



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)

## NEWS

### GreenFriends Program Guide Ads



Forest Restoration ad  
to be designed



GreenFriends will offer three Program Guide ads this year. The size of the ad and whether it will be a local or a national ad will depend on how much money is donated. All proceeds will go towards Amma's 2019 Pacific Northwest Programs. You can donate to one ad or divide your donation among two or more of the Green Friends ads. In order to know what size ad to design and to track the donations we need to know how much you plan to donate. Please send your pledge to [Karuna](mailto:karunap108@comcast.net). She will send you payment details at that time.

### Kick Butts Day Work Party March 3rd



The PNW Litter Project is sponsoring our 8th annual cigarette butt pick up work party in support of Kick Butt Day, a campaign for tobacco free kids. The event will go from 10 am to noon. We will meet at Hing Hay Park (Map) in the International District of Seattle, and spread out from there. Everyone from everywhere is welcome to attend. If you would like to participate in the Seattle event, or create a similar event in your own area sometime during March, contact Karuna at [karunap108@comcast.net](mailto:karunap108@comcast.net).

Your effort will help keep these toxic butts out of landfills, waterways and the stomachs of fish, birds, and animals.

## NEWS

### **Forest Restoration Work Party (Beacon Hill, Seattle) Sunday February 24**

The next GreenFriends Greenbelt Restoration work party will be on Sunday February 24 from 10 am until 1 pm. We are working to restore this site to the beautiful forest it was meant to be. This work party will focus on removing ivy and blackberry vines from new areas and in tending to previously planted areas by weeding, removing blackberry shoots that are coming up and other maintenance activities. Come join the fun! For more information or to sign up go to: <https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/15422>

### **Snoqualmie Valley Seed Exchange Saturday February 2 (11 am to 2 pm)**

*Snoqualmie Valley*  
**9<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL**  
**SEED EXCHANGE**  
GATHER & EXCHANGE SEEDS & KNOWLEDGE  
*Cedarcrest High School Duvall, WA*  
*Saturday February 2, 2019*  
**SNOQUALMIEVALLEYSEDEXCHANGE.ORG**



## PNW Gardening

### That Awful White Sugar Has Its Uses; Who Knew? by Lin



Photo Credit: [Cindy Knoke](#)

The hummingbirds at my feeder were acting peculiar on New Year's day. I had just put out a freshly filled container of nectar by the back window. But, instead of diving in as usual, they were licking the bottom, or the seams around the edges. They'd stick a beak into one of the little red metal flowers, take a taste, and fly away. By the end of the day, they were ignoring the feeder entirely. The feeder by the front window, on the other hand, was buzzing with the usual activity.

What's wrong with my hummingbirds? I asked Google.

The wrong kind of nectar is bad for them, came the answer from the Audubon Society and from Smithsonian.

Use refined white sugar. Organic, natural, and raw sugars contain levels of iron that can be harmful or outright toxic over time. Powdered sugar contains corn starch that quickly ferments. Honey diluted in water spoils quickly and promotes bacteria or dangerous fungal growth.

Plain white table sugar is sucrose, which, when mixed with water, very closely mimics the chemical composition of natural nectar. Red coloring is not necessary, and the chemicals could prove to be harmful to the birds. Beet sugar should also be avoided.

S&H white cane sugar is the stuff to use. Protect your birds' health by being sure to keep their nectar fresh and the feeders well cleaned.

That was it. I had made a batch of nectar using Costco's organic sugar, thinking it would be better than that nasty

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white over-processed stuff I no longer eat myself. Who knew that the iron left in the attractively golden less-processed type of sugar would be bad for the hummers? I quickly went out and bought a 5-pound bag of S&H and brewed up a fresh nectar batch for the little guys. It's heartwarming to see them taking long drinks from the feeder again.

### **Nectar Recipe:**

¼ cup white sugar

1 cup filtered water

Bring to a boil to kill any mold or bacteria that might be present in the sugar.

Let it cool and then pour it into your feeder.

<https://www.audubon.org/news/how-make-hummingbird-nectar>

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/hummingbird-nectar-recipe>

Come summer, you can also attract hummingbirds (and butterflies) to your garden with the following plants:

1. Bee Balm.
2. Fushia and Lantana.
3. Hollyhock.
4. Rose of Sharon.
5. Butterfly Bush.
6. Trumpet Vine.
7. Japanese Honeysuckle.\*
8. Cardinal Vine.
9. Silk Tree.\*

\*Plant it in a container to keep it from spreading. A lattice will help it grow against a wall.

