



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](mailto:karunap108@comcast.net)

## PNW Gardening

### Planting Seedlings by Tirtha M (Maltby)

Before being transplanted into the garden, seedlings should be “hardened off” outdoors in a sheltered area for 7 to 10 days. (The plants need to get used to the temperatures and being outside. If you bring them outside and plant them right away they will go into shock.)

It's best to transplant early in the morning or on a cloudy day. Avoid doing it in the middle of the day when it's hot.





## PNW Gardening

Make a hole big enough for the seedling.



I like to put a little of mycorrhizae powder at the bottom of the hole. It helps build a microbial system in and on the plant roots which helps water and nutrient intake. The brand may vary, but you can get the powder at any garden store.





## PNW Gardening

Place the seedling in the hole.



Put soil around the seedling.





## PNW Gardening

Press the soil down around the seedling to make sure it is secure in the ground and that it has enough support.



The seed package will tell you how far apart to place the seedlings. These corn seedlings were planted six inches apart.

Water the seedlings well.





## PNW Gardening

### Update

You can see April photos of Tirtha's garden on pp. 17-20 in the May issue of this newsletter. On pp 7-9 of that same issue, Tirtha wrote about how to plant seeds.

To see the photos in those articles, [click here](#).

The plants have grown a lot since those photos were taken. In the photos below, you can see what two parts of her garden looked like in mid-June.





## PNW Gardening

### Maltby Food Forest Photos: 2017 and 2020

2017

Pear trees, apple trees, plum trees, goumi berries, honey berries, autumn olives and herbs were planted by many devo-tees.





# PNW Gardening

2020

The food forest is now producing fruit, berries and herbs.





## PNW Gardening

### Art of Bonsai #4 : Summer Preparation by Ken (Vaughn)

After a winter where only the hardiest of bonsai remained outdoors and the cold frame was packed with trees, the benches are once again full with trees displaying their spring glory. The resilience of nature brings my heart back to a place of peace and contentment.



The beauty of the totality hides the work that is being done to prepare each tree for summer. The maples, and other deciduous trees above, have been cut back to their present look after allowing branches to grow unchecked. By allowing the maple and elm branches to grow out unchecked (below, left), they get stronger and set new buds. Below right, the tree has had wayward shoots cut – those that grow straight up, straight down or towards the interior. Branches are thinned as necessary and lightly wired to place them in positions where they will get sunlight and create a pleasing design.





## PNW Gardening



Some trees begin the new year with more show. Flowering species like the English hawthorn (below), azalea and crabapple, to name a few. The hawthorn, now sporting berries, is nicely paired with a cut-corner Koyo pot.



A Chinzan azalea (8" tall) blooms in May:



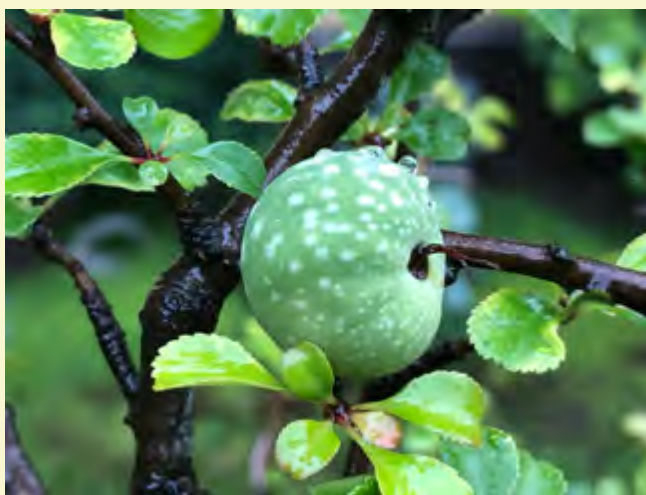


## PNW Gardening

An exposed-root satsuki azalea shows its soft white flowers. They quickly faded with all the spring rain we have had. To set the tree up for a healthy summer, the spent flowers are removed and the leaves thinned by removing large older leaves. This needs to be done each year.



