



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

Special Feature: Focus on Trees

Forest Wonder by Mark Braaten



It is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of air, that emanation from old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit. —Robert Louis Stevenson

Spiritual masters like Amma affirm that God is present everywhere and in all of creation. This may be at times difficult for us to see. When we need an easy reminder, we need look no further than to the nearest tree, to witness many Divine qualities.

Trees are the embodiment of patience. Many species of tree far outlive the life span of a human being. Some, such as the “Alaska” Yellow Cedar (*Cupressus nootkatensis*) that grow on Vancouver Island, can live up to 2,000 years old. These ancient ones help us to see how short our lives actually are, and perspective that helps us to surrender our troubles to the Divine. Indeed entire cultures can rise and fall within the lifetime of a single tree.

Trees teach resilience and equanimity, standing quietly night and day, through the hot summer sun and cold winter wind, making use of both. Trees protect us from the harshness of the elements rendering them pleasant and refreshing. Our climate and environment are buffered by trees, transferring water into the atmosphere, releasing life giving oxygen, storing sunlight and sequestering carbon.

Trees are the ultimate yogis that demonstrate that with flexibility comes strength. They can adapt to almost any con-

Special Feature: Focus on Trees

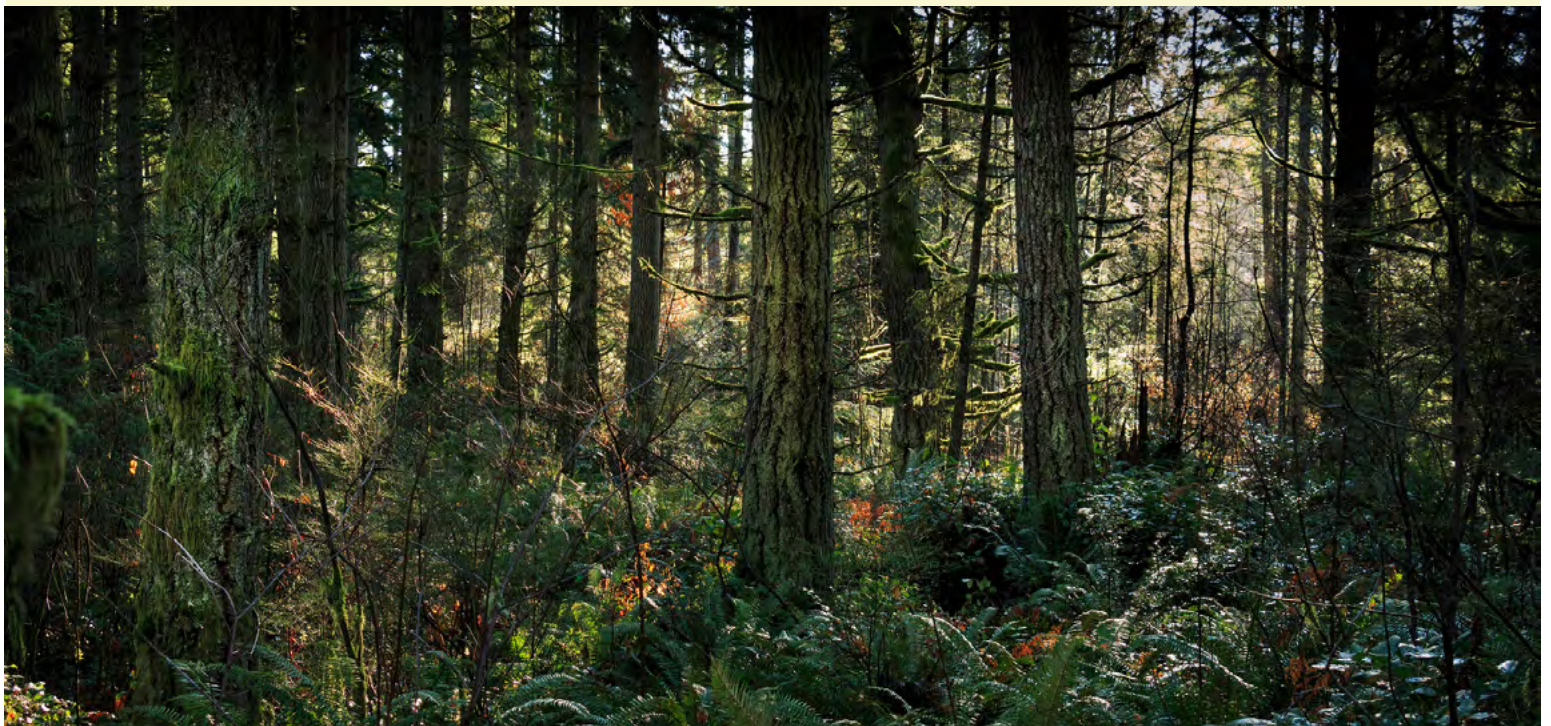
ditions and thrive in harmony within a community of many species.

