



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

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

Gardening: Donations to Mother's Kitchen by Satyavati



On the 3rd Sunday in May at Mother's Kitchen, Visala remarked to me, "Wouldn't it be great to grow organic food for the men?". She meant the 40 men we serve food to at The Compass Center Mission each month as well as the 50 plus homeless we feed under the viaduct. A big YES welled up inside of me.

Then three days before the Toronto program, I was saying "good bye" to Ranjini, who was staying with her uncle, Vasishta, until she and her family moved to India. Vasishta told me that I could use his large, sunny and newly plowed garden space on Key Peninsula. He was too busy working to plant and weed the space. I already garden at home using raised beds and containers. Yet, I felt as though a magnet was pulling me to buy veggie starts and I did so on my way home. By 10am the next morning, I was weeding and preparing the garden space. As Ranjini was watering the newly planted starts and seeds, it became clear to me that this was Mother's Garden for the mission men!

Jai Ma! By Amma's Grace, we will see how the tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, spinach, squash, swiss chard and kale develop and grow.

If YOU have EXTRA produce from your own garden, please consider donating veggies and fruit to Mother's Kitchen. Also, if you would like to plant a winter garden, Vasishta recommends collard greens, kale, and swiss chard as some of the plant varieties that will grow well.

Gardening: Donations to Mother's Kitchen (contd.)



Once in California, Amma commented after eating food from the San Ramon ashram garden, "I can taste the mantras".

Blissful growing and sharing mantra filled food with the homeless we serve.

Mother's Kitchen is the 3rd Sunday each month.

*Om daridra janata hasta
samapita nijandhase namah.
Salutations to Her who offered Her
own food to the poor.*

Stories and Reflections

JUNE



JULY



Stories and Reflections - Gardening

From Laura in Seattle:

[In June, Laura reported that birds had dropped a seed into one of her potted plants and it had begun to grow. Now we can see what it became!]

Here are some beautiful pictures of a hummingbird, and also a haiku.

<http://cuteoverload.com/2014/07/18/friday-haiku-hmmmmmmm/>

Stories and Reflections - Recycling

From Achala in Olympia:

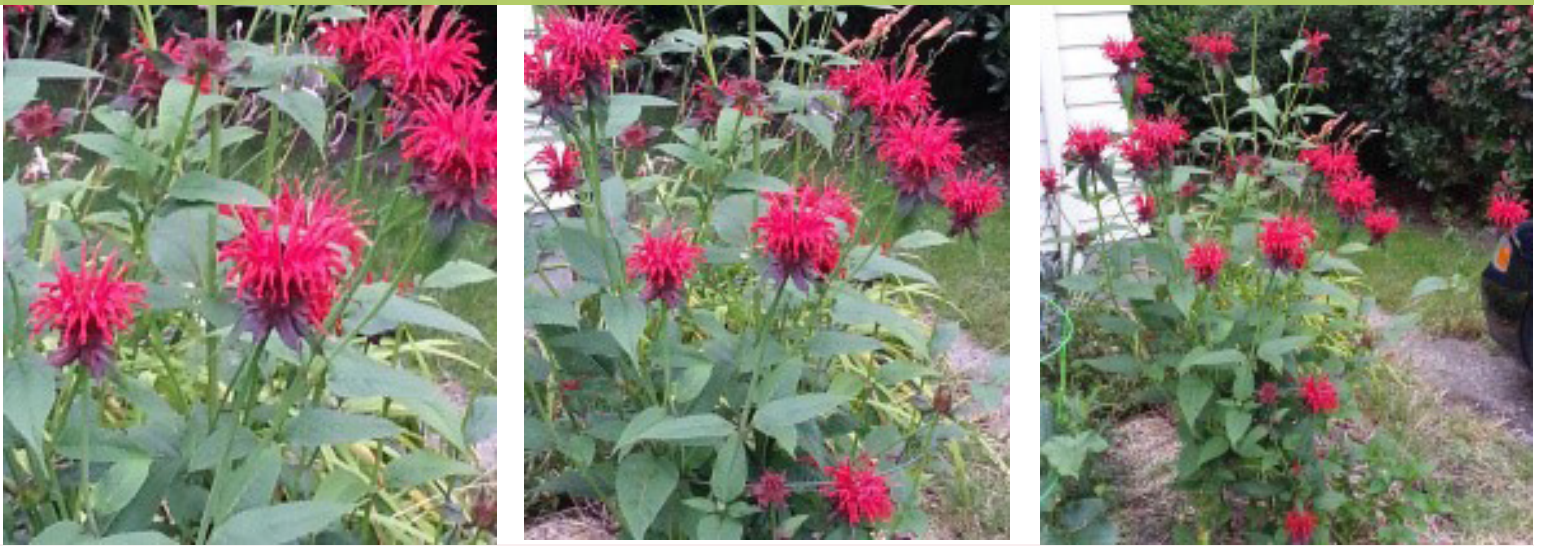
Here is an interesting collage technique, using rolled up colored, recycled paper

