



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

Backyard Herbal Medicine

Humble Hawthorn: The Heart Healer by Visala Hohlbein



Happy fall, sweet herbal Friends. It is that exciting time again! Time to practice super gratitude for the very powerfully nourishing, useful herb: Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). Late October is the perfect time to visit a Hawthorn tree in your neighborhood to stock up on some incredibly healthy nutrition for your body! If you are collecting berries, it is best to collect them before the first frost arrives. She is a deciduous tree, so the leaves will fall soon. If you have room in your yard, please consider planting a Hawthorn. She produces beautiful white flowers in May and striking red berries in fall.

Hawthorn leaves are commonly talked about as great herbal medicine. Her leaves can make a healing tea or herbal infusion. The leaves are said to strengthen both the physical and the emotional heart. Her berries are also **exceedingly** powerful at healing! They are used for the same benefit as the leaves, for healing the heart. The Hawthorn tree has been used since the first century as a healer. The ancient Greek Herbalist, Dioscorides, was one of the first who was known to have promoted her use. The Hawthorn was considered to be "sacred" by the Druids in the 3rd century. Today, as in the past, Herbalists worldwide revere her!

Herbal Studies are showing that Hawthorn berries are a strong cardio tonic. They can help with health problems like angina, and reducing cholesterol and blood pressure.

Her leaves. The leaves are easy to pick, but please be careful because the Hawthorn is part of the Rose family and has thorns. The thorns are also a good way to identify that what you are looking at is indeed a Hawthorn. The leaves contain flavonoids, which are powerful anti-oxidants, meaning they will protect your body's cells, perhaps even suppressing cancer cell development. In addition, the leaves have anti-inflammatory and immune boosting properties. The leaves are easy to harvest and make a very healing and restorative tea. If you take time this fall to dry the leaves,

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you'll have tea all winter long even when she isn't available in the garden. Added advantages are knowing your tea is organic, since you grew it yourself, and that you don't have to go out and buy it.

Her Berries (known as HAWS). The beautiful red roundish berries are edible, with a taste somewhere between sweet and sour. Native Americans often included Hawthorn berries in their diet. The berries are healthy and can easily be made into tea or a tincture (see link below) or dried for winter consumption.

Highlights of Medicinal Uses of Hawthorn. Hawthorn is such an important herb for backyard herbalists! The squirrels and birds do a good job of spreading the berry/seeds around. I like to call Her "Humble Hawthorn" because she will pop up as a volunteer wherever there is one of her sisters nearby. I bet if you take a walk around your neighborhood, you will find that lovely lady Hawthorn is living amongst you.

When you get ready to harvest her leaves and berries, please take the time to talk to her and listen to what she is saying to you. Sing to her! My favorite thing to do is to gather a group of friends to go herbing with. My neighbor Karen and I enjoyed each other's company recently while we gathered berries. Please choose a spot that is away from the road and make sure it hasn't been sprayed with pesticides. Wouldn't it be nice to pick some of the leaves, too? You can dry them and make a Hawthorn tea gift to share with a friend. Everyone loves the gift of a sweet bundle of fresh tea!

Before you gather the herb, remember to thank the plant, and always give something back afterward. What you give back is up to you: maybe a chant, song or a simple message of gratitude, or you can return the used portion of the herb back to the base of the plant. That is also a loving action. Hawthorn contains iron, phosphorus, calcium, Vitamin C, Vitamin B1, and Vitamin B2.

Here are **three quick easy ways to start using Hawthorn intentionally** and medicinally.

1. HERBAL TEA. Collect 4-5 Hawthorn leaves and berries. Drop them into boiling water, and turn off the burner. Let her infuse 10 minutes before drinking. You can either strain the herb out, or just enjoy the pieces when you drink the water. Herbal water is much better tasting and healthier than just plain water. It tastes as great cold as it does hot. Think about adding a berry or two to intensify the flavor. It is amazing how fresh and stimulating Hawthorn is!

2. HERBAL INFUSION. Put one ounce of Hawthorn berries and leaves into a mason jar and fill with boiling water. Put a lid on. Let the Infusion sit overnight. In the morning, strain out the berries and leaves. Drink the infusion throughout the day. This is an incredible, healthy tonic for the heart.

3. HAWTHORN TINCTURE. My new Fall favorite! Fill a small bottle 1/2 full with Hawthorn berries. Fill up the remainder of the jar with 100 proof vodka. It's okay that a few berries may float to the top. Store in a dark place out of sunlight. Shake and turn the mixture daily while it sits for 4-6 weeks. This tincture will be ready to strain and use after 4 weeks. If it sits longer, it is not a problem. You can put it in a bottle with a dropper and take 1/2 a dropper per day

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for increased health. Noticeable improvement in health may take 6-12 weeks.

