



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

NEWS



PNW GreenFriends Newsletter Feedback Questionnaire

Thanks to the 65 of you who sent in feedback about the format and content we have used in the newsletter for nearly six years. The results were very encouraging. Fifty-three percent of the respondents look at the newsletter most of the time; 23% look at it sometimes. Fifty-one percent read all or most of the newsletter and another 37% read some of it. Thanks also for your helpful comments. We have implemented some of the suggestions in this newsletter.

To see the survey results in full [click here](#).

Readers requested investigative reporting on environmental topics and articles about helping animals. Are any of you willing to write one or more articles on those topics? If so, send a note to the email address at the bottom of the page.

Do It Yourself Projects

One of the suggestions from the questionnaire feedback was to start a Do It Yourself (DIY) section that has short articles about home projects.

Do you have any DIY projects that you are willing to write about? What DIY projects would you like to learn about?

This month there is a DIY article about papermaking in the Saving the Earth's Resources section.

Question of the month

"During the dark months of Jan and early Feb is when my mom curled up on the couch with her favorite blanket and reviewed seed catalogs and then ordered in Feb. What are your favorite seed companies/catalogs and favorite veggie seeds?" Vandyia Huntting

Send your answer to this question and your suggestions for future questions to the email address below. Answers to each month's question will be included in the newsletter that follows it.



If you have responses to any of the questions on this page send your answers to:

pnwgreenfriendsmagazine@gmail.com

PNW Gardening

Getting Ready: A New Gardening Season Lies Ahead by Netsah Zylinsky



It's 2017 and preparations for a new beginning in a new year of planting are upon us. Where do we begin? Let's start by remembering that the earth is sleeping and resting right now. So let us, too, go within: remember, listen, and feel our connection to our holy ground and the Great Design. Let's set our intention to grow and serve, and to be a benefit to all.

1. OBSERVE with soft eyes and an open heart; feel the deep season of winter and the promise of a fertile spring.
2. Make notes and draw diagrams, sketching in changes to the growing areas. Also, consider what areas need to rest and be fallow for a season.
3. Apply Permaculture ethics and principles whenever possible:
 - CARE FOR THE EARTH
 - CARE FOR THE PEOPLE
 - RETURN THE ABUNDANCE BACK TO THE WHOLE

Now, we get to physically, begin... with the COMPOST! Check how much compost is left over from the last season. Does it want to be turned or aerated? This is a good time to add seaweeds, manures, old leaves... and just to fluff up the pile in preparation for spreading it around the beds. Remember to feel gratitude for the nutrients this compost will unlock in the soil and the new energy it will bring to your garden.

Next, decide on the shape and size of your growing beds. Can there be more planting area if you use the Permaculture models of random assembly, mixed diversity, and companion planting? These are just "considerations," yet these concepts begin the process of changing from annual planting to perennial plantings. Perennials will drop seed and plant themselves year after year.

PNW Gardening



You can expand garden beds or create new ones by covering weedy or grassy areas with cardboard. By blocking light, cardboard smothers unwanted vegetation, and its carbon feeds micro-organisms in compost and soil. It is a perfect example of one of the Permaculture principles “that the solution is in the problem.” So, instead of rototilling, which breaks up the little air and water ways developed by worms, bugs, and bacteria, we just add layers of cardboard, wet them with a hose, and cover with soil and compost. Voilà! Growing beds are created with nutrient rich abundance.

One of the last preparations for spring planting is to check out your seed supply and the dates on leftover seed packets. Remove a few seeds from questionable packets and start them on a wet paper towel to check for viability. Decide what you want to grow from seed and study the packets for advice about starting seeds indoors and when to plant outside—generally about 6 weeks or more before the last frost.

Choosing Seed. Probably the most important consideration when buying, trading or purchasing seed is to choose open-pollinated seed. This means pollination occurs by insect, bird, wind, humans or other natural mechanisms. Also, open-pollinated seeds are more genetically diverse.

Look for Heirloom seeds. This is a seed that has been passed down through communities or families for generations. Heirlooms are always open-pollinated.

Then there are “hybrid” seeds, often labeled F1, which tend to grow bigger plants and produce larger yields, yet cannot reproduce themselves and cannot be saved. Gardeners must buy new seed every year.

