



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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Interesting Information from Our Readers



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

NEWS



Trees for Amma's birthday Update from GreenFriends North America



Our goal for this project is to plant trees all over North America, in honor of our beloved Amma's birthday. We are happy to report that many devotees are responding with joy and enthusiasm.

You can still participate! Amma's birthday has passed, and the pledge period has ended, but you still have until Dec. 20th to plant trees and have them counted. Let's see if we can plant more than 1,500 trees to delight our beautiful, compassionate and ever-giving Amma!

As of Sept. 28th, 187 people have pledged to plant 1,060 trees. And 120 trees have already been planted!

Trees are being planted in many states and provinces, including Arizona, British Columbia, California, Colorado, Connecticut, DC, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North

Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Ontario, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Quebec, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. We even have pledges from Odisha and Kerala, India!

Use this form to report how many trees you planted by Dec. 20th. You are welcome to report the trees you planted whether or not you made a pledge. (Note: Trees planted during a satsang work party should be reported only by the organizer of the event, on the same form.)

For interesting articles, videos and information, (e.g. how to plant a tree, and how to plant trees if you have no land) please check out the new tree-planting section of the GreenFriends-North America [Resources page](#).

We welcome your tree-planting stories or photos! Please send them to info@greenfriendsna.org

NEWS

Tree planting events

Portland Satsang will be planting trees on October 13 at a Friends of Trees event. For more information contact: Adrienne at apmullock@yahoo.com.

MA Center: PNW Maltby Farm will host a tree planting event from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, October 13. To RSVP and for more information: <https://ma-center-pnw-tree-planting-habitat-restoration.eventbrite.com>



Pacific Northwest Litter Project

The Pacific Northwest Litter Project moved beyond the 10,000 hour mark in September. As of September 30 participants had picked up litter for 10,037 hours.



PNW Gardening

Backyard Herbal Medicine - Best Basil

Hello Dear Herbal Friends,

This month let's take time for the amazing herb Basil. Although most of us are familiar with only one or two types of Basil, amazingly there are somewhere between 50-150 Basil species, most of which are known for their culinary use and less commonly for their healing ability. She is an herb that is used nearly worldwide and is found in the cooking of almost all cultures. Basil is a member of the mint family. In India, Holy Basil, or Tulasi, is the most popular variety.

In the tropics it grows as a perennial. In the Pacific Northwest, Basil grows outdoors as an annual, but you will have to grow her inside or wait until next summer since fall is just about here.

The Latin name for Basil is *Ocimum Basilicum* (meaning "to be fragrant."). She is also known as St. Joseph's Wort.



Basil leaves come in a variety of colors; most common are green and purple. Her flowers begin to bloom in mid- to late summer. If you want to extend the growing season, you can respectfully pinch off the blooms and encourage the plant to continue to put energy into producing leaves. Basil flowers are a favorite for the bees.

Basil is native to Asia but grows well here in the PNW. She loves having lots of sun and almost any kind of well-drained soil will do. It is not recommended to fertilize Basil.

Her healing parts: leaves, stalks, fresh flowers

Constituents: Linalol, Methylchavicol, Methylcinnamat, Linolen, Camphor, Rosemarinic Acid

Magical Uses:

Basil helps to build a solid house and a strong, committed family. Having her around increases blessings. Basil is often used in cleansing rituals. Basil brings or attracts love and good luck. She is known for producing Prophetic dreams and enhancing mental clarity.

Herbal Actions:

Antidepressant (helps to lift spirits), anti-bacterial, antifungal (to fight and eliminate fungus), antioxidant (helps protect cells), anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, aromatic, carminative, diaphoretic (causes sweating), emetic (cause vomiting), emmenagogue (helps increase or stimulate menstrual flow), febrifuge (helps to reduce fevers), galactagogue (increase breast milk production), nervine (calms the nerves), refrigerant (cools the body's tissues)

PNW Gardening

Basil is such an important herb for herbalists! Some more of Her healing benefits are:

- May help fight cancer,
- Acts as a natural adaptogen
- Reduce stomach spasms and gas
- Restores loss of appetite
- Supports kidney health
- Treats colds, warts, worms, snake and insect bites

Three Quick Ways to Start Using Basil Medicinally Today!

1. Make a Basil-based cleaner: Fill a spray bottle with water and then crush a few basil leaves and add them to the water. The Natural Anti- Bacterial properties will help keep your home cleansed.
2. Add Basil to your salads.
3. Start drinking Basil Tea to reduce stress since she is a natural adaptogen.