Always remember herbs are medicine, so please use with care! If you are already on a heart medicine, this may not be a good choice for you. Please check with your doctor first. Pregnant women should use special caution with herbs.

I hope you will take time to build a connection with Hawthorn, and ultimately to your Mother Earth, by experiencing her herbal leaves and drinking the infused tea water consciously and intentionally. Happy Herbing!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFG9RFCXd-0> Here is a link to a video with the ever-inspiring Susan Weed!



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Seeds of Life, Seeds of Healing by Vandyia Huntting



Amma has been suggesting we grow vegetables for several years. Many people started small garden plots in their yards. Amma's ashrams around the world are becoming resource centers for growing food - offering permaculture workshops, keeping bees, planting trees and orchards, etc. Our local Amma center is becoming a garden paradise!

One of the most important requirements for a garden is good seeds. Farmers and gardeners of the past saved their own seeds. Today good seeds are harder to come by.

"Every seed we plant is a tiny loving prayer in action."

Rowan White, founder of Sierra Seeds

A LIVING TRADITION

The worldwide tradition of seed saving gave us the multitude of grains and vegetables we grow today. Farmers selected seeds from the most vigorous and healthy plants for the next year's crop. They carefully chose plants for desired traits like productivity, flavor, and disease resistance. Neighbors often traded seeds adding to the genetic diversity and strength of the plants. Over time the plants adjusted to local soil, pests, diseases and climate. If a new disease came or the weather pattern changed drastically, someone in the village likely had a variety that was unaffected. Repeated cross-pollination of the survivor with other strains added new features to the genes of these plants. Together plants and humans created a wide and varied gene pool – a shared insurance that some seeds would survive despite threats.

Migrating settlers brought their most cherished seeds with them to their new homes. Centuries later many of these varieties still thrive. In this way, people all over the world selected and bred increasingly resilient open-pollinated seed strains. These seeds are a treasure house of immensely varied genetic material – adapted and selected over generations for diverse wants and needs in every growing condition.

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In our modern world of climate change and increasing pollution, seeds born of a time-tested gene pool may become the key to survival for future generations. Preserving this treasure house of adaptability should be a top global priority.

THE LOSS OF ADAPTABLE SEED STRAINS

In recent times, there is an unprecedented loss of seed varieties. During the past 60 years many traditional country markets and local grocery stores have been replaced by supermarket chains. Crops are bred for storage and easy marketing rather than flavor, nutritional value and resiliency. Many small seed companies were swallowed up by larger seed-breeding facilities. These larger facilities could afford the research and specialized equipment to develop new strains for these new demands. Many larger companies were taken over by multinationals whose primary interest was often manufacturing chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Strong and naturally resistant seed strains of the past were of little interest and even detrimental to business.

Corporations invested huge amounts of money in seed research and development. This produced *F1 hybrid seeds*, which are specially bred for specific characteristics. The first generation often displays a strong growth known as *hybrid vigor*. But the seeds are bred so they can't produce the same standard of plants again when re-sown. Unlike traditional varieties, hybrid seeds lack the ability to adapt to changing conditions. Commercial hybrid seeds often depend on the chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Many hybrid seed varieties are patented, making it illegal to save seeds without permission or payment to the seed producer. Unfortunately, it is often hybridized varieties that are available in garden shops around the world.

Genetically modified (GM) seeds were introduced in 1994. GM seeds are produced by introducing genetic characteristics that can't occur naturally. These qualities are added for specific demands such as increased shelf life for shipping purposes. GM seed producers also promised greater harvests. GM seeds are patented; it is illegal to save seed for use the next season. Unfortunately, an increasing number of GM crops are failing to fulfill their promises and show detrimental effects on health and the environment.

Studies have shown severe digestive and reproductive disorders in test animals when fed a diet of GM corn and soy. Since 2005, reports show that East Indian farmers whose sheep and cattle graze on GM cotton fields after harvest, found their animals dying in large numbers. There are negative effects from the use of pesticides associated with GM crops. In a small community in Campeche, Mexico, Mayan farmers found that 1,500 colonies of honeybees died from the fumigation of GMO corn crops in the area. And when it comes to seed saving, one of the big issues is that GM crops threaten the purity of seeds everywhere through unwanted cross-pollination.

