



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

[Seed Saving and Autumn Planting](#)

[Photos of Lalita's Garden](#)

Nature

[Find the Frogs](#)

[Elephant Spotting](#)

[Eucalyptus Tree in San Ramon](#)

[Photos of Kohala on the Island of Hawaii](#)

[Just whose Place is it Anyway?](#)

Interesting Information from Our Readers

[Links](#)

[Rose Hips- Yummy and Nutritious](#)

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

[Hearty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow](#)

[The Transformation of the Greenbelt](#)

[Greenbelt Restoration Work Party:](#)

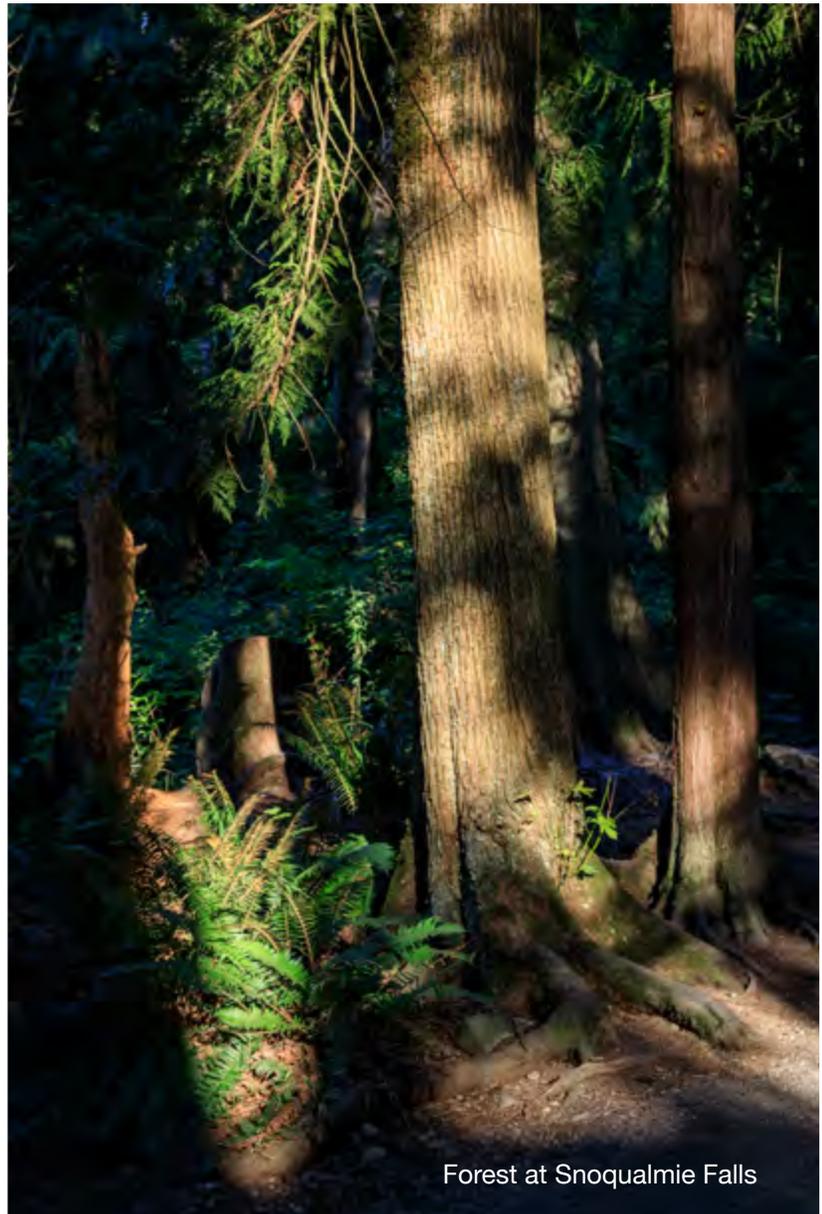
[Expedia Day of Caring](#)

PNW Litter Project

[Stats](#)

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

[Composting Toilets](#)



Forest at Snoqualmie Falls

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

Seed Saving and Autumn Planting by Sri Pati in Victoria



Zinnias in bloom (one covered for seed saving)

Saving Seeds

- Select most vigorous plant specimen and choose based on colour, form or earliness of bloom.
- Cover with a loosely woven piece of lightweight cotton secured by a rubber band so the seed won't be eaten by birds or rodents.
- Let the flower dry until the seed head is ready to release its seed.
- Move the flower to a drying space indoors to thoroughly dry the seed head.
- Remove the chaff and store the seeds in small plastic bag, or small jar.
- Be sure to label to identify the plant and date the seeds.