The flowering quince has produced several fruit, one of which is pictured below:



Evergreens are labor intensive this time of the year, especially Japanese Black Pine and Japanese Red Pine. Unlike other species of pine that have only one growth spurt per year (white pine, ponderosa pine, mugho pine, scots pine, etc), these varieties have two growth spurts per year—provided the trees are strong and healthy. During the fall and winter, 3-year-old needles were pulled from the tree as these old needles were no longer contributing energy to the tree. By removing them the remaining needles get more sunlight and air circulation. Both are essential for the health of the tree.

To increase branch density the new candles are cut in early June leaving a small stub. The photo below shows the top of the pine before the candles are cut. Looking at the candle in left-center you will see that it has been removed in the second photo.



## PNW Gardening

Removing this year's new growth will stimulate the tree to generate two or more buds where there had been just one. These new buds will appear about two weeks after removing the candle. These new buds will open in mid-July, but because the tree is dividing its energy to grow more needle clusters and the needles will be shorter, helping to keep them in scale with the size of the tree. This helps the tree look more natural, full and stimulates the growth of dormant buds towards the interior of the branches.

In the first photo below, you can see the result of removing the candles last year – the “V” shape of the two needle clusters. The candle was removed in the center and where there was one there are now two. In order for this procedure to be successful, the tree must be very strong.



Of course, evergreens include species other than pines. In the photos below, you can see one of my favorite bonsai – a collected Mt Hemlock from a mountain top in Canada. I have had this tree now for 13 of its 100+ year life. In the photo on the left the tree is very full from last year's growth. To the right is the tree after it has been thinned to allow light into the interior and to better see the structure of this amazing tree.





## PNW Gardening

huckleberry, salal or small flowering plants as is the Japanese maple with Sweet Woodruff below:



Bonsai serves to bring me closer to nature. It allows me to interact with trees in a way that is deeply personal and fulfilling. I hope the photos of some of my trees fill your heart with joy as they do mine.



## PNW Gardening

### My Little Patio Container Garden by Sarva (Renton)

When I sold my house last year, I knew that if I missed anything, it would be the front yard and gardens. I moved into a small apartment for the time being, and while staying at home during the pandemic, I decided to grow a container garden. My apartment is on the ground floor and there is a patio outside my back door. I claimed a wee bit more outdoor space last year by putting up a low garden fence extending out onto the grassy area, for my dog to sit in the afternoon sun and scratch in the dirt between walks without worrying he might run. My chihuahua-mix rescue, Jellybean, is my familiar.



Once planting season started, it was in this area that I launched my little container garden. It gets the sun all afternoon, and the rain, of course. I began with a good-sized container and filled it with edibles such as mustard greens, pak choi, cilantro, pansies and oregano. I snipped these as they grew and put them in my salads. Over time, I added plants, sometimes by digging things up from friends' gardens, such as mugwort, bee balm and lemon balm. I dug up more mugwort from the woods. Some plants, such as calendula and cilantro, I started from seed. I ordered medicinal plant starts from Bastyr Gardens including motherwort, nettle, yarrow, and German chamomile.

Today, the container garden takes up less than 30 square feet of ground space, and Jellybean still has a square yard or so for sunbathing or giving loud warnings to the squirrels in the nearby trees. I will try not to crowd him out completely! It feels so good to be in this tiny green haven. I wander out many times during the day to admire new growth or harvest an herb, move plants around for more advantageous exposure, and soak in the peace of green. It's especially nice after the rain.



## PNW Gardening

A fairly complete list of what's growing here now:

**Edibles** - mustard greens, pak choi, cilantro, bay, rosemary, peas, jalapeno, chive, mint, pansy

**Medicinals** - yarrow, tulsi, mugwort, motherwort, nettle, skullcap, lemon balm, chamomile, echinacea, calendula

**Flowers & others** - rose, gladiola, English lavender, hibiscus, marigold, bee balm, palm





## PNW Gardening

### Namaste Herbal Farm Stand Photos (Maltby)





## PNW Gardening



Namaste Herbal Farm Stand is an Amma-devotee owned and led effort as a tool for fundraising.

All proceeds from the farm stand are donated to MA Center's [Embracing the World](#) Initiative.

You are welcome to come and buy lots!

It is a self-service farm stand open during daylight hours.

Location: 12823 Lost Lake Rd., Snohomish, WA

About 2 blocks from Maltby Farm

(Due to Covid 19, Maltby Farm and residence remains closed to non-residents.)



