



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

PNW Gardening

Harvesting Culinary Herbs



This is the ideal time for harvesting Mediterranean culinary herbs: Thyme, Rosemary, Marjoram, and of course my favorite: Savory. The picture shows Winter Savory (*Satureja montana*) at this time of year, just prior to flowering, and it illustrates my point. Harvest prior to flowering, giving the whole plant a haircut to shape it into a mounding form. If you wait until the plant goes to flower, the herb will be coarser, less aromatic, filled with flower fragments that are not as tasty as the green leaf, which is ideal for spice. Do not delay--these plants run to flower so fast that a day or two can make a big difference!

If you're really into it, and want to process herb for storage and/or sale, I recommend using herb rubbing screens. If you use ones that are finely wrought, they will do a great job of grinding spices to the correct size for culinary use, and removing twigs, which are not part of the spice.

<https://www.facebook.com/Strictly-Medicinal-Seeds-348837717347>

Gardening

Proper Weed Trimming and Other June Gardening Tips by Leonard Perry, UVM Horticulturist and Charlie Nardozzi, Garden Consultant

Proper weed trimming, pruning lilacs, and preventing cucumber beetles are some of the gardening activities for this month.

If you're using a string trimmer to trim around trees, be careful not to damage the tree bark. Repeatedly striking tree bark with weed whacker strings opens the tree to infection, and may over time kill the tree by cutting through the tender bark. Technically, this is known as “girdling”. Mulch around trees so you don't have to trim close to the trunk, or place tree guards on the trunks. Just make sure you don't pile mulch up around the trunks.



[Picture: Wikipedia](#)

After lilacs finish flowering, you can “deadhead” or prune off the old blossoms. I haven't noticed leaving this significantly affects future flowering, and birds love the seeds they produce later in the season.

To reduce the height of tall lilacs, prune the old stems to the ground and allow new suckers to grow and flower.

This is drastic and will reduce the height all at once, but it will take several years for the plant to look attractive

again. This also won't work on the many lilacs that are grafted or budded. This means the desirable cultivar (cultivated variety) is growing on a vigorous understock or roots. Prune the tops off, and this less desired cultivar will take over. What was a red lilac may then become purple, or an early lilac may become a late species.

If plants are large, taking one-third of the old stems out over a three-year period doesn't create the dramatic butchered effect of pruning all at once. Some prefer to prune in late winter when it is easier to see the branch structure. Pruning early, though, will remove this year's flower buds which begin forming soon after bloom of the previous year.

Young cucumber, melon, and squash plants are easy prey for cucumber beetles. As the seedlings grow, these yellow-striped or yellow-spotted beetles emerge to feed on the foliage. The beetles also spread bacterial wilt disease. To control them in a small planting, cover plants with a lightweight white fabric referred to as a “floating row cover”

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(until blooms begin to open—by then the adult beetles should be moved on), spray pyrethrum botanical spray, or trap them with yellow traps coated with petroleum jelly.

Keep new plantings well-watered throughout the summer. Many new flower varieties you may have purchased in pots like lots of fertilizer. If you didn't incorporate a slow release chemical fertilizer into planters, you can "topdress" or sprinkle some on top. Or use a liquid fertilizer (synthetic or organic), applied often and according to label directions and amounts.



[Picture: Wikipedia](#)

As your peony blooms fade, snip off the dead blossoms. Removing the dead blossoms will not only make the bush more attractive, it will allow the plant to send more energy to the leaves and roots and less to producing seed. Spent blossoms also are prone to the gray mold disease which looks just as its name indicates.

Peonies are hardy, easy care, long lasting perennials with gorgeous blooms. If you're looking for one, check out 'Mahogany'. This Japanese type peony gets 28- to 36-inches high, with shiny dark red petals which contrast nicely with the yellow central stamens. The single, cup-shaped flowers bloom early to mid-season, and make good cut flowers. It has been around since 1937, when it was bred by Lyman Glasscock. In 2015 'Mahogany' won a gold medal from the American Peony Society, and was chosen by them as the 2016 Peony of the Year.

Source: <http://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/jun16tips.html> (Used with Permission)

Read more of Dr. Perry's work at [Perry's Perennial Pages](#)

NATURE

The Rhododendrons are Blooming by Karuna Poole

When I visited the Maltby property, home of the future MA Center Pacific Northwest, I was blessed with this sight.