PNW Gardening

Planting to attract bees and other pollinators is good gardening practice.



Each year, I choose the most vigorous chard plant to let go to seed. This is yellow chard, that is now 6' tall, staked (with the green stake) and I'm letting the seeds ripen and turn brown on the plant.

The birds love harvesting seeds from this plant, and they are responsible for spreading some of the chard seed through the garden. I enjoy being able to share the garden with the birds. When the seed fronds turn brown, I will snip them and place in a brown paper bag to continue drying. I will leave the bag open to allow air circulation and then label and date them.



PNW Gardening

Autumn Planting: Winter Cold Frame for Plant Starts



I just planted my winter cold frame with pre-starts of Bibb lettuce. First, I enriched the soil with a bag of mushroom manure. Any salad greens can be planted in the cold frame, and hardier plants such as kale and chard can go directly into the garden bed.

Several years ago, I made the cold frame from an old window placed over 2x6 foot frame and then situated it against the warmest side of the garden shed. On warm days, I leave it open during the day and close it in the evening. In winter, I keep it closed except to harvest or water. The cold frame is tilted forward so the plants receive direct sunlight.

It is important that I remember to water the plants thoroughly. In the past, I was successful growing salad greens in eastern Canada with a foot of snow on the ground. Successful until the neighbour's goat got loose and stepped on the glass, broke the window and had lunch.



PNW Gardening

Photos of Lalita's Garden on Small Island in B.C



PNW Gardening



Nature

Find the Frogs by Lalita (on small island in BC)



Nature

Elephant Spotting at Bandipur by Kothai

The drive from Nilgiri hills to Bangalore is a trip that I always look forward to as we have to cross the Bandipur Tiger Reserve and National Park en route. I had my eyes peeled and was hoping to spot some wildlife and was thrilled to encounter a magnificent lone tusker at close proximity. We also saw spotted deer, langurs and some baby elephants.