Trees exemplify selfless service offering their bodies as a home for many creatures and even sacrificing their lives without resistance for the needs of others. We take it for granted that even when the forests of the world have been over exploited for fast profit, still trees continue to regenerate and offer themselves to us, they do not attempt to punish us for our greed.

Trees reveal the full manifestations of Divine Beauty, ever-changing, always fresh and new. Whether from a distance or a close-up perspective, we marvel at the intricacy and color of buds, flower, grain and bark, or the shape and form of stem and branch, majestic canopies, hill and vale of infinite shades of green.

The Japanese have recently developed a practice known as *shinrin-yoku* which means “forest bathing”. Scientific studies show that this practice results in improved mood, vigour and reduction of stress hormone levels (cortisol). These effects are similar to those enhanced meditative experiences experienced in the presence of mahatmas.

As beautiful as an individual tree can be, it's mature forests that are part of intact ecosystems in untouched nature that offer myriad lessons to humanity. These forests are living libraries that contain secrets as yet undiscovered by modern science. Perhaps by visiting these “temples not made with hands” and making offerings of humility, love and stewardship we may yet learn at the feet of the ancient masters, the trees.



Special Feature: Focus on Trees

Awakening by Rusel Demaria



I am cocooned in my sleeping bag, aware of a slight undulation that coincides with a light breeze. In it the scent of pine and earth and damp. There is a faint whisper of light and my eyes flicker open, blink a few times and take in the most amazing scene. In sleep, I have forgotten where I am. In awakening, I see it again for the first time. I am 110 feet high in a Douglas Fir, less than halfway to the top. My Treeboat is slung under a massive branch that curves slightly upward and away from me, gesturing toward the rising sun. The needles on the lush branch glisten and shine. Below me, thousands of feet below, lies the Rogue River Valley of southern Oregon, USA.

I am cradled in the arms of this beneficent tree, rocked gently in the wind, perfumed by the scent of bark and needles and pitch. I lay here, content, for several breaths, then, grasping my Monkeytail--my safety line through the night high above the forest floor--I lift myself slowly. I notice that I am still wearing my climbing gloves and my Zipka lamp embraces my wrist like a fat wristwatch. As I rise, the panorama unfolds around me. Behind me to the north, the beautiful and picturesque Portal Fir stands on a nearby hillside, glowing in the first light. To the east, the sun is winking at me, just making the day begin, casting long shadows over the fields, lakes and rivers below. Morning comes early, high on the hill, high in a tree. I watch the sleepy valley below awaken.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



Above me, my sweetheart sleeps in her Treeboat. She is so utterly peaceful. I must preserve this moment. and quietly I extract my camera from its bag, turn it on and snap a picture. She is the perfect image of bliss, with the new rays of the sun playing gently across her face. It is the most glorious morning I can remember. I realize, with gratitude, that this magnificent tree has me in its arms, literally, and that I am safe, supported and loved. I wonder if there are any brownies left for breakfast.



Special Feature: Focus on Trees

My Early Morning Adventure by Karuna Poole

My home in Seattle is on the border of one of Seattle's Greenbelts. For last 20 years, whenever I looked over my hedge into the Greenbelt, I saw dense blackberry vines that were 6-8 feet deep covering most of the land. That was the view as far as my eyes could see. In addition, ivy climbed most of the trees. So many trees had died during that time and many others were near death.



