



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

## Contents

### PNW Gardening

[Flower Photos from John and Vijaya's Garden](#)

[Garden Surprise](#)

[All About Containers](#)

[Foiling Slugs and Rabbits](#)

[Spring Photos from Sarah's Garden and Neighborhood](#)

[The Togetherness of Social Distance](#)

[Photos from Ken and Eric's Garden](#)

[Bee Magnet](#)

### Nature

[Stay at Home Photos](#)

[Foraging During Lockdown](#)

[A Story of Love](#)

[The Lives of Songbirds](#)

[Spring Photos from Kathie's Neighborhood](#)

[Opossum Photos from Marla](#)

[Looking Like Its Name: Pristine](#)

### Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

[Trees for Earth Day](#)

### PNW Litter Project

[Stats](#)

[Green Friends North America Newsletter](#)



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

### Flower Photos from John and Vijaya's Garden (Victoria)





## PNW Gardening





## PNW Gardening





## PNW Gardening





## PNW Gardening

### Garden Surprise by Prarthana (Bainbridge Island)



## PNW Gardening

### Container Gardening- Part 2 by Emma S. (Lake Stevens)

#### All About Containers

I continued growing my sprouted veggie seeds inside for 6 weeks. When I noticed that my sprouts had become stunted – which probably meant they needed more room, in larger pots, to grow - I started to plan how to transplant my plant babies!



I planned to grow tomatoes, kale, beets and snap peas in my container veggie garden. All those plants were very small as sprouts, but they would need lots of room to grow and mature. Before I transplanted them, I had to choose which veggies went into each container.

It is important that you do a bit of research before placing each plant in a container. You should make sure that the container you choose will have enough space in depth and width to support the full grown plant. For example, tomato plants tend to get quite large and have expansive root systems. I chose to plant my tomato starts in a 5-gallon container. This will give each tomato plant lots of room to stretch their roots out. However, beets can grow in a much shallower pot because they are a root vegetable. You'll still want the pot to be about 12 inches deep. And the wider the pot you choose the more starts you can plant. I was able to place 4 beet starts in my shallow container, each about 3 inches away from each other. Google and YouTube have many helpful resources that can suggest the perfect pot size for your veggie plants.

I put steel cage supports in my tomato and snap pea containers. As the tomatoes grow fruit, the branches will get heavy and the cage will help hold the whole plant upright. Snap peas love to grapple and climb up anything and everything! Giving this plant a steal cage also allows it to grow to its heart desire and produce more pea pods.



## PNW Gardening



I did my potting in early spring after the last frost was long gone, but the temperature was still dropping down into the 30s every night. If I left my sprouts out exposed to the elements, I had a feeling that they would be killed off by the cold nights. I had seen other gardeners covering their plants with a clear plastic film in early spring. Not wanting to go out and purchase unnecessary plastic, I started to look for things I already had on hand. Before I bought reusable grocery bags, I accumulated a small stash of plastic bags, and I am always looking for a creative way to reuse them. After a few cuts here and there and some tape to hold them together, I created a unique way to cover and protect my plants.





## PNW Gardening



These covers stayed put until warmer nights came to the PNW.

My container garden is now beginning to thrive and to enjoy the sunny side of my duplex that gets 6 – 8 hours of bright sunshine nearly every day.





## PNW Gardening

### Foiling Slugs and Rabbits by Lin (Bellevue)

Here's a photo of last year's kale going to seed. I like letting the yellow flowers bloom because the honeybees love them. Sadly, this year I have yet to see a bee. The raab was delicious, however, lightly steamed with a little butter and garlic and finished with a squeeze of lemon juice. Raab (sometimes spelled rabe) is what the unopened flower heads, tiny leaves, and tender stems are called. They're very tasty, sweeter than regular kale leaves.

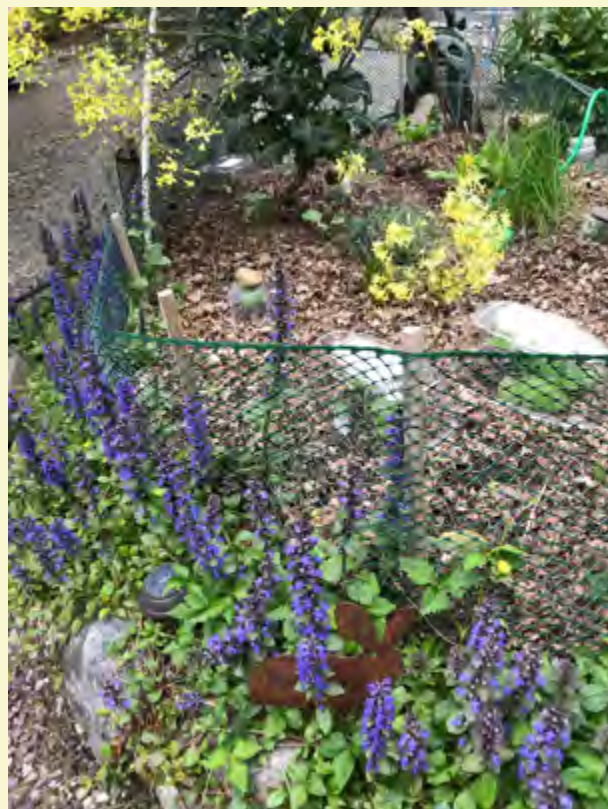
*What are those lumpy white things on the ground? you might ask, looking at the photo.*