Nature



Nature

Eucalyptus Tree in San Ramon, CA by Arati



Nature

Photos of Kohala on the Island of Hawaii by Eric

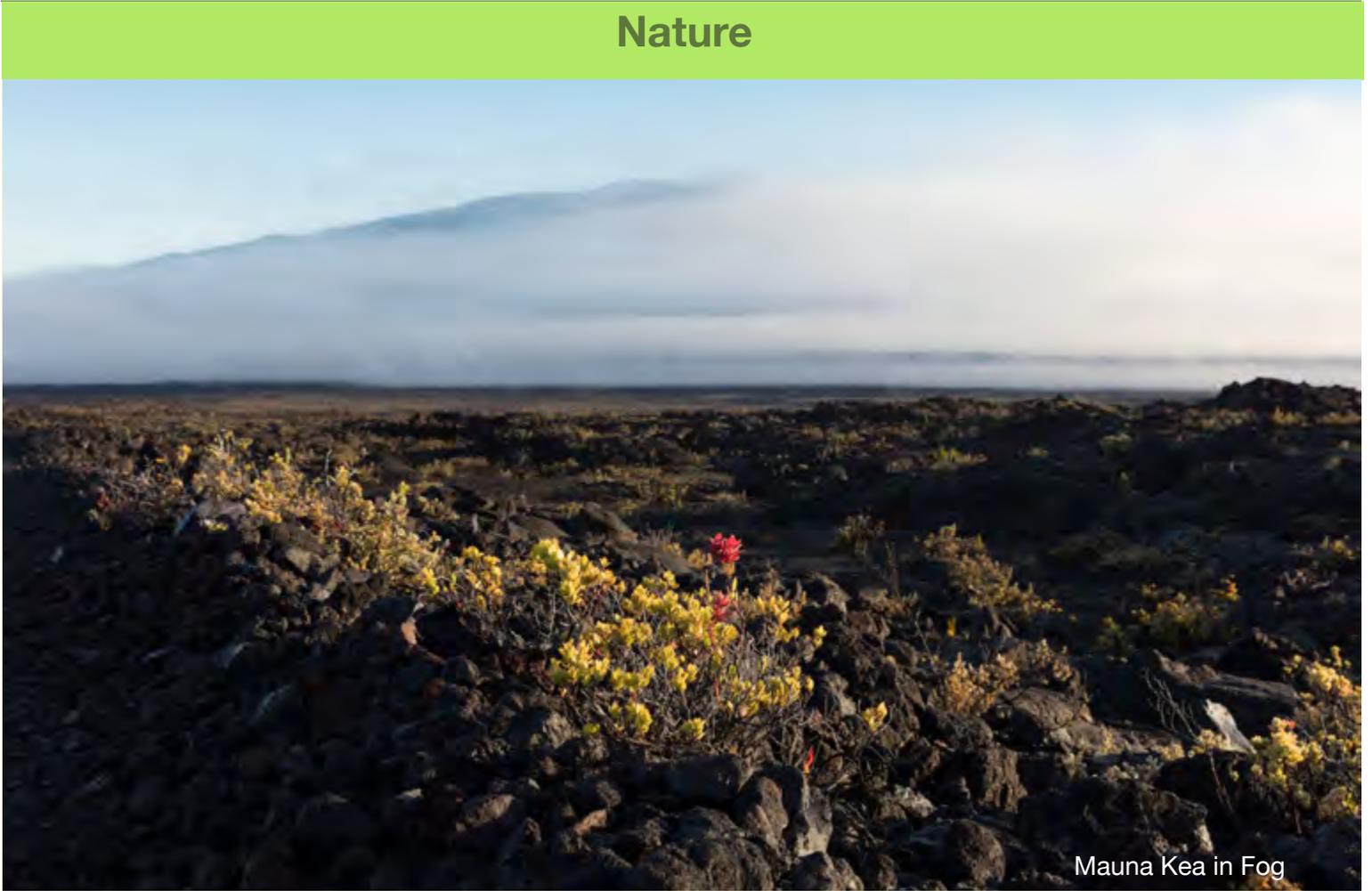


Kohala Coast 1



Kohala Mountain Looking to Hualalai

Nature



Mauna Kea in Fog

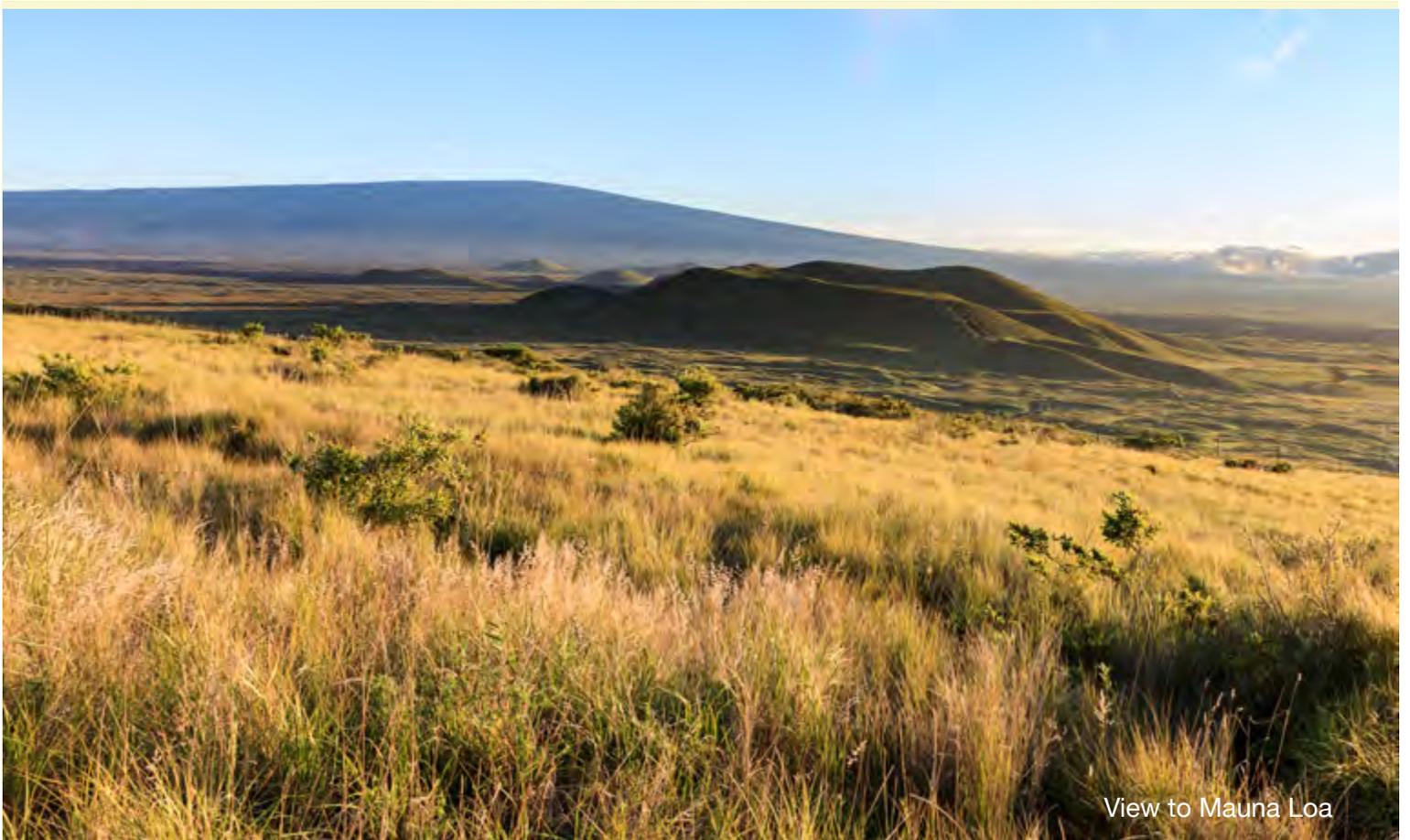


Pu'u Kalepeamo on slopes of Mauna Kea

Nature



Rainbow Shower Tree landscape



View to Mauna Loa

Nature

Just Whose Place It Anyway? by Lin in Bellevue

“Out of the way—coming through!” It’s the universal cry of Homo sapiens. Chainsaws snarl, giant machinery yanks trees up by their roots, and earth movers scrape away the underground burrows of creatures large and small. In creating our homes in suburbia, we humans think nothing of upending the homes of birds and animals and carving routes through a world that used to belong to wildlife.

But here at my house the critters have turned the tables. Gophers and rats tunnel relentlessly through my vegetable garden, and rabbits chew through the heavy plastic fencing I put around it.

My nine hundred square foot burrow consists mostly of an open space for living, dining, and kitchen—with floor to ceiling glass front and back. You can come in the glass front door, cross the living room, and go right out onto the back patio. That’s what the birds and squirrels do when the rain dries up and the summer sun comes out and I throw open my doors and windows to rejoin the world of nature. The critters use my living room as their personal freeway—and I’m happy to share the space.

A squirrel carrying one of my neighbor’s peanuts walked in the other day. It ignored me on my keyboard at the dining table and made a tour of the place, eventually leaving the way it entered. They have my big backyard of fir trees, ferns, and rhododendrons, yet my planters on the back patio still seem to be the preferred place to store those peanuts. Declaring the pots off limits seems only fair—so, even though I’ve draped them with bird-netting, I end up shouting, “Get your furry butt out of my flower pots!”