## PNW Gardening

### Photos of Ken and Eiric's Yard (Seattle)





## PNW Gardening



### Garden Delights from Prarthana (Bainbridge Island)

micro greens in foreground, then broccoli, fennel, peas, lettuces, kale, berries, arugula, baby bok choy, herbs





## PNW Gardening

### Photos of Our Garden and Yard by Sarah (Eugene)

Bok choy and 15 rows of potatoes from our family's plot in the Eugene Community Garden



and flowers in our yard





## Gardening

Photos from Raji's Quebec Farm  
(on the south shore of the lower St Lawrence River)



Alfalfa



Barley



Red orach (spinach family) and  
beautiful crimson colour -  
I got a bit too close



Garlic from last year.



Chives from last year



Potatoes planted from last year's  
potatoes



## Gardening



Buckwheat (we'll have to figure out what to do with it)



Chick peas (garbanzo beans)



Strawberry patch coming to life



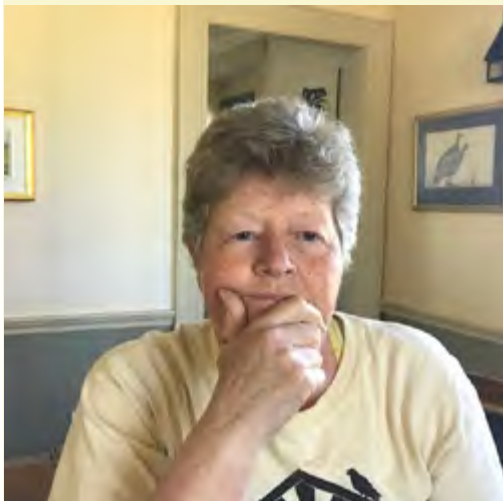
New grapevine row.



Asparagus bed left to grow out now...



New raspberry and strawberry bed



We've planted fava beans, corn, and other things, but they haven't come up yet... it's going to be a year of basically getting the beds in good condition for next year.... we did a few patches of just one grain so we could see how they each grow - but the bulk of the large area at the back end of the field has been a mixture of all kinds of grains and different cover crops... chipmunks are gorging themselves on the oats - I hope they don't get bloated!! Otherwise, we shall see what happens.....

Sending lots of love to you all!!!

Raji



## Nature

### Watching Miracles of Nature- Part 1

by Sonali (Sammamish)

In late May on Memorial Day weekend, my dad was tending to the spring flowers in our backyard garden when he noticed that a bird was hurriedly going back and forth from the green belt to the supporting pillars underneath our deck. My dad sat quietly observing the bird, soon realizing that the bird was making frequent trips to a nest that it had already made on the top of the pillar. He immediately rushed back inside and ecstatically told us all: "I think we have a bird nest underneath the deck!"



The even more exciting part was that we could see directly down into the nest between the wooden slats on our deck, and to our surprise, there were already 4 beautiful blue eggs in the nest! After doing some research online, we determined that these were eggs laid by an American Robin. The vibrant blue hue of their eggs is so unique that it has inspired its own color shade called "Robin's Egg Blue."

We were thrilled for what was to come – little chicks hatching and growing into nestlings and then fledging the nest. We couldn't wait to watch the baby robins come to life and take to the skies right in front of our eyes!

But alas, this was not meant to be. The next morning when we woke up, the nest wasn't there. Unfortunately, it had taken a great fall overnight, which we suspect to have been from the stormy weather and strong winds the previous night. This tragic incident left us all downhearted and gloomy the entire day. How would the robin react to seeing her eggs completely broken? I couldn't sleep that night thinking about and processing everything that had happened. In the coming days, I slowly forgot about the incident and lost all hope of getting to see baby robins growing up.

My dad was also very upset about this hapless occurrence, so he decided to closely inspect and analyze the location where the nest was originally built. He realized that it was very precariously perched and hence must have fallen. Hoping that the robin would come back next year, my dad cleaned the area where the nest used to be and added wooden supports on the side to ensure that a future nest in that location would have support and protection from winds. Now, the location was all set and ready for a future nest.

