

Green Friends

Nature on its own is indeed beautiful and clean. The hills and rivers do not need us to clean them. In fact it is nature's water which cleans us; it is trees which purify air for us. Because we have littered, we have spoilt its pristine beauty.

Amma



May Greetings

Another big month for PNW Green Friends! In April, Netsah Zylinsky presented a Permaculture workshop in Pt. Townsend, and we had Earth Day cigarette butt pick up in Seattle.

In addition, we were awarded another King County Tobacco Prevention Project grant. We have agreed to pick up and count the cigarette butts we find in 5 different South King County parks. The Tobacco Prevention Project will then present this information to the various City Councils. For our service, we will be paid \$4,000. The money will go towards our future PNW M.A. Center.

In April, we removed and counted the cigarette butts from two of the five parks. The last three work parties will be on May 5 and May 11. If you are willing to participate, write karunap108@comcast.net. We especially need more help on the 11th.

We hope you enjoy this month's newsletter!

Contents

May Greetings

Interesting Articles and Videos

Litter Project Membership

Litter Project Hours

Aluminum Can Report

Cigarette Butt Report

Highlights from the Permaculture Class

Expressions of Gratitude and Learning

Permaculture Class Follow-up

Organic Gardening – How to Get Started

Stories and Reflections

Earth Day 2013

Stopping Junk Mail

Green Friends is a global grassroots environmental movement which promotes environmental awareness and local participation in conservation efforts throughout the world.

Green Friends 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 Green Friends Litter Project write Karuna at pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com

Interesting Articles and Videos

Numerous people have sent in interesting articles and videos:

CNN Hero Chad Pregracke has helped pick 67,000 tires, 218 washing machines, 19 tractors, 12 hot tubs, four pianos and almost 1,000 refrigerators out of rivers during the last 15 years. He is sometimes called the "Rivers' Garbageman". His philosophy is: "The garbage got into the water one piece at a time, and that's the only way it's going to come out." Article and video: http://www.cnn.com/2013/04/18/us/cnnheroes-pre-gracke-rivers-garbage/index.html?hpt=hp_t5

Allan Savory: How to fight desertification and reverse climate change: http://www.ted.com/talks/allan_savory_how_to_green_the_world_s_deserts_and_reverse_climate_change.html

Top Ten Trees <http://www.toptenz.net/top-10-amazing-trees.php>

Top Ten Tree Tunnels <http://www.toptenz.net/top-10-incredibly-beautiful-tree-tunnels.php>

Insect Hotels <http://www.inspirationgreen.com/index.php?q=insect-habitats.html>

Dirt! The Movie <http://www.thedirtmovie.org/>

Brussels in Bloom <http://www.raileurope.com/blog/9230-brussels-grandplace-in-biannual-bloom> and <http://www.theweek.co.uk/pictures/30783/brussels-bloom>

Seattle Food Forest <http://www.collective-evolution.com/2012/02/28/its-not-a-fairytale-seattle-to-build-nations-first-food-forest/>

Litter Project Membership

As of April 31, 2013, we had 293 members.

Litter Project Hours

Forty four members reported picking up 112.54 hours of litter during April 2013.

(The statistics below relate to members and guests who report having picked up litter. They do not include those who do not report or who reported 0.)

Average: 2.56 hours

Range 2 minutes to 17 hours

Median: 1.17 hours

The group has completed 3,382.56 hours of litter pick up since the project began in July 2011.

Aluminum Can Report

Washington State Litter Project members collect and sell aluminum cans gathered from the litter they pick up and from friends, family and colleagues.

In 2011, they sold 323 pounds of aluminum cans for \$151.04. In 2012 the total was 281 pounds for \$134.67.

In April 2013 we turned in 45 pounds of cans and earned \$18.98. That makes 148 pounds and \$76.78 earned for 2013.

Since the project began, we have sold 858 pounds for a grand total of \$398.62. All funds were given to the Pacific Northwest M.A. Center.

Cigarette Butts/ TerraCycle Report

In January 2013 we joined the Cigarette Brigade of TerraCycle.

We can send the cigarette butts to TerraCycle, at their expense, and they will turn them into recycled products such as plastic pallets. This keeps the toxic butts out of the landfill and waterways.

In March we sent 22 pounds of cigarette butts to TerraCycle for a yearly total of 62.50 pounds.

Highlights from the Permaculture Classes

By Maheswari

Permaculture Ethics: Care of the Earth - Care of the People - Return the Surplus back to the whole

In April and March Netsah Zelinsky, a certified Permaculture Instructor taught two “Introduction to Permaculture” classes for GreenFriends. One class took place on an urban property and the other one was on a five acre rural property. The classes were well attended and there was a lot of new learning for those who participated. With so much material to cover in a one day class, the main class focus was on food production and how to apply the ethics and principles of permaculture to how we grow our food. Here are a few of the many highlights shared during the Permaculture Classes.