They're my latest brilliant idea—which is still in the testing phase, but it seems to be working—namely, re-purposing the plastic containers that my SuperGreens come in, along with empty jugs of Crystal Geyser spring water. The water jugs, with their bottoms cut out, have the advantage of height, plus ventilation—all I have to do is unscrew the lids.



After I cut the lids off the SuperGreen clam shells, I flipped them over to form little hothouses that I remove when the day is warm and replace while we're still having cool evenings. Alternatively, you could cut out the bottoms and prop up the lids for ventilation as needed. I'm thrilled to have a use for these things because it's painful every time I toss the empties into my recycling bin.

My other purpose for the plastic hothouses is to protect the baby vegetable plants from critters—the slimy slithering and hopping kind. I have a soft spot for rabbits—they're very cute, and I've had them as pets in years past. But these wild bunnies ate right through the garden's heavy plastic fence last year and devoured more than their share of my





## PNW Gardening

vegetables. They're already at it again this year.

So far, my plastic containers are protecting the little starts of zucchini, kale, chard, parsley, and collards until I can replace the plastic fence with a wire one. The little hothouses, with their edges pressed well into the dirt, also seem successful at keeping slugs away from those tender leaves.

But that was three weeks ago. Now the little starts are nearly too big for their hothouses, so my next ploy will be to cut 18-inch strips of hardware cloth to bend into tubular fences around each plant or groups of plants. That will take care of the rabbits—hopefully—but slugs will be another matter.

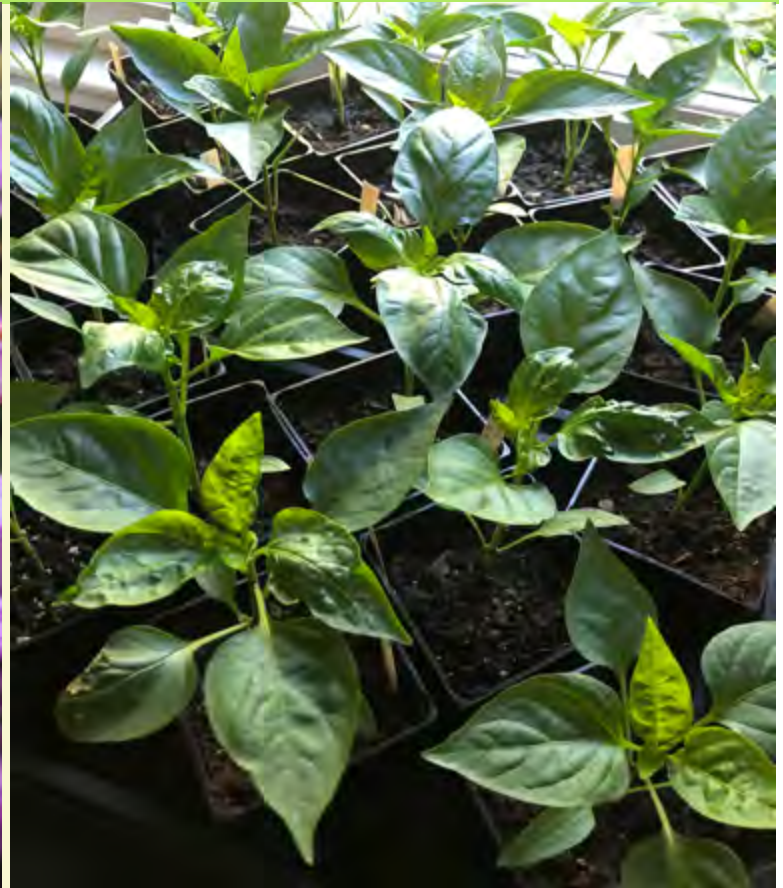
My friend Yasas said an excellent slug deterrent is a strip of stainless-steel window screen encircling each plant. Supposedly the slugs won't want to crawl over the sharp edge along the top. But that will have to wait until Covid passes and I feel safe making a trip to Home Depot.

Meanwhile, the rest of the garden and the blooming rhodies are taking off at a great rate. Turns out there's nothing boring at all about watching grass grow. I can hardly keep ahead of it.