<https://hubpages.com/animals/The-Best-Ever-Hummingbird-Food-Recipe>

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Growing Trees on Raw Land in Eastern Washington

by Dharmajan



In the summer of 2017 I bought a 7-acre property on the eastern flanks of the North Cascades, west of Twisp. The land has a beautiful view into the mountains, as well as good sun. It's also very quiet, which I deeply appreciate. It is mostly forested – 3 acres of aspen, about 2 acres of pine fir mix - and the remaining 2 acres are open ground suitable for a house and gardens. I bought this land with the thought that I would at some point build a small residence and call this place home.

Purchasing raw land means there is a fair amount to do in order to be able to live on it. The first project, since the property had not been cared for in a long time, had to be cleaning up dead wood and thinning the forest in order to mitigate the possibility of wild fire. I mostly completed the aspen grove during the first fall with help from an awesome crew of hard-working guys. We finished early in the spring, and I had a guy come in and chip the debris and other dead wood. Next, I hired a fellow to do the thinning and limbing in the stand of firs and pines, and a State DNR grant helped me pay him. It was awesome to see the result of these efforts, and my neighbors and I are both happy to know there is now a better margin of safety in case of fire. The wildlife seemed to appreciate being able to move more easily through the woods as well.

During the winter of 2017, I lived at the Maltby Farm and developed ideas for planting a privacy screen bordering an

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edge of my property's open ground. Along with interrupting the sight-line between myself and my neighbors, I wanted it to be a food source. I ordered a variety of trees, shrubs and edible plants from different nurseries, with delivery timed so as to have them on hand for spring planting. My purchases included 7 varieties of basket willows from a farm in Mount Vernon (these, if left unpruned, will turn into small tress; if pruned (coppiced), they will create a nice hedge as well as provide material for baskets or stick furniture), along with blueberries, currants, gooseberries, apricots, asparagus, and a maple and oak tree from an online nursery. A local nursery provided a variety of native plants, shrubs and trees. In total, that came to 47 trees and shrubs and 24 asparagus plants, all of them chosen to suit the climate of Eastern Washington.

When spring of 2018 arrived and I returned to Eastern Washington, the main items on my agenda were building a small barn for storage, planting the trees and shrubs I'd ordered, and putting in a drip irrigation system. In my mind's eye, a bit over-enthusiastically, I envisioned the planting as a simple project that could easily be accomplished in a matter of a couple of weeks of steady work. I smile now at the actual complexity and my lack of foresight, given the wildness of the area and the other projects I had planned for the general timeframe.

To my dismay, the deliveries of my orders didn't show up at the time I'd requested. Being forced into a later start was stressful for me because I feared that the plants wouldn't have time to establish themselves before the heat of summer arrived. I really wanted them to have their best chance of survival.

When my orders finally arrived, I got help digging the holes and beds and adding soil amendments, for which I am grateful as it was hard work and help was much needed while I was recovering from Achilles tendon surgery. Adding to the challenge was that I had not given thought to variances of weather and other possible glitches. Nevertheless, the task of putting the plants in the ground turned out to be enjoyable as we welcomed them to their new homes.

The next step was learning how to set up the irrigation. It took time to figure out how much water flow and pressure was available for the system, and the size and number of emitters that could be run off of each valve in order to ensure the plants got all the water they needed while establishing themselves. This involved a number of trips to town for supplies, consultation with those more experienced, and some experimentation. It was an interesting journey, and I'm happy to say the system works nicely now.

Unfortunately, high runoff from the winter's large snow pack meant the irrigation could not be turned on until almost a month later than intended because debris carried by the water would plug up the system. All I could do was hope that moisture in the ground would still be there when I got to planting. So, without my drip irrigation system running yet, I had to water by hand from the seasonal creek for the first few weeks.

The next big challenge the plants and I had was that from early on there were turkeys and deer that were quite interested in these tasty new treats that seemed to be planted just for them. I had given thought to deer as I knew they would be interested in tender eats when the grasses started to dry, but turkeys were a new experience. Before I



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knew it, they were digging things up or eating them down to the ground! I had to quickly dial in some form of shelter for the plants to keep them protected. I got some 2" x 4" wire fencing and built cages around the plants. This worked well until strong winds blew them over and the animals returned to resume munching away!

I attempted to use stakes to hold the cages in place. Still, high winds would blow some of them over and the plants would get munched again even though I did my best to get the cages replaced quickly. (It was as though the animals were waiting for the opportunity.) Some of the plants got pretty stunted from tooth and beak pruning so often throughout the season. Then a friend told me that come winter the cages would get squashed by the weight of the snow. I'd need taller stakes to support their sides to keep this from happening.

