



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

Garden Photos

From Maltby Farm:



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From Lalita on small island in BC:



From John on Vancouver Island:



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More photos from John:



Orange Hubbard Squash



Restaurant Kitchen Garden in Cumberland

PNW Gardening

First Garden-to-Table Dinner in Maltby



The GreenFriends of the Maltby property put their imaginations together in early August to create a full-course dinner of entrees, side dishes, condiments, hors d'oeuvres, and beverages from their garden's produce. The meal was a benefit to raise money for next year's garden and was attended by 21 guests.

The dinner was served on the deck overlooking the bountiful "Devi's Garden," the kitchen garden that Amma had blessed when she had visited in previous years. The evening began with appetizers and beverages, and much photo-taking of the beautiful spread of foods. This was followed by a tour of the garden by Visuddhi, the resident master gardener whose devotion has been nurturing the garden for four years now. Over 100 species of vegetables, fruits, flowers and herbs are growing in the densely prolific mandala.

Before sitting for the initial soup and salad, the cooks introduced the guests to the specialties they were about to enjoy. Mechas explained that the "secret sauce" was the love with which everything was grown and that most of the ingredients were picked from the garden right before cooking. With each course served, the guests were heard exclaiming with delight how beautiful and delicious everything was.

All the volunteers who decorated, cooked and served the dinner enjoyed themselves and had fun working together. Afterward many of the guests requested that the event be repeated again, perhaps even 2-3 times in the summer growing season. Stay tuned for future announcements!



PNW Gardening



Visuddhi, Ranjini, Anavadya, Susanta, Achala, Mechas, Visala and Gopika cooked for the event. Most of them are in the first photo on this page.

PNW Gardening



**Garden to table
benefit dinner menu**

<p>Beverages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> kombucha - Ginger-raspberry Hibiscus Tea-cold Lemon Balm Tea-hot Coffee <p>Appetizers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beet, Carrot & Hummus Cheese plate Crackers Raw cut veggies Dried Figs <p>Breads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole Spelt Sourdough Bread Traditional Whole Grain Sourdough Cornbread w/peppers & w/out peppers Butter: dairy & vegan 	<p>Soup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot Sorrel Soup <p>Salads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potato - Visuddhi Garden salad w/vinagrette dressing Fermented Cabbage <p>Entrees & a Side</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zucchini Pasta with capers & basil Morai Risotto Green Beans <p>Dessert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frozen Strawberry Tart Chocolate Zucchini Cake Blackberry Crisp
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Gift Take Home Teas

PNW Gardening

The Art of Bonsai



Photo Credit: Mojpe from Pixabay

We all grow things for a variety of reasons. To eat, for color and scent. Sometimes, I suspect, the reason is far deeper within us. As far back as I can remember I was fascinated by trees – the girth and movement of enormous trunks, the texture of the bark and the magical spread of branches. And of course, the great age of some trees. I took great joy in lying under trees and looking up into the branches, letting my mind wonder at their majesty. I wondered why certain trees grew where they did, and why some got so big and others did not.

So it should be no surprise that once I was exposed to the art of Bonsai 25 years ago there was no turning back. At the time, I lived in an apartment in Ballard but really missed having a garden of some kind. I had a deck and Bonsai are portable, so problem solved! I found that working with Bonsai kept me in rhythm with the growth habits of trees during all seasons of the year, whether they were deciduous or coniferous.

It is a common misperception that Bonsai are a unique kind of dwarf tree. The truth is that the trees you find in Bonsai pots are exactly the same as those you find on mountain tops, river valleys, city parks and your own back yard! The difference is that one is in the ground and the other in a pot. In the wild, trees that are closest to Bonsai are those that grow from cracks in rocky hillsides and cliffs, straddle a large rock with their roots, or cling to the bank of a river with their roots fully exposed.