A few months ago, I decided I couldn't watch that happen any longer. Since then, removing the blackberry vines and other invasive plants has become a passion for me. My friend Ramana and I have worked many hours removing them.

This alder is my favorite tree on that property. (It is actually two different trees, and each one of them is split into two trunks so there are actually four trunks, but I still see them all as one tree.)

One of our top priorities was to remove the blackberry vines and ivy from around that tree. I had thought we had accomplished that goal, but one day I noticed that there was a branch on the north side of the tree which was so long that it disappeared into the blackberries.

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It was not okay with me that blackberry vines touched even one portion of that tree. I committed to freeing the buried branch the next day.

Early the next morning, I headed for the storage shed to pick up the tools I needed. As I started to open the shed door, I walked face first into a big spider web. Yuck. I backed up to see where the spider was. What I saw was a yard spider that was bigger than any I've ever seen before.



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What a way to start my quest! Making sure I avoided the spider, I picked up my tools and then headed towards the stairs that go to the lower lot. Moments later, I walked into yet another unseen spider.



Clearly I needed to pay more attention to my surroundings. I inched my way down the hill, drawing ever closer to the alder. As I descended, I appreciated how much clearing we had already done. Once I reached the area where the branch was buried, I started cutting a path through the blackberry vines.



As I drew closer and closer to my destination, I could see that the land sloped downward in that area. When I opened a hole in the mass of vines, I noticed that they were much deeper than I thought. I knew I had to be very careful or I could accidentally stumble down the decline and into a deep hole of painful blackberry thorns, potentially twisting my ankle in the process.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



Finally, I got close enough to the branch that I could begin cutting the vines that were holding it down. I worked diligently, oblivious of the time.



Special Feature: Focus on Trees



I was excited to see that there were many signs of life on the small branches that were off-shoots of the larger one.

I noticed that there was still one segment of the branch that was trapped. I couldn't even see where it ended. It occurred to me that none of the other branches on the tree were anywhere near as long as that branch, so I decided to cut it just below the areas of new growth.



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As soon as I made that cut, the branch rose ten to twelve feet into the air.

Free, free at last! I wondered if the tree was celebrating as much as I was. I even imagined the alder being able to breathe better.

As I prepared to leave the area, I noticed so many other trees that need to be freed from the blackberries. I was committed to continuing this work, but it would have to be on another day.

I picked up the tools, and started walking back up the hill. As you can probably imagine, once I reached the shed, I made sure the spider hadn't rebuilt the web across the door before I put the tools away. As I returned to my home, I felt exhilarated and content. I love my new passion and look forward to many more adventures in the Greenbelt

Special Feature: Focus on Trees

Willows Weep by Cheryl-Lynn Roberts

They arrived at the cemetery, the fourth of July, for the burial of her mother's ashes. Such a beautiful sunny day and the evergreens mixed with willows made for an appropriate setting. She brought the roses to represent her sister and her, her two children and her nephew and the three grandchildren...adding one red rose for her mother's husband. A brief prayer was read and they each sprinkled ashes over the urn, "Love you Mom."



*willows weep
breeze kiss her tears
waving adieu
(c) Tournesol '15*

Special Feature: Focus on Trees

Yes, I AM One of Those Tree Huggers by Kathie Arcide

Here she is, on the far left. She was one of only two big trees the builder saved when he tore down the oldest cottage in our area to build a mini-mansion.



He stripped her body of all her lower limbs, I suppose to enhance the house value by giving the new owners more of a view.



Here's what I could see on Full Moon nights....through her branches.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



This was my sunrise view each morning. She towered into those pink skies.



Then one morning, I heard an awful sound, terrifyingly familiar....There was no warning.

Just that terrible roar at 7 AM, on the morning of her murder.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



I ran across our adjoining yards to say Good-bye. I had known her for over 40 years.

My son had grown up in her shade. They wouldn't let me near her.



It took hours to kill her. I couldn't watch very much of it but I would return to my window and take a picture now and then...and tell her she was not alone.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



The final Cut.....



Hauling off her parts, in a tree Hearse....

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Her decimated stump....



Still oozing her life's blood.....

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



Her perfume still powerful, all the way across the two yards and into my house....



Her ancient skin...cast aside, in broken chunks.....