Around the same time, I realized that the few gophers I thought lived in the field were a lot more active than I imagined they would be. As summer progressed and the ground became drier, the gophers gravitated to the wet areas around the plantings. I never saw any plant damage indicating their roots were being eaten, but I realized that it would only be a matter of time before the plants became stunted from the gophers' digging and feeding habits. After considering many possible solutions, I settled on digging a trench all around the plants and burying some ½" hardware cloth (wire mesh) 12 inches down. That was a huge project, and I am happy my son came and helped with the effort.

By fall of 2018, the plants had nice cages with good support to keep deer and turkeys out, wire mesh barriers in the ground to keep away the gophers, and an effective irrigation system that could easily be drained and shut down at the end of the season, then turned on again in the spring. Only one tree had been lost, and it turned out it was not cold hardy enough for the area anyway. All this took considerably more time than the two weeks I'd initially envisioned, but hey—I had fun, learned a lot and have ended up fully satisfied. All the work and movement were great therapy that helped with the healing of my Achilles tendon.

Come spring of 2019, I'll find out how well everything fared over the winter, and will once again give care and attention to my plantings as I watch them continue to grow.

It is my understanding that after 3-5 years the new trees will have their roots down deep enough that they will be able to survive without my attention, or at least without irrigation. By then, along with whatever else gets planted in the interim, I think there will be a wonderful environment created both for humans and wildlife to thrive.

**From Jovanna in Port Townsend:**

[This island was on the brink of disaster. Then, they planted thousands of trees.](#)



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### The Urban Forest Needs Our Help! by Tirtha

Any day now in my city, Victoria, a developer will cut down 29 trees on a 1.76-acre downtown property, to begin construction of a luxury townhome and condo development. By the time you read this article, the trees may already be gone.

These trees include two historic Giant Sequoias, which were planted just after Canada was born in 1867. Sequoias store far more carbon than any other species of tree. So, at 150 years old, these trees are still in their youth. Their species can live 2,000 to 3,000 years!

It's a tragedy. And part of the tragedy is that we desperately need these trees – to mitigate climate change, to cool the air, to produce oxygen, to clean and filter the air, to reduce storm water, to retain topsoil, and to buffer sound, among other things. But they are on private property, so they are doomed.

The same thing is happening in cities all over the world.



The former view from the back of the property.



One of the giant sequoias – still a kid at 150 years old.

Last summer, three of us met through a local environmental organization. We were all concerned about the urban forest, and decided to start the Community Trees Matter Network. Just five months later, we have more than 100 members, and 300 followers on Facebook. Clearly, urban tree loss is important to a lot of people!

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

We had all noticed more and more trees in our region being lost to development. Also, more publicly-owned street trees are dying due to our now-common longer, drier summers.

We initially planned to focus on increasing the public's awareness of the value of trees. However, some of our active members are quite political, so we have also made presentations to local municipal councils, and are developing relationships with 'greener' councillors and some of Victoria's city staff.

The UN's warning that we have only 12 years to make drastic changes, in order to avoid catastrophic climate change, really affected us. Since trees store carbon – and mature trees store exponentially more carbon than saplings – we really stress the importance of retaining mature trees.

Our group planned a public "Goodbye and Thank You" to those 29 trees in Victoria. We gathered in front of the property, and walked the four streets of the perimeter singing songs together. We shared tree poems, and a moment of silence to send love and gratitude to these beings who gave so much to our community, just by existing. One difficult part of the work we are doing is that now we are hearing about even more trees being cut down! For people who love trees, this is painful. And ironically, it seems that installing bike lanes is the newest reason to remove trees.

But we remind ourselves to enjoy all the trees that are still with us, and to savor our victories. We played a part in saving about 50 trees in one neighbourhood from being cut down to accommodate a new sewage line. Council also listened to us and the neighbourhood when we requested that another 20 or more big trees not be cut down to accommodate a new swimming pool. Our city council appreciated our presentations and seems to be moving ahead with making tree preservation a bigger priority, including giving the parks department a bigger budget.

We are grateful to the trees we have, for all they do for us. And we're grateful to our forebears, who had the vision and generosity of spirit to plant so many beautiful trees. We hope our city has the wisdom to keep as many as possible. People in the future will certainly need them.