Another misconception is that Bonsai stay small because they are somehow tortured with lack of nutrients and water. Black pines for example, are kept small by fertilizing at specific times of the year and specific pruning techniques. To be healthy a Bonsai needs to be in a pot that is neither too large nor too small, uses a well-draining soil, proper watering, and the application of organic fertilizer selectively and purposefully. When and how the tree is fed and pruned depends on the type of tree, and where it is in its refinement. This is where the art of Bonsai taps into the rhythm of the tree. All pines are not the same. Some pines have a single growth flush per year (e.g., White Pines), while others have two growth spurts per year (e.g., Japanese Black Pines). Therefore, these two varieties of pines must be pruned and fertilized very differently to reach their potential.

PNW Gardening

Part of the mystique of Bonsai is the illusion of great age. Old trees usually have battle scars from wind, snow and lightning; especially conifers. As a Bonsai artist I can create deadwood on trees that gives a strong feeling of great age without adversely affecting the health of the tree. Think of those ancient junipers in the high deserts of the Southwest. There is often as much deadwood on the tree as live growth. Drought, freezing temperatures and blowing sand have sculpted these trees in magical ways. Bonsai artists can create a similar effect, but without putting the tree through life-threatening events.

Other trees, like maples and oaks, exude a feeling of lush growth with a spreading canopy of branches that twist and turn. Proper Bonsai technique recognizes this and creates properly applied results in trees that have a very different feel from coniferous mountain trees. The Bonsai maple photo below invites the viewer to give the tree a hug or to curl up to take a nap beneath its welcoming arms.

This is the first of three articles on Bonsai. I hope to illustrate and explain the dynamics of Bonsai and how the art serves to connect the viewer with the rhythms of the natural world. I hope you enjoy the photos and that they serve to help you see trees (and Bonsai) with renewed joy.

Unless otherwise noted, all the Bonsai photos are of my trees.

Sierra Juniper that is hundreds of years old growing from a crack in the rock. This tree is about 40 feet tall.



Photo credit: Bonsai Tonight

PNW Gardening

This is a Chinese Juniper Bonsai that takes its inspiration from trees in the wild (like the Sierra Juniper in the photo above.) It was field grown for about 40 years and was dug from the ground (“collected”). I purchased the raw material and then styled it as a Bonsai about 20 years ago, creating some deadwood to give it a feel of great age. This Bonsai is about 2 feet tall.



Bonsai can provide a wide range of glimpses into nature. From craggy mountains to the peaceful valleys, as evidenced by the Kiyohime Maple Bonsai below. This one is 16 inches tall.



PNW Gardening

To the bald cypress and pond cypress in the swamps and bayous of the Southeast:



Bald cypress in the wild

Photo Credit: [Wikipedia](#) Attribution: Kej605 [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)]