## PNW Gardening

### Spring Photos from Sarah's Garden and Neighborhood (Eugene)





## PNW Gardening

### The Togetherness of Social Distance by Lin (Bellevue)

Who would have guessed social distancing would bring so many new acquaintances? They've mostly come at the end of a six-foot leash. The biggest dogs are the friendliest. They can't seem to resist me sitting at eye-level on a low stool, weeding my gravel driveway near the sidewalk, and they drag their people over to say hello. They've never heard of the new human rule of staying six feet away.



[Photo Source](#)

[Photo Source](#)

[Photo Source](#)

My driveway is across from a park, and there's been a steady stream of joggers, dog walkers, and people pushing strollers ever since schools, offices, churches, stores and many restaurants have been closed and we've been locked up in our houses. Everyone keeps the proper distance, so it's sort of like a parade.

With all this activity, I've never enjoyed weeding so much. One minute there's a chickadee overhead calling to its buddy on a nearby branch. The next minute there's an enormous retriever's muzzle in my face with friendly brown eyes and a wagging tail. Of course a petting session ensues while I ask the dog's name, and his or her owner and I make small talk. A young labradoodle practically turned inside out with excitement as I admired his silky soft coat. A grizzled old racoon shyly peeked around the stone wall edging the driveway, which caught the attention of a family walking on the other side of the street and prompted an animated conversation among us.

Two women stopped to admire my stock tanks, freshly planted with vegetable starts, and that too began a conversation. I guess there's nothing like the requirement of social distancing and staying away from human gatherings to make us want to talk to each other.



[Photo Source](#)



[Photo Source](#)



[Photo Source](#)



## PNW Gardening

### Photos of Ken and Eiric's Garden (Seattle)





## PNW Gardening





## PNW Gardening





## PNW Gardening

### Bee Magnet by Kothai

Come Spring and I keep a watch out for those bees. Though rhododendrons, lavenders, and other perennials attract bees there is this one special plant in my garden that year after year attracts the most number of bees. Anytime I go out in the backyard, I see a ton of bees buzzing around this plant.





## Nature

### Stay at Home Photos by Karuna (Seattle)

Like most of us, I imagine, I'm spending most days in my house. While over the years, I have developed the habit of leaving the blinds on the front window down since they help keep the house warm in the winter and cool in the summer, now that I'm indoors so much, I often find myself pulling the blinds up during daytime hours.

Still my eyes may not see what's in front of my face. One morning in May, I gazed towards the front window and really "saw" the view. I had known this rhododendron shrub had buds, but I hadn't noticed it had come into full bloom. The sight was stunning.



## Nature

### Foraging During Lockdown by Gopika (Maltby)

There is joy in discovering that food and traditional plant remedies are available for free in your own backyard. All you have to do is be sure you're fully informed about edible wild plants so that you don't accidentally make yourself sick. For instance, many edible and non-edible plants look alike, some plants are only edible at certain times of the year, and only certain parts are edible on others. And some, like specific wild mushrooms and many white berries, are downright poisonous.

There are little windows of time in which to forage, with spring being one of the best. The harvesting site is important too. You'll want to forage in pristine areas that are free of contamination from things such as animal waste and, most especially, weed and insecticide sprays that might have drifted from a neighbor's yard or a road that county staff treated. It is also important not to deplete an area by over-picking plants.

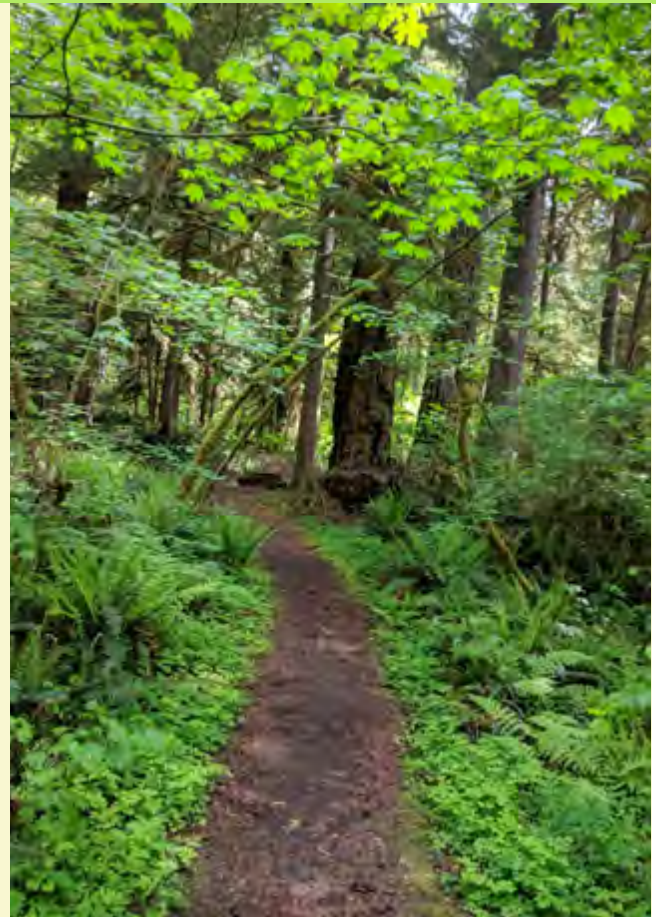
Afterward, the foraged plants must be cleaned, eaten, dehydrated or otherwise processed without delay or they will become moldy.