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"We need to save those Elders who cannot speak for themselves – the trees." – Haida Gwaii, Traditional Circle of Elders

*The trees are the Elders of the Earth. Go to the forest or to the mountains and find a young tree. Then find an old tree. Spend time with each. Sit by the young tree and listen to your thoughts. Then move to an old tree and listen to your thoughts again.*

*Just being in the presence of an old tree, you will feel more calm.*



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*Your thoughts will contain wisdom and your answers will be deeper. Why is this so?*

*These old trees know more, have heard more, and are the Elders of the Earth.*

*We must ensure these trees live so we can learn from them.*

*My Creator, help me to protect the trees and listen to them.*

(Quote and prayer from: <https://www.blogarama.com/medicine-remedies-blogs/310702-essentials-recovery-essentials-of-rec-blog/4643638-elders-meditation-day-native> )

The two Giant Sequoias in the photo below are approximately the same size and age as the Giant Sequoias and 27 other mature trees that are going to be cut down soon in Victoria.



Photo credit: [Wikimedia](#)

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Want to Start an Urban-Forest Advocacy Group? by Tirtha

*"Forests play the most important role in maintaining Nature's harmony.*

*It is only due to them that there is any semblance of harmony in the world today.*

*Each country should try to protect its remaining forests and plant as many trees as possible." – Amma*

We were very fortunate to start off with a couple of experienced writers and photographers among our early members. Both are helpful if you are sending out news releases or writing articles to raise awareness.

If you don't have writer or photographer members, try to recruit some, but don't wait around – you can still be active without them. Good public speakers are also valuable. But even a normal, nervous speaker can make a difference by speaking with sincerity.

- Try using Meetup to find more people interested in joining you. Also, connect with local environmental groups. Neighbourhood groups often try to protect trees in their area. By banding together, we can bring more voices of support to tree issues, and put more pressure on communities to value trees.

- Take the time to do good research, and stick with the facts. You'll be able to use the information over and over. But if it's not factual, your reputation suffers and trust will be lost. You won't be able to accomplish as much.

- Study the tree policies on your own city's website, and also learn something about the policies of nearby municipalities. Find out what the best existing practices are in other places, too.

For instance, Victoria's bylaw protects non-native trees from being cut down only when they are 80 cm (about 31.5 inches) in diameter or bigger. Vancouver, on the other hand, has a newer bylaw that protects non-native trees from a much smaller size – 20 cm (nearly 8 inches). Armed with knowledge like this, you can make stronger demands for better bylaws.

- Some very good advice from a Vancouver politician, Sarah Blyth: Don't just tell politicians what they're doing wrong. Suggest a solution. Make a case for it. She says: "Someone needs to be willing to create a case for something, be tough, and present it so that no one can say no to it, because it's the right thing to do."

- Write 'letters to the editor' regarding local tree issues. Sign it with your name, and the name of your group.
- If you have a Facebook or social media information page, people will be able to find your group online. You can post informative articles about trees, and also notify people about local issues.

- Make a list of local media – newspapers, online news, local TV and radio stations, etc. Find out where to send news items. Letters to the editor may use the same or a different email address.



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- Learn how to take good photos if you don't have an experienced photographer in your group. Your news release stands a better chance of being published if it's accompanied by a well-focused, clear, interesting photo with no visual clutter.
- Learn how to write a news release or media release. You can find information online about this. Your news release should have a contact person from your group, phone number and email address. It should explain who, what, where, when, why and how. Make the first lines as lively and interesting as possible, so people will read on. Keep it short and informative.



We sent this photo of Vijaya Taylor planting a tree to local papers, with a news release about Canada's National Tree Day. We mentioned our new group, Community Trees Matter Network, and our email address. It was printed in several community newspapers.

- However, be prepared that your news release may not be used. Don't be discouraged if it isn't, this time. There may not be room to print it. Many newspapers are thin these days. But papers generally do want interesting local news stories, and you're giving them one. Other possibilities are that they may print it, but change it, or cut its length. Even if it's not printed, the editors will become more aware of your group and activities, and that people are interested in trees.
- Is there a regional or federal tree-planting or 'tree appreciation day' in your country or area? Before that date, take a great photo of volunteers planting trees. Send out a short news release about it. You can add some of the benefits trees give us (see links below), and encourage people to plant trees.
- Write an opinion editorial for a local paper about the importance of trees, or to draw attention to a local tree issue. Include lots of facts. Most people don't know all the amazing things trees do for us and the planet.