Hybrid and GM seeds stand in stark contrast to traditional open-pollinated seeds that have been used by farmers for thousands of years. These seeds are bred specially for flavor, nutritional value, beauty, fragrance, dependability, diversity, and sustenance. Open-pollinated seed produces plants that are true-to type. They carry their unique genetic material with all its possibilities from generation after generation.

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The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimated that 75% of crop diversity was lost between 1900 and 2000. This is due to the diminishing use of traditional crops, massive consolidation of seed producers, and large-scale planting of genetically modified crops. It is estimated that 90% of agricultural varieties are no longer available. Farmers and home growers are left with a rapidly diminishing seed pool to draw from. For example, India had nearly 110,000 varieties of rice until 1970. Now only 6,000 - about 5% - of these rice varieties survive. This loss of our diverse genetic seed heritage endangers the world food supply and poses a great threat to the modern world.

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Home gardeners around the world have kept traditional vegetable varieties in cultivation. These seed savers are the guardians of a huge store of genetic diversity. Their home-saved varieties may have preserved the right genes for dealing with the challenges of our rapidly changing world – tolerance for drought and extreme weather, resistance to diseases, and more.

A garden that is self-reliant fosters a deep sense of satisfaction and independence. To see your seeds grow and mature into flowers and a new supply of seeds is to witness one of the simple miracles that sustains life. Participation in this process allows you to enter into the ancient, living cycles of Nature and Her continuous power of renewal. Seed saving becomes an unbroken connection to something greater than ourselves.

Seeds have always and will always be a vital part of the cultural fiber of community. Through garden networks, seed swaps and exchanges, gatherings and celebrations, heirloom seeds highlight the common bonds of people, food and place. They are integral to any goal of local food sustainability. Seed saving is a precious opportunity to step into the unbroken circle of one of the most enduring world traditions. It is also a necessity to secure our earth's magnificent and precious biodiversity. Let us honor this vital responsibility and make an everlasting offering to the future generations of the world.

“Take care of the seeds and they will take care of you.”

Rowan White, founder of Sierra Seeds

LET'S GET STARTED!

Winter and Spring

Do some research. If you haven't saved seeds before, check out seed companies that sell heirloom open-pollinated online (several are listed in the resource section). Most will send you a free catalog. Check out local seed companies. Talk to neighbors and friends who save seeds. Get some good seeds. Pick a few vegetables or flowers you would like to save seeds from.

Summer and Fall

If you have a garden, pick a few vegetables or flowers you want to save seeds from. Flowers are an easy way to start. Do a bit of online research and save a few (seed saving info is listed in the resource section). Trade seeds with

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friends and neighbors. Attend a local seed exchange.

Take a Risk.

Bet on Love.

Plant a Seed.

NOTES

Thanks to Green Friend's Lets Grow Seeds for lots of the info in this article.

RESOURCES

Books:

Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties: The Gardener's and Farmer's Guide to Plant Breeding and Seed Saving, 2nd ed. Deppe, Carol. (2000). Chelsea Green Publishing

Thorough, readable book detailing all aspects of seed selection and breeding techniques for creating your own new varieties.

The Resilient Gardener: Food Production and Self-Reliance in Uncertain Times.

Deppe, Carol. (2010). Chelsea Green Publishing

Great info for any gardener in uncertain times!

Lets Grow Seeds.

Green Friends. (2014). Mata Amritanandamayi Mission Trust.

Simple guide to saving seeds, lots of pictures!

Braiding Sweetgrass, Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. (2013). Milkweed Editions.

Fantastic book weaving botany, ecology and indigenous wisdom in a world view honoring all of life grounded in reciprocity and gratitude.

Film:

Seed: The Untold Story

Seed reveals the story of passionate seed keepers around the world as many irreplaceable seeds near extinction.

Great interviews. Available to rent on Amazon.

HEIRLOOM SEEDS

Here are a few places to get heirloom seeds (best are organic, open pollinated seeds). These sites are inspiring and have great online resources for all things gardening, including lots of seed saving info.

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Adaptive Seeds

<https://www.adaptiveseeds.com>

Pacific Northwest grown, open-pollinated, organic seeds. Local!

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds

<http://www.rareseeds.com>

Baker Creek has probably the most beautiful seed catalogue around – one is free and the big one - The Whole Seed Catalogue - costs a bit and is filled with lots of fun info. Located in California.