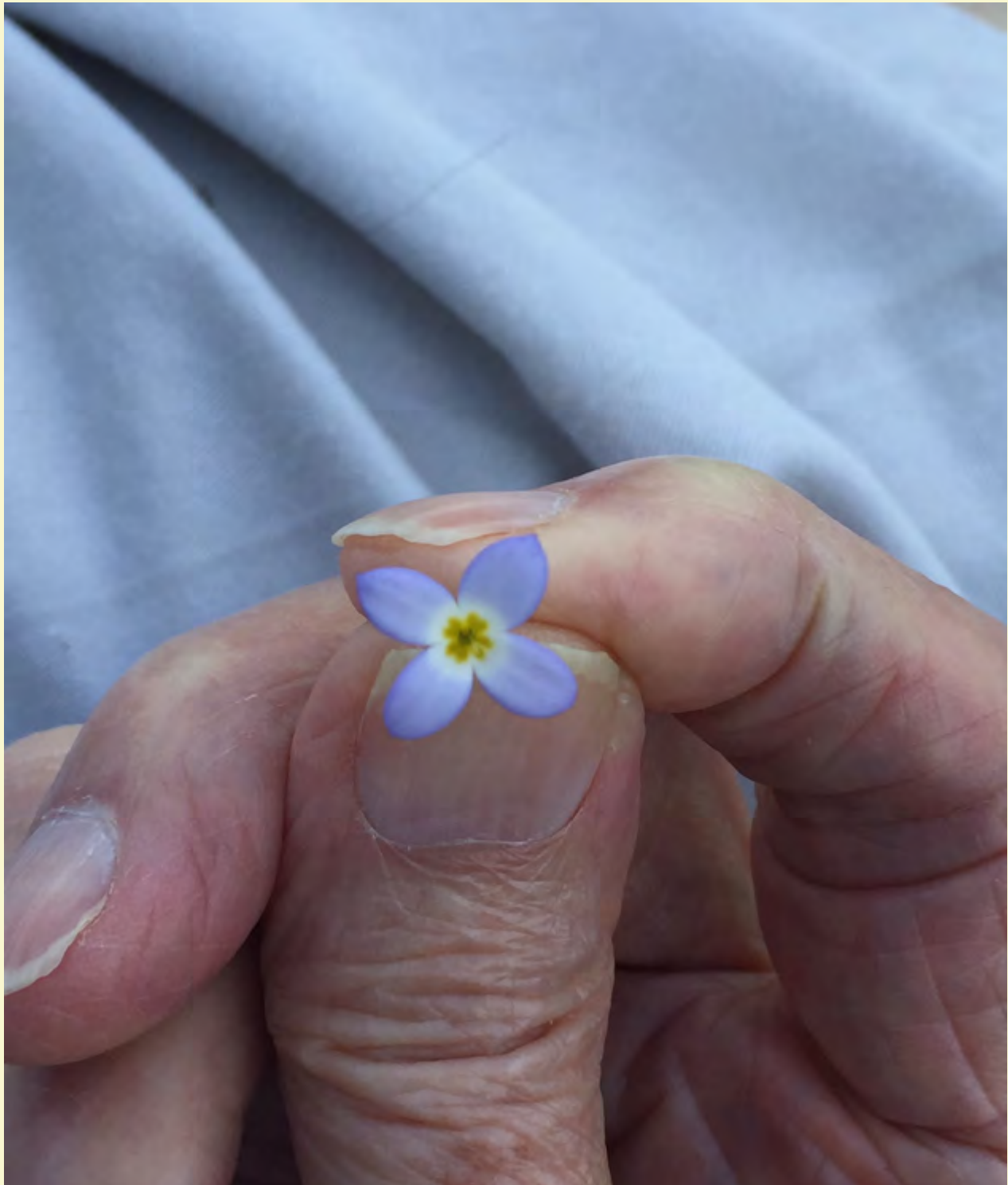
Severe storms break off the top of the Bald Cypress trees, creating “flat-top” cypress. Those trees gave inspiration to the Bonsai below. This Bald Cypress was dug from a swamp in Louisiana in 2004 by a friend. That tree was about 30 years old at the time. I then put it in its current Bonsai pot. It is now 42 inches tall.



Nature

Immersed in a Tiny Forget Me Not by Dhanya

This is Hubby having an up close with an individual Forget Me Not in Point Pleasant Park (Halifax, Nova Scotia). We had done something similar in herb class just the week before. The effect was immediate for him and he was immersed in this tiny flower for at least an hour. Of course, flowers are delicate so it was eventually placed down among some blades of grass, but this very sweet memory will be with me forever. It's the tiny things we often overlook that matter most.



Nature

Poem by Rama Devi Nina



THE INNER SELF

*all window-soul eyes,
like dew drops reflecting sun,
radiate from the same source*