A week went by of us desperately hoping that we would somehow be able to experience the fascinating growth and maturation of baby robins firsthand. Once again, my dad was in the backyard tending to the flowers and noticed that a bird was unusually active, rushing back and forth. He silently sat to observe, and to his surprise, he realized that the birds were building a nest in the exact same location!

We were all delighted to hear the great news but also astonished that the bird had chosen that exact same spot to raise her babies, all in the span of a week. We all understood that for this to happen not once, but twice in a row was an extremely rare occurrence and we were all filled with gratitude. After a closer look, we determined that they were



## Nature

robins as well! This left me thinking; was this the same robin pair willing to use this spot to try again, despite what happened the first time? Or had another pair of robins stumbled upon this spot and chosen to lay their eggs here?

Looking at the nest between the deck slats, we noticed that the nest wasn't complete yet. Although it had the surrounding structure – which was now well protected thanks to the wooden support on the sides – it still didn't have the bottom layers yet. My dad had installed a Wi-Fi camera so we could monitor the nest without going on the deck and potentially disturbing the robins. Would the robins finish the nest the next day? Would they lay eggs again? If they did, how many eggs would they lay this time? The exciting part was that we just didn't know!



As soon as I woke up the next morning, I rushed to see the live video feed through the camera we installed, hoping that the nest would be completed. To my absolute surprise, I saw there was a stunning, bright blue egg in it, the same color as before. Apparently, the robin had completed building the nest early that morning and had started the process of raising a family all over again. I rushed to go tell the rest of my family, and they mirrored my pure excitement and enthusiasm. Together, we all began to look forward to watching these baby robins grow again!

Robins only lay one egg per day. They usually lay four during the first nesting and three in the subsequent nesting. Assuming this was the same robin pair, we were expecting two more eggs in the next few days. Sure enough, the robin had laid two more eggs over the next two days!



Robins typically begin the incubation process after all the eggs are laid. They sit on the eggs for 12 to 16 days. All the incubating is done by the female as she has a brood patch (incubation patch that helps heat transfer from her body to the eggs). She hardly leaves her eggs for more than 5 to 10 minutes at a time. The dad always stays close to the nest, sometimes on the nest, and keeps an eye out for predators while the mom leaves the nest to take a break and feed herself.

The female robin sits on the edge of the nest and rotates the eggs multiple times a day to regulate the temperature and to ensure that as the babies incubate they don't get stuck to the inside of the eggshells. The chick has to even-



## Nature

tually fight its way out of the egg. It uses a special hard structure called the “egg tooth” which is essentially a hook on its beak. Even with that, it still takes hours or an entire day for the chick to arrive. We have a laptop in the room streaming live video where we all check in from time to time to watch the baby bird action, and record if something is interesting.



Mom



Dad



Mom rotating eggs

After 14 days of incubation, the first egg hatched! A cute little robin baby, eyes closed and all curled up, laid silently in the nest. The delicate hatchling had no feathers yet and its eyes were closed. The mom was very careful with the baby and kept it tucked underneath her. She sat on the nest throughout the day to give warmth to the baby and to continue incubating the other eggs as well. We noticed a crack in the second egg, so we knew that the baby would come out anytime in the next 24 hours. The next morning, the second egg hatched and there were 2 babies!



We then waited for the third egg to hatch and to seeing how these little babies grow and take their first flight. Stay tuned for part 2. It will be in the August PNW GreenFriends Newsletter.

More info at:

<https://journeynorth.org/tm/robin/EggstraEggstra.html>



## Nature

### Fourth Generation Neighbor by Eiric and Ken (Seattle)



This fledgling crow is the 4th generation. The parents watch over him/her but do not squawk or dive at us. They even let Eiric get within a couple of feet of it and don't caw. Such an honor!!!

We feed them food scraps. Crows are scavenging carnivores. With us they are also having vegetables and starches (potatoes/ rice/pasta). They toss aside what they do not like (tomatoes/onions/broccoli).





## Nature

### Nature's Surprise by Prarthana (Bainbridge Island)

Look who was born in my friend's yard in Winslow!





## Nature

### Spirit Lifter: Watching a Baby Rabbit by Kathie (Bellevue)

This baby rabbit was small enough to fit in my cupped hand.