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



But her breath-taking beauty...undeniable!



All that's left of her. We grieved for months.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees



Now, at sunrise, I can still look over at her Sister, spared the tragic fate imposed by the hungry builder.



Chosen Perspectives

And the new owners have made the yard around her grave, a lovely spot for all to enjoy.

Special Feature: Focus on Trees

Supporting Tree Health by Racheal Fairbanks



Trees seem to be a mystery to us. How do they know how to grow into their perfect form, and how deep are those roots really under there? These philosophical questions have been researched and come down to three factors: soil, oxygen and water.

The harder compacted the soil, the less deep the roots will grow. Roots grow anywhere from 4 to 107 feet deep depending on the soil content and type of tree. When soils become waterlogged trees cannot grow deep roots, the same as when there is no oxygen in the soil, or the soil has a deadpan.

Why is this all important? For the health of the trees. If you are planting a new tree, you can easily find resources on-line for supporting the growth of the tree- how deep and wide to dig your hole, how to care for the new tree, etc. But when do we think of the established trees we have growing in our yards as our plants, and our priority?

There are a few things you can do to support tree health:

- 1) Hug the trees- they love it!

Special Feature: Focus on Trees

- 2) Mulch regularly under the trees to create space for water to permeate and a weed-free area between the tree and your lawn.
- 3) Be careful with your weed-whacker- trees get nicked by the weed whacker and it can leave damaging areas in the bark for pests and disease to penetrate.
- 4) Never park under your tree- compaction is the tree's worst enemy; it needs oxygen to grow deep roots.
- 5) Only trim when needed- over-pruning can create stress for the tree.
- 6) Watch for bugs and pests- get to know what diseases could affect your trees, and take regular walks around your property to check up on your trees.
- 7) Enjoy your trees; encourage them to grow with your admiration!

Sources:

<http://www.deeproot.com/blog/blog-entries/how-deep-do-tree-roots-really-grow>

<http://www.bhg.com/gardening/trees-shrubs-vines/trees/keeping-trees-healthy>



Special Feature: Focus on Trees

Join a Work Party on Green Seattle Day!



This information is from: <http://greenseattle.org/get-involved/green-seattle-day>

Plant a Tree- Saturday, November 12!

Green Seattle Day is our biggest party of the year, and we want you there! Join hundreds of volunteers planting thousands of plants in parks throughout The Emerald City. All community members are welcome!

The event runs from 9am-noon at Camp Long, and at 15 other parks across Seattle. No experience necessary. Tools, gloves, plants, coffee, snacks, and instruction provided.

The Hub at Camp Long

[REGISTER FOR CAMP LONG](#)

This year's main location will be at [Camp Long](#) in West Seattle. We're excited to be at this historic park and bring a few hundred of our closest friends to help plant the next generation of forest there. No matter where you live (but especially if you live, work, or play in West Seattle), come join us for tree planting, food, and fun.

Green Seattle Day locations throughout the City

- Alder Creek Natural Area (Madison Park) [REGISTER](#)
- Burke Gilman Trail (Sandpoint) [REGISTER](#)
- Commodore Park (Magnolia) [REGISTER](#)
- Discovery Park (Magnolia) [REGISTER](#)
- Golden Gardens (Ballard) [REGISTER](#)
- Kinnear Park (Queen Anne) [REGISTER](#)
- Kubota Gardens Natural Area (Rainier Beach) [REGISTER](#)
- Lewis Park (Beacon Hill) [REGISTER](#)
- Licton Springs Park (Licton Springs) [REGISTER](#)
- Longfellow Creek (West Seattle) [REGISTER](#)
- Maple Wood Playfield (Beacon Hill) [REGISTER](#)
- Orchard Street Ravine (West Seattle) [REGISTER](#)
- Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland (Rainier Beach) [REGISTER](#)
- Woodland Park (Wallingford) [REGISTER](#)



PNW Gardening

You Are What You Eat



The schoolbell once again rings, and apples dangle ripe on the trees. Foods direct from garden to table are tantamount to medicine for body and soul. Eat them daily, while affirming your personal health of body and spirit. Feed your positivity and feel good. Wracked by negative thoughts? Go to the garden. Thoughts are just like leftovers--they can be composted in the place where you throw such things, and by their absence, good thoughts will find room. Composting negative thoughts promotes the growth of good actions. You are what you eat--a plant rising to flower, a good soul finding its power.