With that information under your belt, perhaps reading this story will inspire you to start learning what you need to know for do-it-yourself foraging!

My own foraging education began at the outset of the Coronavirus lockdown when Achala Devi, an occupant of the Maltby Residence, turned to nature for a feeling of well-being. She told me foraging reminds her of the litter pickup she used to do regularly. She was always wondering what she might find that day that could be useful in a new way. It was a game that engaged both heart and mind. She thinks of foraging the same way.

With that approach, she began four weeks of daily foraging in nearby woods and parks. Although she started wild-crafting fifteen years ago and finds being in nature very calming, she told me she had never foraged so intensely. Aware of coronavirus precautions, she was careful to maintain a safe distance if she encountered anyone on the trail (which she rarely did). She said that early on she realized the foraging walks were also an opportunity to listen intently for what nature might be offering. As Amma recently said, nature provides protection for us. What could be more protective than food and self-care?

At first she wasn't looking for anything in particular except nettles (also known as stinging nettles). Nettles grow abundantly in the spring in much of the Pacific Northwest. They make a nice traditional tea, and a healthful food





## Nature

when steamed or made into pesto. Best of all, like all foraged foods, nettles are free!



*Nettles*



Besides nettles, Achala found the herb self-heal, which aids in calming stomach upset and irritation. Then there was sweet woodruff, an herb used traditionally for a variety of disorders including menopause. If she didn't recognize a plant that drew her attention, she would take a leaf home to study and try to determine what it was.

Each day revealed something new. We had a gorgeous dandelion flower syrup on our pancakes at Maltby Residence one day, as well as roasted dandelion root as a coffee substitute. There was also an elderflower syrup with an amazing smell. We ate maple blossoms in salad and sautéed, and Achala even dried some and turned them into flour.



Dandelion Syrup



## Nature



Elderflowers



Maple blossoms

Other foraged food included horsetail, which contains silica and can be good for the teeth; cleavers and plantain are edible and are used in many ways.



Horsetail



Cleavers



## Nature



Achala with oyster mushrooms

Perhaps the most surprising discovery on Achala's walks was the abundance of oyster mushrooms. She spotted some small ones growing on trees and waited until they were the right size for picking. After her first harvest, she walked out of the woods with 13 pounds of mushrooms, and the next day with 30 pounds. She didn't bother to count on the third day! The mushrooms were so plentiful that the area beyond her reach remained chock full.

Again, the residents of Maltby were fortunate to share in the foraged bounty. We had a dinner of fresh, delicious, sautéed oyster mushrooms!

"I had a lot of fun," she told us. "Foraging for new plants made me become more intimate with the woods as I observed the forest daily over time. The coronavirus lockdown, instead of being a burden, has become a unique opportunity for inspiration, enjoyment and, best of all, a feeling of closeness to Amma in nature."

As we look for ways to have a smaller footprint on this earth, to be more sustainable (and self-reliant), it is easy to see that eating foraged foods, which are so readily available, is also a way towards living more sustainably. Perhaps you'll be inspired to try it yourself.



## Nature

### A Story of Love by Tirtha G. (Victoria)

#### Book Review: The Legacy of Luna by Julia Butterfly Hill



[Photo Source](#)

Feeling cooped up with the lockdown?

Imagine living in a 200-ft-tall redwood tree for more than two years. Twenty years ago, Julia Butterfly Hill did just that to draw attention to the continued clear-cutting of California's remaining redwood forests.

Hill did not set foot on the earth for 738 days. Instead, she learned to climb up and down the 1000-year-old redwood tree for exercise. She found she felt safer to climb barefoot, without climbing gear. Her feet developed muscles she hadn't known they possessed.

She was cold and wet for much of that two years. There was no heat, no electricity. No artificial light. She had a sleeping bag, a solar-powered cell phone for media interviews, and a single-burner propane stove to cook and heat water. She had few necessities, and no luxuries.

Hill lived on two platforms, built from wood scraps and covered with tarps to theoretically keep the rain out. One measured 6 ft by 8 ft. The smaller one, 4 ft by 8ft, was mostly used for storage.