Nature

It's the birds that have the hardest time with that highway between the front and back door. They get disoriented on the spinning suet feeder at the entrance and careen indoors and up against the plate glass back wall instead of going out the door embedded in its center. Sitting at my keyboard, when I hear the whir of wings and a feathery thud, I know what's happened.

I'm always amazed that they can't seem to find the two open doors and let themselves out. When my herding attempts with a dust mop fail, I wait for the little thing to tire so I can get close enough to toss a dishtowel over its feathery body for a gentle carry to freedom outside. Mostly it's chickadees and Oregon juncos. The one and only hummingbird seemed smart enough to quickly find his way out. I knew it was a he not only because of his red head, but because the boys use the feeder at the front window, and the girls use the one at the back.

My weirdest and most exciting rescue was the day I didn't notice a visitor come inside. There was a substantial thud and a frantic crashing around, unlike anything I'd experienced before. Was it a raccoon? No, it turned out to be a young Pileated Woodpecker—possibly one that had just fledged, since the feathers on his red head weren't yet standing upright. He'd spun off the suet feeder and ended up against that glassy back wall.

My dust mop failed to usher him to the door. He was so big, the size of a large crow, that the dishtowel technique left his head uncovered. Strangely, he didn't let out a sound as I picked him up and carried him toward the door. He just swiveled his long skinny neck 180 degrees like an owl to take in his surroundings and size me up. The arc swung by that huge beak was impressive.

Not wanting to scare him further, I took him outside quickly and let him go. But I wish I had held him longer for a good look at such a rare and elusive neighbor. In the nearly fifty years I've lived here in this house, I've heard the Pileated Woodpecker's unique calls and guessed that the rectangular holes in a dead madrone at the back of my woods is their home. But I've had only four sightings of the birds themselves.

The first one was bizarre. Normally, when the Blue Angels do their August air show over Lake Washington (seemingly using my flat roof as a route marker), I hide away indoors to escape the ear-splitting racket of low-flying jets. But that year there was an equally ear-splitting commotion in my front yard, and it sounded like it came from a bird.



Nature

When I went out to investigate, there was Mister Pileated Woodpecker atop the phone pole abutting my driveway. Every time a jet flew over, he'd look up at it, flap his big black wings and send off a string of woodpecker curses at top volume. Clearly, this was his territory, and he didn't appreciate it being invaded. I hope he'd put on the same performance if a chainsaw or earthmover threatened his tree. I know I'd be out there sticking up for him.

The animals and I have each put down roots in our suburban space and have established our respective routes so that we cohabit harmoniously. I can walk out the front door hardly disturbing the nuthatches on the suet feeder or the Oregon juncos on the ground below it because they know that's my route. When I reach the graveled driveway, if I find one of the brown rabbits there, I stop and chat. More often than not, the rabbit sits down and listens, sometimes even stretches out full length to get comfortable while I deliver compliments about the softness of his coat and confess my relief that he dislikes the taste of chard and kale in my garden. It's a more leisurely and satisfying connection than I have with most of my human neighbors.

After all these experiences with the birds and bunnies, and the squirrels, raccoons, and tunneling pests, I like to think of this plot of land as our home, not just mine. After all, the wildlife was here first.

Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Kothai in Bellevue:

[Honoring the life cycle — Saukhyam Reusable Pads](#)

From Karuna in Seattle:

[Seattle Community Collection, Compost & Special Events: Fall 2019](#)

[A single tea bag can leak billions of pieces of microplastic into your brew](#)

[US and Canada have lost 2.9 billion birds since 1970, study says](#)

Green Seattle Day- Saturday November 2

On Green Seattle Partnership's Green Seattle Day, there will be tree and shrub planting work parties all over Seattle. You will find the locations here: <https://www.greenseattle.org/get-involved/green-seattle-day>

Interesting Information from Our Readers

Rose Hips- Yummy and Nutritious by Eileen in Seattle

Each year Mark and I go down to Richmond Beach by the Puget Sound and pick rosehips. You can find them in many areas; for example, they've been seen in Discovery Park.