Article by Richo from [Strictly Medicinal Seeds](#)



PNW Gardening

Planting a Butterfly Garden

by Leonard Perry, Horticulture Professor, University of Vermont



Butterflies are important pollinators of our food and flower crops. To keep them coming, or if you just enjoy their beauty, provide them with the habitat they need. Butterflies are attracted to landscapes that provide warmth, water, food, and shelter—preferably all near each other.

The first step in creating a butterfly garden is to choose the proper site for them, and preferably one where you can observe them. Butterflies are most active in warmth and bright sunlight, so pick a spot that gets plenty of sun. The air temperature must be at least 40 to 60 degrees (F) for them to become active. Place perches for their sunning in, or near, the garden where butterflies can land and spread their wings. These include flat stones, wooden fence posts, and areas of mulch.

Water for butterflies should be provided in the form of a puddle, not birdbaths, ponds, or large water features. Containers could be a small trench in the soil lined with plastic, a plastic pail buried in the ground, or a dish. Fill the container with sand. Place a few rocks and twigs on the sand to provide landing sites within reach of the water. Then fill

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the container with water to the level of the sand.

Provide the least hostile environments to butterflies—those least attractive to birds and other predators. One way to keep birds away is with the use of inflatable snakes. Or you can place birdbaths and feeders a distance from the garden. Sticky tape and flytraps will help catch preying insects, as you want to avoid the use of insecticides.

The same products that kill undesirable insects, including electric bug zappers, also kill butterflies and moths. At some stage of their life cycle, all butterflies are susceptible to chemicals, even some of the least toxic ones such as biological Bt products. Some of the feeding damage you'll see on leaves is probably caused by caterpillars, which you need to tolerate in order to later have butterflies! Usually such feeding is minor, and doesn't pose a significant nor long term threat to your plants.

A wide variety of plants attract butterflies. Remember that you'll need to provide food for the larvae, as well as the adult butterflies (mainly flower nectar). Most species are fussy about where they lay their eggs, selecting plants from specific families that will provide appropriate food for hatching caterpillars. Monarch caterpillars only eat milkweeds. Black swallowtail larvae eat leaves of dill, parsley, carrot, and fennel. Painted lady caterpillars eat thistle leaves. In general, caterpillars like weeds such as clover, thistle, and milkweed. If possible, leave a few weeds for them along the edge of the garden or in nearby areas.

Add some vegetables and herbs to encourage butterflies to lay eggs in the garden. Caterpillar forage plants include parsley and ornamental cabbage, which are excellent edging plants for the flower garden. Clover makes a good "living mulch path". Carrot and dill add fine-textured, attractive foliage to the flower garden.

In general, adult butterflies are attracted to red, orange, yellow, purple, and pink flowers. Also they prefer flowers that are in clusters or flat-topped groupings, and which have short flower tubes. Since they have evolved with flowering native plants, it is important to include these in your landscape. A good listing of native plants, by region or state, can be found from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (www.wildflower.org/collections).

To encourage butterflies to stay all summer long, select plants that flower at different times of the season to provide a continual supply of nectar. Since butterflies are near-sighted, plant more than one of a particular flower to attract them. Butterflies rely on smell more than sight in locating nectar plants, so scent increases the chance of a flower

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being visited by them. (Their sense of smell is located in their clubbed antennae.)

Planting nectar sources in sites protected from wind helps butterflies fly and forage in the garden with less effort.

You could plant windbreaks of trees and shrubs that would provide cover and perhaps even food. Houses, garages, wood fences, and stone walls also serve as windbreaks.

Some butterfly species prefer, even require, overripe fruit to feed upon. Plant some shrubs and trees that produce fruit, such as shadbush, crabapples, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, and viburnum. Just keep in mind that too many such fruit on the ground also may attract bees, hornets, and wasps.