She had occasional visitors – fellow tree-sitters staying over or bringing supplies, and other visitors including a couple of celebrities, as well as spiders, birds, and mice. A pair of resident flying squirrels specialized in keeping her awake at night by noisily investigating all her supplies.



## Nature

Why, you might wonder, would anyone stay in a tree so long?

Hill had survived a bad car accident in Arkansas in 1996. It took a year of therapy for her short-term memory and motor skills to return. She said the experience was a wake-up call. Until then, her main focus had been work. “It became clear to me that our value as people is not in our stock portfolios and bank accounts, but in the legacies we leave behind.”

When she recovered, she resolved to travel and visit spiritual sites around the world. But first her neighbours invited her to join them on a driving trip to the West Coast. A stranger they met in passing told them they had to see the redwoods in California.

On arriving in the redwood forest, Hill says, “Gripped by the spirit of the forest, I dropped to my knees and began to sob... Surrounded by these huge, ancient giants, I felt the film covering my senses from the imbalance of our fast-paced, technologically dependent society melt away. I could feel my whole being bursting forth into new life in this majestic cathedral. I sat and cried for a long time. Finally, the tears turned into joy and the joy turned into mirth, and I sat and laughed at the beauty of it all.”

Even though Hill had just begun her travels, she felt called to try to protect the remaining majestic redwoods. Less than 3 percent of the original forests were still standing, yet the logging continued.

At first Hill was unsure whether to trust this new calling. So she prayed to the Universal Spirit for guidance: “If I’m truly meant to come back and fight for these forests out here, please help me know what I’m meant to do, and use me as a vessel.” Soon, she found herself feeling at peace with the plan to stay, and received a sign she saw as the Universe’s approval.

Hill learned the logging was detrimental to people, as well as the forest. A hillside near Stafford, CA, had already been clear-cut. Just months before Hill arrived, a huge 20-ft-high mudslide carried trees, stumps and debris from that hillside down into the town, leaving seven families without homes. Despite evidence that clearcutting had destabilized the hillside and caused the mudslide, the Department of Forestry granted permission to continue logging on the very next slope.

That slope was where the tree which became known as Luna stood. The redwood was marked for destruction with a slash of blue paint. A group of activists had established a tree-sit, but were having trouble finding people to stay in it. The weather was getting colder. Base camp was being dismantled in preparation to end the protest for the winter. “I need somebody to commit for a long period of time,” the organizer told Hill. “At least five days.”

Hill did two five or six-day stints in the tree. But knowing Luna could be cut down as soon as the tree-sitters left, she wanted to do more. By staying longer, Hill felt, she could continue to draw attention to the plight of the redwood



## Nature



[Photo Source](#)

forests, and keep pressure on the logging company to change its plans and allow Luna and the surrounding grove to live.

Although the other activists were divided on whether or not to support her, five people promised to keep Hill supplied with food and necessities. She went up the tree on December 10, 1997. No one imagined how long Hill would end up staying in Luna, nor the trials she might have to endure.

Early on, the logging company resolved to starve her out or drive her away. They hired 24-hour security guards to harass her and to ensure her support team couldn't deliver her supplies. She was menaced with a helicopter at a dangerously close range.

A neighboring tree was felled, hitting Luna's outer branches and nearly causing Hill to fall. She was verbally abused, threatened with violence, rape and death, kept awake with floodlights, and bugles and air horns were blown through the night.

She began to hate the loggers, and even to hate herself, because she was part of the same human race that had so little respect for Nature. But knowing that hatred was part of the same violence she was trying to work against, Hill spent time praying for help.

One day after praying, she felt filled with love. She realized what she was feeling was the love of the Earth, the love of Creation: "Every day we, as a species, do so much to destroy Creation's ability to give us life. But that Creation continues to do everything in its power to give us life anyway. And that's true love," she realized.

If Creation could do that for us, Hill decided, then she had to find within herself unconditional love even for the loggers. She began to talk to them as fellow humans, responding to abuse with songs or conversational questions. A few weeks later it was New Year's Eve, a time for resolutions. "Resolution is about resolve," she thought. "My resolution... was to take a stand like the redwood tree, and not back down. Even after they've been chopped into the ground, redwoods don't give up," she said. "Instead they try to sprout new life."