My own idea: boil them, add lemon juice and sugar substitute (try the new Monkfruit sweetener) and put in blender. Just blend a little so the seeds don't blend, if you blend a lot the seeds will blend in and the drink won't be as tasty and will be thick. Then you strain all. You get a fabulous drink high in Vitamin C.



Mark at Richmond Beach



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Hearty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow by Sri Pati from Victoria

An Overview:

Garry Oak trees are indigenous to southern Vancouver Island. They have beautiful spreading branches with rough bark and broad leaves bordered with finger-like projections. We decided to see if we could sprout some.

- First, Vijaya and I gathered the Garry Oak acorns often directly from the tree, as many on the ground had holes-drilled in.
- Next we dropped them into a bucket of water. The floaters won't sprout, sinkers are good.
- Then, we planted 3 acorns per pot the depth of an acorn with garden soil enriched with leaf mulch.
- The pots were heeled into a bed for winter with more soil snugged up to the shoulders of the pots. We covered the pots with chicken wire and secured it so squirrels wouldn't bother them. By spring, we had 30 sprouted saplings from 50 acorns planted. 60% successful germination.

Planting Acorns: A Pictorial Story – Part 1



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Watch for Planting Acorns: A Pictorial Story- Part 2 in a future newsletter.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

The Transformation of the Greenbelt

In September 2016, when GreenFriends members started their forest restoration work in this Greenbelt site on Beacon Hill in Seattle, most of the land looked like the two photos below.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

We have now planted trees, shrubs and ground covers in at least 20 areas of the site. The next two pages show the transformation that has occurred between the time two of those areas were planted and August 2019.



February 2018



August 2019

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



November 2017



August 2019

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Many of the elderberry shrubs have become very big. We have one that is around 17 feet tall. The photo below is of the second biggest elderberry shrub.



Three of the Douglas Firs and several of the Alders are more than 5' tall. The Cedars are smaller, but they are so beautiful.



Alder 5' 7".



Douglas Fir 5' 5"



Cedar 4' 9"

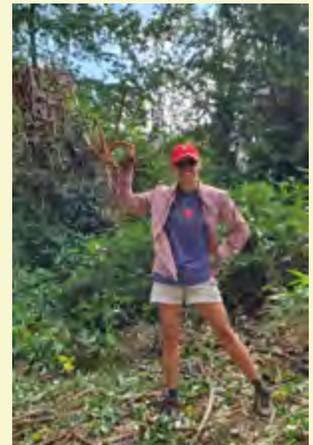
Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Work Party: Expedia Day of Caring



Friday, September 6 was Expedia’s Day of Caring. Twenty of their employees chose to work in our Greenbelt site on that special day. It was wonderful to have them. Many of the volunteers had previous experience doing forest restoration work; their experience was an added bonus. After an initial orientation, the group divided into four teams. One or two of our team leaders guided the work of each team.

Team 1: Sarva's team removed weeds and other invasive plants in an area we had begun to clear during a previous work party. While it will take numerous groups to completely clear this section of the Greenbelt, the Expedia team made tremendous progress.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Team 2: Susan's team started clearing an area along Cheasty Boulevard, which borders the eastern portion of the site.



There were some native shrubs in this area, but when we started it was hard to see them since they were mixed with weeds and invasive plants. The next two photos are before and after photos of a section like that.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Before



After

Laurels, hawthorne, and holly are considered invasive shrubs. The first photo below shows one of the patches of hawthorne and holly prior to the work party. The second photo shows what the area looked like after the weeds were cleared and the lower limbs of the shrubs cut off so that the Parks Department staff can easily find them when they come to remove invasive shrubs/trees.



Before



After

This team also disassembled a pile of dried debris that had been created from invasive plant cuttings during earlier work parties. After they took the pile apart, they spread the dried debris along the ground. Next they made a new drying rack to hold the blackberry and ivy vines, as well as other weeds, the volunteers removed that day.



