



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

Contents

PNW Gardening

Photos from Our Reader's Gardens
Echinacea conservation front and center!
A-Not-So-Sweet-Ending

Teaching the Children

Pond Dipping

Saving the Earth's Resources

Making a Toilet Paper Roll Pencil Holder
Watch, Wait, Wonder
A New Bee Sanctuary
Living Sustainable Lives within Our Resources

Nature

Monarch Meditation
Chrism
Beautiful Nature Photos from Cindy Knoke

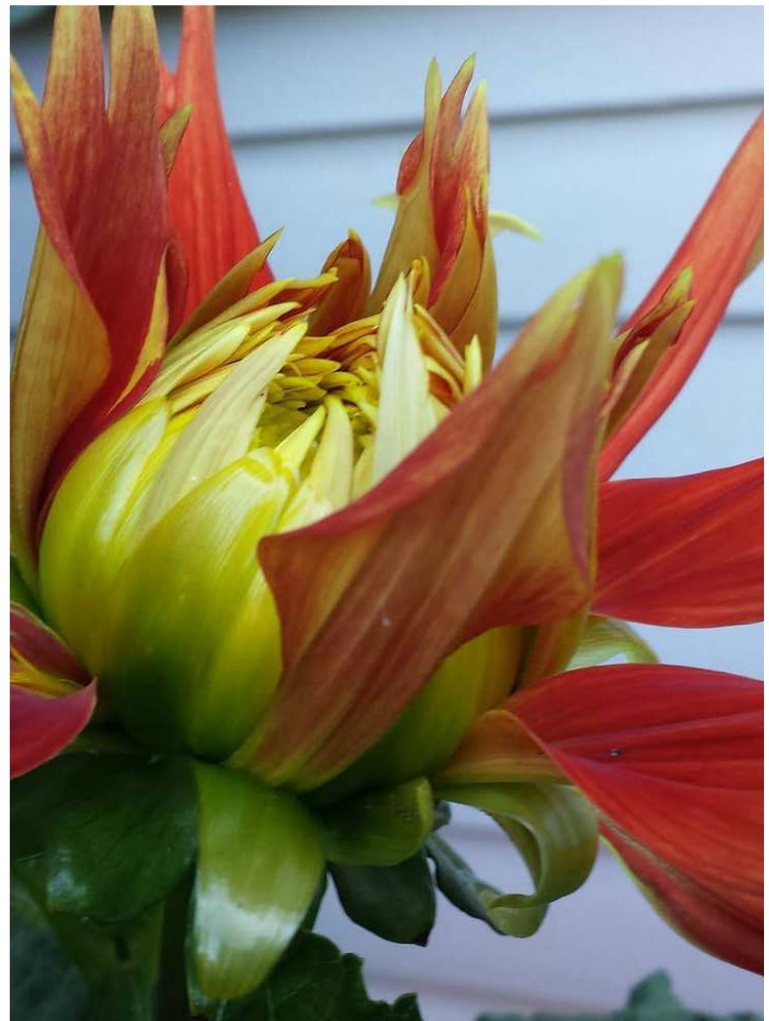
Wildlife

Bandipur Tiger Reserve
Interesting Facts about Ants
Followup from the August Slug Articles

PNW Litter Project

Litter Project Stats

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 pnwgreenfriends108@gmail.com

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

PNW Gardening

Photos from Our Reader's Gardens

From Cynthia in Kirkland:



From Samantha in Seattle:



PNW Gardening

From Mechas in Bellevue:



PNW Gardening

Echinacea conservation front and center!

Consider choosing one of the nine native species of Echinacea, grow it in seclusion and save seed. Reason being, these native land races, which are our American birthright, are fast disappearing, and need home gardeners to conserve the pure strains.

A good patch of any open pollinated Echinacea grown in a garden where no other Echinacea species are visible, is a good go. Purists will require 2,000 individuals and a mile of seclusion, and this is a good scenario, but under the circumstances, less individuals and less seclusion are better than-nothing. Here are some photos of the bloodred "*Echinacea sanguinea*." as appearing in one of our gardens.

Echinacea sanguinea (Sanguin purple coneflower - Herbaceous perennial)

The most southerly ranging of all Echinacea species, *E. sanguinea* grows in acidic, sandy soils in the open fields and pine woods of the West Gulf Coastal Plain. The plants are not very cold hardy in comparison to other species in the genus. This species is similar to *E. pallida*, with long, thin ray flowers that occur on slender, swaying stems. The disk corolla of *E. sanguinea* is characteristically blood red in color, as are the seeds.

