



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 karunap108@comcast.net

PNW Gardening

Backyard Herbal Medicine - Delicious Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Hi Herbal Friends. Since it is spring-time, it is time to practice gratitude for the amazing herb Dandelion.

Once you read this, you will definitely start eating this popular nutritional-ly valuable herb that graces so much of our beautiful Pacific Northwest. YOU can start getting better health today for FREE!

Dandelion is abundant and readily available nearly year-round. She is incredibly yummy, equally beautiful and brilliantly healthy! Each and every part of her is valuable medicine. The greens, the flowers and the roots.

She contains vitamins A and C , iron and calcium.

Dandelion helps to regulate blood pressure, helping you to reduce your risk of hypertension It has been shown that regular intake of Dandelion will help reduce the event of heart attack and stroke.

Dandelion is such an important herb for herb lovers! She can help with:

- bone health
- diabetes
- creating healthy hair and skin
- urinary disorders
- liver disorders
- calcium
- diuretic/ weight loss
- kidney cleanser
- acne
- cancer prevention
- jaundice
- gall bladder disorder prevention
- constipation
- blood pressure regulation
- anemia prevention

Before you gather the herb, please thank her before taking medicine, and always give something back to the plant. What you give back is up to you, a simple loving song of gratitude will do. Try to return any of the unused portion of the herb back to the base of the plant. That is a loving traditional action. In addition, talk to the plants as you see them.



PNW Gardening

Here are **four quick easy ways to start using our friend Dandelion** intentionally and medicinally:

1. Dandelion Flower Fritters - Gather some organically grown dandelions (any dandelions that haven't had chemicals sprayed on them), prepare a vegan thickening agent by mixing 1 T ground flax seed with 2 T of water. Let stand for 4-5 minutes until gelled. Mix in 1 1/4 cup cornmeal and the same amount of Almond milk. Dip the Dandelion heads into the batter and fry them in oil. You'll be amazed at the flavor and the great feeling you'll have communing with nature!
2. Dandelion Tea - infuse two tablespoons of chopped dried or fresh dandelion root into 1 cup of hot water after 15 minutes. Strain out the herbs and enjoy.
3. Dandelion greens in salads or just for snacking are great - As the plants come up, the smaller fresh lighter green leaves tend to be a little less bitter. Start sampling and you'll become an expert. Just take joy in remembering that her bitter taste means that she is aiding you in your digestion and boosting your immune system.
4. Dandelion Vinegar - After giving thanks to nature, pick fresh dandelions in the early morning after the dew has dried. Infuse them in apple cider vinegar in a sealed container. After 4 weeks of keeping the container in a cool dark place, you'll have some great herbal vinegar. Take 1-2 teaspoons every day for great help in regulating blood sugar, lowering blood pressure, improving skin health, boosting gut health, and improving skin health... not to mention all the added benefits of the dandelion!!

If you want to start working with Dandelion, I am happy to bring you some Dandelion seeds so you can start your journey. Email me at vhohlbein@msn.com (Ha Ha, just kidding.) Make today the day you transition into someone who cherishes and uses Dandelion for their improved health.

Peace and Happy Herbing!

Visala



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Greenbelt Restoration Project: Our First Planting Season is Over by Karuna



The planting season in Seattle's parklands starts when the autumn rains begin and ends in mid-March. The reason for planting during those months is that it gives the plants time to root before they have to deal with the dry summer months. During our first planting season, we have planted 55 trees and 530 shrubs and ground covers.

The new plants are all native to the Pacific Northwest. This chart lists the varieties we planted during our first season restoring this stretch of Seattle's Greenbelt.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Douglas Fir Tree	Early Blue Violet	Trailing Blackberry
Grand Fir Tree	Orange Honeysuckle	Fringecup
Hemlock Tree	Snowberry	Three Leaf Foam Flower
Sikta Spruce Tree	Goatsbeard	Oceanspray
Cedar Tree	Pacific Bleeding Heart	Oregon Stonecrop
Gary Oak Tree	Salal	Red Columbine
Serviceberry	Roemer's Fescue	Sea Thrift
Red Flowering Currant	Spreading Woodfern	Wild Ginger
Deer Fern	Tapertip Rush	Salmonberry
Sword Fern	Tall Oregon Grape	Kinnikinnick
Evergreen Huckleberry	Dwarf Oregon Grape	Nookta Rose
Red Huckleberry	Wild Lily-of-the Valley	Nodding Onion
Bald Hip Rose	Coltsfoot	Mock Orange
Pacific Ninebark	Twinberry	Red Elderberry