Seed Savers Exchange

<http://www.seedsavers.org>

Preeminent USA seed saving organization, whose members share over 1,000 heirloom varieties of vegetables, fruits and grains. Probably the greatest single heirloom seed-saving resource. Great seeds, great resource. Become a member!

Fedco Seeds

<https://www.fedcoseeds.com/seeds.htm>

Large selection of certified organic cultivars and regional heirloom varieties located in Maine.

Bountiful Gardens

<https://www.bountifulgardens.org>

Resource for good-performing heirloom, untreated open-pollinated seeds located in California.

Sierra Seeds

www.sierraseeds.org

Small seed company that provides regionally-adapted seeds of the Sierra Foothills, as well as programs that empower seed stewards and local farmers. Founded by Rowan White, an Indigenous seed steward of the Mohawk and Haudenosaunee. Sierra Seeds is infused with the wisdom of her indigenous ancestors. She says on the site: “These seeds, these tiny capsules of life and witnesses to the past, they speak to me in my dreams.” The site takes you into the beauty of connecting on a deeper level with all things seeds.

Uprising Seeds

<https://uprisingorganics.com>

All seeds are certified organic, open-pollinated and grown by small family farms in the Pacific Northwest. Local!

Check your local co-op, garden stores, etc., for more heirloom and native seed companies. Port Townsend now has about 3 small local seed companies! Trade with your friends and neighbors!

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SAVING SEEDS

Here are two free online sites with seed saving info. Most of the seed companies listed above and the Organic Seed Alliance also have seed saving info.

Seed Savers

<http://www.seedsavers.org/learn>

Vegetable Seed Saving Handbook

<http://howtosaveseeds.com/index.php>

ADVOCACY

Organic Seed Alliance

<https://seedalliance.org>

A local (Port Townsend) non-profit that advances ethical seed solutions through research, education, and advocacy programs. Doing great work with local farmers and advocacy work nationally. They have a free Seed Saving Guide for Gardeners and Farmers that you can download.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

A Birthday Gift for Amma

The original goal for this project was for devotees in the PNW region to plant at least 64 trees in honor of Amma's birthday. At the time this article was written, the number of pledges had almost reached 200! You are welcome to participate in the event even if you didn't make a pledge ahead of time. You can do that by planting a tree or trees on your own or by attending one of the upcoming events.



Green Seattle Day: Saturday, November 4 from 9:00 a.m. to noon

Hundreds of volunteers will be planting thousands of trees in parks all over Seattle on this day. You may be able to plant up to 4 trees an hour depending on the site. Keep track of how many you plant so we can add the number to Amma's birthday tree planting totals. To get more information about Green Seattle Day and to sign up for the work party of your choice go to: <http://www.greenseattle.org/get-involved/green-seattle-day>.

Amma Portland Satsang will partner with Friends of Trees on November 14.

Where: 23520 SW Pinehurst Dr. Sherwood OR 97140

When: Sat, Nov 4th, 9am – 1pm -- please meet by 8:45am. Tree planting activities will start promptly at 9:00am and wrap up by 1:00pm.

What: Amma Portland Satsang will join Friends of Trees at Woodhaven City Park this season in partnership with Tualatin Riverkeepers, the City of Sherwood, and Clean Water Services. This planting is part of the Tree For All campaign which has planted over three million native plants in the Tualatin River Watershed in the past decade! Clean Water Services, Friends of Trees, thousands of volunteers, other non-profits, city partners, and private land-owners will be working together this season to continue the success of this program.

Contact Adrienne (503) 545-5256 or Rene (503) 589-5096 with questions.

The project ends on November 5. After you have planted your trees, write Karuna at karunap108@comcast.net and let her know how many trees you planted and where you live. If possible, also send photos and stories!

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Making a Difference by Vijaya Taylor



In Washington, Oregon, California and here in western Canada, our forests have been decimated by wildfires this year. This has been the worst season for wildfires in BC's history. Internet reports say that more than two million two hundred thousand acres have been scorched in BC forests this summer. In our hometown of Victoria, we escaped fires but experienced dense smoke for several days. Skies became an eerie white haze during the day, while at night the moon glowed red. Summer temperatures frequently broke record highs. Snow which cloaks the Olympics even in summer months became barely discernible from Victoria.

An online U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report says that, in the western United States, 8.3 million acres have burned this past summer. That's the second largest area of US fire damage (the largest being the 10 million acres that burned a few years ago). Seattle summer temperatures were the hottest and driest on record, while here in Victoria we went three months without any rain to speak of, though we border a rain forest. According to what I've been reading, climate change, or global warming, includes changes in rain patterns. We have definitely experienced those changes these last few years, with trees in particular being adversely impacted by them.

