



Nature on its own is indeed beautiful and clean. The hills and rivers do not need us to clean them. In fact it is nature's water which cleans us; it is trees which purify air for us. Because we have littered, we have spoilt its pristine beauty.

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

For Organic Gardening and Permaculture write Maheswari at: PNWGreenFriends@google.com

For The Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project write:

Ananya ammasananya@comcast.net and Kalavathi annecrory@gmail.com

Kick Butts Work Party is Sunday March 9

(Remember that Sunday is the day that Daylight Savings Time starts!)

We will once again be picking up cigarette butts in the International District in honor of Kick Butts Day <http://www.kickbuttsday.org/>. Our event will be 10:00 to 11:30 on Sunday, March 9.

The work party staging area will be at Hing Hay Park at Maynard & King Street in Seattle. For easy parking come early. Please check in and check out with Shirley or Karuna at Hing Hay Park. (Know that the "Park" is not a green park with lots of trees; it is an inner city park where the ground is mostly covered with bricks.) You can get more information about park and location at: <http://bestseattleparks.com/parks/hing-hay-park/> For more information about the work party call Karuna 206-722-0878.

<http://seattle.cedar.greencitypartnerships.org/event/4533/>

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project What a Beautiful Sight

What a beautiful sight it was to see so many hands working together for a common goal. On Saturday, February 15, Amma's GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration group joined with about 20 volunteers from the University of Washington to plant and mulch in the forest remnant zone at Warren G. Magnuson Park. In no time at all, about 30-40 native trees and plants were in the ground and lovingly covered with mulch. The cool temperatures and steadily increasing rain did not deter our group. We continued to plant and mulch until our task was complete -- what a joy!



GreenFriends Recycling

Metal Drive Report

Our metal drive lasted from Sunday February 23 through Sunday March 2. Everyone had the opportunity to bring the metals to Seattle Holistic Center (7700 Aurora Ave. North, Seattle) during the weekly Sunday satsangs, during the special Shivaratri satsang or to drop it off in bins placed behind the Center anytime during the week.

It was a good opportunity to clean out basements, storage units, storage closets, garages, etc.

Steel	237 pounds (\$0.07- .08 a pound)	\$15.98
Stainless Steel	3 pounds (\$ 0.35 a pound)	\$1.05
Copper	29 pounds (\$2.20 a pound)	\$63.80
Irony Brass	3 pounds (0.76- 0.90 a pound)	\$2.30
Dirty Aluminum	20 pounds (\$0.37 a pound)	\$7.40
Clean Aluminum	2 pounds (\$0.50 a pound)	\$1.00
Old Sheet Aluminum	9 pounds (\$.40 a pound)	\$4.00
Irony Old Sheet	1 pound (\$0.25 a pound)	\$0.25
Aluminum Cans	14 pounds (\$0.40 a pound)	\$5.60

Amount of metal recycled **318 pounds**

Total donated to PNW MA Center: **\$106.98**

Electronics Drive

At this point the Electronics Drive is scheduled for Friday March 14 through Friday, March 28. We are doing this project in conjunction with a company called Friendly Earth.

Friendly Earth is an environmentally responsible electronics recycling organization. They will be bringing containers to the Seattle Holistic Center so we can fill them with our electronics recycling items such as, computers, cell phones, television sets, speakers, stereos, and video players (DVD, VHS, etc.) Start searching for those old electronics items, and get ready to bring them to this event. By doing so, you will be following one of Amma's New Year's directives and doing something about the environment.

Finalized information will be sent out soon.

TerraCycle

Message from Visala:

Currently we are still collecting Plastic Cereal Bag liners (cracker liners ok too) and Granola Bar/ energy bar wrappers as well as Cigarette Butts.

If you have any, please bring them to Seattle satsang. Please only bring these 3 items for now.

For more information about TerraCycle go to: www.terracycle.com

It's Nesting Time

By Maheswari



"Habitat loss is the single greatest threat to our birds," said Adam Roberts, executive vice president of the conservation group Born Free USA. "You can help offset some of these threats by creating habitats in your backyard and community — and get the whole family involved."

Why provide birdhouses? Habitat loss has driven some species away from former nesting areas. The right house can bring birds back home.

I love waking up to the songbirds chirping in my yard. It reminds me that despite the cold, spring is on its way and with it the new birth of Mother Nature's miracles. Have you ever watched the birds through your window as they hop around the ground or back and forth into the trees as they gather food and explore their habitat? Do you wonder where they go to nest? Would you like to provide a habitat for our feathered friends?