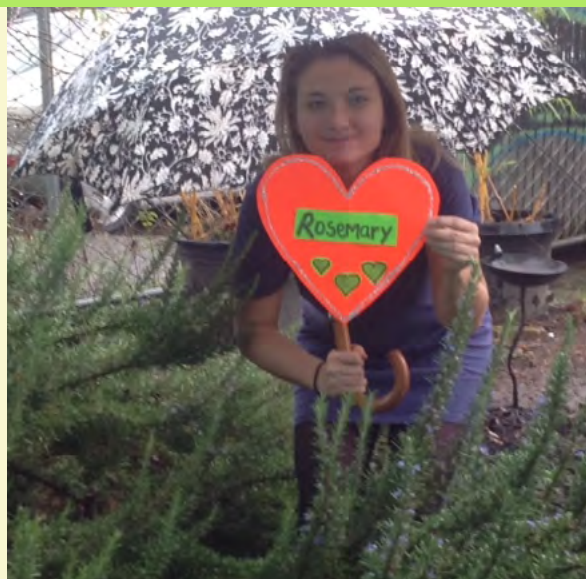
By choosing open-pollinated and Heirloom seed varieties, we are helping conserve biodiversity and bringing history to our gardens.

Next time I’ll address in more detail specific seed plantings.

Until then, bless this growing season with Love and abundance for ALL.

PNW Gardening

Backyard Herbal Medicine - ROSEMARY by Visala Holbein



Let's take a minute to be thankful for the herb Rosemary. Rosemary is an herb that many people are familiar with. When you walk by a green Rosemary bush with its seasonal sweet light blue flowers, you might be one of those people that gently cups the pointy herb in your hands and runs your fingers along it as you carefully caress it and then quickly bring your hands to your nose to savor the aroma. You may have been a secret admirer of Rosemary for a long time. Many people know of the many culinary uses for Rosemary; you can find her in many recipes, but have you considered using this beautiful ancient herb as medicine? Consider yourself challenged to launch into new relationship with this fantastic gem!

Rosemary has become very well known for it's healing properties such as:

- Reducing anxiety, elevating mood.
- Boosting memory.
- Brain protection.
- Calming effects.
- Pain relief.
- Headache relief.
- Protects against DNA damage.
- Arthritis treatment, anti-inflammatory.
- High in vitamin A, thiamine and magnesium.
- A very good source of vitamin C, vitamin B-6, folate, calcium, iron and manganese.

PNW Gardening

Please join me in trying to get to know our friend Rosemary better. If you don't yet have a Rosemary plant, you can get one easily at a local plant nursery. When buying herbs, organic is always recommended. Here in our amazing Pacific Northwest climate, Rosemary grows well and is available for use year-round! If you plant her, she is likely to thrive, especially if you talk to her and water her. If you have a playful pup who accidentally breaks off a branch of the plant, this is a great time to bring the broken branch in and dry it so that you can use the herbal medicine later. This healing herb grows well in a pot, so if you live in an apartment you can still enjoy her. Also, many neighbors who have Rosemary will be happy to share if you ask. What a great way to make a new friend in the neighborhood. It might be that you are the one sharing with a neighbor.

I want to share **two quick easy ways to start using Rosemary** intentionally and medicinally. Before you gather the herb, remember to thank the plant before taking any of its medicine, and always give something back when you take something from the plant. What you give back is up to you. You can give back a chant or a song or just a simple message of gratitude, or maybe you will return any unused portion of the Rosemary back to the base of the bush.

1. Cut off small pieces of Rosemary to put into your water bottle (1-2 tsp.). Let it infuse 10 minutes before drinking. Oh my gosh, so very refreshing! You can either strain the Rosemary out, or just enjoy the pieces when you drink the water. After all, it is edible. Also, it is so amazing to share with friends when they need water; it's much better tasting and healthier than just plain water.

2. Make a tea with Rosemary by putting the fresh herb (1-2 tsp.) into boiled water and wait 10 minutes for it to steep. The taste will probably be new and different if you haven't had it before, but it is so delightful!

Please take time to reflect on what connection you felt to the plant and ultimately to your Mother Earth by drinking the infused water so consciously and intentionally. Hope you enjoy it!

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Discovery Park Bluff Restoration by Ananya Holterman



Discovery Park is a beloved natural oasis in the north part of Seattle on the shores of Puget Sound. Many who live nearby go there for a real dose of natural beauty in the midst of life in the city.