Before



After spreading old debris



New drying rack

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

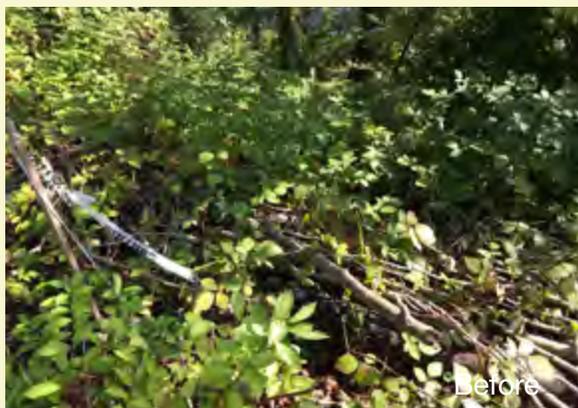
Team 3: Haley’s team removed invasive bindweed that had invaded two planting areas. In many cases, the bindweed traveled through and over horsetails. (Horsetails are native plants that were around before the dinosaurs, so we leave them alone.) The first photo below shows the bindweed in this area before the July 24 work party. That photo was used even though there wasn’t this much bindweed on September 6th, because it shows the bindweed clearer than photos taken before this work party.



This team also removed the blackberry vines that were entering planting areas from the other side of the border. The border of that planting area is on a very steep slope so removing the blackberry root balls is not an option; the best we can do is to continue to cut the vines back when they enter the planting area.



The next photos are of the area where the blackberry vines were cut back.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Team 4: Karuna and John led a team that weeded a part of the site where many blackberry, ivy and periwinkle vines were emerging from previously cleared ground. We focused on digging out the blackberry root balls as well as removing grass and other weeds.



Before



After

After a lunch break, we created a bucket brigade to bring wood chips from our wood chip pile on 25th Avenue S into the Greenbelt site. The first thing we did with the wood chips was to spread them along a 125-foot path. Once the path was completed, we focused on creating piles of wood chips on the site. These new wood chip piles will make it more convenient for volunteers to get wood chips during work parties.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



By the end of this segment of the work party, we had moved nearly 8 cubic yards of wood chips into the site! Afterwards, we gathered and put away the tools and supplies and then met for a closing to celebrate all that we had accomplished that day.

PNW Litter Project

Litter Stats

In September 2019, **27** Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for **61.4** hours. (Average **2.3** hours; Median **0.84** hours; Range **2** minutes to 10 hours) We have picked up litter for **10,869** hours since the project began in July of 2011.

TerraCycle Stats

In September 2019, we sent TerraCycle **376** cereal bag liners and a box of uncounted energy bar wrappers. GreenFriends has sent them **355,724** cigarette butts, **394** drink pouches, **1,748** cereal bag liners, and **4,250+** energy bar wrappers since 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Composting Toilets:

A Simple Way to Save Water and Create Nutrients by Josh

As we live in today's world, trying to find ways to be more environmentally friendly, there is one easy way to do this, using something that everyone makes every day: Poop!

I know it sounds gross, and maybe unsanitary, but if done properly it is actually an excellent practice for vastly reducing water consumption, keeping nutrients on-site and helping to build healthy, fertile soil, AND it is perfectly safe!

Just to be clear, you have to **COMPOST** the poop before you use it as fertilizer, which is what this article is about. This article aims to give the most basic information about humanure composting and a very simple system to do so. At the end of this article a number of very in-depth resources will be listed.

Why would you want to compost your poop?

1. In order to save water. Flushing toilets uses a lot of water, anywhere from 1 gallon to 1.5 gallons. With increasing temperatures and water scarcity becoming a real issue, eliminating the need for flush toilets has the possibility of conserving a LOT of water.
2. In order to keep nutrients on site. Human waste contains nutrients just like animal waste. When it is flushed down the toilet all of the nutrients go to waste. If human waste is properly composted it can be used to enrich the soil around our homes and garden.
3. Minimize pressure on water treatment plants, build top-soil, fertilize plants organically, save clean water that could otherwise be drinking water. "In nature, there's no such thing as waste."

What do you need to do this?

1. Cover Material
2. Toilet System
3. Compost bin

Cover Material

The two basic ingredients of any composting toilet system are the humanure and cover material. Cover material is essential and what makes the composting system work. Not only does the carbon-based cover material aid the composting process, but it prevents any bad smells

Maybe one of the greatest concerns with humanure composting would be smell, but if all materials remain adequately covered with carbon-based coverage, there won't be any smell!

