; I use 20 drops orange and 10 drops tea tree)

**Instructions**

1. Add grated castile soap to boiling water and stir until dissolved.
2. Add washing soda and stir.
3. Add liquid castile soap and stir.
4. Let mixture cool, then add essential oils.
5. Transfer to a re-purposed soap dispenser and use as regular dish soap.

**Notes**

1. Soap mixture will harden as it sets. If it’s too thick to pour, just add a tiny bit of warm water and give it a good shake to loosen it up.
2. The amount of washing soda you use will dictate how thick the soap gets, so adjust accordingly. The temperature of your kitchen is also a factor.
Saving the Earth’s Resources

Money Saving Tips

Buy the largest bottle of Castile soap you can. It’s more economical in bulk and will last a long time. I bought citrus when it was on sale, and then I didn’t need to add citrus oil myself. I also made double the batch and it completely filled my saved dish soap bottle. So far, the bottle is only half empty after 1 months of use and is cheaper than the Eco brands to make. I’ve saved a few extra dish soap containers and lids as well for future use. Because lids sometimes break, I keep an extra supply. We have found my homemade soap cleans dishes very well, leaving everything glistening. I get best results by using very hot water, washing my glass items first, and washing greasy things separately instead of in my general wash bowl.

Getting a Sense of Well Being

I was interested to learn in an online article that happiness thrives in cultures whose members are still self-sufficient. Apparently, the more autonomy we have, the happier we are. That’s certainly true for me, which is why I enjoy encouraging others to get out there and experiment. Here is a quote from the article:

Matthew Crawford also argues that people who can make things are more autonomous. They have a natural belief in their own ability. The world is not a mysterious, scary place in which they are alien but is a place in which they have a role to play and the skill to be able to engage with it. This makes them resilient and resilience makes all of us better able to make changes.

Excerpt from article by John Middleton written for http://www.permaculture.co.uk, this is the link: http://www.permaculture.co.uk/articles/why-making-things-liberating

Finally

Let me leave you with words from Matthew Spiegl in a 2013 Huffington Post article:

Think beyond plastic, listen to President Kennedy’s words and become inspired once more -- not to conquer space -- but to free ourselves from a dependence on single-use plastics. Let’s set out on a bold new endeavour, not to launch man off of our planet, but to establish man as an inseparable part of the planet.

Only then will we be able to save both our planet and ourselves.


(There is a link to the video of President Kennedy’s speech in the article above. You can also watch it at: http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/MkATdOcdU06X5uNHbmqm1Q.aspx)
PNW Litter Project Stats

Twenty nine litter project members and friends reported picking up 76 hours of litter in January 2016. The average pick up time was 2.7 hours; the range was 2 minutes to 10 hours and the median was 1 hour.

Members of the project have picked up litter for 7233 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 60,900 butts, bringing us to a grand total of 264,624 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)
PNW Litter Project

Holbein Family Picks Up Trash at Long Beach, WA from Visala
GreenFriends in Amritapuri
Amritapuri Flowers
GreenFriends in Amritapuri

[Images of flowers]

[Images of plants]
For several months I will be sharing pictures of the gardens in Amritapuri. This beautiful one is located south of the Western Café.
Some people who were wandering the garden showed me this insect. At the time, I thought it was staring straight ahead. When I looked at the photos later, I discovered it was staring at me!!

After I returned to my room, I did some research and learned that the insect was a baby praying mantis. The photo on the bottom right shows what a mature Indian Praying Mantis is like. That photo is courtesy of [Wikimedia](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki).
GreenFriends in Amritapuri
Sunset in Amritapuri by Karuna Poole
After seeing Karuna’s Amritapuri sunset pictures Cheryl-Lynn from Quebec wrote:

Loving Embrace

mother nature soothes

cradling her stellar babe

tranquil surrender

compassion embraced

warmth slipping into deep sleep

© Tournesol 2016/01/20
Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Poornima in Shoreline:
Michigan students crochet grocery bags to create mats for the homeless.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/students-crochet-sleeping-mats-for-homeless-using-old-plastic-bags_us_56990f55e4b0778f46f90718?7vnp14i=&utm_hp_ref=good-news

From Visala in Seattle:
Take a look at what Surf Rider’s “Hold On to Your Butt” program is doing in Seattle.
https://seattle.surfrider.org/?p=689
https://seattle.surfrider.org/?p=706

From Premarupa in Amritapuri:
After reading these it occurred to me that maybe if every person or family kept one milkweed plant, the monarchs could flourish and the milkweed would be contained....

From Karuna in Seattle:
When I stopped by the grocery store soon after returning from India, I discovered they had something called Living Butter Lettuce. I had never heard of such a thing. It was noticeable because the lettuce was still attached to the roots of the plant. I was curious so bought it.

I didn’t know how it was supposed to be treated so I put some water at the bottom of the container. Two weeks later, the small amount that still remains is as crisp and beautiful as the day I bought it. Too often lettuce goes bad before I use it. This is going to solve that problem.

Today I looked on the internet to see what I could find about living lettuce. One of the articles I read said that hydroponics is the method used to produce it. There may be downsides to this that I don’t know about, but at this point I’m impressed. I’m always looking for ways to decrease my wastage.