## Nature

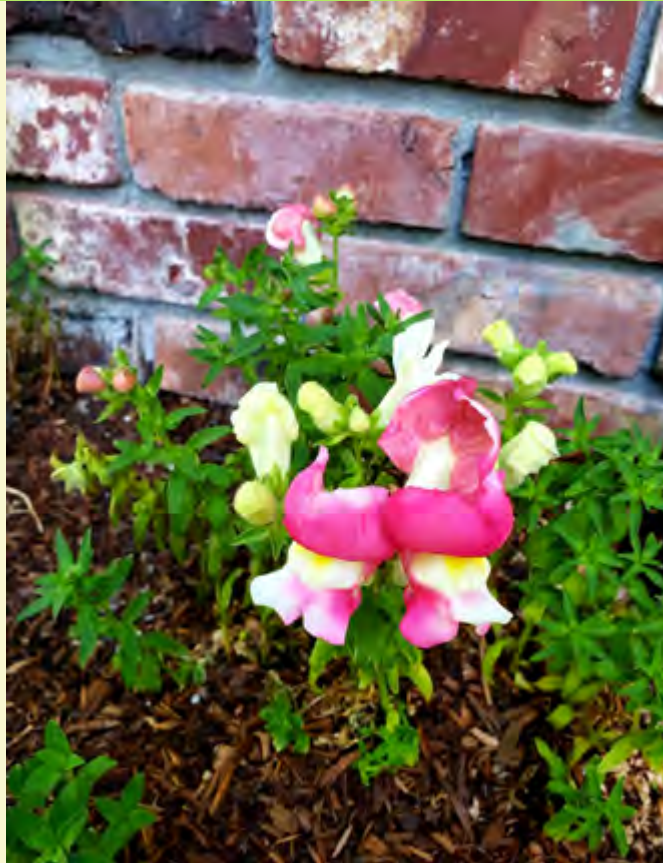
Bearded Iris Photo by Lin (Bellevue)





## Nature

### The Beauty of Nature by Emma S. (Lake Stevens)





## Nature





## Nature

### Crossing the Alps: from Garmisch, Germany to Garda, Italy by Akshay



Partnachklamm near Zugspitze



From Zugspitze, Germany 2965 m  
(9728 ft)..



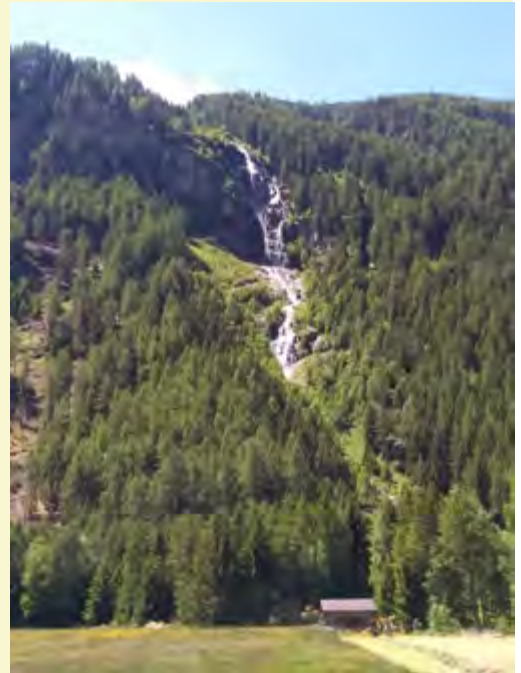
Near Knorrhütte (Germany)



from Küthai to Ötz (Austria)