*this poem is based on this photo by my friend Veikko Suikkanen

Nature

Mount Si Photos by Eric

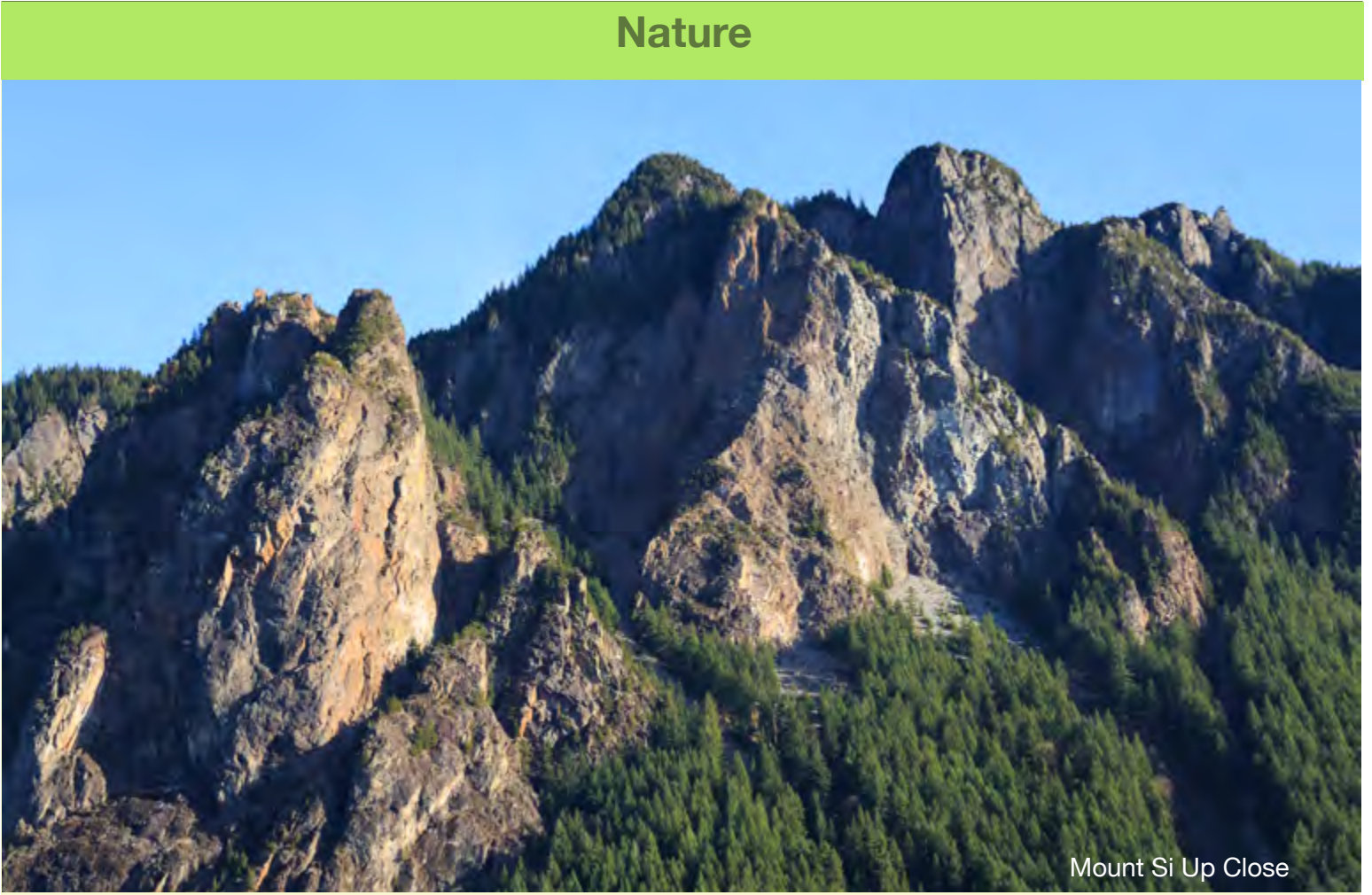


Mt Si from Snoqualmie River



Mt Si from Old Mill Pond

Nature



Mount Si Up Close



Mount Si and Old Mill Pond

Nature

Colorado Nature Photos



Nature

Arboretum Photos by Shawn (Seattle)

On the small trail behind the Japanese Gardens at the Arboretum I found some nice bark on trees.



Nature Looks Back

Nearby someone had arranged stones in cairns.



Balance

Nature

Strathcona Park Photos by John (Vancouver Island)



Natural Wetlands

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Greenbelt Restoration Work Parties: July 28, August 3 and August 10, 2019



From July 28 to August 10, we held three work parties. A combined total of 53 volunteers participated in the events! The majority were students from the UW’s Introduction to Environmental Science course. Others were team leaders, neighbors, friends of the students or volunteers who found us on the Green Seattle Partnership Event Page.

We did many types of work during these work parties.

Watered plants

This year we have a cistern so we are able to water the plants that need it. Each needy plant receives 2 gallons of water.



Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration

Reinforced paths

We reinforced 500 ft of the paths that go through the site by creating a bucket brigade in order to spread a new layer of wood chips on some of the existing paths.