<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/440789882252209998/>



We Need the Bees!

by Karuna



Two years ago a friend gave me a bee balm plant. Last year had quite a few blooms. This year it has taken off. At this point it is 64 inches tall and is full of blooms!

Bee balm is known to attract butterflies, hummingbirds and bees. It is also considered edible and medicinal. While I have been delighted by the number of blooms on my plant, I have also felt distressed by how few bees there are both in the bee balm and in my garden as a whole. I'm also concerned that essentially all the bees are bumblebees. Until recently there were almost no honey bees despite the fact that I have neighbors three houses down who have honey bee hives. It has never been this bad before.

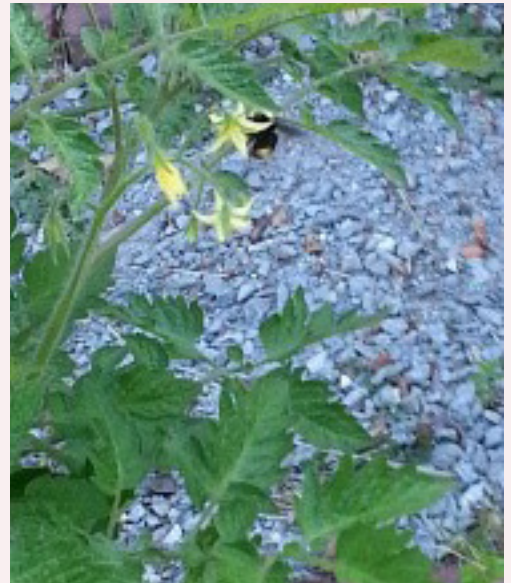
As you probably know the bees are disappearing all over the world. They are getting sick and dying. From [BeesFree](#): A list of possible causes for bee Colony Collapse Disorder includes beekeeper management practices, new pesticides, pesticide use patterns, nutritional deficits associated with extensive monocultures, climate change, exotic parasites and pathogens, diminished immunity to pathogens or even interactions among two or more of these factors.

We Need the Bees! (contd.)

From [Green Peace](#): Scientists know that bees are dying from a variety of factors – pesticides, drought, habitat destruction, nutrition deficit, air pollution, global heating, and so forth. The causes of collapse merge and synergise, but we know that humanity is the perpetrator, and that the two most prominent causes appear to be pesticides and habitat loss.

Last year, Whole Foods created a visual of what its produce department would look like if there were no pollinators. They removed 237 items from their shelves; 52% of the total. This year they did the same thing with their dairy counter. [See the graphic pictures.](#)

My rhododendron bushes were full of bumblebees when they blossomed this year. The buzzing was so loud that it sounded like a bee hive was nearby. Now there are usually only one or two bumblebees in the garden at a time; and they seem to have no interest in the bee balm. At least they visit these three plants:



May we find the solution to the problem and have the will to do whatever it takes to reverse this impending disaster.

Originally posted on Living, Learning, and Letting Go
[July 6, 2014.](#)

A few days after posting this article I had the delightful experience of witnessing this hummingbird in the bee balm.

Discouragement, Thrills and Wonder

by Saroja



Second week of July - the month to take stock of the garden in transition - and we're saying goodbye to some, harvesting some, and asking what's in store for the near future.

All those beautiful lettuces have gone to seed and are now feeding Bob's compost bin.* They provided salads for us for a full three months, and a good amount went to the White Center Food Bank. Romaine, which was broadcast later, is still growing nicely and doesn't seem to mind the heat.**

Here's where the discouragement comes in: Seeds are waiting to be put in the ground for winter harvest. Between 4th week June and end of July, there are numerous veggies wanting a start in life. Cilantro- Dill- Orach- Green Beans- Carrots- Brussels Sprouts- Endive- Radicchio- Italian Parsley- Kale- Purple Sprouting Broccoli- Cauliflower- Radicchio- Swiss Chard- Collards- Kohlrabi- Spinach.