The months ahead held great challenges for Hill. The logging company wasn't her only problem. One of her scariest times was a 16-hour, 70-mph windstorm, one of the worst Northern California storms in decades. The wind shredded



## Nature

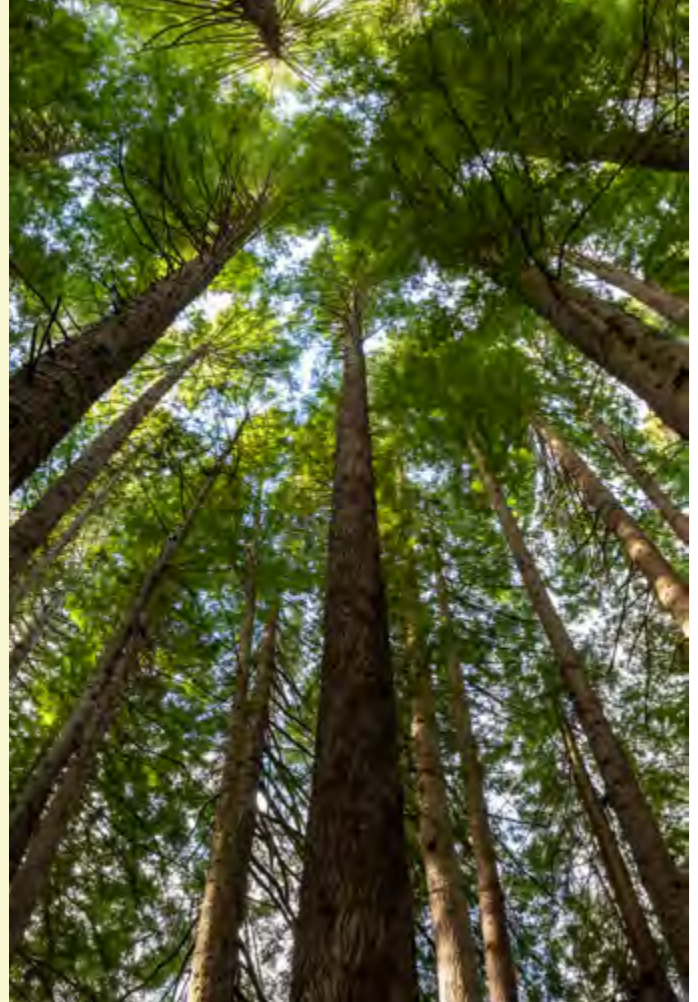
the tarps that surrounded her, and even ripped huge branches off the tree. “Sleet and hail sliced through the tattered pieces of what used to be my roof and walls,” she wrote.

“Every new gust flipped the platform up into the air, threatening to hurl me over the edge. I was scared. I take that back. I was terrified. As a child, I experienced a tornado. But that was a walk in the park on a sunny Sunday afternoon compared to this.”

Clutching the branch that came through the middle of the platform, and so terrified she was afraid she might lose her mind, Hill prayed to Luna for help. “In that moment, I heard the voice of Luna speak to me. ‘Julia, think of the trees in the storm... They allow themselves to bend and be blown with the wind. They understand the power of letting go,’” the voice told her.

That night, Hill felt she let go of her very self. When the storm departed, she no longer feared death. She felt she had undergone a transformation, like the nickname she’d had since childhood – Butterfly.

Many more experiences unfolded during those two years. Her feet once turned black with painful frostbite. When lightning struck nearby during an electrical storm, her hair stood straight up. Nearby helicopter logging made her ears ring for weeks. Then for six days, the leftover stumps and debris were set on fire on the entire slope. Her eyes swelled almost completely shut, and her throat and lungs burned from the thick smoke that surrounded her.



[Photo Source](#)

Thankfully, Hill also had many wonderful experiences. Despite the scorn often heaped on environmentalists, Good Housekeeping Magazine nominated Hill as one of the most admired women in America. Striking steelworkers told her she had inspired them. Fifth and sixth-grade students from a school in Wisconsin corresponded with her, and even took action on her advice to reuse paper in order to protect forests. Hundreds of people wrote to thank her for bringing a spotlight to the issue of deforestation. She also had the ongoing support of her committed team, who hiked in for two hours each way, three times a week, to keep her supplied with food and necessities, sometimes having to outwit security guards in order to deliver them.

Finally, an agreement was reached with the logging company, and on December 18, 1999, Hill climbed down to once again walk on the earth.



## Nature

With their willingness to sacrifice comfort and safety in order to bring the world's attention to the last stands of California's majestic redwood forests, Hill and her fellow activists left an important legacy. They were successful in saving Luna and some surrounding trees. Through their efforts, thousands more people learned about deforestation and its many ill effects.

As role models, Hill and her team showed us how we too could resolve to help Mother Nature, and follow through with long-term, committed action. Twenty years later, this is still an inspiring book, well worth reading.



The Legacy of Luna: The Story of a Tree, A Woman, and the Struggle to Save the Redwoods, by Julia Butterfly Hill is available from [harpercollins.com](http://harpercollins.com) for \$15.99 US plus shipping.

A personalized, autographed book is also available for \$30 US plus shipping from the author's website, [juliabutterflyhill.com](http://juliabutterflyhill.com).