Still, we can make a difference as individuals. What to do? Plant trees! Make a personal commitment to plant one, two, three trees per year. Our beloved Amma has of course asked this of each of us for a while now. Once fall begins to bring rain, it is an ideal time to plant trees.

Trees heal the planet, restore and cool our earth and give us air to breathe. We take their coexistence for granted, but

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

for how long?

Look at the trees on your property. Are they stressed with brown needles, leaves and limbs? That is, beyond the normal dropping of leaves and needles that happens in fall. Next year water them through the summer months. Fortunately, fall will bring rain to restore trees, but first they need to survive summer. We are not accustomed to needing to water trees in the Pacific NW, but they deserve our attention so they can thrive through the driest of recorded seasons.

Five or six years ago a friend gave us a Christmas planter with a poinsettia and a very small tree approximately four inches high. We planted the wee pine tree in our garden and now it is ten feet tall and seven feet wide and expanding. Consider re-purposing a live tree such as this yourself. Let your children get in on the fun and excitement of planting a tree and then seeing its growth through the years.

What about allowing trees that “volunteer” in your garden to continue growing? Having habitually dug them out and thrown them into the compost in the past, I now plant volunteer trees in pots and give them to others. Or you can transplant the little guys to another location in your garden rather than composting them, again making sure it is a location with water so they can survive the droughts of summer months.

Or what about planting a tree to memorialize a loved one? Donate a tree as a gift. Or purchase a fruit tree to provide food for your family.

It's also fascinating to learn more about trees. I'm currently reading “The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate” by Peter Wohlleben, which is opening doors of discovery for me.

Last year at Costco our family fell in love with a rather large red maple tree and impulsively purchased it without considering how we'd transport it home. We wrapped its root ball in a plastic bag, put the seats down in our vehicle, and drove home with its leafy top between the driving wheel and passenger seat. What fun to drive amidst a tree! Its red glow currently gives lovely contrast to surrounding greenery in our backyard garden. So, fall in love with a tree and give it a new home – it will be yours to enjoy for generations. It will reward you with its beauty and shade and provide a place for birds to rest and sing while cooling the earth's atmosphere and absorbing pollution.

With so much destruction from wildfires we need more trees planted than ever. Trees offer renewal and joy. Plant them to thwart climate change. Save the planet. Each of us can make a difference.

Note: We planted the tree in the photo above when it was 4 inches. It is now 10 feet tall!

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Work Parties - Oct 1, 2017



On October 1, we held our first forest restoration work party since the end of July. Twenty-two people participated. They included five members of our GreenFriends group, twelve students from the Introduction to Environmental Science class at the University of Washington, a neighbor, a high school student, a Forest Steward from a different site and two other Seattle residents.

In less than three hours, we ...



removed blackberry, bindweed and ivy vines and dug out blackberry root balls from 2050 sq. ft. of property that had been previously cleared....

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

cleared 750 sq. ft. of land for the first time...



erected a two-foot-high “wall” made from pieces of broken concrete pieces. The space between the “wall” and the foundation will be used to store some of the trees, shrubs and ground covers that we will be planting in the coming months...



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

and dug out the blackberry root balls that were growing amidst the concrete rubble. (The last photos show some before and after photos of one area where we removed the rubble.)



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Work Parties - October 14, 2017



The October 14th work party was our biggest ever. Thirty-four people participated. That included 4 GreenFriends members, 4 neighbors, 22 students from the University of Washington's Introduction to Environmental Science class, 4 friends and a Forest Steward from another Greenbelt site.

Our goal for this work party was to finish preparing the land for the 35+ trees that we would be planting on October 22. We created a bucket brigade and then carried 10 square yards of wood chips from 25th Avenue S into the Greenbelt and dumped them in piles around the site,



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



We also removed blackberry root balls that were located close to the planting areas and placed burlap around each section where a tree will be planted.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



The work party may have only lasted three hours, but as you can see from the photos above and below, we have lots of memories!



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



PNW Litter Project

PNW Litter Project Stats

In October, 34 Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for 82 hours. (Average 2.4 hours; Median 1 hour; Range 1 minute to 18 hours) We have picked up litter for 9043 hours since the project began in July of 2011.

TerraCycle Stats

TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items that are normally considered unrecyclable. They have credited us with turning in 321,224 cigarette butts since 2013. We have also sent them 394 Drink Pouches, 732 Cereal Bag liners, and 2,997 Energy Bar wrappers.

