



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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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 karunap108@comcast.net

Nature

Vancouver Island Photos by Cindy Knoke



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Good Morning to You by Karuna Poole

In the early to mid-90's, I wrote a fun bhajan that my son, Sreejit, told me sounded like a sea chantey. Years later, one line from that song would often come into my mind when I went on morning walks. At that point, though, the lyrics were different. They had become "Good morning to you, good morning to you, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning, good morning to you." I would sing the ditty to the plants and trees I encountered on my walk.

One night in October, we had a big rain and wind storm in Seattle. On Friday morning I went outside to see how the trees fared. I found myself spontaneously singing that song to each tree along my way.



First I visited the trees in my back yard:

Maple tree, good morning to you!



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Holly tree, good morning to you!



Magnolia tree, good morning to you!



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Juniper trees, good morning to you!



Blue Spruce, good morning to you!



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Next, I walked down to the Greenbelt lot where we've been rescuing the trees from blackberry vines and ivy. I was eager to check out what had happened there during the storm. I could tell everything was fine, but it was still windy so I didn't go as close to those trees as I would have normally. I didn't want to take any chance that a dead branch would drop on my head.

Cherry trees, good morning to you!



Cedar trees, good morning to you!



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Buddleia, good morning to you!

I look forward to seeing who you become now that you are freed from the blackberries. I also look forward to seeing if butterflies flock to your blooms.



Hawthorne tree, good morning to you!

I look forward to seeing what happens now that you have a chance to thrive.



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And last but not least, beautiful **Alder, good morning to you!**



I thoroughly enjoyed my morning visit to each of these trees. Maybe this will become a daily ritual for me!
I wish each of you who read this article a very good morning, no matter what time of day it is when you read it.

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Not Just a Tree by Kathie Arcide



For fifty years, there was a Star Pine tree in Pacific Beach that could be seen from almost everywhere in that California neighborhood. Rumor had it that this particular tree was by far the tallest in this San Diego beach community, and the surrounding area for that matter.

The true story about the origin of this tree is a well-guarded secret, but for a good cause: to prevent sibling rivalry. Here is the part of the story that can be proven. It seems an unusually forward thinking young man moved to the West Coast from Coffeerville, Kansas in the late 1940's, and wisely bought a piece of property close to the ocean. He had everything planned: 1) settle in to his new job as an aeronautical engineer at Convair, 2) build his new house and get it all ready for a family, and then, 3) begin his search for the woman who would become his wife.

The only thing missing from the homestead he was creating was a large tree on which his future children could climb. (Well, that and a storm cellar. Being from Tornado Alley, he believed this was an absolute necessity. But that is another story.)

Here's where the secrecy starts. This man eventually had three daughters. Each of these daughters has a different tale about the origin of the big old Star Pine tree that dominated the property, as well as the Pacific Beach skyline. I am the oldest of those daughters, so here is my version, told to me by my Daddy when I was very little.

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The yarn goes like this. When my Dad met the woman who would become his “one and only”, she already had a two-year-old daughter...ME. In order to welcome me into his life, we went shopping for a tree for the front yard of his newly-built home. We had to look around a bit because he had many specific requirements for this tree.

- 1) It had to be a future climbing tree.
- 2) It had to be a pretty tree.
- 3) It had to provide shade.
- 4) And most important was that at the time it was planted, it had to be exactly the same height as his new little daughter, “so that the tree and I could grow together”.

So we found the Star Pine that occupied the front yard of this home in Pacific Beach. Well, “occupied” is a relative term. It grew way faster than me, and became massive! It needed a “trim” regularly, to prevent its branches from growing into the bedroom windows and overtaking the house completely.

This tree really saw some life, let me tell you. I am now in my sixties and some of my fondest (as well as harshest) memories are of sitting way up high in this old tree for hours at a stretch; sometimes reading, sometimes privately watching the neighborhood stretching from the West to the Pacific and to the South to San Diego Bay. Sometimes I'd climb the tree with a friend to enjoy a picnic lunch, and sometimes I'd hide up there from my bothersome little

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sisters, or from my imperfect parents. The Star Pine was where I would “run away”.

My favorite thing, a guilty pleasure now I see, was that from high on my secret perch I could hear everything my parents said when they would come out into the yard, worried and looking for me. I loved to eavesdrop on my Mommy and Daddy while they discussed how much they loved me and how very much they would miss me if I never came home again. (Now, of course, I’m sure my folks knew I was up there in that tree all along.) There were also those times when that old Star Pine tree was utterly a place of soul-saving refuge.

