



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)

## PNW Gardening

### Spring Is Sprung by Lin

Spring is my favorite time of year in the Pacific Northwest. Well, summer is pretty terrific too. But my yard is at its best in spring. Daffodils come up, and rhododendrons bloom, along with the dogwoods, plum trees, and azaleas.

A couple of rabbits must be living under the shed out back. I see them on my garden paths and patios. The young teenager bunny was curious enough to peer through my back window, even though I was on my laptop just a few feet away.

Even friendlier wildlife in the form of a pair of nest-building Oregon juncos joined me when I pressure washed the patio. Just a few feet away they gathered bits of twigs and strands of dried grass, not seeming to mind getting showered by muddy spray ricocheting off the patio's surface. When the nozzle built up mucky piles of fir needles, the juncos attacked with glee—presumably finding yummy bugs amid the mess. Ah, spring is good.





# PNW Gardening

## A Work in Progress by Karuna





## PNW Gardening





## Nature

### Visitors in Spring by Kothai





## Nature

### Spring Photos by Karuna





# Nature

## Spring Photos by Sarah





## Nature

### Bandipur Jungles by Kothai



My husband sent me this picture he took as he was passing through the Bandipur Jungles on his way to Bangalore, in India.



## Nature

### Snoozing on Cannon Beach



## Interesting Information from Our Readers

### From Eileen in Seattle:

[How Our Toothbrushes are Littering Paradise](#)

[Climate Fwd: Newsletter May 15, 2019 \(New York Times\)](#)

### From Iswari in Edmonds:

[It's Not Entirely Up to School Students to Save the World](#)

I met two of the youth climate change kids. Two very driven Seattle area 16 year olds. One was from the organization <http://thisiszerohour.org>. Another girl represented the Youth Climate strike in Seattle area <https://www.facebook.com/climatestrikeUS>. Local group contact: <https://www.youthclimatestrikeus.org/washington> and <https://twitter.com/climatestrikewa>. I was very inspired by their eloquence and their commitment to getting the adults to add climate change to the agenda for the upcoming elections.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### A Birthday Present for Amma (Tree Planting) Report by Tirtha



Thank you to everyone who planted a tree (or many) to honor our beloved Amma's 65th birthday. There are some really awesome tree planters out there! From the time our campaign started last September until it ended March 31st, people have reported planting a grand total of 6,526 trees! May Amma bless all our beautiful trees with health and long life!

With so much enthusiasm from so many people, we are delighted to report that we have far surpassed our goal! But let's keep planting...

Whether we keep track of the numbers or not, trees bless us with many gifts. Their beauty lifts our spirits. They keep us cool in the summer. They produce oxygen, and store carbon. They reduce flooding, retain topsoil, buffer sound, and filter pollution from the air. As if that wasn't enough, they provide homes and food for birds and wildlife, as well as food for us.

Pranams and a big thank-you to all who supported this project. Your efforts made this possible!

Michigan



Oklahoma





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Maltby Live Willow Stakes



Seattle Greenbelt Restoration



Victoria



Vashon



Portland



Qualicum Beach, BC



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Greenbelt Restoration Work Party: DocuSign Returns



On April 24, DocuSign, a Seattle corporate group, came to help in our restoration project– for the fourth time! They are such a fun group to work with and are so productive.

We completed many tasks during the work party. One group removed the blackberry, ivy and bindweed vines, as well as other weeds, that were emerging in the south-end planting areas. When other groups finished their assigned tasks, they joined this group.

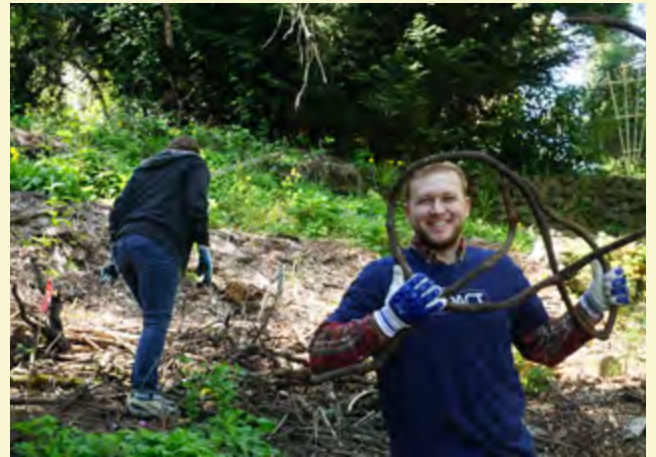




## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



A second group built new drying racks. Drying racks are primarily used to keep the invasive blackberry, bindweed and ivy vines off of the ground while they dry out. If the vines are left on the ground, there is a good chance they will re-root.