Why am I waiting, why are these seeds still not in? Every morning I get up with renewed interest to seed, then the day passes, another morning and evening, the seeds still in their envelopes. Maybe it's too warm to feel right about putting seeds in the ground.

Seattle temperatures have been hot - in the first three weeks of July we've had 10 days over 85, 15 over 80, and virtually no rain. The fans are on at night and we wake still feeling warm. I think that this must be the reason it hasn't happened. Seeding works so well when it's cooler - March, we bundle up knowing we're going to get wet but no discomfort matters because this is the thrilling time, the hopeful time. And as soon as the seed hits the soil, it's wet and happy to be so. Now there's the worry, can they be kept moist enough in this heat? After our two-day rain and cold in the middle of the third week, now again it's in the upper 80's and no rain forecast for the last week of this month.

Discouragement, Thrills and Wonder (contd.)

So I keep taking stock - lolling under an umbrella, drinking iced Moroccan mint tea - in reflection. There's the sadness of seeing some veggies go away and in not seeing others yet happening when they're asking.

And then in the midst of my angst, here we are sitting down to a dinner and feeling so very grateful. We have on our plates a salad of crookneck squash and Romano cheese (recipe below), and green beans simply steamed, and kale with olive oil and tamari, and a salad of romaine lettuce and tomatoes - everything from the garden but the dressings. This is what thrills us, to go out to the garden and harvest for dinner.

And guess what! a new enthusiasm. I have a picture and a plan now - will go out tonight just before dark, it'll be cool and I can bring a spotlight out from the garage, and I'll get to seeding - I can't wait! Tonight I'll also cut off all blooms from our six tomato plants. They're already providing loads of ripe red tomatoes and if this abundance continues into August, it'll be fun to share our ongoing tomato experimentations with you in the next PNW Green Friends newsletter.

For two-thirds of the winter list it's by-the-book too late, insufficient time for the plants to develop before our cold fall sets in. But that's the Wonder: I'll bet that some will be successful in spite of me and my moods and the waiting.

Beets*** and a purple cauliflower, both planted with Jo Robinson in mind - getting more phytonutrients from darker-colored vegetables (see last month's review of [Eating on the Wild Side](#)).

* Lettuce. Mostly reds, bought as starts at the annual Seattle Tilth Early Plant Sale on March 15, and an April seeding of a lettuce mix.

** Territorial "Valmaine"

*** Territorial "Bulls Blood Beets"



Discouragement, Thrills and Wonder (contd.)

SHAVED SUMMER SQUASH WITH ROMANO

1 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. olive oil

Pinch sea salt

Three 6- to 8-inch summer squash or zucchini

2-ounce piece Romano

8 to 10 basil leaves, sliced into very thin ribbons

pepper

In a large bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, olive oil, and salt. Set aside.
Using a vegetable peeler or mandolin, shave the squash into paper-thin ribbons,
about 1/16 inch thick, to yield 3 to 4 cups.

Toss squash ribbons with the dressing and marinate
at room temperature for 5 minutes.

Shave the Romano into thin strips with a vegetable peeler to yield about 3/4 cup.

Add to the squash and toss gently. Taste and add more lemon if desired.
Divide the mixture among 4 plates. Garnish with the basil and season with pepper.
Serve immediately or chill slightly.

From Saroja and Bob's garden in Highland Park

Recipe (from Willi Galloway's Grow Cook Eat)



Followup to “Becoming a Bug Mother”

by Kathie



(See original story at: <http://amma.org/sites/default/files/litterprojectnewsletterapr2014.pdf>)

From 27 Giant Spiny Australian Leaf Bugs,
I am down to 5.

It's not that I wasn't prepared for their passing but for some of them, I have had to deal with all the ramifications of possibly contributing to their early departure because of bad food. I am afraid I may have given them "sprayed" Blackberries. They appear to be dying from pesticide poisoning.

For these magnificent creatures, this is a long and slow death, and I imagine, painful. I have had to think deeply about how much I should do to keep them alive.

I have struggled my whole aware life with the concepts of euthanasia, abortion, “putting down” pets, and any heroic measures to keep a living being alive. I know the side I most often land on but never without serious reconsideration in every case.