Since species may overwinter in any of their four stages— egg, larva or caterpillar, chrysalis or pupa (which is the stage that metamorphoses), and the adult butterfly— a variety of winter cover is needed. Butterflies overwintering in the adult stage may use the peeling bark on trees, perennial plants, and old logs or fences. Old sheds, barns, or houses also provide overwintering sites. Similar sites are used by overwintering pupae. Butterfly hibernation boxes are seldom used by them, but more frequently by wasp colonies.

Butterflies overwintering as caterpillars or eggs use herbaceous perennials, shrubs, and trees. Leave the leaf litter and dead plant parts of perennials in the garden until spring to provide cover for them from predators such as birds. You can learn more about butterfly gardens, and how to officially certify yours, from the North American Butterfly Association (nababutterfly.com).



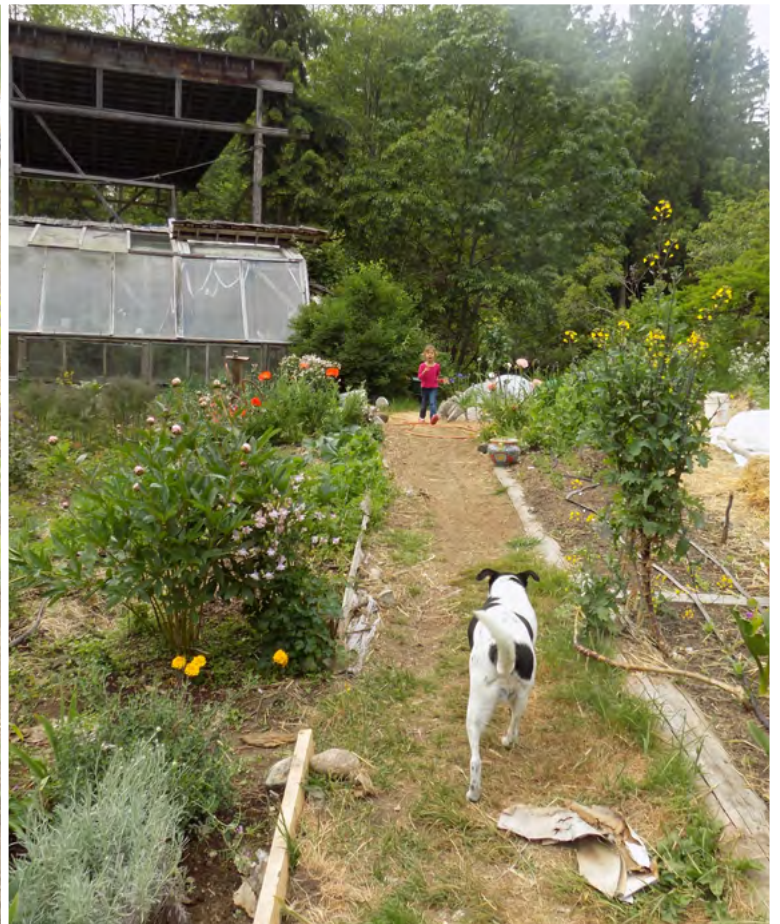
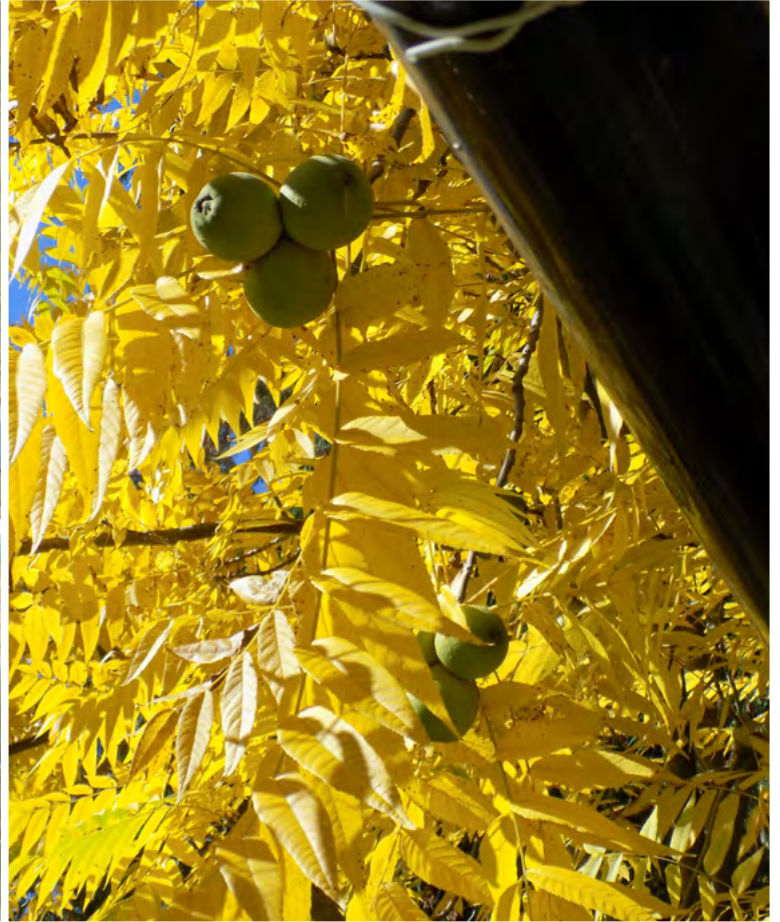
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From Our Readers' Gardens