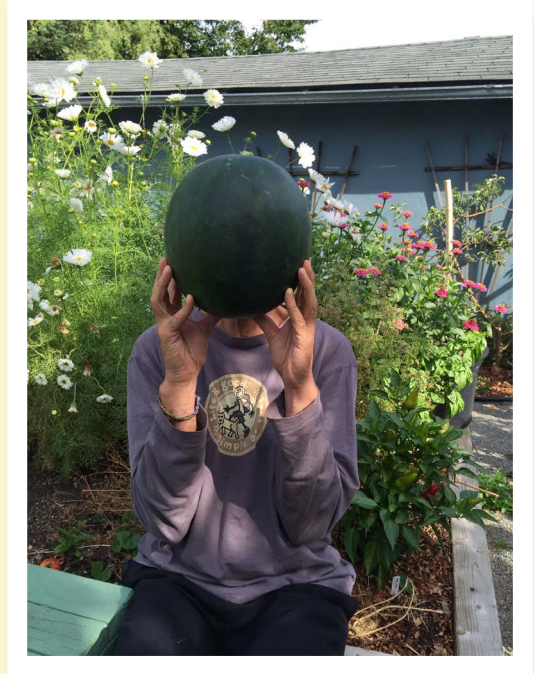
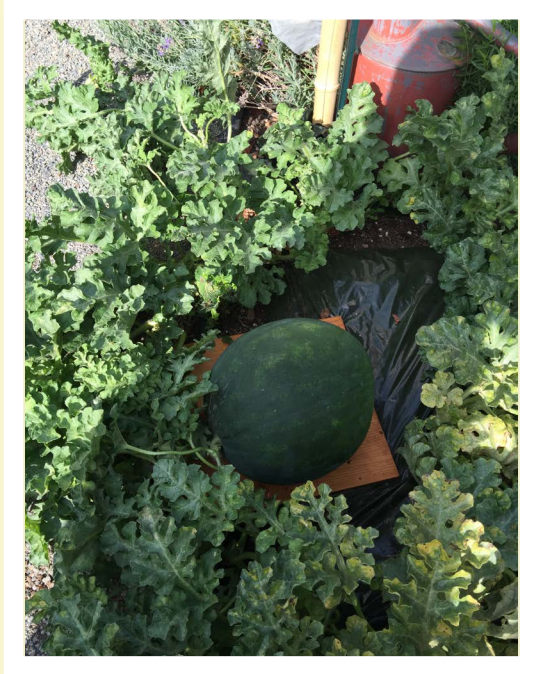


Article by [Richo Cech](#), [Horizon Herbs](#), Williams, Oregon

PNW Gardening

A Not-So-Sweet Ending by Saroja Strand

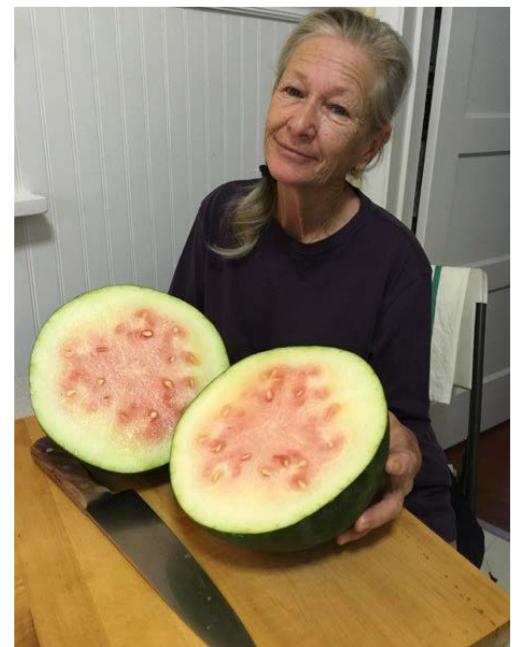
We were so excited to harvest our big sugar pot watermelon. I was concerned about leaving it on the vine too long before harvesting. The seed information said the melon should weigh between 8 and 10 lbs. Ours weighed in over 10, so that was a good sign. Then we knocked on it like you do in the grocery store. We heard a nice low hollow ring, which sounded very promising.



I sent Karuna these two photos thinking she might gasp in delight. She might even think that we would get together and fill ourselves with sweet, delectable watermelon. I waited until this morning to cut into it (it's been in the fridge for two days getting nice and cold), thinking I would send her a tempting photo of the inside. I knew she would be happy like we were.

The time had come. One cut and “Well.....” The picture says it all.

Maybe if we had left it two or three more weeks it would have been ripe. It's not edible so will go in the compost with its other melon friends, ones that had rotted before their time.



PNW Gardening

On another topic, I'm sending a picture of our Fiesta apple tree and Matts Wild Cherry Tomato living in symbiosis. The tomato plant is absolutely unbelievable, measuring 7 ft. in diameter! This is our favorite Cherry Tomato, no tough skin like so many others, and very very sweet. We buy Matts Wild from the Tilth Sale in the spring.



Teaching the Children

Pond Dipping by Aiswarya Murray in Victoria



One of my favorite summer activities for connecting kids with nature is pond dipping. Muddy ponds, cool streams, and other wetlands are rich with life that we don't normally pay attention to, and a hot summer day is the perfect time to discover crayfish, stoneflies, dragonflies, and salamanders in a nice cool pond. However, these rich environments are often quite sensitive, so it is important to be mindful while you are exploring them and ensure that your actions don't harm the pond you are learning about.

The equipment needed is very inexpensive and may already be in your kitchen. Recycled plastic containers from yogurt, etc., make excellent temporary homes for aquatic creatures; and ice cube trays can be used to give each insect or other creature you find its own space. Children will want nets to dip with – but they aren't always necessary. In streams, many insects cling to algae covered rocks, so finding creatures can be as simple as picking up a stone and shaking it gently in a yogurt container filled with water. In ponds, there are often leaves or other plant material on the bottom, and shaking these off in fresh water can also reveal interesting creatures. Looking carefully amongst cattails or other aquatic plants at the pond's edge can reveal dragonfly and damselfly nymphs climbing on the stems.

If you do decide to use a net – consider a kitchen strainer with a long handle instead of a net, as these are easier to clean between adventures. Paintbrushes are an excellent tool for gently removing creatures from strainers.

Teaching the Children

After you have your equipment, you'll need to find a pond or stream to explore. All ponds and streams have a wonderful diversity of life in them, but you'll want to research your intended pond a bit before setting out, as they can often be ecologically sensitive. The best locations are areas with boardwalks, viewing platforms, or small 'beaches' that allow children to access the water without damaging any of the vegetation around the edge.

Once you've got your equipment in hand and have chosen a pond to explore, catching insects and other creatures is pretty straightforward. Children won't need a lot of instruction on how to find creatures!