I love watching the plants grow. Some have doubled or tripled in size since we planted them. Almost all of them have leaves now and some even have flowers.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Oregon Grape



Red Flowering Currant



Roemer's Fescue



Fringecup

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Orange Honeysuckle Vine



Serviceberry



Cedar tree



Red Columbine

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

There were also plants emerging from the ground that were a complete surprise. One day, I noticed long stalks scattered around one area. They seemed eerie and otherworldly.

As the stalks grew, they became even more intriguing. The intricacy of their design was beautiful... and fascinating.



Later, I learned they are Bracken ferns. I found some photos of Bracken ferns on [Pixabay](#).

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



There are going to be a LOT of beautiful Bracken ferns in that area. I'm eager to see what they look like scattered among the new plants.

When I was taking photos in the Greenbelt a few days after I took the ones for this article, a tiny hummingbird came within two feet of me. It is going to be an exciting spring and summer. I look forward to all I will see and learn. I hope some butterflies grace us with their presence.

From Lin in Bellevue:

['I Am His Hands. He Is My Eyes.' The Friendship That Built a Forest \(video\)](#)

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Work Parties: Photo Journal

April 8, 2018



Moving Burlap from 25th Ave. S into Greenbelt



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Weeding: Blackberry vines and Ivy



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Wood Chip Mulch Bucket Brigade



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

April 14



Wood Chip Mulch Bucket Brigade



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Weeding: Blackberry vines and Ivy



Cutting Down Bamboo



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Next on our to do list:

- Finish mulching some small areas on the property that have not been mulched yet
- Weeding, weeding and more weeding
- Remulch areas that were planted in October and November of 2017
- Finish cutting down the bamboo
- Dig out the invasive holly and bamboo

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Trees (and shrubs) for Free! by Tirtha



Why not try your hand at propagating some trees and/or shrubs?

It's true that not all species are easy to grow from cuttings, but many will respond to your care and effort. When the saplings or plants are established, you can plant them in your own yard, or ask friends and family members if they'd like them.

(You could even offer free trees on craigslist! In order to fulfill Amma's request that we plant trees, David, a Victoria satsang member, recently put an ad on craigslist offering to plant free fruit trees at the homes of those with farms or acreage who wanted them. He got lots of responses! He ordered rootstock and did his own grafting. Victoria satsang is also asking members for cuttings so we can grow more trees to plant.)

Some trees and many shrubs can be propagated from stem cuttings. They are considered 'clones' of the tree they were cut from. Birch, fig, cedar, fir, magnolia, dogwood and ginkgo can all be started from cuttings. So can roses, forsythia, privet hedges, and much more.

It is suggested we start many more cuttings than we want, as not all of them will survive. However, no doubt love and prayer will also help! Amma tells us to spend time with our plants, to talk to them lovingly, kiss them and sing to them.

There are three different kinds of cuttings – softwood, semi-hardwood, and hardwood. Some species are more likely to root with one type than another, while some are easy to root at any time.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Softwood cuttings bend easily, and are taken in the summer. Spruce, viburnum, birch, azalea, broom, crab-apples, dogwood, as well as blueberries and privet are among those that can root from softwood cuttings.

Semi-hardwood cuttings are less flexible and are taken in the summer or fall. Poplar and quince cuttings are among those best propagated as semi-hardwood cuttings.

As the name suggests, hardwood cuttings are the least bendable, and are taken while the tree or plant is dormant, in winter or early spring, before growth starts. Because they don't have leaves, these cuttings are less susceptible to drying out. Figs, pomegranates, mulberries, quince, and some plums are easily propagated from hardwood cuttings, as well as grapes, kiwis, black currants, red currants, golden currants and gooseberries.