Before you gather the herb, please remember to thank her before taking her medicine, and always give something back to the plant. What you give back is up to you; a simple prayer of gratitude is nice. Try to return any of the used portion of the herb back to the base of the plant. That is a loving tradition. Always remember herbs are medicine. Please use with care!

Contraindications: Pregnancy, Gastric Ulcers, Crohn's, Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Peace and Happy Herbing!

Visala



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

How to plant trees if you don't own land by Tirtha



- Buy a tree as a gift for a friend, family member, neighbour or your landlord. (But make sure it's a wanted gift that will be watered regularly.)
- Suggest that someone plant a tree as a memorial to a loved one that has passed away. Help them plant it and pray for the person.
- Learn how to start trees from seeds or nuts in the fall, by planting them in pots you can keep indoors. (Research the type of trees you want to start on the internet first.) The methods are different for many species, and some need to stay in pots for up to two years, while others can be planted in the spring. You may also be able to donate these little trees to your city, or a school.
- Ask your city if you can plant a community orchard in a park or on municipal property.
- Advertise on Craigslist or a similar local website. Offer to plant a free tree for someone who promises to care for it. Ask if you can follow up to see how the tree is doing.
- See if your city or town has grants for sustainability or climate change projects, or projects for community health. Apply for a grant to plant trees in your neighbourhood or region. Then advertise by putting up posters in neighbourhood community centers, cafes, etc. to find residents who would like a tree planted in their yard, and who promise to care for it. Ask if you can follow up with them to see how the tree is doing.
- Ask your city parks department if it has a public planting event on Arbor Day in the U.S., or on National Tree Appreciation Day in Canada. (Or at any other time.)

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

- Many regions have groups or organizations that plant trees in parks or forested areas. See if you can find one, and join it. Often they also do other things like remove invasive species, or report on wildlife.
- Sponsor a contest in your area. Offer a nice prize for the person who plants the most trees by a certain date.
- If your city has a policy of requiring developers to replace each mature tree that they cut down with one or two saplings, lobby the city to require 10 or more saplings be planted for each mature tree that is killed. Try asking for an amount of saplings to be planted that would equal the volume of the mature tree, so they could be more able to replace the eco-services that the mature tree was performing for the city. (You might not be able to take credit for planting the trees, but it's still worth doing!)

"Plant trees. It is a blessing to do so. Trees outlive us and provide fruit and shade to coming generations. Individually, we should each make a vow to plant at least one tree a month. In a year, each person will have planted 12 trees. Together we can restore nature's beauty to the face of the world." – Amma



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

GreenFriends Greenbelt Restoration Project

Last year, we only had photos from the Internet to show what the trees, shrubs and ground covers we were planting were going to look like. This year, we can share pictures that were taken on our site.



Sikta Spruce



Salmonberry



Red Columbine



Bleeding Heart

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Early Violet



Nodding Onion



Serviceberry



Budding Fern Leaf

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Red Flowering Currant



Snowberry



Oregon Grape



Roemer's Fescue

Nature

Grandmother Redwood Tree

This is the amazing Grandmother Redwood tree that stands as a beacon as you come up our driveway leading to our property and house. Mother Nature standing guard, welcoming the Angelic and Devic beings a sanctuary for all wild creatures! Blessings every day! (From Achintya in Santa Cruz)



Nature

Buck at Sunset



from Achintya in Santa Cruz

Nature

The Intriguing Pond Heron by Karuna

During my recent Amritapuri visit, I stopped by a small garden that is near the Western cafe. When I walked into the garden, I saw a friend who has lived at the ashram for many years. From time to time, other ashram residents bring her injured or abandoned birds. She does her best to nurse the birds back to health and then frees them. Birds that don't survive receive a lot of love during their last days. On the day that I was in the garden, she was interacting with a pond heron. I was intrigued.



Nature



Source Reduction

Source Reduction in Laguna San Ignacio, Mexico by Diya

Richard and I have always had a fascination with and love for the ocean. We've had incredible experiences with dolphins who came to swim and play with us while snorkeling in Hawaii. We also had the opportunity to swim with manta rays and sea turtles but we were yet to get close to gray whales. In March we decided to head to Baja Mexico where we'd heard about Pachico's Eco Tours, a company that took you out into a biosphere reserve where you'd get close enough to pet and even hug gray whales. What we didn't expect to experience was how much work these people put into protecting and preserving the environment and living in harmony with nature.



Baja is such a beautiful place. Serene and expansive landscape with gorgeous missions, churches, wild horses and everywhere you turn, a beautiful altar with a statue or picture of La Madre Divina (the Divine Mother) adorned with fresh flowers and candles.