As much work as it was to rake up the shedding needles and branches, Dad loved that tree and so did we. It was a landmark of sorts. One really couldn’t miss it as it could be seen from most angles throughout the town. Over the years, Pacific Beach flourished and filled in around him, but somehow retained its small beach town atmosphere, so Dad was really content there.

He is gone now, having lived what he called a wonderful, fulfilling life. When Dad passed on, my sisters and I made the very tough decision to sell our childhood home. We idealistically tried to require the buyer to promise NOT to cut down this magnificent old tree. He agreed, but if you are ever in San Diego, don’t bother looking for it. Our TREE is no longer there. It should have been left to live out its life in peace, just as Dad did in his cherished, self-built home-stead. The man who bought the house claimed termites and had the tree removed. He also did other things to the house that, other than the address, make it no longer recognizable as our childhood home, our Father’s dream. But some part of my Daddy is still there, his spirit and energy strong. And so are his three beloved little girls, frozen in familiar childhood poses, arguing over whose myth about the origin of the tree is really the truth.

Book Suggestions from Our Readers

[The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate - Discoveries from a Secret World](#) by Peter Wohlleben

[Farm City](#) by Novella Carpenter

[Locally Laid](#) by Lucie Amundsen

[The Dirty Life: A Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love](#) by Kristin Kimball

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Last Rights by Cheryl-Lynn Roberts in Quebec



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The colours will soon disappear and I look around at the maple leaves on the ground; some are red, yellow and amber. Walking through the thicket I try to slow my pace and take in the little green that is left and the grounds are muddy now and leaves are turning to mush. Still, I hope the Great Spirit will not wash it all away before its time. Last week we had five days of rain and this is day two of the five days forecasted again. Wind and rain seem to be the enemy in mid-autumn for we are robbed of those last days of colour and beauty. In spring, wind and rain turn into our gifts to clean the land and make space for new blossoms. I suppose there is a time for everything...this is the unsavoury part of loss, endings.

season's rituals
Mother Earth goes to sleep
cleansing rites

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Nature In Their Footsteps

There are people in the world who are doing amazing things to heal the earth. Two of those people are Saalumarada Thimmakkaj and Jadev Payeng.



Photo Credit: [Wikimedia](#)

When Saalumarada and her husband were still childless after 25 years of marriage, they decided to start planting trees and to nurture and care for each of them as if they were their children. The couple had to carry buckets of water from a well several kilometers away to water the saplings.

Their woodland now has almost 300 trees and runs for four kilometers on both sides of the road. While her husband has passed away, Saalumarada is now 105 years old. She gives this advice, "How we planted and took care of the trees, everyone from children to the elderly should plant and grow trees... It will be beneficial for all of us."

Source: [India's 105-year-old Mother of Trees](#)

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Photo Credit: [Bijit Dutta](#)

In 1978, teenaged Jadav returned to the island in Assam, India, where he was born only to find a hundred snakes dead on a sandbar because there was no shade. Devastated by the sight, he started to plant trees on the island. Over time, he has created a 1,360 acre forest with several thousand trees. The forest is home to Bengal tigers, rhinoceros, deer, rabbits and many varieties of birds. A herd of elephant spend six months a year in the forest. Jerad is known as the Forest Man of India.

You can watch a video about Jedev at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkZDSqyE1do>

Sources: 1) [An Assamese who created a woodland in a river island is the Forest Man of India](#)

2) [Jadev Payeng](#)

May we follow in Saalumarada and Jadev's footsteps by doing what we can do to protect Mother Nature.