The closest I came to performing euthanasia myself was when my 26 year old cat was run over in my garage by my housemate and trapped under the wheel of the car. No room to pull forward and backing up was certain death. I called my Vet who, ethically of course, could not tell me what to do, but in a hint-filled question, she gave me a solution. She said, "Isn't your husband diabetic?"

I ran for the insulin syringe, preparing to do the unthinkable if I had to. But blissful relief, Little Old long-surviving kitty "Surprise" had died while I was on the phone.

Anyway, I hand fed my sick bugs for a while and gave them droplets of water and several times they seemed to rally but they both finally passed over. The emotion I feel is so spiritual in a hard to articulate way...the blessing of watching their entire life cycle...from egg to death and also witnessing a couple of them surviving impossible odds. One was hatched but could not free one of his feet/claws from the egg shell so she hauled it behind like a ball and chain for two molting's! This is months and months of her leg trapped in the original egg shell. She finally lost part of that leg (and therefore the egg) in a molting and for a long time, she remained the smallest of all the bugs...but she just kept trucking along. Now she is the 2nd biggest of them all.

Followup to “Becoming a Bug Mother” (contd.)



Notice her missing front left leg?

When the two poisoned bugs died, we gave them a ceremony outside, laying them to rest in the very Blackberry patch I fought to kill off for so many years. (The one that grew up my chimney and down into my living room!)

I figure if an animal crosses my life path it is for a purpose, not just for me but for their own reason also. I try to learn from every encounter, short or 26 years long.

Here's my current, ongoing lesson.

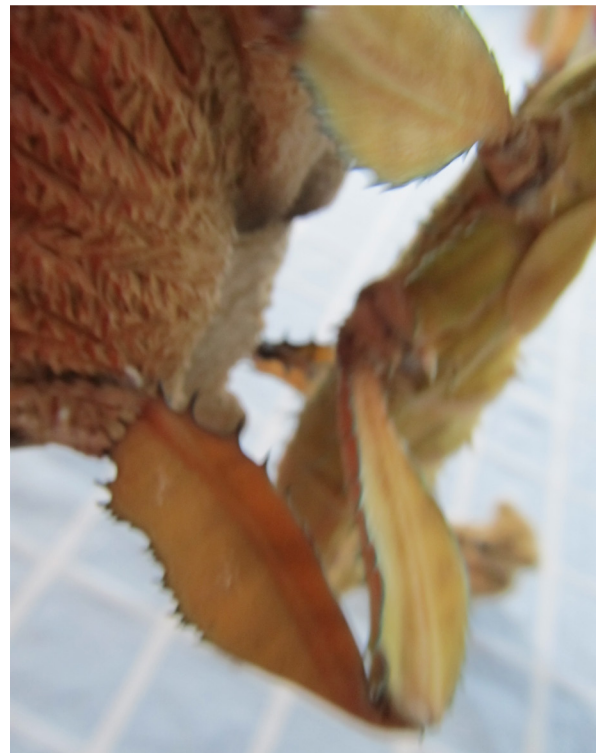
I fight a childhood fear of spiders, having been bitten in the neck by a Black Widow at 9 years old and frightened to death by an older cousin when I was 12. He put his pet Tarantula in the bottom of my sleeping bag. Ha-ha! (If I could figure out how to type the sound for that creeped-out shutter people do when they are scared by snakes or rats or spiders, it would be right here.)

When I find a spider in my home, I don't kill, I transport. I tell them I live in a "no spider" house and ask them to please not come back.

But Sheesh...Spiders? Giant bugs? Why is there such a difference in my physical reaction to them??? I am fine with these bugs crawling right up my arm, but the tiniest spider can bring out the killer in me!!! Oh and mosquitoes too.

In the meantime, all of my remaining five Bugs have rallied and are eating so much, I can hardly keep up. I have found a resource of unsprayed Blackberry leaves so I'll just try to keep up. I may need to buy a much bigger terrarium to house them if they keep growing at this rate. Or, as a friend recently pointed out, I better start looking for leashes!!!

And guess what! At this stage of Parthenogenesis, they are not supposed to be laying eggs! But while I clean their cages out, I am suddenly finding hundreds of eggs! I'm containing them



Followup to “Becoming a Bug Mother” (contd.)

differently than the original batch that hatched freely all over my kitchen after a whole year of gestating...AND, I am also putting the word out way in advance. "Taking orders" for bugs in 12 to 15 months, or for some of these eggs right now!