This time of year many birds are scouting out nesting sites. Some birds look for cavities or holes in trees where they can build their nests. Birdhouses, also called nest boxes, are also used by birds in place of dead trees or holes made by woodpeckers. You can help provide shelter for the birds in winter and/or a new home for a bird to nest by building or buying a nesting box.

Different types of birds require different types of bird houses, which will include the height of the house, the size of the entry hole, and the size of the floor. Sometimes the cute, colorful, birdhouses found in novelty stores will not necessarily make a good birdhouse. The wood may not be suitable for the outdoors and the paint may be toxic. If you want to buy a bird house instead of making one consider going to your local plant nursery or a bird specialty store where you can ask questions and learn about your options.

When building or buying a birdhouse here are a few things to consider:

- Use thick $\frac{3}{4}$ ", untreated wood. Most birds will flock to plain unfinished wood boxes. Cedar works great.
- Rough, raw wood especially on the inside of the box gives babies a foothold to scramble up the wall when they are getting ready to leave the nest. If possible have a rough surface outside also, making it easier for the mother bird to enter and exit the nest. You can also make grooves in the wood for this purpose.
- Birds are sensitive to chemicals and anything treated with chemicals. The fumes may build up when it's hot, and if a bird gnaws on the wood, the chemicals can be toxic.
- Do not put a perch outside the hole of your birdhouse. A perch can provide a place for predatory birds to settle themselves as they reach in for a snack.
- Make the house easy to clean by having a hinged roof or a side wall that can be lifted up on the birdhouse.

It's Nesting Time-cont

- It is not necessary to paint your birdhouse. A bright color could send out a signal saying, "Hey, look at me. Here I am." making it a perfect target for a predator. If you do want to paint the box use a non-toxic paint and colors that will blend into the environment such as: brown, green, grey, or slate blue.
- Drainage holes or slots ensure the floor of your bird house will stay dry. You do not want water to collect that may drown the baby birds or cause mold.
- Holes in the top also allow heat to escape and air to flow.
- Keep an eye on unwanted guests in your birdhouses, mice, insects, squirrels, other birds, etc. If you do find one have someone help you remove them.
- Do not spray your birdhouse with pesticides or other toxic chemicals.
- Birdhouse placement is very important.
- Don't be discouraged if the birds don't find your birdhouse right away. It may take a season before you see them nesting. Be patient.
- Placement of your birdhouse is very important. Place the birdhouse at least 20 feet from feeders or birdbaths. You can set it atop a pole, post, or attach it to a tree trunk. Most birds prefer the birdhouse to be stable and securely anchored, instead of hanging from a rope or chain and swaying with the wind.
- Look for a spot that does not have a lot of foot traffic. Keep it away from fences which are usually visited by cats, raccoons, rodents and other predators.
- Having the front entrance facing east keeps it protected from prevailing winds and rain.
- Try placing nesting material close by to encourage the couple to build in the nesting box: string, twigs, strips of cotton cloth, pine needles, hair, etc.
- Clean your boxes after the birds have left the nest. Use hot soapy water with biodegradable soap. Dry it out completely before putting it back up.
- Birdhouse plan: http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/basic_songbird.html
- Information on birdhouses: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/nestboxes/index.html>



PNW Litter Project

Almost to 5000 hours!

As of February 28, 2014 the Pacific Northwest Litter Project
was only 73 hours away from reaching
5000 hours of litter pick up!!!!



Litter Project Stories and Reflections

From Aditi in Iowa:

It's been a record breaking couple of months, even for Iowa in the winter. The foot of ice and snow that's been everywhere for about 3 weeks has partially melted, frozen, melted, and frozen again, several times. The temperature actually went above 25 degrees for a couple of days and we had near flood conditions as the result. The ground can't absorb the water even though we've been in a drought for the past 3 years. The final layers of ice are still everywhere. Last night we had another storm that dumped another 4-6 inches on us. It is beautiful and relatively quiet, but certainly not conducive to picking up anything. It's -1 degrees now with windchill from the NW making it -21 degrees. Sigh.

I occasionally see a relatively intact can on top of a snowplowed snowbank but can rarely get to it to pick it up due to the treacherous footing. Thank heavens for the slipon "cleats" my daughter gave me so I would be able to navigate on foot in grocery store parking lots.

So greetings from the frozen Midwest!

From Kirtana from Seattle but in Brazil:

I am totally tickled at how much cleaner the Casa grounds are now. The giant mounds and thousands upon thousands of butts are gone. Definitely some litter and butts but far, far less than before!

