



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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PNW Litter Project

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

NEWS

Needed: Writers and Photographers



In order to keep the PNW GreenFriends Newsletter as a monthly publication, we need to have more people who are willing to write articles and share their stories or photographs. Contributors beyond the Pacific Northwest are welcome to participate. If you would consider helping in this way, contact [Karuna](#). She will send more information to anyone who is interested in contributing.

PNW Gardening

How Healthy is Your Soil? by Lin



A couple of years ago I bagged samples of soil from my vegetable garden and stock tank planters, marked them with the type of plants I was growing, and mailed them off to the free King County Soil Testing Program. The results were illuminating and very helpful in light of the nutrients and pH needed by the types of fruits, vegetables and ornamentals I was growing. I promptly added some bone meal (minerals), alfalfa pellets (nitrogen), and a heaping layer of composted yardwaste mixed with organic dairy manure from Bailey Compost in Snohomish <http://www.bailey-compost.com>. Since then my plants have been much healthier and more productive. With a soil baseline established, I've been able to monitor ongoing nutrient and pH levels with a home-test soil kit.

Here's a summary from the website for the **KCD Soil Testing Program**:

<http://kingcd.org/programs/better-soils/healthy-soil>

The King Conservation District provides basic soil tests for all residents and municipalities in our service area (which includes 34 cities and all of unincorporated King County). The cities of Enumclaw, Federal Way, Skykomish, Milton, and Pacific are outside the District boundaries, but residents of those cities can have samples processed for a fee of \$20 per soil test. If you live outside of King County, send soil samples to [A&L Western Labs](#) in Portland, OR. The District's soil testing program covers commercial farms, pastures, parks, **home yards, and community gardens**.

Each resident in our service area is eligible during their lifetime for a total of five free basic soil nutrient tests for properties they either own or rent. Additional soil tests can be ordered for \$20 each.

PNW Gardening

[Download the KCD Soil Sample Submittal Form PDF](#)

Put 2 cups of your soil sample in a ziplock bag and send it in on a Monday so the sample is fresh. Put your email address in the box. Label each sack with your name and what you want to use the soil for.

We will send your soil samples to A&L Western Laboratories in Portland, OR, to test for Nitrogen, Phosphate, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Sulfur, Organic Matter, pH, and Cation Exchange Capacity. The laboratory will analyze your soils and provide recommendations specific to your plant needs. You will receive a detailed 12-page report back by email. Among many other details, the test will tell you what your soil is lacking and what you need to do.

The King Conservation District pays only for basic nutrient tests. Additional tests for heavy metals or other soil properties are charged separately.



Both photos are from pixabay.com

PNW Gardening

Backyard Greens in Duvall by Naveena



PNW Gardening

Marigolds in Bryan's Victoria, BC Garden

Bryan stands in his garden in Victoria, amid marigolds seeded from malas used for a Shiva puja.