From Diane on Cortes Island:



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From Priya in Seattle:

My night blooming Cereus bloomed for the 5th time this year. Sweet-smelling, it only blooms at night and is fading by the next morning. The first two pictures were taken at 3:30am Friday and second two were from Saturday morning.



Nature

Our Shower Frog

We were playing music last night in the living room and our "shower frog" joined in. I hope this was out of thrill at hearing music and not because our music (cello and guitar) sounds like croaking! When we find the little fellow in our shower stall, we catch him and put him outside, but somehow he finds his way back in again, around the plumbing, and slips back in through a crack around the faucet. Its raining here in Williams, and this marks the beginning of the end for seed collecting--I'm surrounded by screens full of dry seeds. Outside, the rain wets nature. I am the squirrel in the bole, tail around nose, resting on a pile of nuts. I will use them well.



RC '16

A Surprise Visit



Clr'16

Nature

Photos by Alan Bosse



Nature



Saving the Earth's Resources

Buying Less Plastic—Part 4. Eco Hand Sanitizer by Vandita Smith



[By Ellin Beltz \(Own work\) \[Public domain\], via Wikimedia Commons](#)

FDA Banned Triclosan and Other Anti-bacterials in the Hand Sanitizers

Why? Overuse of antibacterial ingredients — like triclosan — is helping create superbugs. Our increasing obsession with avoiding germs could actually be making us sick. Softeners are also designed to stay in clothes and not fully rinse out, which means lingering chemicals come into contact with skin.

Source: Published on November 15, 2015

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/queen-of-green/2015/11/diy-recipes-to-help-combat-colds-and-flu>

So what can we use instead? Apparently warm water and soap works just as well.

What If We Need a Hand Sanitizer When There is no Water and Soap?

My husband's work involves fixing septic fields. He's on the road a lot working out of his van, so he really needs hand sanitizer. He bought big containers of it, all containing triclosan. Knowing how much he was using, I worried about the toxic effect it might be having on his body and his brain.

The David Suzuki website has this to say about triclosan:

What is triclosan?

Triclosan is used in cleansers, antiperspirants/deodorants, toothpastes and hand sanitizers as a preservative and

Saving the Earth's Resources

anti-bacterial agent. It's toxic to fish and wildlife and may be an endocrine disrupter, i.e., interfere with hormone function. It's best avoided, which can be tricky because it seems like it's in everything — soaps, countertops, garden hoses, garbage bags, socks, laundry products, facial tissues and more.

Source: Published on November 15, 2015 <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/queen-of-green/2015/11/diy-recipes-to-help-combat-colds-and-flu>

Wanting something less toxic, I was glad to find a recipe for an Eco alternative on the David Suzuki website: <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/queen-of-green/2015/11/diy-recipes-to-help-combat-colds-and-flu>



Hand sanitizer

- ¼ cup (62.5 ml) pure aloe gel
- ½ cup (125 ml) grain alcohol (e.g., vodka) or rubbing alcohol
- 5 to 8 drops tea tree or thyme essential oil (go easy on tea tree oil; it gets a bit strong)
- Optional: add 2 T (30 ml) vegetable glycerine to combat alcohol's drying effect

Mix and store in a squeeze bottle. (I doubled the recipe to fill this 235 ml container, with a little bit left over. It got a bit cloudy but seemed to work well anyway.) Keep a batch in your diaper bag, child's backpack, at your desk, or in your purse or car.