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Trees in India by Kothai

The special focus on trees section in the last two greenfriends newsletters reminded me of some the famous trees in India. I have listed a few fresh in my memory. **The Bodhi Tree** in Bodh Gaya, India is where Buddha is supposed to have attained enlightenment. He supposedly sat there motionless for seven days and meditated. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhi_Tree



The Sacred Mango Tree in Kanchipuram, India is thought to be very old (3500 years). The branches yield four different varieties of mango and are said to represent the four vedas. [Source](#), [photo1](#), [photo2](#)



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The Kadamba Forest is mentioned in the Lalitha Sahasranama (1000 names). One of the names of devi is 'Kadamba vana vasini'. The literal meaning being, 'one who dwells in the Kadamba forest'. [Source](#), [photo1](#), [photo2](#)



The Big Banyan Tree in Karnataka, India is a 400 year old tree that spans over 3 acres. [Source](#), [photo](#)



Gardening

Repelling Moles and Gophers



Gopher Spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*) proved to be our best protection against rampant moles and gophers this year. Not only did they not bother these plants, but the presence of the plants along the border of the garden discouraged immigration of burrowers into the garden. I'll be doing more with this plant next year, as I love my roots! Gopher Spurge is a biennial, so the stout plants you see in the picture will be full of seed next year. They really bushed out in the rich garden soil. The other flowers you see arching over my friend's head are Cordao (*Leonotis nepetaefolia*) which we grow for the hummingbirds!

Richo



Gardening

Flowering Amaryllis Indoors

Dr. Leonard Perry, Horticulture Professor, University of Vermont



Although poinsettias remain number one in popularity for holiday plants, another plant that you'll find commonly during late fall and winter is the amaryllis. It's usually sold either in bloom or bulb ready to pot, is a fast grower, has a long bloom period, and requires minimal care. This makes it a perfect choice for beginners or those without "green thumbs", but its beauty is appreciated by even the more advanced gardeners.

The large trumpet flower resembles a lily, although it is not a member of that family but is a tropical bulb, originally imported from Central and South America. What we usually call an amaryllis (said as am-ar-ILL-iss) or Dutch amaryllis (since most of these hybrids were bred there) is actually a different genus (*Hippeastrum*). The true amaryllis, or Belladonna lily, that you may find in specialty catalogs or stores originally came from South Africa. Since either of these do not tolerate frost, they must be flowered indoors. Although the normal flowering season for the Dutch amaryllis is January through April, many greenhouses force it into bloom earlier to be ready for the December holidays. Amaryllis (the Dutch hybrids) most commonly found include red, pink or salmon, whites, and bicolors of red and white. You may be able to find some miniature varieties at complete garden stores, or through mail order and online catalogs. These smaller plants grow to only a foot or so high and have smaller flowers, but otherwise look like the traditional ones.

Many amaryllis plants are sold already potted. All you do for these is to just add water. The larger the bulbs, the more likely you will have multiple flower stalks. You can make a plant flower for a special occasion by starting it five

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to seven weeks before the selected date.

If you buy bulbs separately instead of pre-potted, or in kits complete with soil and pot ready to assemble, store them in a cool and dry location if you need to hold them for later potting or giving as gifts. Although these will keep for long periods, if sprouts start to develop you'll need to plant them as soon as possible. Be careful not to expose the bulbs to freezing conditions.

Pot bulbs in containers just slightly wider than the bulb, such as a 5 to 6-inch wide pot. There should be about an inch between the bulb and side of the pot. Or, you may want to put three bulbs in a 10 to 12-inch wide container. Amaryllis grow best if slightly crowded. Use a standard houseplant potting medium— one containing a large amount of peat moss and no soil. Pot at a depth so the top third (the “neck”) of the bulb is exposed. The potting mix should end up about a half inch to inch below the pot rim. This allows space for watering.

A good way to not overwater (they don't like to be waterlogged) is through sub-irrigation with warm water. Do this by filling a pot saucer or tray underneath, then letting the soil absorb the water. After 30 minutes, discard any water that remains in the saucer. From this point until flowering stems are a couple inches high, water sparingly—only when the top inch or so of the potting mix feels dry—perhaps once a week. Watering too frequently or too much can cause the bulb to rot. Also when watering, make sure and use water that is slightly warm.

Put the freshly potted bulb in a warm location above 60 degrees (68 to 75 degrees F is ideal—remember these are tropical). Near a heat vent or wood stove (not on the woodstove), or on top of a refrigerator are good locations. Place your amaryllis in a warm location that gets about 4 hours of direct sun daily, such as south-facing window. When the flower bud stalk is about eight inches tall, you can place the pot in a cooler location if you want to slow growth. When the first bud is about to open, keeping cooler (such as 50 to 60 degrees) will prolong the bloom period. Warmer temperatures speed up and cause earlier flowering.

Since bulbs are self-contained packages, containing much food for the season, they don't need much fertilizer. You may fertilize lightly—about half strength of your normal houseplant fertilizer— every couple weeks, especially while the plant is in bloom.