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- Find out if your group can meet with parks staff to ask questions about policies you don't like. Make sure you read the information your city has on its website about its tree policies. It helps if you can say, for instance, "I notice your policy is to post a notice at least 10 days before a publicly-owned tree is cut down, and that doesn't seem to be happening."
- Find out if your group can make a presentation to your municipal or regional government. If possible, get lots of supporters to show up. We asked people to bring or wear something tree-related in order to stand out. Several of our members spoke at recent council meetings, and it seemed to have quite an effect on the councillors. (Parks staff even broke out in applause at one point, although applauding is not permitted.) Other members have met with councillors and/or parks staff.
- Think about building bridges. Even if you're frustrated, make it clear you're criticizing the policies, not the people. Find out the reasons for the policies. Maybe your group can suggest realistic alternatives. Hopefully, you will have long relationships, and it helps if they can be as positive as possible.
- If there's an election coming up, try to make trees an election issue. Several of our members attended all-candidates' meetings, to publicly ask questions about how they would respond to our concerns. We also came up with a list of tree-related questions, and emailed them to every single candidate, mentioning we planned to post the results on our website. Many replied, some with obvious sincerity. We posted all the replies, referred to them on Facebook, and asked people to share the information widely. Our website post also came in handy after the election to refer back to who said what (some candidates had good suggestions), and who is most likely to give us a receptive ear.
- If you can afford it, have some 'business cards' printed up with your group's name and email address. Members can hand them out when they attend events, if people are interested in joining.
- In an email to our group members, we wrote a sample letter to City Council (this one urged Council to implement and budget the funding for the Urban Forest Master Plan that Council endorsed five years ago but didn't act on). We sent it to everyone on our email list, asking them to copy and paste the letter, add to it or edit it if they chose, sign it, and send it on to the City. We gave them councillors' email addresses to send it to (usually available online). It was quite well-used. One person re-wrote it slightly and, at the end, requested a response. She received one quite promptly. It was helpful to know the letters were being read.
- Now that we are more well-known, many people email us to tell us about trees that are threatened in their neighbourhoods. It helps to have relationships with city staff whom you can call or email with a question, such as 'someone is suggesting a tree is being poisoned, does this sound like a possibility?'

But we are also realizing we can't fight every single tree battle. Sometimes we simply offer suggestions, or we offer to write an informative post to put on Facebook.

## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

If you'd like to learn more about our group, Community Trees Matter Network, please check us out on Facebook, or see our website, [www.treesmatternetwork.com](http://www.treesmatternetwork.com). We were also mentioned in a recent local magazine article, which you can read here: <https://www.focusonvictoria.ca/janfeb2019/victorias-diminishing-urban-forest-r17>

This year, our group plans to host a series of speakers on the subject of trees, to help increase awareness of their importance, and how many we're losing.

Some of the other activities we're considering include: talking to school classes about all the things trees do for us; talking to neighbourhood associations about the importance of trees, giving an annual award to the local municipality with the most tree-positive policies, and hosting a tree-focused children's art and essay contest, which would require children to learn more about trees.

Good luck! Please let us know how your tree advocacy group grows and develops! ([treesmatternetwork@gmail.com](mailto:treesmatternetwork@gmail.com))

More info on why we need urban trees:

<https://www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm>

<https://www.treepeople.org/tree-benefits>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/reasons-living-trees-are-valuable-1343514>

Halifax's wonderful, very informative 5-minute video on the importance of urban trees:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyXDjOamDj8>

Great idea for putting signs on urban trees slated for removal:

<https://www.facebook.com/ThinkingHumanity/photos/pcb.2091955320865346/2091954494198762/?type=3&theater>

News story about the "Goodbye and thank-you" event:

<https://www.vicnews.com/news/celebration-of-life-hosted-for-29-victoria-trees-set-to-be-removed>

# Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

## Practice in Letting Go by Karuna



I have found that our GreenFriends Greenbelt Restoration Project has provided me with seemingly endless opportunities to practice life lessons and spiritual practices such as persistence, flexibility, being in the moment, surrender, impermanence, non-attachment, equanimity and letting go.

When I think of letting go, I think of the title of a book that I purchased in the mid-80's, *Life is Goodbye, Life is Hello: Grieving Well Through All Kinds of Loss*. The title reminds me that loss is inevitable and it often, if not usually, leads to grief. I know that grief includes anger and fear as well as sadness. I believe that every ending brings with it a new beginning and that it becomes easier for us to let go as our faith grows; e.g., faith in God, faith in ourselves, faith in others.

I knew early on that the reforestation work would give me many opportunities to practice letting go. In my initial Forest Steward training, the students were told that we should be prepared to lose 30% of the trees, shrubs and ground covers that we plant. The thought of so many plants dying was totally unacceptable to me, but I also realized that I have no control over the weather and very little control over disease.