Many species can be propagated at more than one time of year. Check the link below to find which type of cutting the tree you want to propagate may require. If your tree or shrub is not listed, do an internet search for how to propagate it, or try planting some of each type, and see which works. <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/plant-propagation-by-stem-cuttings-instructions-for-the-home-gardener>

1. Fill your pot with well-draining (sandy) soil, or a mixture of half peat, half perlite or sand, and then moisten it.
2. Take cuttings from young branches of healthy trees. Use sharp, clean pruning shears – a sharp cut heals more quickly than a ragged one, so is less likely to allow pests or disease to attack the tree. Early morning is considered the best time to take cuttings, when the tree contains the most moisture. Cut a section of current growth from the branch tip, about 6 to 10 inches long. Remove any flowers or buds so energy will be directed to growing roots instead.
3. If there are leaves, remove them from the lower half of the cutting. With a sharp knife, cut a thin strip of bark from either side of the cut end. Dip in rooting or hormone compound, available at garden stores.
4. Press the cut end of the branch into the moist soil, until half, or at least one-third of the cutting is buried. Take care not to plant them upside-down. If you're planting more than one in each pot, make sure all the leaves can receive light. (Some cuttings may also root in a jar of water.)
5. If you're growing several kinds of cuttings, be sure to label them.
6. It's essential to keep the cuttings from drying out, or they will die. You can keep them in a greenhouse, but you can also just cover the pot with a plastic bag, sealed with an elastic or string, to keep humidity in. Water when dry. Regular misting can also help. Keep the plant away from direct sunlight.
7. Be patient... some cuttings may take a long time to root. As long as the cutting hasn't dried out or died, it may still

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

be working on producing roots. (Don't forget to pray and talk to it.)

8. Once the cutting has rooted and new growth appears, you can transplant it into a pot with regular soil. Water when the top inch of soil is dry. For the best chances of success, wait until the fall of the cuttings' second year to transplant into a permanent spot. Choose the spot wisely – make sure you understand how much room the mature tree and its roots will need, and whether its needs for light, drainage, etc. will be met in that spot.

9. Remember to keep watering regularly (weekly, even in winter, if there is no rain) for at least one more year, to help the tree develop a strong healthy root system.

Bigleaf Maples

Now may also be a good time to collect some helicopter seeds from bigleaf maples (which are native to the PNW – unlike the Norway maple, which is considered invasive). Bigleaf maples provide food for birds and small animals, as well as shade and beauty. Collect seeds near healthy, well-formed trees.

Young seedlings that have already taken root, but are under 3 feet tall, can also be collected. Dig them up carefully, wide and deep enough to preserve all the roots and the soil they're in.

Plant the seeds soon, before they dry out. (Or else wait and plant them in the fall.) Using plantable pots, made of peat, coconut coir, paper, etc. will protect the seedling from transplant shock as both plant and pot go directly in the ground. Choose a medium or large size, so you'll have some time to nurture the seedling before it needs to be planted. Remember to water them regularly so they don't dry out.

The roots will grow right through a plantable pot. Maples are quick-growing, so keep an eye on the bottom of the pot and get them in the ground soon if you see roots coming through! If planted in a temporary location, they should be well-mulched and not transplanted for two years. But it's best to plant them in a well-chosen permanent spot.

Big-leaf maple seedlings prefer to be planted in partial shade, in moist, well-drained soil. (Some sites say full sun is also okay, but not dense shade.) It's also best, if possible, to plant in a similar type of location as the seeds were found. You may not want to plant too close to houses or sidewalks, as roots can grow into plumbing or crack cement.

If deer are in the neighborhood, trees will need protection. Deer enjoy eating the leaves and young stems, as well as rubbing their antlers on the trunks, which can cause a great deal of damage to a young tree. For protection ideas, read more at: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/plant-problems/pests/deer/newly-planted-trees-deer.htm>

Newly planted trees need to be well watered for at least the first year. (If you are planting in the forest, where they won't be watered, trees will have the best chance at surviving if you plant in late fall, just as the rainy season is starting.)