Source Reduction

While driving we were somewhat disturbed, however, that even in desolation, plastic had managed to infiltrate and defile this stoic landscape. We saw a lot of discarded tires, plastic bottles and food wrappers along with many plastic bags stuck to the cacti. It was apparent that like other countries, Mexico was being strangled by single-use plastics. We also chatted on the drive about how much we'd grown. How we'd stepped way outside of our comfort zone by deciding to stay at an eco-camp with no electricity, no internet, no cell reception, and compost toilets only. You see, Richard and I are not campers. Our idea of camping is a hotel without room service but we really wanted to meet the gray whales and have an experience so we acquiesced.



A few hours later we stopped for lunch at a small taqueria. We were absolutely thrilled when we walked in and saw a sign on the wall that said, 'No straw, thanks!' It gave us so much hope that all around the world, people are beginning to wake up to the detriment of plastic on the environment and trying to do something about it. In our limited Spanish, we pointed to the sign, gave them the thumbs up and said, "Gracias! El plástico no es bueno!" (Thank you! Plastic is no good!) They laughed and reciprocated the thumb's up sign in agreement.

We'd been told when we arrived at the camp to come directly to the 'Earthship Gathering Center' to retrieve the keys to our cabin and meet the owner and our host, Jesus Mayoral. Having never heard the term 'Earthship' before, it sounded like something out of Battlestar Galactica. We were pleasantly surprised when we walked up to the stucco building and opened the door. Inside it was warm and cozy and there were several other guests gathered around a communal table laughing and telling stories. We were greeted warmly by everyone and introduced to Jesus who showed us to our cabin.

Source Reduction



The cabin was a humble structure with a bed, small table and bathroom. It was solar powered for lighting but not sufficient to charge phones/computer. Jesus gave us instructions on how to use the compost toilet and this is where reality really sank in. There was a wooden platform with a toilet seat on it. We lifted the lid and underneath was a bucket with some sawdust on the bottom. Next to the toilet was a bin filled with fresh sawdust and an abalone shell to scoop it out with. We were told to do our business then cover it up with sawdust which would neutralize any odors. Oh, and toilet paper had to be put into the garbage can next to the toilet. When our buckets started getting full we were to let housekeeping know and they would come and take it away to the compost area. This was definitely going to be an adventure.



The next day we spent some time talking with Jesus and learning more about the eco-camp. We discovered how much they were doing with limited resources while still protecting the environment. We learned the term 'Earthship' referred to a particular type of sustainable solar house made of natural and upcycled materials pioneered by architect Michael Reynolds. The Earthship Gathering Center at the camp was made out of earth-packed tires, cans and

Source Reduction

bottles. Jesus explained to us because the camp was remote, they had to process their own waste and find creative ways to recycle, reuse and conserve. They developed such an efficient system they were now educating and working with other villages to set up similar facilities. Richard and I were awed and inspired.

Over the course of the next few days we had several memorable experiences. The communal table in the gathering center quickly became a favorite place. Because there was no internet, TV and very limited cell reception, there were no distractions so we had to talk to each other, to learn about one another and be present. We shared about ourselves and had great conversations about life and what had brought us all to that remote camp in Baja. We played music and sang together in the evening. Jesus played bass guitar and two of the other guys had guitars as well. I happened to have my kaimonis (little hand cymbals) with me so I joined in on percussion. We bonded and felt a sense of community we all acknowledged was severely lacking in our society today.

By the end of the week we had also come to really respect the humble compost toilet. There was something comforting about knowing our waste would be returned to the earth and become fertilizer for something else. We thought about how much water we were saving and how with the growing global population and climate change we may all be using compost toilets in the future.



Of all the experiences, our encounters with the gray whales were the most memorable. Every day we went out we had curious whales doing spy hops right next to the boat. A spy hop is when they pop their head up out of the water to take a look at us and see what we're up to. We suddenly realized how small and vulnerable we were in our little boat when a whale swam right up alongside us. One flick of that powerful tail and we would capsize but instead he just let us oooh and awww and snap our pictures before he peacefully swam away. There were many encounters over the course of the next couple days, but we had yet to touch a whale and we were all secretly hoping it would happen.