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



Here are two cover materials that I would suggest:

Sawdust and straw. The sawdust is for use in the toilet system, and the straw is for use in the compost bin or pile as a whole (i.e., it doesn't go in the compost pile, just below and on top of it).

The easiest way of obtaining sawdust is to obtain a bag of wood pellets. These are just sawdust compressed into pellets. If you mix the pellets with water and let them sit for a few minutes, they will decompress into sawdust. I use Clean Burn Wood Pellets but there are many brands of sawdust pellets.

Toilet System



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Basically, all homemade composting toilet systems will use one (or multiple) five-gallon buckets as the toilet. There are many ways of building a box to house the bucket on which you can then put a toilet seat. Or, if, as I had once, you have a nice private area outside, you can put the bucket there and have a squatting toilet, covering the bucket with a lid when not in use.

Regardless of the way you choose to go, using the toilet is very easy. You can take your empty bucket, put a nice layer of sawdust to start (which helps clean up when you are ready to dump the bucket) and then make your deposit (numbers 1 and 2), along with your toilet paper. After you are finished with the deposit, you simply put a nice scoop of sawdust in order to cover your deposit. Not only does this help the composting process, but adequately covered deposits will prevent any unpleasant smells! That's all. Once the bucket is full, you dump it in the compost bin.

The Compost Bin



Photo Attribution: [Michael Barera](#)

The easiest way of building a compost bin is to use four pallets to basically build a box. Depending on how many people are using the system, it would be good to have two of these, so then when one gets full it can be left to complete it's composting while the other is being used. (The photo above shows an example of the simple way shipping pallets can be stood on end to create an enclosed area for composting.)

Before building the box, it would be good to dig a little bit into the soil, so that soil and organisms and worms can have easier access to the compost pile. However, the humanure will NOT go directly on the soil.

Once the ground is cleared and the box is put in place it is very important to put cover material directly on the soil. This what the straw is for. Also, a layer of sticks and leaves could be used for this, at least 12-18 inches worth. The purpose of this is to create a "biological sponge" to absorb any deposits that may drip down so they stay in the pile

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

and do not go into the ground!

Once you have the biological sponge in place you can start adding deposits. So once your toilet bucket is full, simply put in on top of the “biological sponge”. Once that is done, cover the deposit with more straw so that it doesn’t smell.

After the first deposit is made and covered, when you want to add new deposits, simply move back the straw, add your new deposit, and then recover with straw, adding more straw on top if necessary.

While planning your composting toilet system there is one thing it might be important to consider, which is your local laws and regulations. Some counties have certain requirements or restrictions, so it could be beneficial to check those out during your planning process.

Additionally, if this or another DIY method isn’t suitable for whatever reason, there are definitely options for non-DIY composting toilets systems. One of the best known and well-rated is called the Nature’s Head Composting Toilet. This system is great for RVs and can also be installed in a residential setting. Of course, it costs more, but it is also lower maintenance.

The method I have described is also probably not very suitable for commercial or large-scale applications, but there are multiple companies that do professionally install and maintain composting toilet systems. For example, Clivus Multrum and Phoenix Composting Toilets are two such companies.

I hope after reading this article you are inspired to seriously consider this simple way of reducing water consumption and being more environmentally friendly in your life. This article has presented the most basic information about composting toilet systems, and has included one of the simplest, yet undoubtedly effective, systems for doing this, that has been used by me and some more advanced permaculture practitioners I know personally.

I realize you may have more questions before jumping in, so here are some more in-depth resources:

The Humanure Handbook, by Joseph Jenkins, and his website

humanurehandbook.com -- this includes a free, condensed version of the book and other resources

The Water-Wise Home, by Laura Allen, this book focuses on other ways of reducing home water consumption

Google, of course in this day and age there are many more resources on the internet, particularly about ways to build compost bins and toilet systems, as well as additional pre-made residential and commercial systems