Photo by John <http://johntaylorphoto.ca>

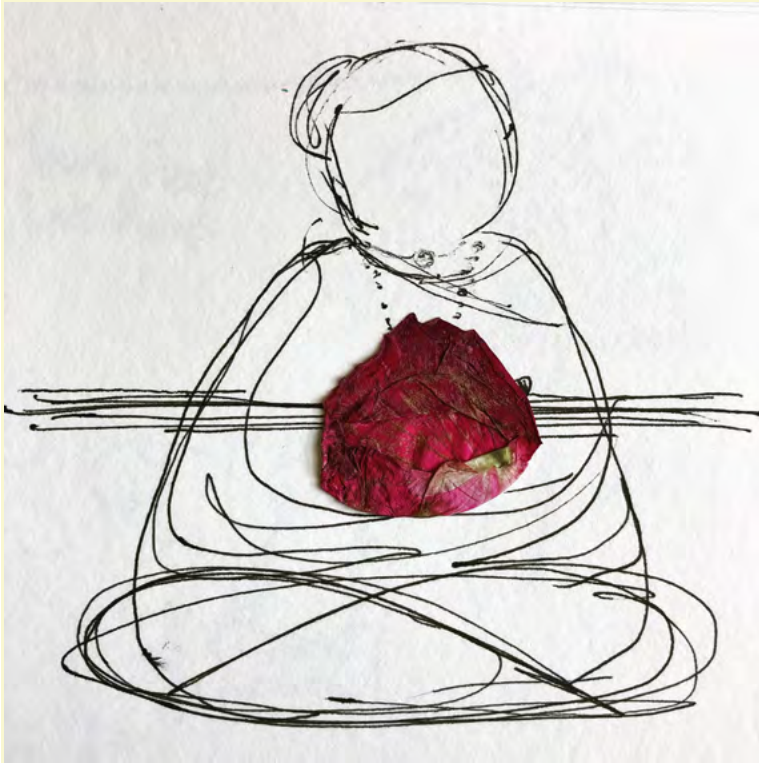
Nature

Washington State Deer Photos by Cindy



Nature

Photos from Eugene, OR by Sarah



Nature



Nature

Washington State Nature Photos by Eric



Nature



Cowiche



Cowiche



Snow Mountain Ranch in Cowiche

Nature



Camano Island



Camano Island



Camano Island

Nature

Photos from Bodega Head, CA by Shantimayi



Nature



Nature

Mother Nature's Busy World by Lin



Things are pretty quiet at my house these days. It's just me and my laptop with a cup of hot tea at the dining room table. But the two sections of plate glass beside me provide an excellent window into the active world of neighborhood wildlife.



One morning I was astonished to see a squirrel jump up and grab a fern frond for a wrestling match. He'd jump away, then dive back in for more rolling around. The poor frond was left battered and bent as the squirrel raced off for hijinks elsewhere. Talk about hyperactive! Cute baby birds have fledged. They're hopping around the patio begging their parents for feedings. A couple of brown rabbits bound through every so often—one is still a baby, the other an adolescent.

On sunny days, I sit with my feet up in the Adirondack chair just outside my back door. Hummingbirds visit the feeder, whirring their wings above my head. Sometimes they hover a foot or two in front of my face, getting a good look

Nature

at this lady who supplies their nectar. About 6 or 7 feet away is a ceramic plate of water, and I get a big kick out of the Oregon juncos that use it for a birdbath without seeming to be bothered by my nearness. The other morning a raccoon paid a visit... perhaps fluffy babies will be trailing her soon.



I like that things are quiet and orderly indoors and buzzing with activity outside. Watching by the hour is fascinating and entertaining and, unlike naturalists holed up in freezing or broiling blinds with biting insects, my wildlife blind has all the amenities.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Wildlife in the Greenbelt Restoration Site by Karuna



Photo Credit: [Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

I have been excited to see the wildlife in our restoration site increase. During a break in one of the April work parties, a student and I sat quietly on a recently-built platform. In addition to gazing at the trees, shrubs and ground covers in the planting area in front of us, I heard and saw many birds. I felt so much peace as I took in the sights and sounds.



We spent part of that work party building wood chip rings around plants. (Those rings will help keep the ground moist during the dry summer months.) In the process of building the rings, we used up the wood chips in two wood chip piles that were located on the site. At one point, when I sat on the ground near one of those areas, I noticed insects (gnats?) coming out of the remains of the woodchips. As I watched, four robins flew to the area and started feasting on them. They didn't seem to care that I was sitting so close to them.

When I walked into the Greenbelt in mid-May, the first thing I saw was a hummingbird. Many of the shrubs we've planted are supposed to draw hummingbirds, but this was the first one I'd seen. In addition to the robins and the

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

hummingbird, I've seen lots of sparrows, chickadees, crows, flickers, and a few blue jays.

Later that day, as I was getting ready to leave the Greenbelt, I saw a small rabbit and baby bunny in front of me. To the right of them were two robins looking for food and to the left two squirrels were scurrying around. Again, I felt a sense of peace and was very grateful to be able to witness this scene.

Single yellow swallowtail butterflies, like the one in the photo at the beginning of this article, have flown through the site for the last two years, but one day last month I had a quick glimpse of an orange one. I've also seen bumblebees, honeybees, mason bees and wasps.



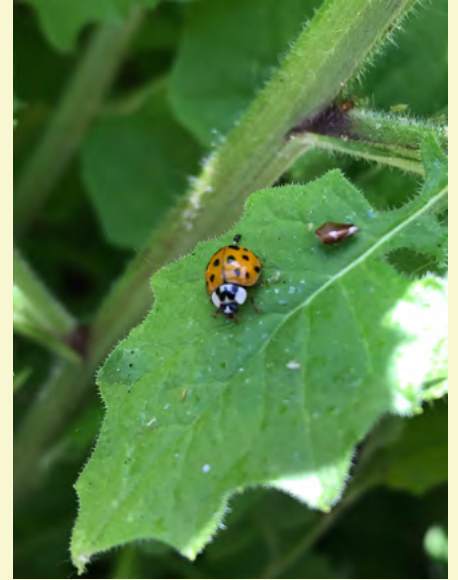
Last week there was a dead mole on one of the paths. I felt sad to see it. I don't know how it died but was thankful that the person who was with me buried it. I know there are raccoons on the property, because I've seen their droppings, so maybe that is what caught and killed it.