Between Ötz and Längenfeld



Somewhere in Ötztal Valley



## Nature



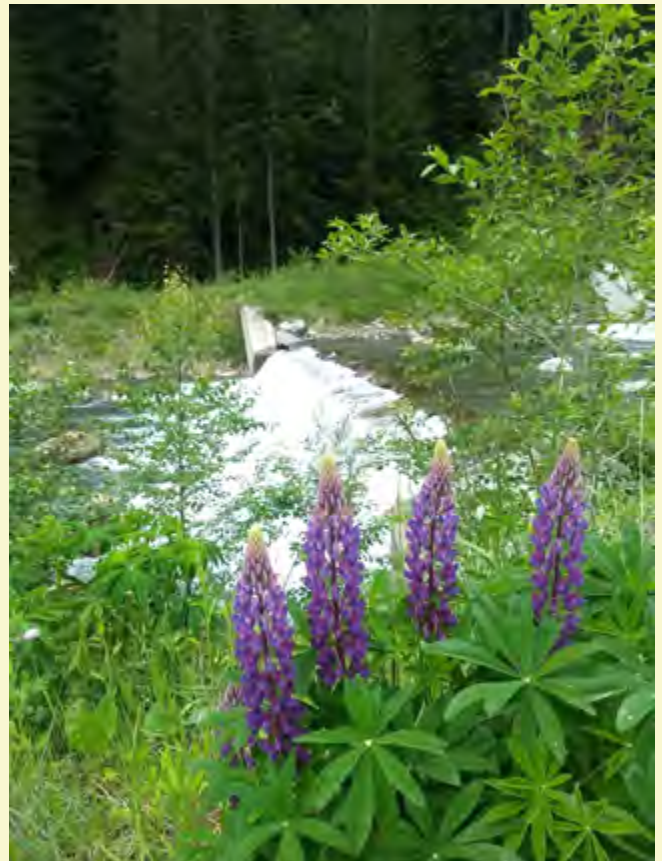
Atterkarjoch, Austria 2976 m (9764 ft)



Descent from Atterkarjoch



Between Atterkarjoch and Sölden (Austria)



Passer River flowing in the background. (Italy)



# PNW Litter Project

## Litter Stats

In June 2020, 24 Litter Project members and their families and friends picked up litter for 56.8 hours. (Average 2.4 hours; Median 1 hour; Range 2 minutes to 10 hours). We have picked up litter for 11,451 hours since the project began in July of 2011.

## TerraCycle Stats

We have sent TerraCycle 355,724 cigarette butts since 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]



## Unusual Litter Sighting by Kothai (Bellevue)

I was very surprised to see this unusual litter when I took a walk near my home in early July.





## PNW Litter Project

### The Absence of Plastic by Karuna

Towards the end of January in 2017, I cleaned out the three birdhouses in my back yard so that they would be ready for birds to use when they were ready to build their nests. Each of the birdhouses had old nests inside but I noticed that none of them had been used; one was barely begun and another I thought was abnormal.



The one I considered abnormal practically filled the whole birdhouse. The top of it was flat and solid. There was no place for a mother bird to lay or sit on her eggs. Like the others, that bird nest was made of many natural materials, but it also included many small pieces of plastic.



I ended up taking that bird nest apart. I soon discovered it contained a tremendous amount of plastic. Below you will see a photo of the plastic that I found in that one nest.



## PNW Litter Project



I wondered if the bird's brain had been poisoned by the plastic and if that was why the top was flat. My heart ached when I thought about the many ways humans contaminate nature.

This experience occurred soon after we started working on restoring the Greenbelt property that is adjacent to my house. The land at that time was full of trash, big and small, and there were a lot of small plastic pieces in and on top of the ground.

It was near nesting season, so we decided to invite the Bala Kendra group from our Amma satsang to do a Greenbelt litter pickup work party. It was amazing to see how much trash the children gathered in an hour's time.





## PNW Litter Project

In the years since then, numerous truckloads of garbage have been removed from the property.

I have continued to check the bird houses before nesting season each year even though in the subsequent years they didn't contain nests. This year (2020), however, even though two of the houses were practically empty, the third one contained a complete nest. It didn't look like it had been used, but at least it had been built normally; there was even a cup indentation on top, a place for the mother bird to lay her eggs.



I didn't take apart the nest this time, but the absence of plastic was very noticeable. I only saw one small piece on the outside of the nest and another small piece at the bottom of the cup. I was pleased for the tangible evidence that the clean-up work we have done in the Greenbelt since 2017 has made a difference.

### Interesting Information from Our Readers

#### From Dhanusri in North Bend:

[Barcelona Opera Reopens with an Audience of Plants](#)

#### From Karuna in Seattle:

[Flamingos Flock to a Locked Down Mumbai](#)

#### From Poornima in Bellingham:

[Amritapuri Organic Garden - Land of Love and Life](#)