By the way, whoever is in charge of sending out lessons, I need a break for a while to catch up on all my homework.

Did you see the pictures last month of the 4 wild (and precious) kittens born in the woodpile in front of our porch over in Spokane?

We found homes for 3 of the kittens...and one INSISTED on adopting us. No resisting this little trouble maker. Even our two cats are falling on love (one more easily than the other, but I am confident.)

Thanks for reading.

Kathie, the Bug Mama



Do you ever wonder what is in your worm bin?

By Karuna



I know there is lots of life in a worm bin, but my outdoor one has SO many creatures in it I was beginning to wonder what is normal.

For example there are a huge number of what I have called potato bugs. It turns out those are more commonly called pill bugs. They eat decaying vegetation and shred and consume some of the toughest materials.

They are considered highly beneficial in worm composting. Good thing. I have quite a supply!

Picture credit: Wikimedia . For more information and pictures go to:

<http://www.naturesfootprint.com/community/articles/worm-bin>

Helpful

Sow bugs
Pill bugs
Potworms
Beetles
Millipedes
Ants (unless infestation)
Maggots
Soldier Flies

Problem

Snails and Slugs
Centipedes
Flatworms
House Flies
Mites

Not Harmful, Not Helpful

(nuisance or eat worm food)

Fruit flies
Earwigs
Springtail

PNW LITTER PROJECT

PNW Litter Project Stats:

As of May 31, 2014 we had 365 members.

Thirty-one members and their guests reported picking up 108 hours of litter during June 2014. The average pick up time was: 3.5 hours; the range was 2 minutes to 30 hours and the median was 1 hour.

Members of the project have picked up litter for 5497 hours since the project began in July 2011.

TerraCycle credited us with turning in 139,534 cigarette butts in 2013. We have turned in 34,600 butts so far this year for a total of 174,134 butts since we started sending them to TerraCycle in January 2013. (We also collected the 5 gallon jar of cigarette butts we use for the litter project display. Those have not been counted.)



Stories and Reflections - Litter



From Gwen in Burien:

Here is my son Matthew in front of the best garbage can system he has ever seen.

It is only missing compost. But one hotel we were in even had that.



The man in the second picture is John. His job in the park is to pick up litter. John is showing Matthew his tools for picking up trash. John was so appreciative of Matthew's trash pickup efforts.

Stories and Reflections - Litter (contd.)

From Achala in Tacoma:

The average American produces at least 4 pounds of garbage daily. It is twice the amount produced in the 1960s and 50% more than the amount of daily garbage produced by Western Europeans.

To see thought provoking photos of people lying in their weekly garbage [click here](#).

From GreenFriends member:

What's under your kitchen sink, in your garage, in your bathroom, and on the shelves in your laundry room?

Learn more about what's in these products, about potential health effects, and about safety and handling.

<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm>

Important Articles About Litter

Poornima from Shoreline sent three excellent articles about litter. They are very different from each other but each has important things to say!

Littering and Following the Crowd

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/08/littering-and-following-the-crowd/374913/>

This article examines why people litter and what it takes to change the behavior. The author not only shares her own experience in picking up litter and providing litter education but also shares information about relevant social science studies.

South Downs litter picker has truck named after him

<http://www.wscountytimes.co.uk/news/local/south-downs-litter-picker-has-truck-named-after-him-1-6204429>

The Horsham District Council in the UK named a garbage truck David Sedaris in honor of all the litter pick up he does. District Councillor for Chantry Ward, Diana van der Klugt, said: "David Sedaris is a familiar and very welcome

Stories and Reflections - Litter (contd.)

sight in the lanes and by-ways of this lovely part of Horsham District, as he tirelessly and painstakingly goes about gathering up the litter so thoughtlessly discarded. His is a wonderful example of community spirit in action. It is a great privilege and delight for Horsham District Council to be able to name one of its waste vehicles after David, as a sincere and appropriately cheerful token of their appreciation and thanks.”

(Be sure to look at the picture of the truck! Karuna)

Garbage Everywhere: What refuse in India's streets reveals about America's hidden trash problem

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/06/confessions-of-a-trash-tourist-india/373118/>

The author takes and reports on an organized nine hour trash tour (by foot and by van) called “Trash Trail” through the city of Bangalore. He then compares it to the waste management situation in the United States. The statistics are staggering. For example, if you take the amount of waste America produces and divide it by the number of people, the average is 35 tons of waste per person a year.