A forest is not like a garden that you can keep well-watered; the amount of water that the plants receive is determined by the weather. I did have some control over whether the plants were planted properly and stayed free of invasive blackberry, ivy and bindweed vines. And I could give them my attention and my love. My job would be to put in the effort and let go of the results.

Just before we did our first tree planting in November of 2017, our GreenFriends group performed rituals asking Mother Nature for permission to plant and requesting that she protect and nurture everything we planted. We also placed blessed petals on every plant we planted that year. We didn't lose anywhere near 30% of our November 2017- March 2018 plantings. In fact, during this summer's long drought, only one of the trees died and almost all of the shrubs and ground covers grew substantially.





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

While I have experienced lessons in letting go throughout the project, November 2018 seemed to bring more of them than ever before. Before I tell you about some of those events, I will share a bit of back story. In April of 2018, I decided we would clear some of the invasive vines on Cheasty Boulevard, the street on the east side of our site. As I walked down the road looking for a place to start, my eyes fell on some gigantic cottonwoods hidden among dense blackberry and ivy vines. I thought that was a perfect area for us to begin the new endeavor.

On April 27, a corporate group from DocuSign came to work on our site. We divided the participants into several groups. One group worked on freeing those cottonwood trees from the invasive vines.



In the months after the work party, I enjoyed walking down Cheasty Blvd. to visit the trees. They were so big and majestic. The photos above don't accurately reflect their height or their width. Then, on November 5th, I received a notice from one of the Green Seattle Partnership staff saying that a number of cottonwood trees on Cheasty Boulevard were going to be cut down. Tests had been done that showed the trees were hollow and had significant decay in the lower part of the trees and roots. If they fell, they would be dangerous.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



I had a sense that some of the trees that were to be removed were “my trees,” so I walked down the Hanford stairs to look. Two of those trees had big R’s written in white chalk on the trunks which confirmed my fear. I was not surprised though. The trees were very old and one had a big fungus (*Ganoderma*) on it, which is also a sign of decay.

My lack of surprise was also because in July, a smaller cottonwood tree on a nearby site had fallen across the road. I say smaller but it was still very tall—tall enough that when it fell, it took down the power lines on the far side of the street.

When I had looked at the remains of that tree, I had seen that it was hollow. So even though I felt sad that the big cottonwoods were going to be cut down, I understood the importance of the act. Safety is of primary importance. Also, it was much easier for me to accept this situation than it might have been in a different circumstance—such as when trees are removed in the course of housing construction or because they block a view.

The trees that were to be removed were so large that the city had to hire a crane company to cut down the top part of the trees. I didn’t go anywhere near the work that day, but I did watch and take pictures from my back yard, which borders the site. I was shocked when I saw the size of the crane through the trees. My uneducated guess was that it was 250 feet high. (There is a steep drop off between the main part of our site and Cheasty Blvd., so the bottom quarter of the crane and tree trunks cannot be seen in the photos below.)





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

The person in the basket not only cut off the top portion of the tree, he/she also cut off most or all of the branches. At one point during the day, my whole house shook. I thought that must have been caused by one of the tops falling to the earth, or was it a whole tree?



I thought it was curious that several of the largest trees were left standing. I later found out that Seattle Parks Department would be finishing the job.

The next day, when I walked into the Greenbelt and arrived at our eastern planting areas, I was horrified to see that the top of one of the trees had fallen onto one planting area and part of another. I had never considered such a possibility and was very afraid that our plants had gotten squashed. I knew it was another letting go opportunity, but this one wasn't going to be easy; I was way too attached.





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

When I looked closely through the shattered cottonwood branches, I could see one of the baby evergreen trees we had planted. After walking back to my house to get a pair of hand clippers, I returned and cut away some of the branches. With relief, I found that the baby tree was okay.

We had a work party scheduled for the next day. It was obvious that we would need to let go of at least part of our plans for the work party. I didn't know how we would manage to move the big branches, but that wasn't the task for the present. Dealing with the smaller branches would be the first step.

I called Andrea, one of my Green Seattle Partnership supervisors. We talked about what had happened, and she agreed we could remove some of the small branches but said we would need to be sure none of the ones that were holding the tree's trunk off the ground were cut. We didn't want to chance anyone getting hurt.

Andrea mentioned that some Parks Department staff would be coming later that day and would take a look at the situation. When I walked down to that part of the site that evening, I was astounded by what I saw.

The Parks Department staff had indeed come. They had cut up all of the branches and had stacked them neatly out of the way. I soon discovered that not a single plant had been injured by the falling tree or by the staff's work. In fact, the planting areas were neater than they had been before the event. The branches, and the trunk that had fallen outside of the planting area, would decrease the chance of erosion and would become a home for insects and other wildlife.