Dragonfly Nymph

After insects are caught, it's good to have a book or other identification guide on hand to try to determine what creatures you are looking at. A great example can be found here: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/pdf/level1/pondkey.pdf>

Even without knowing what the insects you are catching are, the exercise of exploring a pond to discover dozens or hundreds of tiny creatures you wouldn't otherwise see is a great way to have a conversation with children about the diversity of nature. Wetlands are some of the most productive ecosystems on Earth, and yet we rarely take time to appreciate the creatures that live in them. There is so much that we don't see, just in a small pond. It's also a perfect venue to discuss how our actions affect nature, as these often overlooked areas are so incredibly important for absorbing nutrients and pollution, controlling runoff, and providing habitat for wildlife. Perhaps take some time to

Teaching the Children

clean garbage up from around your local pond after you explore it. If your child is truly inspired by exploring ponds and wants to help protect them, many communities have Streamkeepers or other similar groups that work to restore and protect wetlands.

Whether you learn to identify twelve different damselfly species, or simply spend a cool afternoon getting muddy and chasing water striders, time spent exploring a pond is a rich way to connect with nature, and open up conversations with your children about our impacts on our environment.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR POND DIPPING:

*Make sure your equipment is clean, especially if you've used it in a different pond. You could accidentally introduce diseases, invasive species, or other pollutants by using dirty equipment.

*Return everything you catch to the pond where you found it. Don't be tempted to take creatures home to study or keep as pets.

*Never move amphibians, fish, or even insects between ponds.

*Learn about bullfrogs – an invasive, introduced species in our area – before you set out: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/frogwatch/publications/factsheets/frogs/bullfrog.htm>

Photo source: [wikipedia](#)



Saving the Earth's Resources

Making a Toilet Paper Roll Pencil Holder

by Sonali Vaid (age 10)

Recycling is a process to change waste materials into new products to prevent waste of potentially useful materials. Always remember the three R's-**Reuse, Reduce, Recycle**. Reducing, reusing, and recycling are three ways to eliminate waste and protect our environment.



A hobby of mine that I am very passionate about is Arts and Crafts. It's fun and you don't have to be good at crafts to make something beautiful.

The first recycling project I completed was a toilet paper roll pencil holder (or anything that would fit, like scissors, pens, sharpies, paperclips, etc.).

Things you will need if you want to make one:

- Hot glue gun
- Toilet paper rolls (empty)
- Paints
- Paper bag
- Cardboard
- Scissors



Saving the Earth's Resources



How to make:

1. Trace the bottom of the toilet paper roll onto a piece of cardboard.
2. Cut out the cardboard circles and set them aside.
3. Put different colors of paint on your paper bag in one spot. The more colors you have, the better!
4. Roll the toilet paper roll in the paint that's on the paper bag, until the roll is fully covered.
5. When the toilet paper roll is dried completely, take the cardboard circles and put the circles a little bit inside the toilet paper roll.
6. Hot glue the cardboard in place.
7. Make as many as you want and glue them together.
8. Enjoy!

Optional: After the toilet paper roll is dry, you can paint the inside.



Saving the Earth's Resources

Watch, Wait and Wonder by Karuna Poole



Photo Credit: [Steve Shattuck](#)

Towards the end of May, a swarm of tiny black ants formed on the sidewalk in front of my garden. I, of course, didn't know how many there were but in my shock it looked like millions!

(See video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kbqyg9OI_8g)

I didn't want to kill them but I also didn't want that many ants, and potentially more, in my garden. I also didn't want anyone, especially children, to accidentally stand in them. After pondering the dilemma for a short time, I decided to wash them away with water from a hose. That solution worked and the ants never came back.

When I wrote about that event in Discrimination Opportunity, a blogging friend responded that he understood black ants to be harmless. In pondering his words, I realized that I had moved to action very quickly. I had been stung by red ants a couple of times in the past after I unwittingly stood on or near their hills. Even one bite from a red ant can be very painful, and being bitten by a large number of them is something I will never forget. Did that memory cause me to act too fast?

As I continued to reflect on my action, I realized that a child would be terrified if that many ants were crawling on them, even if they weren't being stung. I concluded that my washing the ants away was a reasonable response, but I

Saving the Earth's Resources

wasn't sure that I was right.

Prior to that event, I had seen a few big black ants in my living room. After the incident with the tiny ants in the garden, more of those big ants showed up, both inside and outside of the house. Two ant events in a short period of time made me wonder what was going on.

When I become conscious of an animal, bird or other living being repetitively showing up in my life, I sometimes look to see what that creature symbolizes in Native American traditions. I googled "native american medicine ant" and found [Dr. Loretta Standley's website](#). She says this about ant medicine:

When Ant Medicine grabs your attention it is asking you to cooperate with your tribe (co-workers, family, projects, etc.) in unity and patience. Ants are resolute and unwearied little creatures. Although they are tiny, they are indeed mighty. They have a strong skeleton on the "outside" of their body (exoskeleton) with specialized muscles that give them their strength. Ants can carry 30 times their weight, which would be equal to a 150 lb. person carrying a bulldozer on their back at 19,500 lbs.

The typical way to stop ant medicine is to literally stomp on it or fumigate it. If an ant is stomped on, it will emit pheromones that will draw more ants to the area. In short, ant medicine is unstoppable, tireless, patient and unified.

Ant's message is about working non-stop toward your goals and forging ahead for the Good of the whole. Are you working on a project that benefits a larger audience? Have you been ignoring your tribe? Ant medicine cooperates with the tribe in harmony and wisdom toward a common goal, knowing that patience will be rewarded. Have you been cooperating with yourself on your own personal projects?

I was intrigued. Just the day before, I had met with two colleagues to clear up some long standing issues between us and was going to do the same with another friend the next day. I thought the "ant medicine" perspective was valuable and would ponder the questions Dr. Standley put forth. Now that I had this information would the ants go away?