This amazing park encompasses a variety of wildlife habitats and ecosystems. While traveling around the park, it is encouraging to see that a number of restoration projects are underway. It was a delight to find that one such restoration project has taken place on one of the bluff areas that overlooks the Sound.

As can be seen in the photograph, berms of rolled coconut husks have been placed in strategic spots for erosion control and to provide stabilization on the bluff. It is hard to detect in the photo, but small shoots of native plants have been dug in throughout the area. The swirls of restoration materials and vegetation have created patterns with a beauty of their own. How inspiring to see that efforts are being made to maintain the integrity of this captivating natural environment.



Saving the Earth's Resources

Going Green One Conscious Choice at a Time by Teri Bailey Weibert



My name is Teri Bailey Weibert, from northwest Montana, and I would like to tell you how I started making more earth conscious choices one step at a time. It was about seven years ago, that I began recycling paper and plastic, and began washing glass jars to reuse as our town does not recycle glass locally.

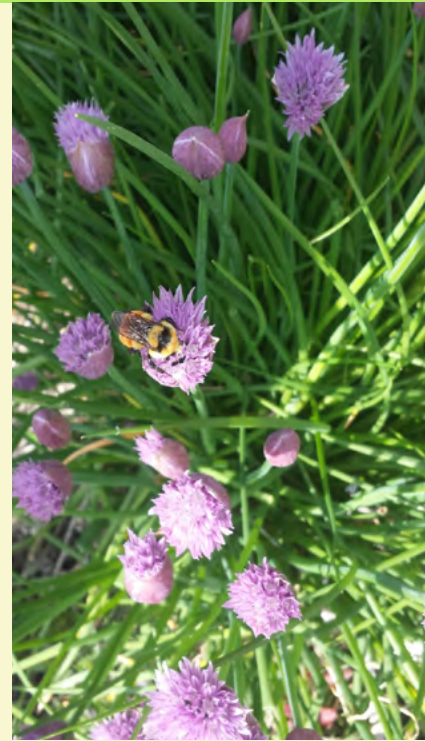
I bought two large 30 gallon containers with lids and marked one “recycling” and one “garbage.” Every week we would load them into our vehicle and dump them at the transfer station. I must admit it was a good feeling pulling over to the recycle bins and seeing how much we unloaded from our container instead of throwing it in the garbage. Then I became more aware of turning off the water, instead of letting it run, as I brushed my teeth. It took a little practice to remember how wasteful the running water was, but now I turn it off automatically.

Gradually, as I used up my store-bought cleaning products, I replaced them with all-natural ones. I must admit I grew up on bleach, ammonia, and a number of other harsh chemicals, and I was not sure about giving up the old ways. But I’m happy to report I was blown away with the results I saw immediately from my eco-friendly products, and I love the citrus scent from the essential oils. Win! Win! I have even learned to make my own personal care products from all-natural ingredients.

This last summer I became a beekeeper. I started with two hives using a “Beekeeping for Dummies” book, and I am pleased to say we harvested 66 pounds of Raw organic honey. One hive got off to a slow start due to the species of bees I received, but the second hive was a hardier more aggressive bee. Those sweet little girls did an amazing job.



Saving the Earth's Resources



Beekeeping is not for the faint of heart. It really was a lot more work than I had originally expected, but the outcome was so worth the effort. I now substitute honey for sugar in all my recipes so that I can avoid toxically-grown cane sugar. I am taking an online beekeeping class at our State College so that I'll be well-prepared when I add two more hives in the spring.

We grow a truck garden every year using all-natural products. It's a thrill to eat fresh garden fruits and vegetables all summer long. In the fall, we put part of our harvest in glass canning jars, along with blanching and freezing fruits and vegetables and making freezer jam. I also dehydrate some of our harvest. The remainder we store for home-grown eating all winter long.

I saw a recent video post on Face Book from a guy named Max Ribner challenging people NOT to purchase a single plastic water bottle during 2017. I was so inspired that I have committed to following through on this great idea. I have stopped buying the big plastic water bottles of water for home. Instead, I went online and ordered 5-gallon glass home-brewing jars with lids that I can fill at the local health food store. I even ordered a nifty handle for carrying the jars. My family members all have refillable water containers and, when we are on a trip, we just fill a 2-gallon container to take along and refill as needed.