From Vandita in Halfmoon, BC :

Busy Mum here. I wanted to do a lot more, but managed 30 minutes of litter pick up in February. I wasn't planning to pick up litter, as it was a rushed walk. I have always planned to carry one of those litter grabbers and a bag so I don't get dirty, but this time I didn't even have a plastic bag in my pocket. I'd been feeling so sad about the environment- mass farming, GMO, pesticide use, etc. so when I started to walk past the plastic laying on the beach, I couldn't. I picked it up and used it as a bag for all the other litter I found on the way home. I'd met a woman on the way there and we said hello. I saw her again on the way back. She noticed I was carrying some garbage and actually thanked me and said she also picks up garbage. It is so beautiful and pristine here, so the litter really stands out. After feeling so helpless about things, it felt good to pick up the litter. Some things maybe I can't change, but some things I can. My effort may be small, but it is significant and a little less plastic is ending up in the ocean.

Vermicomposting

Worms: Did you know?

Last month the newsletter had an article about the life cycle of a worm. This month will focus on other worm facts!

From: <http://www.worm-farming.com/worm-facts.html>

- A worm has no eyes, legs or arms.
- There are 2700 different types of earthworms in the world.
- There can be up to 1 MILLION earthworms in just 1 acre of land.
- 22 foot long earthworm was found in South Africa.
- The sticky slime a worm makes helps keep it from drying out. If the worm dries out, it will die, because it 'breathes' through its skin.
- Earthworms can replace lost parts. Some types are better at this than others.
- A worm chopped in half will not become 2 worms. Just the head end will regenerate into a new worm.
- Even without eyes, a worm can still sense light and will move away from it.
- Earthworms come to the surface when it rains because they need oxygen to breathe, and they would drown if they stayed in the soil.
- Some of the largest worms can live to be 50 years old.
- Regular earthworm can live 15 years.
- In countries such as China and New Zealand, some people eat earthworms!

From: The Eco System Worm Farm Instruction Book page 16 and 17

- A worm doesn't have nostrils or a tongue but it can still smell or taste things. The worm's taste cells are near its head.
- A worm has a brain (cerebral ganglion), a mouth, five hearts, nerves, and a gizzard which contains stones that crush the food it ingests.
- A worm has setae which are tiny bristles that can grab onto rough surfaces.
- A worm has a clitellus which is where it makes cocoons and stores eggs.
- A worm also has intestines, an anus, and blood vessels.
- In every segment of a worm there is a kidney!

From: Wiggling Worms at Work by Wendy Pfeffer

- Worms usually select dead and decaying plants to eat because they have bacteria and healthy plants don't.
- Worms will choose leaves with pointed ends instead of those that are round.
- Worms eat fungi and mold.



Interesting Information of all Kinds!

It has been awhile since we've had a section of articles and videos in the newsletter. This month so many of you sent them in and they are awesome. I think these are a fascinating series and hope you enjoy them. Karuna

Magnificence of Nature

Giant, awesome 'tree lobster' survived 80 years in hiding: "The Lord Howe Island stick insect... hatching above, looking like an alien struggling out of a human torso, will grow to the size of your hand. It's also called a "tree lobster" — that's how big it is." http://grist.org/list/giant-awesome-tree-lobster-survived-80-years-in-hiding/?utm_source=outbrain&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=outbrain-trending

The world's 10 oldest living trees: "There are colonies of clonal trees that have lived for tens of thousands of years, but there's something majestic about a single tree able to stand on its own for millennia. These ancient trees have born witness to the rise and fall of civilizations, survived changing climates, and even persevered through the fervent development of human industry. They are a testament to the long view that Mother Nature takes in tending the Earth." <http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/photos/the-worlds-10-oldest-living-trees/taking-the-long-view>

Peaceful view of penguins: "It's easy to get stressed out. You might have a lousy day at work or some other problem. I [Kim Komando] find that listening to beautiful music and watching adorable animals can be very relaxing. This video combines soothing music and adorable penguins." http://www.tvkim.com/watch/1209/kims-picks-most-beautiful-music-and-penguins?utm_medium=nl&utm_source=dotd&utm_content=2011-08-03-fifl&utm_campaign=s

Making a Difference

Indian man single-handedly plants a 1,360-acre forest: "A little more than 30 years ago, a teenager named Jadav "Molai" Payeng began burying seeds along a barren sandbar near his birthplace in northern India's Assam region to grow a refuge for wildlife. Not long after, he decided to dedicate his life to this endeavor, so he moved to the site so he could work full-time creating a lush new forest ecosystem. Incredibly, the spot today hosts a sprawling 1,360 acres of jungle that Payeng planted — single-handedly." <http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/indian-man-single-handedly-plants-a-1360-acre-forest>