Saving the Earth's Resources

Nope! If anything, the number of ants increased. I did more research and discovered the ants were carpenter ants. Everything I read indicated that I would probably have to call a professional pest control company to keep them from damaging my house. While there were still not that many ants, over the next few days the numbers continued to increase. Their favorite location seemed to be on my front porch.

I decided to take the time to observe them and see where they came from, where they were going and what they were doing. As I watched, I noticed that there were some small holes, or perhaps just indentations, in the caulking near the front door. The ants went to those holes over and over again. Even though the ants never went inside of them, it seemed like the holes were getting bigger. Maybe the ants were breaking down the caulking. They also went to a place next to the bottom corners of the door where some wires, probably old wires from broadband television hook ups, were located.

The following day there were even more ants on the porch. Anytime I left the door open even for a minute, the ants tried to get into the house. I decided I couldn't continue doing this so called pest control. I made an appointment for them to do an assessment the following week.

Then I remembered hearing that spreading cinnamon powder could repel ants. It hadn't worked very well in India when I tried it there, but I didn't want to kill these ants unless it was absolutely necessary, so I spread some cinnamon in front of the door and in the areas where the wires were located. The number of ants decreased immediately but some still made their way through the cinnamon.

The next morning, I looked outside to see what was happening. There were three dead ants on the porch. Two were by themselves; the third was being pulled away by a live ant. The dead ant had a little different coloring than the rest of the ants. When I had looked up carpenter ants on the internet, I had noticed that the queen ant had different coloring than the workers so I wondered if the one being pulled away was a queen. I questioned whether a queen would be on the porch with a worker, but it seemed like a possible explanation as to why the black ant was trying to carry her away.

The live ant spent the whole day trying to drag the dead one from the porch. He seemed disoriented so I believed

Saving the Earth's Resources

that he was probably also under the influence of the cinnamon.

I had thought the cinnamon would repel the ants, not kill them. My heart felt heavy as I watched his efforts. As I felt my feelings, I was struck by how much I have changed. I was raised in an era when we killed bugs, flies, spiders, and beetles, with swatters and insect spray, and here I was mourning the death of three ants and feeling compassion for the one who was taking such care to move the dead one.

I watched that process throughout the day, and noticed that no other ants ever came onto the porch. In the weeks that followed there was only an occasional ant on the porch. While there still may be some outside, they are definitely not increasing in number.

Am I done with the ant lesson? I don't know; only time will tell. What I do know is that I gained much from the experience. I see that I had an opportunity to:

- Be thoughtful before taking an action that effects one of Mother Nature's creatures.
- Feel compassion for a creature as small as an ant.
- Consider ways of thinking that are outside my normal experience; e.g., the Native American perspective.
- Hear feedback and reflect on it.
- Not criticize myself when I took action not knowing for sure what was right.
- Learn from a previous experience; e.g., the ant swarm event prepared me for the carpenter ants.
- Share my experience with others.
- Be reminded that if I take my time, the answers will come.
- See how all beings are interconnected.
- Reflect on how much my attitudes towards live creatures have changed throughout my lifetime.

I feel very grateful for all I have experienced and learned as the result of this ant "lesson."

Adapted from: <https://livinglearningandlettinggo.wordpress.com/2015/06/13/watch-wait-and-wonder>

Saving the Earth's Resources

A New Bee Sanctuary and an October Workshop

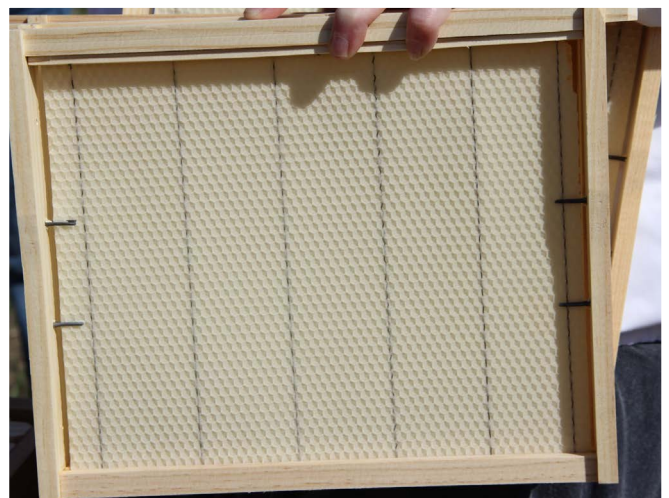
by Br. Shantamrita Chaitanya from Amma's Chicago Ashram



These photos were taken in early June, when our new Bee Sanctuary was installed. Undaunted after losing all our hives last season, our beekeeping team set up two new hives, just 200 feet away from the thriving echinacea field.

For over 2 years now, we have been following the bee-centered principles of natural beekeeping, using a “Warre” vertical top bar hive which allows the bees to make natural comb and overwinter nicely. No chemicals are used and the focus is on their health rather than honey production.

We are striving to provide all the forage needed for all seasons right here on the ashram property, to avoid exposure to pesticides and other stressors that have been reducing our nation's bee population. We are planting large beds of choice bee flowers and surrounding the hives with the medicinal herbs they can use to improve their health. Our goal is to create a Pollinator Sanctuary.



Saving the Earth's Resources



Also, on October 17-18, 2015, we will be conducting a Natural Beekeeping Two Day Seminar, with expert Kerry Jehanne from Queen of the Sun. We look forward to sharing with you all this exciting technique of restoring the bee population and preserving biodiversity. We will share those details as soon as they become available, but in the meantime, those interested in attending can send an email to chicago@macenters.org.

Looking at the innumerable bees blissfully drinking the nectar in the adjacent echinacea field, it is easy to forget that the bees are facing a crisis, but we all understand the gravity of the situation they face. Please keep them in your prayers...