After your amaryllis has bloomed, don't throw them out! You can save the bulbs to reflower in subsequent years.

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Start by removing the flowers as they fade. Continue to water the potted bulb regularly throughout the spring and summer. Apply liquid fertilizer, according to label directions. After all danger of frost is past in the spring, you can plant the bulb, pot and all, in the garden in a semi-shaded spot. Don't place in full sun or the leaves may "burn" and turn brown.

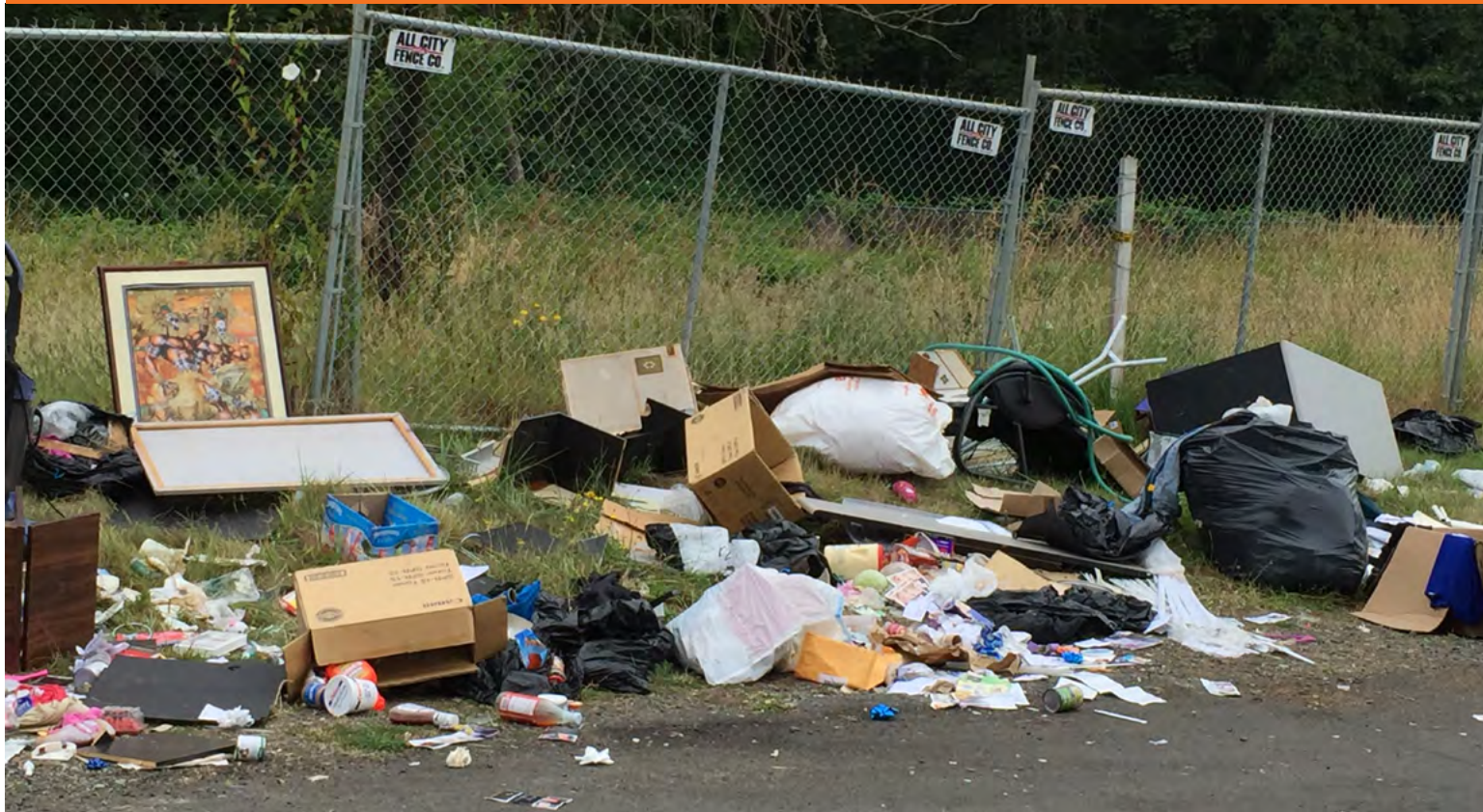
Next September, take the potted amaryllis out of the garden before the first frost, and place it in a dry, warm place. Stop fertilizing and water less. Leaves should start dying back, at which point you can cut them off. Place the pots in a cool, dark place, and leave them alone. If you use the crisper drawer of a refrigerator or cool cellar, make sure they are not stored with apples (these give off ethylene gas that may prevent bloom).