Saving the Earth's Resources



Some additional advice from David Suzuki - on how to shop smarter:

- *Avoid anything labelled "anti-bacterial".*
- *Avoid triclosan in the ingredient list.*
- *Avoid parfum (a.k.a fragrance). Some fragrance ingredients can trigger allergies and asthma. Some are linked to cancer and neurotoxicity. Some are harmful to fish and other wildlife.*
- *Choose bar soaps — a U.S. study found triclosan in 76 per cent of liquid soaps and only 29 per cent of bar soaps (American Journal of Infection Control, 2002).*
- *Choose products that list ingredients (especially home cleaners).*
- *Choose products with plant-based ingredients. Choose products with ECOLOGO or Green Seal labels.*

If you live or work with children, non-toxic disinfectants are even more important. Kids are not miniature adults — kilogram for kilogram they absorb more chemicals. They're closer to the ground and they have an "exploratory nature" — they put everything in their mouths!

Source: Published on November 15, 2015 <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/blogs/queen-of-green/2015/11/diy-recipes-to-help-combat-colds-and-flu>

All David Suzuki information used with permission.

PNW Litter Project

PNW Litter Project Stats

Thirty-six Litter Project members and friends reported picking up **74** hours of litter in October 2016. The average pick up time was **2** hours; the range was **2 minutes to 16 hours** and the median was **1** hour.

Members of the project have picked up litter for **8113** hours since the project began in July 2011.

TerraCycle credited us with turning in **139,534** cigarette butts in **2013** and **55,200** in **2014**. Our **2016** count stands at **25,400** butts, bringing us to a grand total of **300,124** butts since we started sending them to TerraCycle in January 2013. (In addition to the butts we turned into TerraCycle we also have a 5 gallon jar of cigarette butts we use for the litter project display)



Mt. Shasta from Lake Siskiyou

PNW Litter Project

Litter Project Stories from the Past by Karuna Poole

This month, I looked back through some of the original Litter Project Newsletters. I enjoyed re-reading some of my old litter pick-up stories and decided to share them here. (You can find past issues of the newsletter at <http://greenfriendsna.org/newsletters.html>.)

On Labor Day, as I was returning home from picking up litter, a young man called out to me. He was probably in his twenties and was clearly coming home from some kind of sports practice. He said, "I want to personally thank you for what you are doing. When I see you cleaning up all of the litter and beer cans and bottles I get inspired to do the same. I am going home to teach my kids that this is the way to be."

So many people express their appreciation as I clean up litter. Today a middle age black man came towards me on a bicycle. "I've been meaning to ask you. Do you do this as a volunteer..... because you want to?" I said yes I do, and I also do it because my spiritual teacher is cleaning up India and if she can clean up India then I thought I could do a lot more here. "God bless your heart," he said as he pedaled off! Another man said "Thanks for doing that. May I put my garbage in your bag?" Last week, when Theresa and I were working in the International District an elderly Asian woman came up to me and said, "That is hard work. May God bless you and keep you healthy." "That is hard work." she repeated.

In San Ramon, I gave Amma a short report about the Litter Project and then intended to ask her whether she wanted me to be spending as much time picking up litter as I am, or did she prefer that I focus more on making the tiny dolls, which has been my normal seva. I started my question by telling her that I think about litter, I dream about litter, I talk about litter, all the time. Amma interrupted Swami Ramakrishna as he was translating for me and said that I shouldn't worry about that. She said what I am really doing is focusing on what is underneath the litter; i.e., the earth, not the litter. As he was translating her words to me, she interrupted him again and said, "So say your mantra and pick up litter!" Amma had answered my question before I even had asked it!

Next month, I will share other member's stories from the early days of the Litter Project. I'd love it if you would send me litter pick-up stories to share, either current or past!