From: <https://shantamrita.wordpress.com/2015/08/28/new-bee-sanctuary>

The above is a post from Br. Shantamrita Chaitanya's blog, "Life in Chicago Ashram: Witnessing the blossoming of M.A. Center Chicago." If you would like to sign up to receive his future posts go to <https://shantamrita.wordpress.com>. There is a place where you can sign up on the top of the right panel.

Saving the Earth's Resources

Living Sustainable Lives within Our Resources by Vandita (Halfmoon Bay, B.C.)



Photo by Seattle Municipal Archives from Seattle, WA

<http://www.seattle.gov/municipal-archives>

You can watch the tribute to Dr. Jane and inspiring video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeASUdvLLnY>

A Daunting Outlook

Currently the outlook looks daunting. So much seems out of our control, but is it? As Dr. Jane Goodall talked about recently in her 80th Birthday tribute video, if you look at the whole planet and the problems you become overwhelmed, but if you focus on the small things you can change you can make a positive difference and feel happier. She has set up a great institute which is good to be involved with: http://janegoodall.ca/?gclid=CKH6su_ViccCFZFgfgodvNwGow

No Longer Living within the Resources the Earth Provides in 1 Year

"Do We Fit the Planet: *Today humanity uses the equivalent of 1.5 planets to provide the resources we use and to absorb our waste. This means it now takes the Earth one year and six months to regenerate what we use in a year.*

Moderate UN scenarios suggest that if current population and consumption trends continue, by the 2030s, we will need the equivalent of two Earths to support us. And of course, we only have one.

Turning resources into waste faster than waste can be turned back into resources puts us in global ecological overshoot, depleting the very resources on which human life and biodiversity depend.

The result is collapsing fisheries, diminishing forest cover, depletion of fresh water systems, and the build up of carbon dioxide emissions, which creates problems like global climate change. These are just a few of the most noticeable effects of overshoot.

Overshoot also contributes to resource conflicts and wars, mass migrations, famine, disease and other human tragedies—and tends to have a disproportionate impact on the poor, who cannot buy their way out of the problem by getting resources from somewhere else."



Earth photo By NASA / Bill Anders
Wikimedia Commons

Saving the Earth's Resources

(Excerpt from - http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/world_footprint © 2003-2015 Global Footprint Network)

There is a calculator on the website which is interesting to try, although a little limited, to see in which areas you can reduce your global footprint - <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators>

What we can do about an over Populated Planet

With a rapidly growing world population, we can already see that we are having a detrimental effect. The Earth simply cannot support an Unsustainable Economic Growth Model society. We just can't grow anymore. We have already outgrown what the planet can provide in one year, by 6 months.

***"Overpopulation.** Unlike plagues of the dark ages or contemporary diseases we do not understand, the modern plague of overpopulation is soluble by means we have discovered and with resources we possess. What is lacking is not sufficient knowledge of the solution but universal consciousness of the gravity of the problem and education of the billions who are its victim."*

Martin Luther King Jr. (From <http://www.populationelephant.com/PEQuotes.html>)



Photo [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(India11\)](#)

We can help the situation by supporting charities which educate women, such as [Embracing the World](#) and many others. Support women to be independent, support charities which offer micro loans and so on to enable women to be independent. Campaign against child marriages. Campaign for teenagers in the U.S to be able to access information they need about contraception. In the US the population is growing by 0.73% a year. We can think about our own choices about having children and the kind of world we want for them.

I recently watched a good documentary on this subject called Mother.

***"Mother** - an award-winning film about the controversies surrounding a world of 7 billion, and one woman's*

Saving the Earth's Resources

journey to make sense of it. Mother is a ground-breaking and award-winning film that reveals the compelling challenges we face in a world of 7 billion. It tells the story of Beth, an American mother and child's rights activist, and her journey to make sense of how and why the empowerment of women and girls around the world is so intricately linked to our fate on this fragile planet. Mother features world-renowned experts to help explain one of the most persistent controversies in our culture that touches gender equity, religion, reproductive health and the environment. It is a film of hope and shows the strength of the human spirit to make a better world."

This excerpt and the full movie can be found here: <http://www.motherthefilm.com>

How to Reduce Unsustainable Consumption

Oil is on everyone's minds, our whole society is based on it and it is finite. Perhaps more so than oil, our clean water is finite too.

At the moment, we are on drought Level 3 in the part of B.C. where I live. Although it is a rain forest, for the past few years it has been getting hotter and drier. This year has barely seen any rain. Level 3 means we are not allowed to use sprinklers. We are teetering on level 4 and that means no water to be used outside at all. We have a vegetable patch so that means we have to keep it alive using grey water. We are so spoiled in the West, but things are changing. We can't take much for granted these days. In Western Society we waste so much water, per household 30% of clean drinking water is flushed down the toilet. It would be good to see grey water systems introduced to prevent this needless waste. On top of this, the more we consume, the more water and oil is used.

"The boss of Nestlé Waters has said the company wants to increase the amount of water it bottles in [California](#) despite a devastating drought across the state that has triggered demonstrations at the corporation's bottling plant.

Tim Brown, chief executive of Nestlé Waters North America, said the company would "absolutely not" stop bottling in California and would actually like to "increase" the amount of ground source water it uses."