Bulbs are dormant and need a rest for at least six weeks. Check weekly, and later in the fall when you see a new shoot emerging, start watering and treating as when you first got them— keep crowded in their pots, don't overwater, give minimal fertilizer, keep warm, and give bright light (preferably direct sun) at least half a day.



PNW Litter Project

Litter Project Stories from the Past



The following are project members' stories from our 2011 newsletters. I hope they inspire everyone to pick up more litter... and to send in new stories for the 2017 newsletters! Karuna

From Geoff:

We were waiting for the Edmonds ferry 2 weeks ago and it was a Friday. There was a big line way up the hill. So while we were waiting we got out to pick blackberries. We ate a lot of nice blackberries and after a while Lucia, who is 4 years old, and whose face and hands were now stained purple, switched to trash pickup completely on her own and started pulling cans and other trash out of the bushes. After she had accumulated a good pile we loaded it in the car and the ferry line finally began to move. I was surprised, and then impressed, by her self-directed clean-up effort!

From Achala:

I see others who are also picking up litter. We give each other encouragement and share stories. One woman's name is Cathy. She is about 70 years old. We met yesterday and we walked, talked and collected trash together. She said "We live in paradise and we need to take care of it". My response "Yes, Cathy, we do". She said "the more of us that are out here doing this the more normal it will be and more people will be doing it, and less people littering". My response "Yes, Cathy, I believe that too."

PNW Litter Project

From Tasha:

As I took a walk in my neighborhood I picked up a plastic bottle so that I could recycle it. It felt like I was picking up after my child. Like a mom picks up after her child. A mom goes around the house and picks after her child. She picks up the toys left over, the laundry strewn about, the blankets and pillows from the fort that her kids just made. Moms go around all the time and pick up after their children. Dad's do too.

Amma spends Her time traveling the world to help her children. Amma has started a program in India to help clean up India. We, as the most sentient beings of this earth, are, in a sense, entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of the earth. In a way we have been given the duty of being parents to the earth, and family to each other, our community. As a way of picking up litter, and cans, I might just be picking up after my own child or my sister's child. Who's to say that the piece of trash on the side of the road wasn't accidentally dropped by someone I know? Who's to say that the location the litter was found wasn't in my own driveway or street that I live on. And then wouldn't it be my job to pick it up? Had they known that they had dropped it, might they be sad that they littered? The challenge, it seems, is that we claim other streets and neighborhoods as our own

From Al:

Since I joined this project I see litter everywhere!

From Ramana:

One thing that's been fun to notice is peoples' perceptions of us as we go about our work. It hadn't occurred to me when I began the seva, but think about it; what are your presumptions as to the identity of the work parties you see off the highways, with their reflective vests, picking up trash? Anyone? Here's mine: correction system (aka prison) inmates, that's who! So while we are regularly met with "thank you's" and smiles from passers-by, there are also quiz-zical expressions, where you can almost see the gears moving as they struggle to identify us. One passerby looked at a project member, chuckled and said: "Wow; you don't look like an inmate!" Now it puts a smile on my face when I see people looking at us with 'that look' of wonderment. If they ever ask me, I will tell them, "No, I'm not 'out on work release', I'm just doing what I can to change the world."

Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Prakash in Redmond:

You may want to read about this: <https://info.ecosia.org/what>. Now, every time I do an internet search, it goes through ecosia (instead of google) and a tree is planted.

From Achala in Tacoma:

[Street Artist Transforms Ordinary Junk Into Animals To Remind About Pollution](#)

From Poornima in Shoreline:

Video: [Trashion Is Turning Your Trash Into High End Fashion](#)

From Iswari in Edmonds:

[How To Build A Window Box Solar Heater That Gives "Free Heat" All Winter & Doubles As A Solar Oven... | Eco Snippets](#)

From Kathie in Bellevue:

My own worm farm!



(Before Kathie ran to the house to get her camera there were way more worms and two huge spiders!)