What an experience this had been. I felt like I had been on a roller coaster. I had been willing to let go, but not until I put in the effort to do what I could do to save the plants. I had also been willing to let go of the plans for the work party so we could do things that were more important.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

In the end, the plants were fine, and we were able to return to the original work party plan. My faith in the support that is available from Green Seattle Partnership and the Seattle Parks Department had grown.

As I reflected on the incident during the next few days, I remembered the rituals we had done asking Mother Nature to protect the plants. My faith in that process also grew.

A week or two later, as I was waking up, I was pondering how I would write this article. When I got out of bed and checked my email, I received another shock, and another letting go opportunity. Since April of 2017, our primary work force for the restoration project had been the students from the University of Washington's Introduction to Environmental Science class. The email that was in my inbox that morning informed me that the professor who taught that class had retired, and the class was in flux. It, for sure, would not be offered Winter quarter and there was no guarantee that a future instructor would have a volunteer service requirement. This would be a tough letting go challenge.

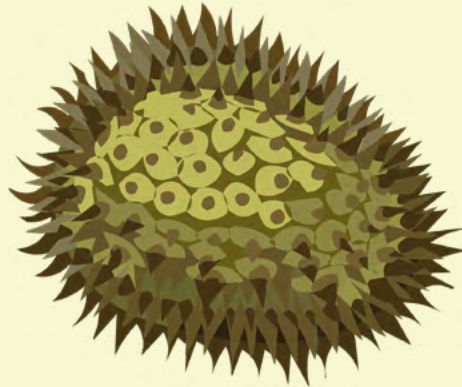
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**Update:** Later in November the city took down more cottonwood trees that were near the road on the Greenbelt site north of ours. This week, I took photos of some of those trees. I think they demonstrate how the trees were dying from the inside out.



## Nature

### The Fascinating Jackfruit by Karuna



Last month, when I was in Amma's Amritapuri ashram, I saw a tree that had a jackfruit growing on it. I have seen jackfruit in markets before but never on a tree. A few days later, I went back to that area of the ashram to take a closer look.

A friend from Malaysia was standing nearby, so I confirmed that the fruit was indeed a jackfruit. She told me jackfruit trees usually have a lot more fruit on them than this tree, and the trees generally don't grow so tall. Since this tree was near tall buildings, she thought it was probably reaching for sunlight.

The first photo below was taken looking up at the top of the tree. The second is of its middle section. You can see a new fruit that is beginning to grow and a spot below that is flowering. The third photo is of the two big jackfruit that originally drew my attention.





## Nature



When I looked up jackfruit on the internet, I learned some interesting facts.

1. Jackfruit is the state fruit of Kerala, India, the state where the Amritapuri ashram is located.
2. Jackfruit can weight up to 80 pounds, and grow to be 35 inches long and 20 inches in diameter.
3. A mature tree may produce up to 250 jackfruit a year.
4. One site said a jackfruit is made up of many flowers (hundreds to thousands of them) and it is the petals that are being eaten. Another site described the fruit as edible bulbs.
5. Ripe jackfruit are eaten as a fruit; an unripe jackfruit is used as a vegetable.
6. Every part of the tree can be utilized. The wood is termite resistant.
7. The fruit is high in fiber and a good source of vitamin C and B vitamin complex. It is also a significant source of a variety of minerals.
8. ackfruit grows in the tropics. It has been found in India for 3000-6000 years.

The two jackfruit photos below and the graphic at the beginning of the article come from [pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com).



## Nature



To read more about jackfruit go to:

[25 Fun and Interesting Facts about Jackfruit](#)

[Fun Facts about Jackfruit](#)

[Jackfruit Nutrition Facts](#)

The last photo I will share is a close-up of the jackfruit I saw on the tree in Amritapuri.





# PNW Litter Project

## PNW Litter Project Stats

In December 2018, **37** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **67** hours. (Average **1.8** hours; Median **1** hour; Range **2** minutes to **10** hours) In January 2019 **34** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **70** hours. (Average **2.1** hours; Median **1** hour; Range **2** minutes to **10** hours) We have picked up litter for **10,317** hours since the project began in July of 2011.



## TerraCycle Stats

TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable. We have sent them **341,224** cigarette butts since 2013. GreenFriends has also sent them **394** Drink Pouches, **732** Cereal Bag liners, and **2,997** Energy Bar wrappers.