<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/may/14/nestle-boss-wants-bottle-more-water-california-drought>

Saving the Earth's Resources

Here are some facts about bottled water taken from: http://thewaterproject.org/bottled_water_wasteful

Fact #1. *Bottles used to package water take over 1,000 years to bio-degrade and, if incinerated, they produce toxic fumes. It is estimated that over 80% of all single-use water bottles used in the U.S. simply become "litter."*

Fact #2. *Recycling is only feasible in limited circumstances because only PET bottles can be recycled. All other bottles are discarded. Only 1 out of 5 bottles are sent to the recycle bin.*

Fact #3. *U.S. landfills are overflowing with 2 million tons of discarded water bottles alone.*

Fact #4. *It takes over 1.5 million barrels of oil to meet the demand of U.S. water bottle manufacturing. This amount of oil far exceeds the amount needed to power 100,000 for a year, which does not include fossil fuel and emissions costs of green house gases needed to transport the final product to market.*

Fact #5. *It is estimated that actually 3 liters of water is used to package 1 liter of bottled water. "*

Bottled water is just the tip of the iceberg. What about all the other single-use plastic containers and bottles we use throughout the year? They are just as bad if not worse.

Our society is all about convenience, and it's not an easy thing to let go of. We're all busy and a little "head-in-the-sand."

"According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in one year alone, the U.S. produces a staggering 32 million tons of plastic waste and only around nine percent is recovered for recycling. This means the majority of plastics end up in landfills and much of it never makes it that far; plastic also has a tendency to wind up in local waterways and our oceans. While we might understand that plastic pollution in the world's oceans is not a good thing, we are only just beginning to realize the impact that plastics have on marine ecosystems.

There are an estimated 270,000 tons of plastic floating on the surface of the ocean and according to a recent study authored by researchers at Plymouth University, a staggering 700 different marine species are threatened by its



Saving the Earth's Resources

presence. More than this, researchers believe that plastic plays a role in rising rates of species extinction.”

(By Kate Good written for <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/environment/marine-species-extinction-and-plastic-pollution>)

What is the solution? Well that is something which will need a bit of a learning curve and some patience. It is best done in small steps, so as not to be too overwhelming.

Reduce single-use plastics by recycling as many empty bottles as you can. Buy from businesses who are willing to refill containers. Often this can result in cleaning, laundry, and skin products which are a lot healthier and nicer. It can even be fun; get kids involved and experiment with different natural scented oils to make things smell nice. This is something we are trying in our household.

There are some good ideas and suggestions listed on www.onegreenplanet.org on reducing consumption and use of plastics.

Other ideas to consider:

- Making meals from scratch always tastes better, and cooking with kids is a great way to get them to eat their food and be interested in it.
- Look into local markets for wholesome local ingredients without all the plastic packaging.
- Make garbage bags out of newspaper or reuse paper bags to keep plastic out of the landfill. Just make sure it is all dry waste. Compost what you can. Due to the bears in our area, we can't compost cooked food waste but we put it in a pot with coffee grains to dry. The coffee grounds seem to eliminate odours, and then we put the dry food waste outside in a paper garbage bag. It's never very much.

Researching for this article makes me realise more and more it's all about what we do in this moment and that everything makes a difference. Walking through the beautiful forests here, surrounded by humming birds, eagles, frogs, deer and so many creatures, I feel very grateful. This is such an amazing gem of a planet. Amma has recently been leading a prayer for the planet that includes imagining white flowers falling to the earth and healing it. I have been practicing this and I find imagining this brings me a lot of peace as well. Love is a good motivator, and respecting nature and praying for it is a wonderful practice.

NATURE

Monarch Meditation

by Br. Shantamrita Chaitanya from Amma's Chicago ashram

Many residents here in the ashram are trying to help the monarch butterflies to reestablish their population, by preserving milkweed and by protecting the caterpillars until they become butterflies. Already at least a dozen monarchs have been released here, with probably dozens more to come.

Yesterday, I watched as a monarch that had emerged from its chrysalis a couple hours earlier was released. I was so taken by its beauty that I brought it very close, and it climbed on my face. The following are some pictures grabbed from a video that was taken at that time.

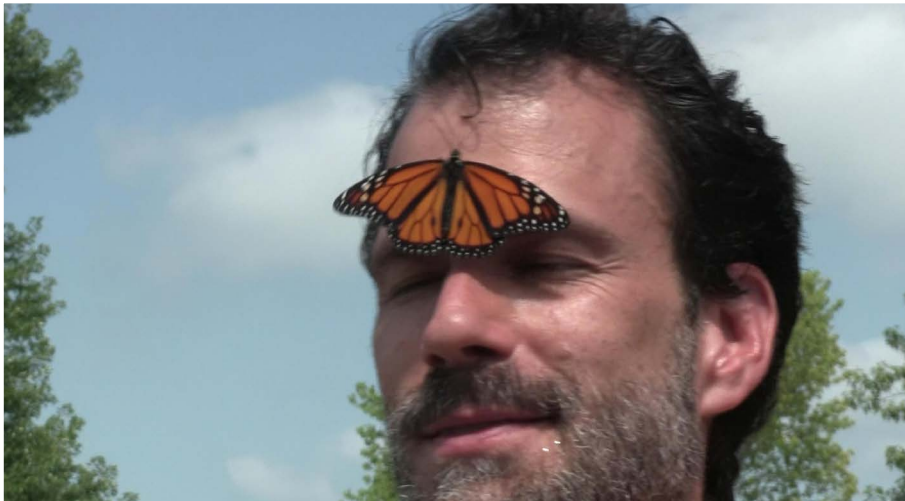


NATURE



NATURE

Then it climbed up on my forehead and flew away...



NATURE

It is truly a joy to see so many butterflies flourishing here. The children are also extremely excited and happy to be able to protect mother nature and help the preservation of at-risk species.

From: <https://shantamrita.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/monarch-meditation>

Also from the Chicago ashram:

As part of Amma's commitment to fostering biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, we're growing echinacea at Amma's center in rural Elburn, Illinois near Chicago. This field is home to more than 150,000 echinacea plants, which means at least 1.5 million flowers! Grown entirely naturally and without any chemicals, these flowers are providing a badly needed source of nourishment for honeybees and pollinators in the region. We're also providing the bees a place to call home.