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

For more info on planting maple seeds: <http://owic.oregonstate.edu/bigleaf-maple-acer-macrophyllum>

More details on hardwood cuttings: <https://deepgreenpermaculture.com/diy-instructions/propagating-hardwood-cuttings>

More about herbaceous cuttings: <https://deepgreenpermaculture.com/diy-instructions/propagating-herbaceous-plants-from-cuttings>

“Plant trees. It is a blessing to do so. Trees outlive us and provide fruit and shade to coming generations. Individually, we should each make a vow to plant at least one tree a month. In a year, each person will have planted 12 trees. Together we can restore nature’s beauty to the face of the world.” – Amma

Tree Planting Stats

In April,

David and Chris from Victoria Satsang planted 13 fruit trees. They also gave 23 trees to farm owners. along with planting instructions, so they can plant them themselves.

Chris from Victoria planted a fruit tree as well as a kiwi shrub and a berry shrub in the last two months.

Vera planted 3 privet shrubs in Naches, WA.

Nika planted 2 beech trees on Bainbridge Island

Visala planted eucalyptus, cherry, almond and two olive trees at her home in Maltby.

GreenFriends planted one walnut tree and one almond tree at another Maltby area property.

Total: PNW devotees have planted **423** trees (plus **666** shrubs and groundcovers) since our Tree Planting project began the last week of September 2017.

Please send reports of any trees, shrubs and ground covers you plant to karunap108@comcast.net each month so your numbers can be counted. Send pictures and what you planted if possible.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Victoria Satsang April Tree Planting



Baby Italian prune plum tree



David with Heritage apple tree they bought from a community garden.



Digging up bare-root heritage apple trees for re-planting



Heritage apple tree, planted at a permaculture demonstration farm in Victoria

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

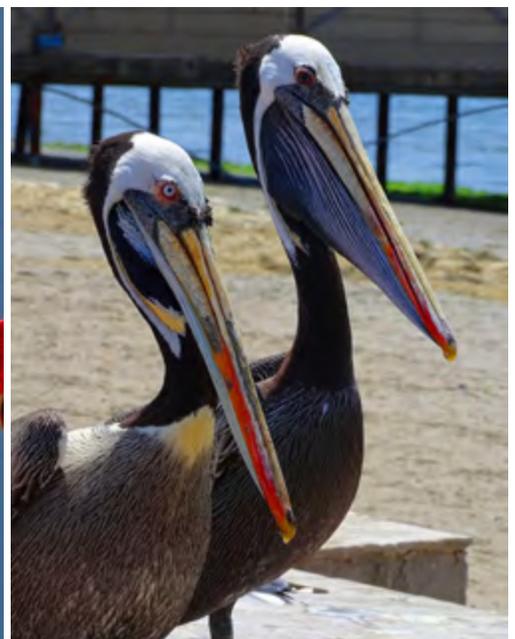
Moss and Soil Monitoring to Measure Forest Health Implications in Seattle, Washington

Green Seattle Partnership and Seattle Parks Department conducted a study in January 2018 to determine the heavy metals levels in Seattle parks. Moss and soil samples were collected across 25 restoration sites. The purpose was to “determine the extent of threat pollution is having on urban forest healing.” The results of the study can be found at: http://www.greenseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/MossSoilMonitoring_GSP_Report-reduced.pdf. The report includes recommendations for reducing heavy metal levels. Those recommendations include both planting and soil amendment strategies.



Nature

Colorful Creature Photos by Cindy Knoke



Colorful Creatures

Nature

Spring Photos of the University of Washington

by Ellen Ferguson



Nature

Spring Photos by Sarah Finney



Source Reduction

3 Step Plastic Challenge Followup



For those who participated in the 3 Step Plastic Challenge:

Dear Challenge Participants,

Thank you for taking part in this important initiative. Every step made towards the goal of source reduction becomes a fragrant offering at the Lotus Feet of our most beloved Amma.

It is time to complete the final step in the [3 Step Plastic Challenge](#). Amma will be here in 6 weeks, and we are excited to present Her with the results and pledges of all who participated in the Challenge.

Today, the total plastic footprint for all North American participants is 272,826 pieces of plastic per year.

We hope you have been successful in making even a small reduction in your plastic usage based on the Pledge you made when you entered your Initial footprint*. In order to complete the challenge, please enter your new reduced plastic footprint in the "Final Footprint" form here: <https://goo.gl/forms/Vuli1vznTVHM4wxO2>

Please note: The deadline to enter your final footprint is May 4th. After May 4th, entries containing an initial but no final footprint will have only their pledges included in the results to be presented to Amma.