As I said in the beginning of this article, it all began with one conscious choice at a time.

Being kind to Mother Earth makes me so happy. After all, she is the Source that helps us sustain life.

Saving the Earth's Resources

Do it Yourself Project

How to Make Paper from Scraps by May Babcock



Making paper by hand at home can be a pretty simple process. It's also a fantastic way to use up your old receipts, scrap papers, junk mail, and copy paper that you were about to throw in the recycling bin, and instead create a thing of glorious handmade beauty.

Have those recycled papers hanging around? Some sort of plastic storage tub, and a kitchen blender? With a few supplies and these basic instructions, you're well on your way to making handmade paper and being ridiculously friendly to the environment.

[Click To Read Tutorial](#)



Nature

Utah: Land of Light and Shadows by Cindy Knoke



Nature



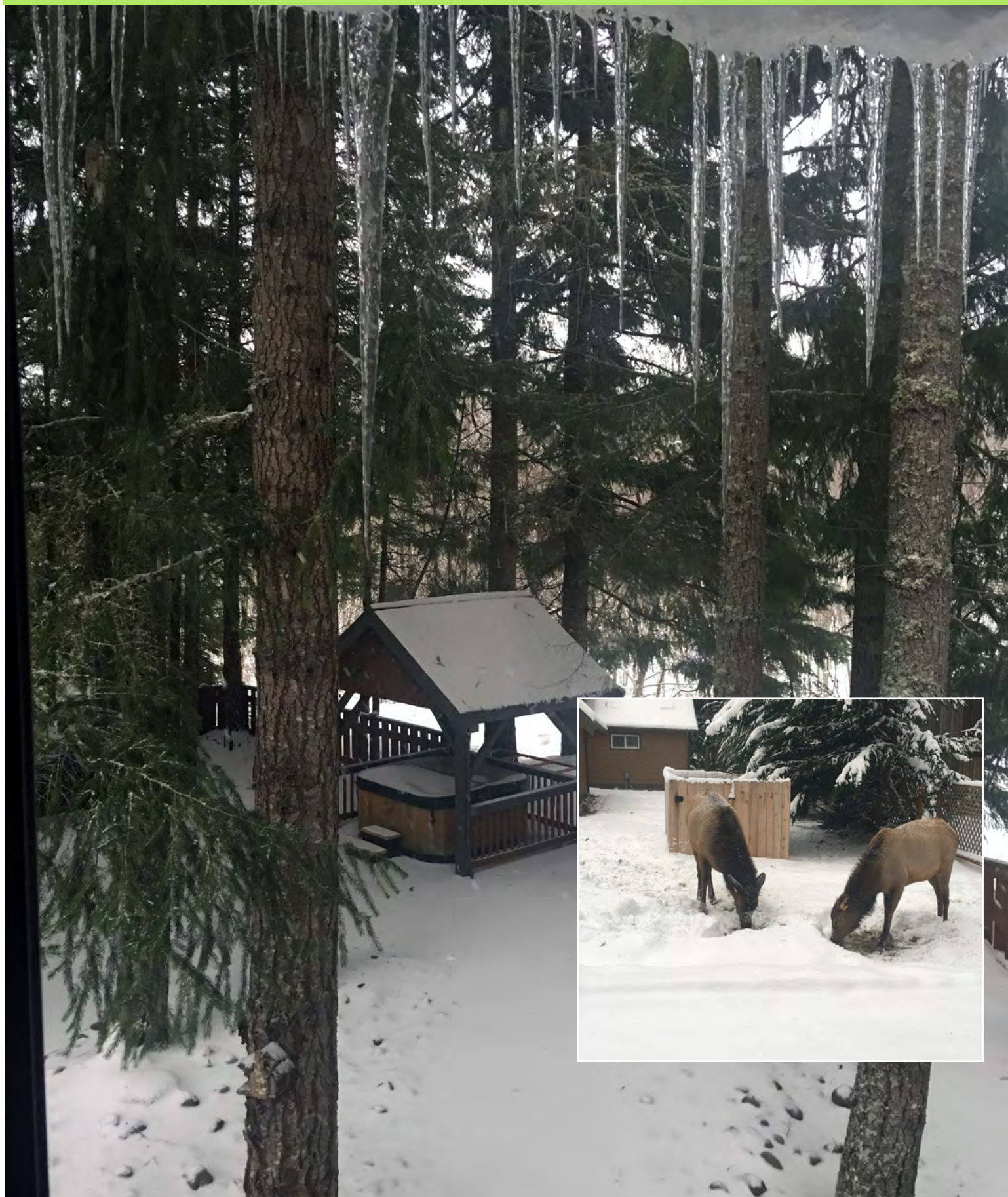
Nature



[Nature's Soul](#)