<https://www.facebook.com/MataAmritanandamayi/posts/10153078866178302?pnref=story>



NATURE

Beautiful Photos by Cindy Knocke



NATURE

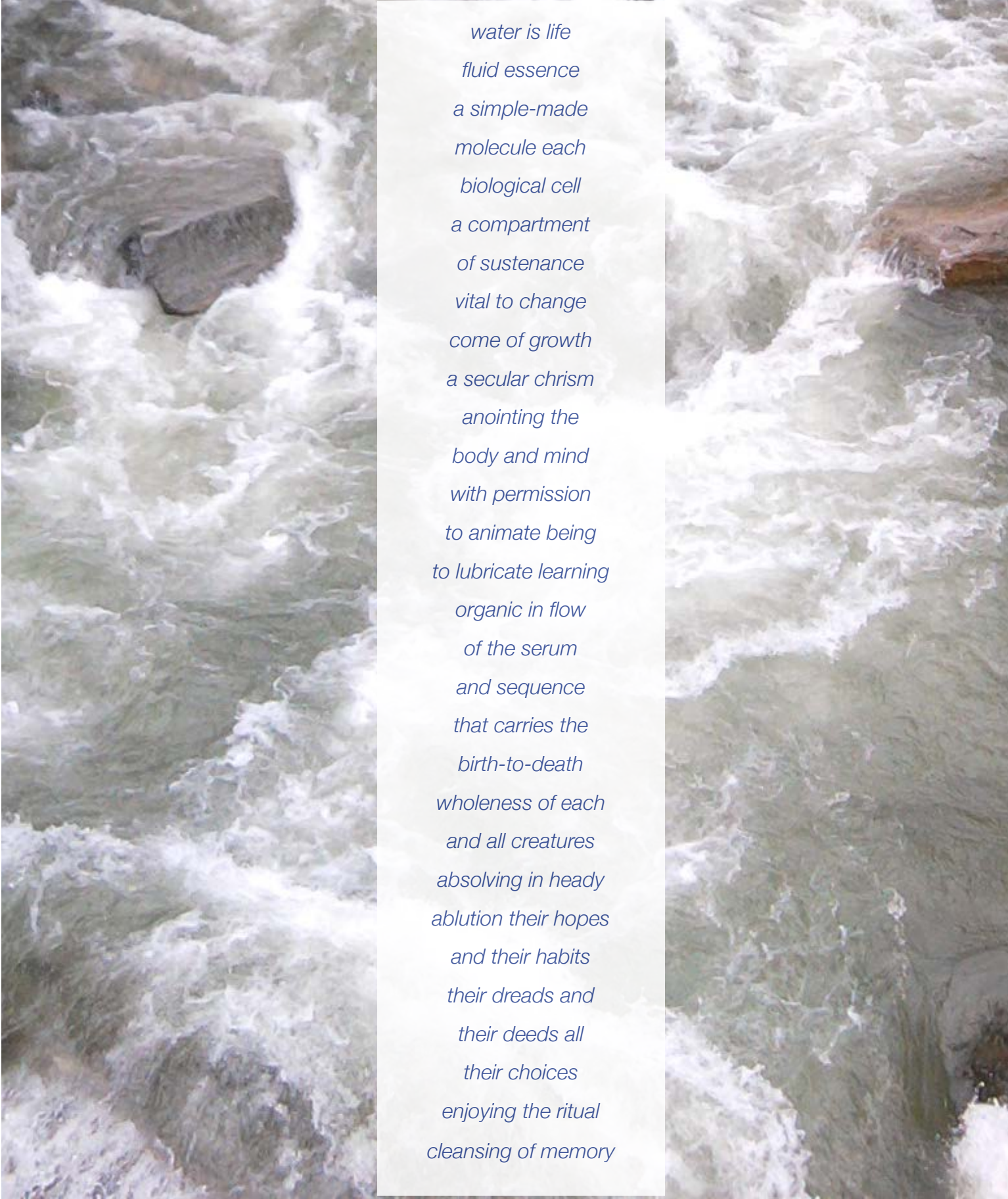


All pictures in this article are from <http://cindyknoke.com/2015/08/05/if-you-were-an-bug>



NATURE

Chrism by [Paul F. Lenzi](#)



*water is life
fluid essence
a simple-made
molecule each
biological cell
a compartment
of sustenance
vital to change
come of growth
a secular chrism
anointing the
body and mind
with permission
to animate being
to lubricate learning
organic in flow
of the serum
and sequence
that carries the
birth-to-death
wholeness of each
and all creatures
absolving in heady
ablution their hopes
and their habits
their dreads and
their deeds all
their choices
enjoying the ritual
cleansing of memory*