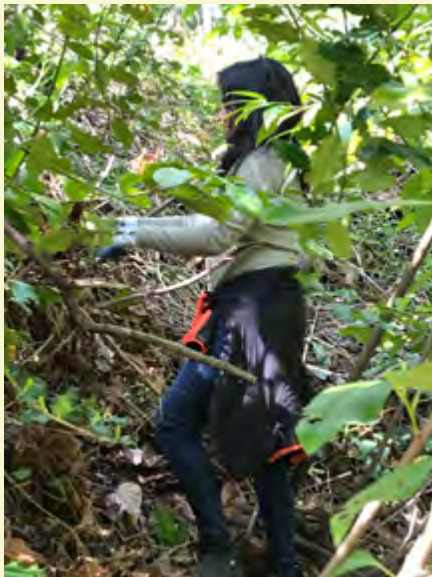


## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

A third group disassembled a pile of branches. They used some of them as mulch and distributed the rest to groups who were building new drying racks.



A fourth group built two drying racks and then stacked laurel branches on them to dry. An important element in urban forest restoration is the removal of non-native and invasive species. (Laurel is considered an invasive species.) Treating the invasive and non-native plants onsite is effective because once the plant material is completely dried out, it is then used as mulch.



A fifth group took an unsightly area that was filled with concrete slabs and broken cinder blocks and turned it into an area that not only looks nice but also has a structure we can use for orientation, breaks, shoe cleaning, group photos, etc. In fact, we used the new structure when we took the group photo at the top of this post!



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Before



During



After

We accomplished so much during the work party thanks to the five team leaders and the DocuSign volunteers. Everyone seemed to enjoy the work. We were very excited when the DocuSign coordinator told us they are planning to come back to our site in November. YAY!



## **Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration**

### **Greenbelt Restoration Work Party: May 4, 2019 by Karuna**

I expected our May 4 work party would be the biggest event we would hold in May. It might even be our biggest work party of the spring. After all, it was one of the Rainier Chamber of Commerce's Bridge to Beach cleanup events. In addition, shortly before the event, we were notified that the work party would be advertised in the Green Seattle Partnership Facebook Page and on their blog.

We had a group of five team leaders, which included me, ready to lead the flood of volunteers who might decide to participate. A neighbor who has worked on this project from the beginning would also be coming. Much to my surprise, the time before and during the work party, ended up being an opportunity for me to practice trusting that the volunteers we'd need would be provided. All of the team leaders also had the opportunity to practice flexibility, persistence, letting go, accepting what is, doing whatever it takes, equanimity and Amma's teaching that we should be like a bird perched on a dry twig, ready to fly at a moment's notice.

For example, a week before the event only two volunteers had pre-registered. Around that time, I received a phone call from a man who had seen our event on the Bridge to Beach listing. He wanted me to know that he and his wife were going to attend our work party. But two days before the event, he called back to say they had found an event closer to their home, so they would not be coming to ours. On the same day they canceled, a young man from a University of Washington fraternity asked if he could bring a group from his fraternity. He believed he could bring 10 volunteers. I, of course, responded with an enthusiastic "Yes." By then one of the two people who had pre-registered early on canceled.

On the day of the event, the team leaders were assembled and ready. The first person to arrive was a high school student who had worked with us before. She hadn't pre-registered, but I was delighted to see her. The other person who had originally signed up didn't show up, nor did any of the fraternity brothers who had pre-registered the day before.

The team leaders "rolled up their sleeves" and started the first task of the day: carrying wood chips from the wood chip pile on 25th Avenue South to the southern planting areas 300+ feet away. Once we reached the planting area, we poured the wood chips in a ring around each of the plants. We then removed chips that had fallen around the stem of the plants, creating an inner circle that was 6-12 inches in diameter. The chips were to help keep the ground moist during the summer months, and the open space was to allow any raindrops direct access to the ground.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Forty-five minutes into the work party, a welcome surprise arrived in the form of six members of the fraternity. I was excited to see them. I had the young men sign up and join the rest of our group in carrying the wood chips and building the rings.



*Southern planting area*

Shortly after the students' arrival, we broke into three small groups; each led by a team leader. One group removed the weeds in an area we had planted on March 17. We had cleared the invasive weeds from that area prior to the planting work party, but they were returning with a vengeance; the periwinkle vines were especially persistent.

A second group started to clear an area that hadn't been cleared before, one that bordered our southern planting area. Dense blackberry vines and other weeds were impinging on, or had actually begun to cover, some of our shrubs and ground covers. The third group removed weeds from the north side of the Hanford Stairs.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



At 11:30 we stopped for a snack break and a group photo.

After the break, the first and second group went back to work in their respective areas and the third group joined the second group. During this time, Sarva and I helped the other team leaders as needed and also took a few photos.

### Clearing the area south of the southern planting area:





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Clearing the area on the north side of the Hanford Stairs:



*The weeds were taken to The Rack Zone and put on racks to dry out.*

Neither Shirley nor I had taken any photos of the group that had cleared weeds in the planting area near the wood chip pile earlier in the work party but I did get one of what the area looked like after it was cleared. Imagine the area in the photo below with 100+ invasive vines emerging from the ground and you will get a sense of what it looked like at the beginning of the work party.