Nature

Greenwater, WA Snow Scenes by Marla Mitchell



Nature



PNW Litter Project

PNW Litter Project Stats

In January, 28 Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for 73 hours. (Average 2.6 hours; Median 1 hour; Range 3 minutes to 14 hours) We have picked up litter for 8331 hours since the project began in July of 2011.

Litter Project Work Party Announcement

We will meet in the International District of Seattle on Sunday, March 5 for our annual cigarette butt clean up in support of Kick Butts Day. Please mark your calendar so you save 10:00 a.m.-noon on that day for this important event!

TerraCycle Stats

TerraCycle, an organization that recycles items that are normally considered unrecyclable, has credited us with turning in 300,124 cigarette butts since 2013.

We have also sent them 394 Drink Pouches, 732 Cereal Bag liners, and 2,997 Energy Bar wrappers.

TerraCycle Info

Do You Eat Granola Bars? by Visala Holbein



Did you know that the usually unrecycleable granola/energy bar wrapper is now being recycled through TerraCycle? Please save all your granola bar wrappers and ask your friends to do so, too! I often find them on the ground as I am out walking. Yes, I pick them up. If you are willing to save the granola bar wrappers and give them to Visala (vhohlbein@msn.com) or Karuna, they will get recycled instead of landfilled. Thanks for helping save our Mother Earth through your participation.



PNW Litter Project

Amma South Africa's Plastic Project

In 2007, a resident at Amritapuri started the Amrita Plastic Project which created beautiful handmade items from waste plastic.



The next year, inspired by the Amritapuri project, Pacific Northwest devotees started crocheting with plastic trash. They made totes from old grocery bags and baskets from a combination of waste strapping, snack bags, and newspaper wrappers.



PNW Litter Project

Soon, the Amritapuri residents joined us in crocheting with waste plastic.



When Karuna was in Amritapuri last month, she learned that there is now an Amma Plastic Project in South Africa. At that site, poor women are taught how to make croched bags and baskets..



They sell their products at a Saturday market, which provides them with some income.

PNW Litter Project



[Take a look at a fun video from the Saturday market](#)

Any excess funds are donated to a feeding program for disadvantaged children.



To learn more about the South Africa Plastic Project go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/AmmaSouthAfrica> and/or

<http://www.amma.co.za/plastic-project>

GreenFriends Projects in Amritapuri

Saraswati Garden by Karuna Poole

The first day I was in Amritapuri, a friend told me about a new garden that was a five-minute walk from the center of the ashram. She said it was called Saraswati Garden and that the purpose of the garden was to raise plants that would be used to make dye. I was very interested and went to see it the next day.

Not only was there a garden, there was also a building called the Eco Textile Work Center. The women in that center were weaving, sewing prayer flags and dying fabric. I decided I would spend as much time as possible in that area of the ashram while I was in Amritapuri.

Yellow and orange marigolds, roses and turmeric roots were the primary flowers and plants used to make dye. The garden has also had plants that produced an indigo dye. During my time at the ashram, madder root, which produces an orange-red dye, was planted.



We harvested piles of turmeric roots. After all the dirt was washed off, the roots were boiled, sliced and dried. My hands were yellow for days after cutting turmeric.



GreenFriends Projects in Amritapuri



One day, the crew at the work center made a prayer flag that had been dyed solely with flowers from their garden. The top part of the prayer flag below was dyed with turmeric. From left to right, the dyes used to make the flags were marigold, rose, madder, turmeric, indigo, rose, madder, light marigold, and dark marigold.



The prayer flags above had not been finished. The photos below show portions of three completed prayer flags.



GreenFriends Projects in Amritapuri

The Center staff were also experimenting with making dyes from various vegetables. The dye for the fabric in the first photo below was made from red onions, the second from avocado pits and peels, and the third from spinach leaves! I would never have guessed.



Banana palms, coconut trees, spinach vines, tulasi and many other trees and plants grow in that beautiful garden.