How the oceans can clean themselves: "18-year-old Boyan Slat combines environmentalism, entrepreneurship and technology to tackle global issues of sustainability. After diving in Greece, and coming across more plastic bags than fish, he wondered; "why can't we clean this up?" While still being in secondary school, he then decided to dedicate half a year of research to understand plastic pollution and the problems associated with cleaning it up. This ultimately led to his passive clean-up concept....Working to prove the feasibility of his concept, Boyan Slat currently gives lead to a team of approximately 50 people, and temporarily quit his Aerospace Engineering study to completely focus his efforts on The Ocean Cleanup." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROW9F-c0klQ>

Washed Ashore: Art to Save the Sea- "The Washed Ashore project builds large art sculptures of sea life made from plastic marine debris. Our unique art pieces are part of a traveling exhibition which includes educational signage and programs that encourage reducing, refusing, reusing and recycling..... Washed Ashore is sponsored by The Artula Institute for Arts & Environ-

Interesting Information of all Kinds! cont.

mental Education whose mission is to provide opportunities to express and teach environmental issues through the arts.”
www.WashedAshore.org (picture used with permission).



Seed Balls: “A seed ball (or seed bomb) is a seed that has been wrapped in soil materials, usually a mixture of clay and compost, and then dried. Essentially, the seed is 'pre-planted' and can be sown by depositing the seed ball anywhere suitable for the species, keeping the seed safely until the proper germination window arises. Seed balls are an easy and sustainable way to cultivate plants in a way that provides a larger window of time when the sowing can occur. They also are a convenient dispersal mechanism for guerrilla gardeners and people with achy backs.” <http://seed-balls.com/>

Radical Mycologist Trains Mushroom to Remediate Cigarette Butts: “As Peter of the Radical Mycology project demonstrates in the video, fungi can not only be trained to digest used cigarette filters but possibly the toxic chemicals that they harbor as well. The methodology Peter used to accomplish this goal was based on an understanding of the skills needed to “train” a fungus to digest a foreign substance. Simply put, the mushroom cultivator must slowly introduce a new food source to a fungus so that the fungus can first determine and then produce the correct enzymes necessary to digest the novel substrate. The same concepts that Peter introduces in this video can be applied to a range of toxins and industrial chemicals, such as petroleum products, dioxins, dyes, and munitions.”

<http://radicalmycology.wordpress.com/2014/01/05/radical-mycologist-trains-mushroom-to-remediate-cigarette-filters/>

Revised Laws and Urban Farming Projects Provide New Opportunities for Urban Gardeners: “In the featured video, “Gangster Gardener” Ron Finley is turning Los Angeles on its nose with his no-nonsense approach to healthy eating. The city of LA issued a warrant for his arrest for the unthinkable crime of growing tomatoes and kale on a small plot of unused land, about 10 feet wide by 150 feet long—basically, a strip of dead grass.”

http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2014/01/04/urban-farming.aspx?e_cid=20140104Z1_PRNL_art_1&utm_source=prmrnl&utm_medium=email&utm_content=art1&utm_campaign=20140104Z1&et_cid=DM38440&et_rid=389023678

20 Clever Ways To Reuse Old Items You Are About to Toss Out. “The latest trend in DIY projects is known as upcycling.... upcycling is known as the process of converting useless products into valuable products that are of higher quality and benefit to the environment and the world around us.” <http://sftimes.co/?id=88>

Interesting Information of all Kinds! cont.

For Even More Inspiration!

These last two entries aren't really related directly to GreenFriends but I have included them in this newsletter because they so inspiring.

My philosophy for a happy life: Sam Berns: "Sam Berns is a Junior at Foxboro High School in Foxboro, Massachusetts, where he has achieved highest honors and is currently a percussion section leader in the high school marching band. He recently achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America. Sam was diagnosed with Progeria, a rare, rapid aging disease, at the age of 2." In this video Sam shares his philosophy for a happy life.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36m1o-tM05g>

See This Beggar? You're Never Going To Forget What He Does: "This old man can show you what it's like to be a hero. He doesn't have much, but he possesses compassion that is more valuable than any pile of gold. When you see what the 99 year-old does every day, you'll realize that superheroes are real. They just aren't who you think they are."

<http://www.viralnova.com/compassionate-homeless-person/>