While we hadn't had the "flood" of volunteers I'd hoped for, using the experience to trust that what we needed would be provided and taking the reduced numbers as an opportunity to practice flexibility, persistence, letting go, accepting what is, doing whatever it takes, equanimity, and being like a bird perched on a dry twig, ready to fly at a moment's notice, meant we'd avoided getting stressed out and had even ended up accomplishing most of the day's goals. The Bonus: together, we were a mix of people who worked well together and contributed to a satisfying and productive day.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Greenbelt Restoration Work Party: Amrita Bala Kendra



On Sunday May 5, five children from Seattle's Amrita Bala Kendra group, along with six of their adult family members held their second work party in Seattle Satsang's forest restoration site. (The group's first visit to the site was a litter pick-up work party in February 2017.)

All of the small trees, shrubs and ground covers on the site have a ring of wood chips around them. The wood chips help the ground to retain water during the summer months. The area close to each of the plants is supposed to stay free of wood chips so that the plant will be able to take advantage of any rainfall. During this work party, the kids and their family members cleared away any wood chips that had fallen into the center of the rings.





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



They also poured wood chips around a new structure that had been built by the DocuSign team during the April 24 work party. It will be used as a “stage” for orientation, a place to sit during breaks and for group photos such as the one at the top of this post. The wood chips around the stage will become part of the system of paths on the property.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Before



After

The group was blessed with a beautiful day, made a significant contribution to this future forest, and had a fun time together.



## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Service-Learning Work Parties: May 6, 13 and 20, 2019

by Karuna



On May 6, the UW students came for their fifth service-learning experience. Most weeks, Sarva and I both work with the students. Sarva was not available on May 6. The rest of us weeded four planting areas (2050 sq. ft.) and put wood chip rings around 90 trees, shrubs and ground covers in the eastern part of the site. The wood chip rings hold in moisture thereby increasing the chance the plants will survive during a dry summer.





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Sarva was back for the May 13 service-learning work party. Once again, we weeded and put wood chip rings around plants, this time in the northwest part of the site. These planting areas had many more weeds than those we had weeded during the May 6 work party. On May 13, we weeded 3705 sq. ft. and built 116 wood chip rings.

I'm sorry I didn't take photos that day; but am glad that Sarva took a few.



However, the next day I did snap photos of some of the planting areas where we had worked. I thought they looked so beautiful.





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

May 20 was the last service-learning session. Sarva and I decided the group would spend the whole time working on the new site across Cheasty Boulevard. We had begun to clear bindweed and other invasive vines from that area on April 29.

We had removed so much bindweed on April 29. Therefore, I was shocked when I visited that site in preparation for the May 20 work party and discovered that while some of our previous work was still visible, the bindweed had already wound its way through the shrubs we had rescued during the earlier work party; and the bindweed we hadn't removed on April 29 had grown at an unbelievable rate.



May 20



May20

I knew there was no way we would be able to remove all of the bindweed, ever; I've read that the roots can go down 32 feet! But we would clear away as much of it as we could.

During the next two hours, we removed a tremendous amount of bindweed from the area. In that process, we also freed three salal shrubs, two snowberry shrubs and an unidentified shrub.





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



We filled bucket after bucket with the vines. Once the buckets were full, we emptied them on the drying racks along Cheasty Blvd that we built last summer. We then spent the last hour of the work party spreading wood chips on the part of the site we had cleared.



We also built wood chip rings around the shrubs we had freed.



I have no illusion that the bindweed is gone but there is sure a lot less of it and the land we cleared looks wonderful.

What a productive last service-learning session we had. I feel very grateful to the students for all they have done during the last seven weeks. Because of their work, our Greenbelt restoration site is so much more prepared for the dry summer months.



# PNW Litter Project

## Litter Stats

In May 2019, **23** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **48.5** hours. (Average **2.1** hours; Median **.67** hour; Range **2** minutes to **13** hours) We have picked up litter for **10,597** 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.]

## Requests

**Needed:** Photos and Articles on any GreenFriends Topic for the PNW GreenFriends Newsletter.

**Wanted:** Normally Unrecyclable Articles to Send to TerraCycle for Recycling

Please save the items below and bring them to Amma's Seattle programs. Drop them off at the local GreenFriends table (Litter Project/ Greenbelt Restoration Project).

- toothpaste tubes and caps
- outer tooth brush packaging
- toothpaste cartons
- toothbrushes
- empty floss containers
- energy bar wrappers
- cereal bags
- drink pouches
- cigarette butts

We will send these normally unrecyclable items to TerraCycle to be recycled. If you live in the Seattle area you can give them to Visala or Karuna anytime.