WILDLIFE

Bandipur Tiger Reserve by Kothai

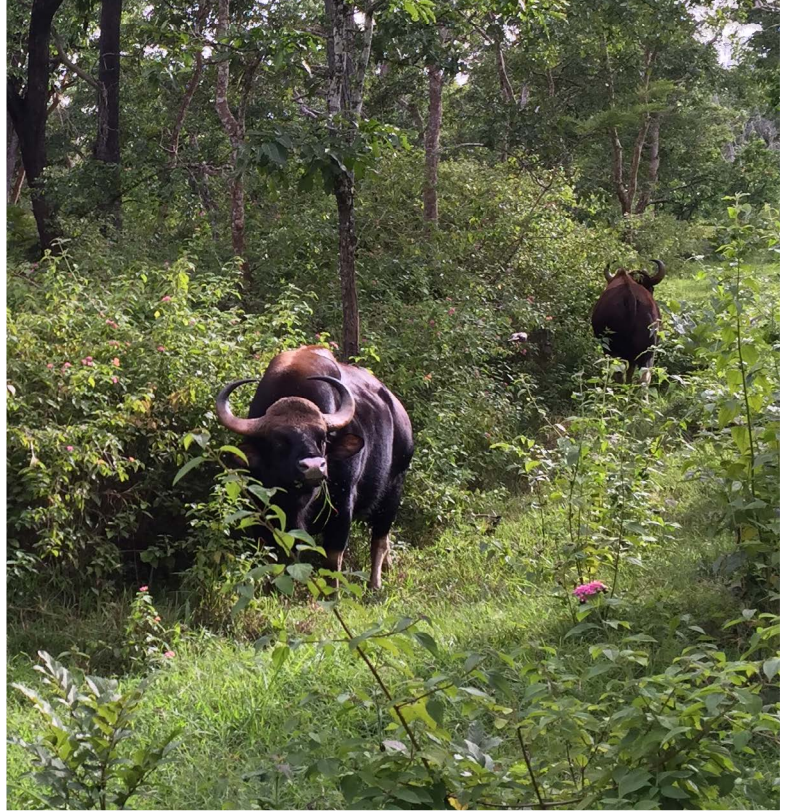


The [Bandipur National Park](#), established in 1974 as a tiger reserve under [Project Tiger](#), is a national park located in the south Indian state of Karnataka. As per the 2010 tiger assessment, the tiger density here is 11 per 100 sq.km.

Deep in the jungles of this reserve we were at the edge of our seats when we spotted the paw prints of the elusive cat. Will we see one was the question foremost on our minds. Fortunate indeed we were to not only spot the alpha male of the region emerge from the bushes but also watch its sport at the water hole.



WILDLIFE



We also saw some gaurs (bison), elephants, langurs, wild boars, sambar deer and serpent eagles. Early morning the next day we saw two langurs perched high on a tree, eyes pointed down repeatedly give out alarm calls. Though we could not make out what was ahead our guide told us that a predator (leopard, wild dogs) was probably nearby.



WILDLIFE

Interesting Facts about Ants



Photo Credit: [Wikimedia](#)

- Ants have been around for 110-113 million years.
- It is estimated that there are ten quadrillion ants in the world (10,000,000,000,000,000)
- Ants make up 25% of the total biomass of land based animals. That means there are approximately 1 million ants for every human on earth.
- Ants can carry 20 – 50 times their own weight.
- Worker ants can travel 700 feet from their nest and find their way back. They do that by following scent trails of other ants.
- Queen ants can live for 30 years, longer than any other insect. Worker ants live one to three years.
- Ant communities have division of labor and can solve complex problems.
- There are more than 20,000 species of ants.
- All the ants on the planet weigh more than all the humans.
- The largest ant colony ever found was 3750 miles wide.

Learn more about Ants at:

[10 Cool Facts about Ants](#)

[Amazing Ant Facts](#)

[Ant](#)

[Fun Ant Facts for Kids](#)

WILDLIFE

Followup from August Slug Articles



Photo Credit: [Wikimedia](#)

Several people sent comments after reading the articles about slugs in our last GreenFriends Newsletter.



Aum Amriteswaryai Namah

I always enjoy the newsletter. Enjoyed the slug facts thoroughly...

Namah Sivaya,

Dayamrita



As usual, I enjoyed reading the newsletter. Love the wonderful photos... I feel inspired to try gardening in the near future ☺ Looking forward to hearing more on how to deal with slugs.

Thanks much,

Love, Theresa



WILDLIFE

I appreciated your article about slugs. I've been dealing with the ethical dilemmas of slugs, snails, and aphids for decades and have had a long-standing (internal) conversation with Amma about it and the whole set-up here (on Earth) since the Orcas Island retreat. I keep changing my strategies, trying to find the right one... that is, the one I'm most at peace with. Right now, I'm leaving slugs alone. I'm killing the large European snails which are not native to this area (with lots of Lokah Samastha mantra apologies), and usually leave aphids alone unless it looks like they're stressing the plant too much.

I used to move snails to a grass patch across the street but finally felt like I was just condemning them to a slow death while I took advantage of out of sight, out of mind. Now I just quickly squash them. But if there was a way, like you're looking for, to put them someplace where they could thrive without damaging food crops, I'd opt for that. If only we could designate a 'wild' part of the garden where we could relocate these beings and they'd stay put!

Priya



Readers also sent other ways to prevent slugs from disturbing the garden plants:

1. Put crushed egg shells around the new plants. The slugs don't like moving over them.
2. Put a small amount of beer in a shallow container. The beer makes the slugs drunk. They will crawl away, but doesn't kill them.
3. Scoop out half an orange, grapefruit or melon, and lay it cut side down as a trap for the live slug, which will work itself into the hollow.

PNW Litter Project

PNW Litter Project Stats

Thirty-nine litter project members and their guests reported picking up **113.5** hours of litter in August 2015. The average pick up time was **2.9** hours; the range was **3 minutes to 23 hours** and the median was **1** hour.

Members of the project have picked up litter for **6789** 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 **56,450** butts, bringing us to a grand total of **260,174** 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)



Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Achala in Tacoma:

Homeless people from a shelter in Atlanta planted an organic garden to help feed the people that live in the shelter. The garden consists of 80 beds. The residents harvested 55 pounds of produce in its first season.

<http://www.the-open-mind.com/homeless-people-plant-a-rooftop-organic-garden-help-feed-an-entire-shelter>

From Sreemayi in Nelson, BC:

High fructose syrup has been connected to collapse of bee colonies.

<http://www.top10grocerysecrets.com/2015-07-20-top-10-reasons-avoid-toxic-high-fructose-corn-syrup.html>

From Saroja in Seattle:

Thought you'd like to see the garlic curing on the front porch.