For those who didn't participate in the 3 Step Plastic Challenge:

If you didn't participate in the recent *3 Step Plastic Challenge* but would like to calculate your plastic footprint go to: [3 Step Plastic Challenge](#) and complete the questionnaire. Then estimate how much plastic you use in a year's time that isn't covered by the questionnaire. Then work on reducing your use of plastic for a month or two and retake the questionnaire. You could even make a pledge to Amma to reduce your plastic use if you like. Feel free to contact me, Diya the PNW Regional Source Reduction Coordinator, at ammasdiya108@yahoo.com

Source Reduction

Enlightenment Through an Eyebrow Pencil by Diya



So here we are in the final stages of the 3-Step plastic challenge for Amma's source reduction campaign. By the time this article is published, those of us that participated will have calculated our 'after' footprint and have been able to see the tangible results of our efforts to reduce our plastic consumption. Hopefully we all learned something and grew in awareness of how our decisions impact the environment.

For me, embarking on this journey has opened my eyes in so many ways. I learned more about recycling than I ever wanted to know, I learned about different types of plastics, I learned there's actually plastic holding my teabags together and I am now thoroughly educated in biodegradable versus compostable. With all this new-found knowledge, what surprised me the most however, was what I learned about myself.

It was relatively easy for example, to give up vegetable broth in Tetra Paks. The time it took to make my own broth was worth the sacrifice to help the planet. It also wasn't too much of a hardship to switch from plastic wrap to Bees Wrap or to carry my reusable bamboo utensils with me when I traveled. The rubber totally hit the road though when my beloved Tarte Amazonian Clay, All-Day Wear eyebrow pencil ran out. It took me twenty years to find the perfect shade and consistency! Now I had to contemplate giving it up because it was encased in disposable plastic? Sacrilege! Situations like those came up many times throughout this challenge. I was able to see how my willingness to sacrifice was directly proportional to the level of inconvenience or ego attachment associated with a particular item.

Overall, the plastic challenge has been rewarding as it brought into light changes I need to work toward externally as well as internally. Although the external changes are important, it's the internal transformation that will have the greatest impact on the world. As I do my best to reduce my use of plastic I'm also trying not to judge myself or others, to understand that change takes time, to keep an open mind to learning new habits, to remain willing to put forth ongoing effort and to remember who I'm "being" is more important than what I'm "doing" in the world. True transformation only occurs in the presence of love, patience and compassion. As Amma reminds us, "Where there is Love, everything is effortless."

Source Reduction



putting one foot in front of the other trusting I would be guided. I asked the farmer's market manager if I could host a booth on single-use plastics and he was so happy! He didn't charge me for the booth and gave me a prime location within the market. The next thing I knew I was making signs and gathering materials. My husband Richard felt inspired to create a simple website for the community (with no affiliation) to reach as many people as possible with simple source reduction resources, facts and suggestions. caringforourplanet.com was launched Friday March 30th.



Source Reduction

On the 31st I showed up at the farmer's market with all my signs and props and a handout for people with resources, links and suggestions. Up until that moment I had been led by my heart. Now that the moment had arrived, my mind kicked in and I became fearful. Would anyone come to my booth? Would it be well received? Would people think I was crazy? What did I think I was I doing? As I became aware of what my puny little ego was trying to do, I took a deep breath, smiled and remembered the results weren't up to me. My only job was to show up and be the light.

Hosting this booth was one of the most rewarding things I've done. I spoke to so many people in the community who were feeling discouraged and weren't sure what to do. I reminded them that any small change would have a huge impact. People were open and grateful and willing to make at least one or two changes to reduce their plastic footprint. I also had some savvy people in the community give me great ideas for ways to reduce my own footprint even further. I realized later that evening I probably shouldn't have laminated my signs as they couldn't be recycled that way! As I make mistakes and gain new awareness myself, it makes me more compassionate toward others for where they're at on their journey.

The day after the farmer's market I was in the car driving, wondering if anything I had done the day before had made a difference. Just then I pulled into the drive-through of my local coffee shop to place my order. The owner popped his head out and said, "Two people you talked to at your booth yesterday just came by a few minutes ago to get their coffee and they each bought a Hydroflask to put it in! They said your booth really made them think of what they could do to make a difference." This process has really instilled in me the truth of Amma's words, "Instead of cursing the darkness, let each one of us light a small lamp."