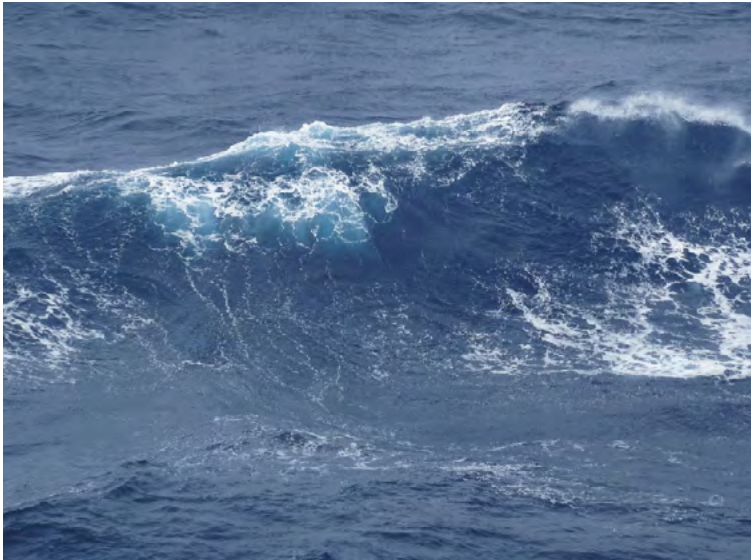
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In 1892, the [women of Washington State](#) chose the Coast Rhododendron to be the state flower, but it wasn't made official until 1959. Below are photos of some of the Rhododendrons in my neighborhood.



NATURE

Storm Sunsets Mid-Atlantic Photos by Cindy Knoke



<https://cindyknoke.com/2016/04/28/storm-sunsets-mid-atlantic>

Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Rosemary in New York City:

I was able to get an initiative passed at my food co-op for a year-long trial participation in the TerraCycle Zero Waste Fee-Based Plastic Packaging Collection program. The Co-op approved a \$5000 budget to purchase up to two bins per month for a year. Now we Co-op members will be able to deposit all of the plastic packaging that comes from buying produce and products at the store. These broader collection bins cost because they are not manufacturer sponsored like the specific free brigades (TerraCycle's word for manufacturer specific brand collections).

When I did a brief survey last year, I noted that over 300 different types of produce and products wrapped in plastic were sold there. We've been doing six free brigades for the last 9 months (two 2 hour collections per month, collecting baby food pouches, cereal bag liners, food storage bags and cling wrap, Brita filters, energy bar wrappers, and toothpaste tubes and brushes) thus far, collecting close to 50,000 items in the free brigades. While continuing with the free brigade collections, we will expand our collections to now include all other plastic packaging waste from products sold at our Coop. We are launching the broad plastic packaging collection in June. This is really all happening because of the inspiration of the Seattle GreenFriends group.

I also now have a contact in Mayor DeBlasio's office for his "NYC Zero Waste by 2030" initiative and hope to get involved on a city wide level before leaving here.

From Iswari in Edmonds:

Article and video about what a family has been able to do on one tenth of an acre fifteen minutes from downtown Los Angeles. <http://inhabitat.com/this-family-produces-6000-pounds-of-food-per-year-on-4000-square-feet-of-land/>

From Julie in Washington D.C.:

My office is 3 blocks from the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. This building is as beautiful as any church in Europe. I am one block from Catholic University. I now know how to use the subway trains and travel all over the city. There is a lot of trash in Washington DC because they are not a state and they do not have consistent funding to hire people to clean up the streets, etc. Our nation's capital is a stinky mess in some areas. It is heart breaking to see this mess. I will continue to pick up garbage and pray that others begin picking up trash, too. I also try to hold the belief that I am honoring the Mother of the planet, and picking up trash is a way to worship the Mother. I pick up trash as a form of worship. Lots of people stop and stare at me. It is a very odd feeling to be stared at for picking up trash.

Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Kathie in Bellevue:

My mind is blown for sure!! I want to OWN (and decorate a whole room around) the flutter of doves flying upward!
And the dog looking up? So cute!!

<http://moodybluesattitude.yuku.com/topic/22388/Re-Artist-Calvin-Nicholls-Paper-Sculpture?page=-1#.V0rpamzmr4g>

From Kothai in Bellevue:

France Declares All New Rooftops Must Be Topped With Plants or Solar Panels

<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2015/04/01/france-declares-all-new-rooftops-must-be-topped-with-plants-or-solar-panels>

From Rajani in Whidbey Island:

I made this tonight from my garden-peas, spinach, kale, arugula, basil, rose petals & strawberries.



From Achala in Tacoma:

Oh, how I would love to do this! I'd really like to create large installations of scrap metal art to sink in the ocean to help create coral reefs. I have to learn how to weld now! <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/ActivitiesAndEvents/Celebrations/washed-ashore.cfm>