We learned that observation of the land is essential before creating a design: Where does the wind come from? Where are the slopes? Where is the arc of the sun during different times of the year? Are there ways to collect the water on the land? Where does the wildlife enter the land? What designs will give you the highest yield?

Participants were shown how to draw a design using an overlay to understand how these observations will affect their food production. Creating a design and taking into consideration all of these aspect is essential to successful planting. It allows you to work within the natural parameters of your land, or to make changes that are well thought out and will enhance productivity.

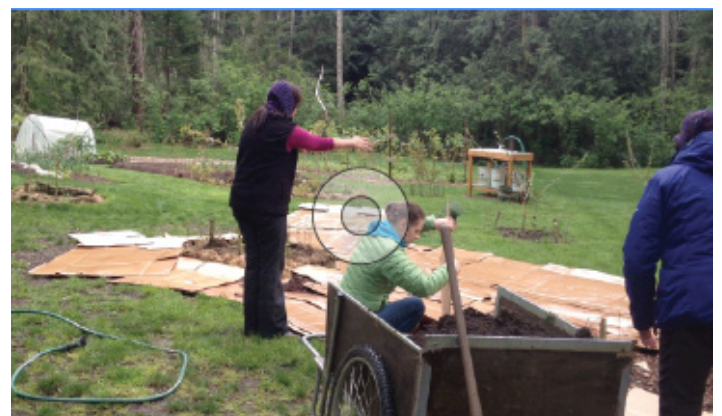


In one of the classes we created a spiral garden together. The purpose of the spiral is to have more gardening space

because you are building and planting vertically. There are also differences in water, temperature and sunlight on the different sides and height of the spiral, thus allowing you to plant various types of plants on different sides and heights of the spiral.



On the rural property we sheet mulched under the young fruit trees and then we covered the cardboard sheets with compost. Sheet mulching is a fast easy way to plant directly over grass without having to remove it. The cardboard is wet on both sides and three layers are overlapped on top of the grass. Once the soon to be planting area is covered with cardboard a thick layer of soil is placed on top and planting begins.



Highlights from the Permaculture Classes -cont.



After the sheet mulching was done, the soil and pathways put down, the plants were sorted and put into guilds around the fruit trees. In permaculture you are encouraged to plant "guilds" around the fruit trees. These grouping of mainly edible plants include herbs, flowers, root crops, nitrogen fixers, vines, groundcovers, and berries. By planting in guilds these plants work collaboratively to contribute toward the health of the tree and the soil. In time it becomes a self sustaining system that requires very little work to maintain.



Expressions of Gratitude and Learning

(from students in the Permaculture Class)

"Life becomes fulfilled when humankind and Nature move together, hand in hand, in harmony. When melody and rhythm complement each other, the music becomes beautiful and pleasing to the ear. Likewise, when people live in accordance with the laws of Nature, life becomes like a beautiful song." –

Amma

With Amma's grace and blessings, the recent "Introduction to Permaculture" classes held in Bellevue and Port Townsend were a great success!! Thank you, Mechas, Eswar and Vandya for hosting the classes in your homes and allowing us to work on your land.

Here are some expressions of gratitude by the participants:

"I was so excited by what I learned I could hardly wait to get home and build my own spiral herb garden."

"Great day! Lots of information with great hands on experience."

"I had no idea I would be learning so much. I am inspired by the idea of observing my land before I create a design to support what I want to grow and maximize my efforts."

"Loved the quality of instruction – fun, interesting, easy to follow, understand and remember, excellent supportive visuals. Loved the mylar demo about "observation." I'll definitely assess my own yard from this perspective. I would definitely enjoy participating in another session."

"I think Amma would be very happy to see us learning about permaculture. I understand now why this is being taught at some of Amma's centers."

"Netsah's knowledge about permaculture is amazing!"

"The class was full of information, and a class notebook was prepared with even more information. I'll be reading the notebook for years to come. So thankful to see Amma's GreenFriends working so hard and effectively to improve our Mother Earth."

"The practice of maintaining vegetable gardens is declining. Even if we only have a tiny plot of land, we should try to grow a few vegetables, using organic fertilizers. Spending some time with our plants, we should talk to them and kiss them. This relationship with Nature will give us new vitality." ~Amma

Permaculture Class Follow-up

by Karuna

I came home from Netsah's Intro to Permaculture class eager to make something. I woke up the next morning realizing that I wanted to make a spiral garden in my front yard. I thought about how to make it in a way that was inexpensive and settled on the idea of using broken pieces of concrete. When it got light, I started looking around my yard to find concrete I could use. All of a sudden, I remembered that the previous week someone had dumped a pile of concrete into the woods a block from my house. At the time, I had been very irritated, but now it seemed like a gift, a goldmine. Throughout the day I carted pieces of concrete home and continued building the spiral. Over the next two days I was able to complete the spiral and sow radish, bok choy and carrot seeds, plus I planted pansies, chives, and a flowering plant that I don't remember the name of! Within 5 days the bok choy and radishes had sprouted, and a week later the carrot seedlings were up!