I've seen rabbits several times recently. They have usually been munching on a particular type of weed. I decided to leave a patch of them for a while hoping they would stick to that diet rather than munch on the shrubs and ground covers we've planted. I haven't seen any rabbits for the last week though, so maybe the weeds have gotten too tough for their taste.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

A few days after I took the photo above, I saw ladybugs on the weeds. Then I noticed there were aphids. Someone recently had seen an aphid on a plant and told me that ladybugs would show up soon, because lady bugs eat aphids. I also noticed that there were three types of ladybugs on the plants. I wondered if these were actually the same type of ladybug but were at three different stages of development; i.e., baby, youngster, mature.



I've tried to take photos of the rabbits, birds and squirrels, but they almost always take off before I can get a shot. Probably if I sat down and quietly waited, I would be able to take more photos, but when I sit down, I usually see weeds that need to be removed so continue with that never-ending task.

Yesterday I saw the bug in the photo below, a large dark black beetle and a dark black centipede. Several days before, I had seen an unfamiliar winged insect.



I am happy that so many forms of wildlife are now living in our Greenbelt site. I hope my descriptions give you a taste of the excitement and the peace I feel as I watch them. I also encourage you to come visit the site and have an experience of your own.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Site Plants: May and June 2019 by Karuna

The Greenbelt trees, shrubs and ground covers are growing so fast. Many are flowering; some are developing fruit or seed pods.



Mock Orange



Oregon Grape berries



Pacific Ninebark



Bleeding Heart



Oceanspray

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Pearly Everlasting



Nodding Onion

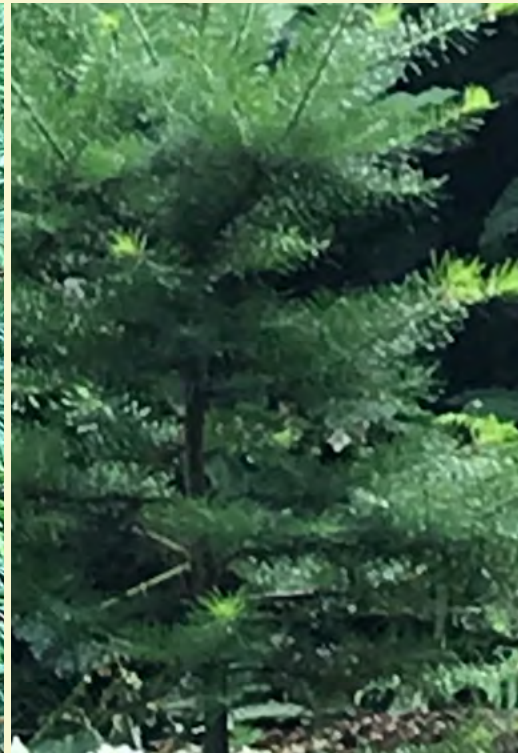
Most of the trees are now four to five feet tall; some of them are even taller.



Grand Fir



Cedar



Douglas Fir

Another example of “fast growing” is the Elderberry shrub in the photo below. When we planted it on March 15, 2019 it was a stem with one leaf. This is what it looks like now:

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Pearly Everlasting

Some of the elderberry plants we planted in spring of 2018 are now more than ten feet tall!



The blackberry and bindweed vines, and other weeds, are also growing fast. We could use your help in removing them. Work parties are scheduled for July 7 and July 28 from 10-1. For more information and/or to sign up go to:

Sunday July 7 <https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/16433>

Sunday July 28 <https://seattle.greencitypartnerships.org/event/16438>

PNW Litter Project

Litter Stats

In June 2019, 30 Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for 61.5 hours. (Average 2.1 hours; Median 1 hour; Range 3 minutes to 14 hours) We have picked up litter for 10,666 hours since the project began in July of 2011.



TerraCycle Stats

GreenFriends has sent them 355,724 cigarette butts, 394 drink pouches, 1,362 cereal bag liners, and 4,147 energy bar wrappers since 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]



Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Jovanna in Pt. Townsend:

[Planting Trees as Resistance and Empowerment: The Remarkable Illustrated Story of Wangari Maathai, the First African Woman to Win the Nobel Peace Prize](#)

From Eileen in Seattle:

[Your Litter Kills](#)

From Kathie in Bellevue:

I think Bellevue Crows actually act a bit differently than these more famous Seattle ones but what a great study and story. Hope you enjoy it.

[The Secret Life of Urban Crows...and why Seattle may be the Corvid Capital of the World.](#)

One of my regular early morning friends...

**From Donna in Kirkland:**

[Climate Victory Gardens Facebook Page](#)

From Karuna in Seattle:

[You could be swallowing a credit card's weight in plastic every week, study shows](#)
[Morrisons bans plastic packaging from fruit and veg](#)