[Photo Source](#)



## Nature

### The Lives of Songbirds by Donata (Toronto)

*If you would like to find out how you can help songbirds, you can skip to the last section of this article called “What We Can Do to Help Songbirds”.*

It is springtime, and the birds are starting their yearly activities. Songbirds are wonderful actors. They sing and chirp away, do silly dances in the spring, and convince us that they are happy go lucky little characters without a care in the world. The reality is that they also do an incredible amount of work in nature, and do so much for our forests and natural spaces that they are absolutely essential to us.

In the forest ecosystems, songbirds have important jobs. One of them is as predators. For example, the Townsend’s Warbler is a west coast bird and the little Hooded Warbler is an east coast bird. They are both predators because they eat insects, including caterpillars. They eat an amazing number of caterpillars. Many studies have been done trying to figure out how important their insect control job is. If you stop the birds from doing that job, then the insects have a chance to spread and do a lot more leaf damage to the trees. The result is that tree growth slows down. Songbirds provide a natural and effective way to control the insects. If humans try to do the birds’ job of controlling the insects, it becomes expensive and the insects develop resistance to the chemicals.



The second big job that songbirds do is to move seeds around. All kinds of native shrubs and trees depend on these millions and millions of birds out there to move the fruit away from the parent. The fruit on a plant is a treat to lure the bird to eat it and then fly away and drop the seeds somewhere else. It is important that they do this because if you plant the seeds close to the parent tree, they don’t do very well.

Birds drop seeds all the time, but it is especially important in areas that need ecological restoration. If there is an area that has been damaged and we want to restore it, humans can plant new trees, or we can let the birds come and do the ecological restoration

*Hooded Warbler, Ninahale / CC BY-SA*  
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## Nature

for free. You can help this process by putting up perches for the birds to land on in an area you want to improve. They will land there after eating fruit and will drop seeds there, which will speed up the whole process of habitat restoration.

The important roles of songbirds in our lives means that when the songbird population goes down, it affects us. A biologist by the name of Bridget Stutchbury wrote a wonderful and readable book called “Silence of the Songbirds” that describes the lives of many different types of birds. You will not be surprised to read that the numbers of birds in North America have been going down over the last few decades. What may be surprising are the numbers: they have dropped by 29% to 53% (depending on the habitat) in the U.S. and Canada since 1970. Bridget describes why their numbers are going down and how we can help.

One interesting thing is that the numbers of ducks and geese have not gone down during that time. Their numbers have actually gone up because duck hunters started addressing their decline over a hundred years ago. The hunters formed organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, which buys and protects wetlands and encourages the formation of conservation easements on private land. It also encourages legislation, such as including wetlands restoration and conservation in the federal Farm Bill. Unfortunately, these conservation efforts have not helped songbirds because they generally live in



*Townsend's Warbler* Greg Schechter / CC BY  
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So where exactly do the songbirds live? The answer to that depends on what time of year it is. The Townsend's Warbler is a yellow and black songbird that is native to the Pacific Northwest and lives as far north as Alaska. Like most birds, these warblers migrate twice a year. They spend the summer months in the northwest, where they nest and breed. Then they move down the coast, in some cases as far south as Central America, for the cold winter months. This means that they make two trips a year that are as long as 5,500 mi (9000 Km) each way. The Townsend War-

## Nature

bler weighs less than 9 grams, less than a third of an ounce, and this tiny bird migrates a total of up to 10,000 miles (18,000 Km) a year. Like other songbirds, they don't breed in the south. They only produce offspring in the north, which makes their habitat in the north so important.

As impressive as the coastal migration of the Townsend's warbler is, even more impressive is the migration of birds like the Ruby Throated Hummingbird. These little birds weigh about 1/8 of an ounce. As part of their migration, they have to fly across the Gulf of Mexico in a nonstop, 500-mile trip that takes up to 24 hours. They can leave from the tip of the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, and land somewhere near New Orleans. This is a risky, do-or-die trip for the birds. Some of them run into bad weather or they don't have enough stored energy for the non-stop flight and don't make it across the Gulf.



What is happening to the habitats of the songbirds?

### Summer Habitat

Many birds spend their summers and raise their young in the boreal forest of the north. Unfortunately, the trees in the boreal forest are being cut down in Canada at one of the highest rates in the world: about one million acres are clear cut every year. A lot of it is cut down to provide virgin pulp for the high quality, soft toilet paper that North Americans have grown used to.