### From Ellen in Seattle:

[My 7000m coastal litter mission](#)

['Miss Environment': The 11-year-old girl 'saving Lagos'](#)

### From Karuna in Seattle:

[Plastics Watch: Could seaweed replace plastic packaging?](#)

[Drowning in Plastic](#)

## Kick Butts Day Work Party

**March 3rd**

The PNW Litter Project is sponsoring our 8th annual cigarette butt pick up work party in support of [Kick Butt Day](#), a campaign for tobacco free kids. The event will go from 10 am to noon. We will meet at [Hing Hay Park \(Map\)](#) in the International District of Seattle, and spread out from there. Everyone from everywhere is welcome to attend. If you would like to participate in the Seattle event, *or create a similar event in your own area* sometime during March, contact Karuna at [karunap108@comcast.net](mailto:karunap108@comcast.net).

Your effort will help keep these toxic butts out of landfills, waterways and the stomachs of fish, birds, and animals.

## Source Reduction

### Sustainable Dental Care by Diya

This is the second article in a three-part series on sustainable, alternative-to-plastic products I've tried and love! In this article, I decided to focus on dental care as I am somewhat obsessive about my teeth.

Okay, I'm actually very obsessive. It's not really my fault though. I was just born with extremely heightened tactile-sensitivity. I'm one of those people who will tear a hole into a brand-new shirt, trying desperately to rip the tags off because I can "feel" them. But really - who's idea was it to attach an itchy little flap stitched with prickly thread into multiple places in our clothing? So, anything stuck in between my teeth that I can feel with my tongue is an absolute no-go and has to be dealt with ASAP.

I try to be discreet, as I was raised with good manners. Though I have been known, on occasion, to go to town with a piece of dental floss at a stoplight. The only redeeming fact about that scenario is that my floss is zero waste.

On that note, here are the sustainable dental care products I have tried that I really like. Not only because they actually work, but because they are better for our planet:

**Product #1: Dental Lace Dental Floss:** <https://www.dentalace.com/pages/about-us>

\*Did you know that many brands such as a Glide dental floss contain toxic PFAS chemicals?



Not only do I love the product, I love the story of the woman who created it and how it came to be. I'm always inspired by people's ingenuity, especially in regards to helping the environment. Dental Lace floss comes in a glass container with a metal lid which are both recyclable, its refillable, the floss is made from silk which can be composted and it comes in completely plastic-free biodegradable and compostable packaging. I know the owner is working on a vegan option that will be compostable as well. All around, it's just a great product!

## Source Reduction

**Product #2: Senza Bamboo Toothbrushes:** <https://www.senzabamboo.com>

\*Did you know 1 BILLION toothbrushes are thrown away every year in the US? That's enough to go around Mother Earth 4 times!



These are my favorite toothbrushes. The bamboo handle can be composted after use. Unfortunately, the technology for plant-based bristles just isn't there yet. Senza suggests pulling the nylon bristles out with pliers and discarding them before composting the brush. The packaging is completely plant-based and recyclable and compostable. They also donate 3% of their proceeds from their hairbrush and make-up sets to Mary's Place women's shelter in Seattle, where the company is based. They, too, make a plastic-free dental floss but I haven't tried this one yet.

**Product #3: DIY Toothpaste**

\*Did you know an estimated 400 million toothpaste tubes are thrown away in the US every year? There are also harmful chemicals in many [name-brand toothpastes](#).

Here is a simple DIY recipe from one of my favorite Zero Waste websites, [Trash Is For Tossers](#):

### Zero Waste toothpaste:

3 tablespoons coconut oil

3 ½ tablespoons baking soda

25-30 drops organic, food grade peppermint essential oil

Mix all three ingredients together in a glass jar.

## Source Reduction

Scoop out a little bit with a spoon and put on your toothbrush and enjoy!



It may take some getting used to, as there are no artificial sweeteners or flavors in this recipe but your body will thank you! You can add more or less peppermint and coconut oil based on your taste and textural preference. If you don't like this recipe, there are many other DIY options out there and that is the beauty of Google and Pinterest!

If you are someone who just doesn't have a lot of time or is not the DIY type, there are many natural toothpastes available today such as Tom's of Maine. Tom's even has a partnership with Terracycle, so you can mail in your empty toothpaste tubes free of charge and they will be recycled:

<https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/tom-s-of-maine-natural-care-brigade#@40.36969605147924:-102.08939924677736zoom:4>

There are so many inspiring resources today about how to live a more simple and sustainable life, which not only honors ourselves, but Mother Nature and all other beings in whom we share this beautiful blue planet.





# Amritapuri Gardens

## Amrita University School of Biotechnology





## Amritapuri Gardens