Source Reduction



The last afternoon of our trip we had our golden moment. A mother and her calf swam right up to our boat! The mother pushed the calf right up to Richard and we got to pet and love him! The experience was beyond words. Looking into the eye of a whale is chilling. You realize there is a highly evolved, conscious being looking back at you. I was deeply humbled every time they looked at me and found myself apologizing on behalf of my species for being so selfish and destructive toward nature. What I felt coming back from them was a profound forgiveness but also a desperate plea for help. It was as if they were making themselves accessible to us so we would appreciate their beauty and truly see we are all connected and when one being on the planet suffers, we all suffer. I made a promise to every one of them I would do everything in my power to help them by reducing my own consumption of single-use plastics that were polluting and destroying their home. I vowed not to waste the precious gift they had given me but rather to use my experience with them to inspire and educate others to reduce, reuse and conserve Mother Nature's precious and finite resources that we all depend on for our survival.

For more information about the tour company go to <http://pachicosecotours.com/About.htm> You can find the PBS documentary on the website. It's called: Saving the Ocean with Carl Safina, episode 1: Destination Baja.

PNW Litter Project

PNW Litter Project Stats

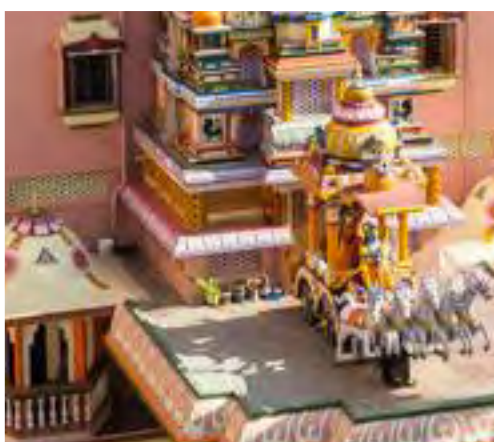
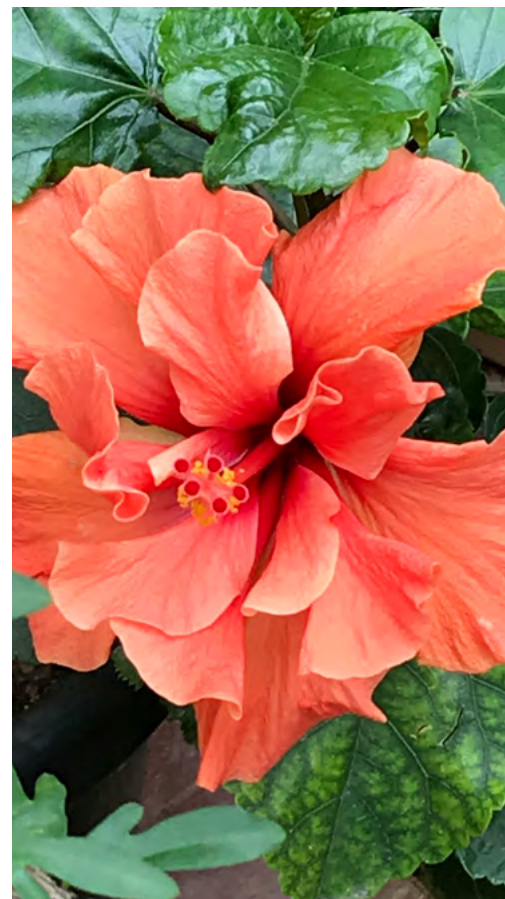
In September 30 Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for 64 hours. (Average 2.1 hours; Median 1.5 hours; Range 2 minutes to 10 hours) We have picked up litter for 10,035 hours since the project began in July of 2011.

TerraCycle Stats

TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable. We have sent them 341,224 cigarette butts since 2013. GreenFriends has also sent them 394 Drink Pouches, 732 Cereal Bag liners, and 2,997 Energy Bar wrappers.



Amritapuri Gardens Main Ashram



Amritapuri Gardens



Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Ramana and Karuna in Seattle:



Photo Credit: [Pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com)

[Jargon Watch: Vertical Gardens vs Vertical Farms vs Living Walls vs Green Façades](#)

[Madrid's Green Wall is Flourishing as is the Caixa Forum](#)

[National Theatre Grows Green](#)

[Green Walls are Growing Inside and Outside in London](#)

[Van Gogh Painting is a Vertical Green Wall](#)

[A Vertical Garden That Actually Lives Up To The Term](#)

[Vertical Farms For London Are Lovely Green Eye Candy](#)

From Tirtha in Victoria:

[Embracing the World: Environment](#)

[Amma addresses the Trillion Tree Campaign](#)

[Trillion Tree Campaign](#)

[History](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Current Status](#)

[India plants 66 million trees in 12 hours as part of record-breaking environmental campaign](#)

From Joanne in Salt Spring Island:

[Video: The Man Who Talked to Trees](#)