PNW Litter Project

PNW Litter Project Stats

In April, **36** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **102** hours. (Average **2.8** hours; Median **1.5** hours; Range **2** minutes to **19.25** hours) We have picked up litter for **9638** hours since the project began in July of 2011.

TerraCycle Stats

TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items that are normally considered unrecyclable. They credited us with turning in **12,150** cigarette butts during March. We have turned in **333,374** cigarette butts since 2013. GreenFriends has also sent them **394** Drink Pouches, **732** Cereal Bag liners, and **2,997** Energy Bar wrappers.



From Lin in Bellevue:

[The Man Behind the World's Largest Beach Cleanup \(video\)](#)

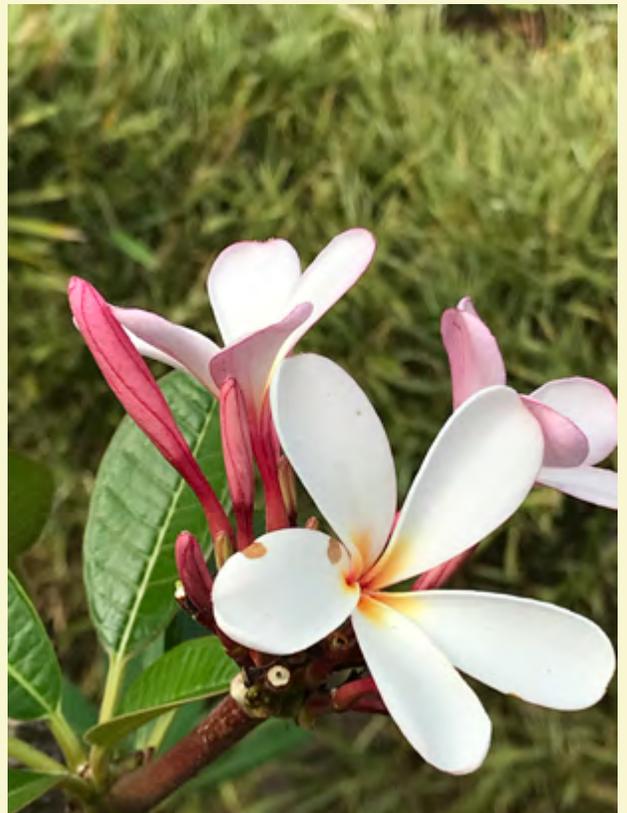
From Eileen in Seattle:

[Washington Statewide Efforts to Save Wildlife. Pets from Fishing Lines](#)



Amritapuri Gardens

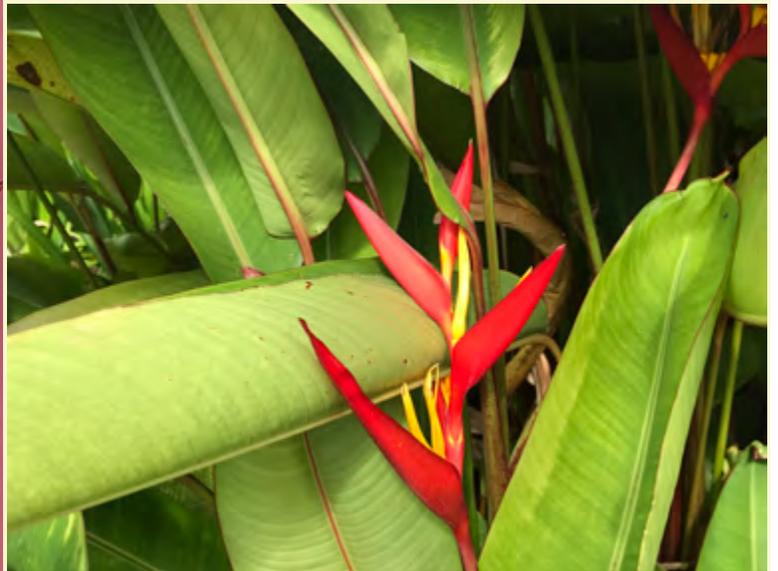
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