### Winter Habitat

A lot of songbirds spend their winters in the forests of Central America and the north part of South America, which is also where coffee is grown. There used to be a lot more forest in these areas because of the coffee plantations, but there has been a change in the coffee growing business. Up until the 1990s, coffee farmers grew shade-loving coffee plants, "*coffea arabica*", which were grown under the shade of forest trees. Since the 1990s the coffee farmers have been convinced to switch to sun-loving coffee plants, "*robusta coffee*", which are more profitable. This caused the cutting down of about half of the forests on the coffee plantations to make room for the sun-loving coffee shrubs.

In addition, pesticides are used very heavily in South America where fruits and vegetables are grown and shipped to North America.



## Nature

### What We Can Do to Help Songbirds

There are several choices we can make when doing our weekly shopping that can help songbird habitats.

- 1) Choose your brand of coffee carefully, and choose brands that are certified to be shade-grown. These will also be organic coffee beans. The gold standard is certification from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center (SMBC). If buying coffee at a café, you can check whether they are using SMBC certified coffee beans.

*Note:* There is another coffee certification program by the Rain-forest Alliance, but their standards are much more lenient and require as little as 15% shade cover of the land area

- 2) Avoid food from areas that use banned pesticides. Learn where the food you buy comes from. Buy food that is more local instead of from South America, or buy organic food from South America, to reduce the amount of the more toxic pesticides used there.

- 3) By reducing our use of toilet paper or by switching to more sustainable brands, we can reduce the cutting down of the boreal forest where songbirds raise their young.



### Resources:

“Silence of the Songbirds” by Bridget Stutchbury

Where to buy certified bird-friendly coffee: <https://nationalzoo.si.edu/migratory-birds/where-buy-bird-friendly-coffee>

## Nature

### Spring Photos from Kathie's Neighborhood (Bellevue)





# Nature





## Nature





## Nature

### Opossum Photos from Marla (Poulsbo)





## Nature

### Looking Like Its Name: Pristine by Lin (Bellevue)





## Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

### Trees for Earth Day by John and Vijaya (Victoria)

In autumn 2018, we gathered 50 acorns from Garry Oak trees, which are indigenous to southern Vancouver Island. We potted them covered with soil and mulch to germinate. To deter squirrels from digging them up, we covered the pots with chicken wire.

The following spring, 30 young trees sprouted. This was a 60% yield, which was quite amazing.

In this past winter 2019, we sheltered them outdoors covered in a blanket of leaves.

This spring 2020, only 22 of them survived our winter. We offered them free to individuals on Earth Day and were successful in finding new homes for all 22 young trees, some of which will go to a new park. They will require watering and protection from deer for the next few years until they are well established.

This contribution to the environment was very satisfying and we encourage others to try propagating trees .



# PNW Litter Project

## Litter Stats

In May 2020, **19** Litter Project members and their families and friends picked up litter for **47.43** hours. (Average **2.5** hours; Median **1** hour; Range **15** minutes to **10** hours). We have picked up litter for **11,396** hours since the project began in July of 2011.

## TerraCycle Stats

We have sent TerraCycle **355,724** cigarette butts, **394** drink pouches, **1,748** cereal bag liners, and **6,747** energy bar wrappers since we started sending items to them in 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]



## NOTICE!

We have decided to stop sending things to TerraCycle for recycling, except for cigarette butts. It takes years for us to collect the amount of each item that they require for a shipment. In addition, TerraCycle has discontinued the collection of granola bar wrappers and plastic cereal bag liners. We found a local plastic waste company that will take most of the wrappers and all of the cereal bag liners that we have collected. Thanks to all of you who participated in this arm of the PNW Litter Project for the last 17 years.





## Green Friends North America Newsletter



Green Friends - North America

*Living in harmony with nature*

*Some small and big actions for a greener reality*

*May 2020*

### Greetings GreenFriends!

Welcome to the Spring 2020 GreenFriends newsletter! In this edition, we will focus on gardening in the time of the pandemic.

Growing Vegetables in Small Spaces

An Indoor Gardening Guide

Temperature and Watering Tips for Planting

Irrigating Using Clay Pots

Growing Flowers in Pots

Getting Started with Sprouts

Sharing a Balcony Garden with Pigeons

This is a challenging time. For most of us, being required to stay at home brings both angst and opportunity. At much of the world has had the pause button pushed, we are required to examine not only how we spend our time, but also that we suddenly have time to do things we may have often wanted to do, but couldn't get around to - like having a garden for instance. Amma says we should be planting trees and growing gardens as some of the many way to show respect for, and honor towards, nature.

But where to begin? For a lot is us, garden space is at a premium. And how should we get started with a vegetable or flower garden if we have never tried it before? In this edition of the GreenFriends newsletter, we share a number of ideas of how to make the best use of garden space both outdoors and indoors. Handy advice on watering, sprouting, growing flowers, irrigating and learning how to share a garden with wild animals (pigeons in this case).

We also invite all of you Green Friends to share your ideas and experiences with your own gardening efforts.

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