Removed blackberries, bindweed, ivy and other weeds

The young plants in our forest restoration site are growing at a phenomenal rate and so are the blackberry and bindweed vines and other weeds. During these work parties, we worked on maintaining the previously planted areas and on clearing invasive plants from areas where we will plant in the future.



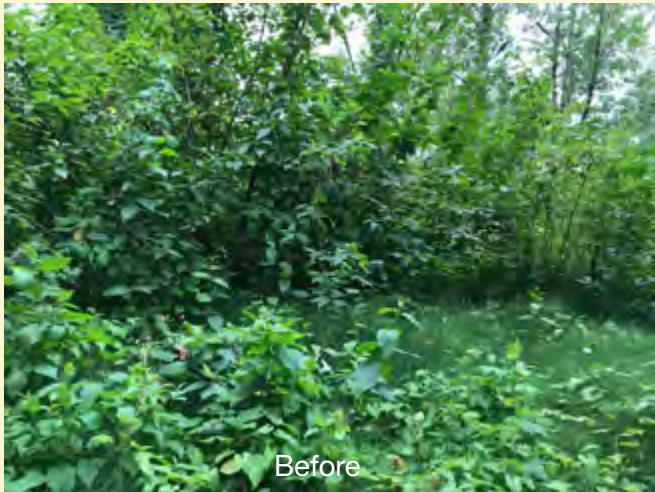
Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



Thinned out red twig dogwood grove

There is a grove of mature red twig dogwood shrubs on the site. The area around it was full of bindweed. On July 28th, one of the teams took on the challenge of thinning out the grove and removing the bindweed from the area around it.

Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration



The July 28th, August 3rd and August 10th work parties were VERY productive and successful thanks to the effort of the volunteers and team leaders who participated. If you would like to help with this project in the future, are interested in working towards becoming a team leader, and/or would like to read a more detailed version of this abridged article write [Karuna](#).

PNW Litter Project

Recycling in Portugal by Achala

Traveling to Portugal and seeing all the types of recycling and garbage bins has been an eye opener. I wish we could have this much access!

This style of bins were at almost every street corner. The yellow for plastic, including bags! The green for glass. The blue for paper and cardboard.



In the underground parking of a big mall, I found a bin for home goods and electronics.



PNW Litter Project

In a grocery store, I found one for batteries.



This stainless steel one was around every corner in a mall.



PNW Litter Project

I've even found them at beaches!



As many of you know, one of my favorite things to do is to pick up trash at beaches. During my walks, I would find litter washed ashore. Many times, I wouldn't have a bag. I would pray, "If you want me to pick this up, I'll need a bag to carry it in." Within a few minutes, a bag would show up. Every time!



PNW Litter Project

Litter Stats

In July 2019, 30 Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for 62.3 hours. (Average 2.1 hours; Median 1 hour; Range 3 minutes to 11 hours). In August 2019, 26 Litter Project members and their friends picked up litter for 59.4 hours. (Average 2.3 hours; Median 1 hour; Range 3 minutes to 17.5 hours) We have picked up litter for 10,789 hours since the project began in July of 2011



TerraCycle Stats

GreenFriends has sent them 355,724 cigarette butts, 394 drink pouches, 1,362 cereal bag liners, and 4,147 energy bar wrappers since 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]

Interesting Information from Our Readers

From Aditi (Iowa) and Dawn (New Mexico):

[Ethiopia 'breaks' tree-planting record to tackle climate change](#)

[Ethiopia plants more than 350 million trees in 12 hours](#)

From Tirtha (Victoria):

[Tree planting 'has mind-blowing potential' to tackle climate crisis](#)

From Melet (Seattle):

[The Lessons of a Hideous Forest](#)

From Poornima in Bellingham:

[Do Plants Have Something to Say?](#)

GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest

Earth Warriors Unite During Amma's 2019 Summer Tour by Diya

This year, I had the honor of being on Amma's staff as the North American Tour Greening Advisor and visiting 11 cities in the US and Canada. Having the opportunity to serve on the ground with passionate Green Teams and meet with people from different departments who were dedicated to sustainability and reducing waste was truly inspirational!

This article highlights some of the eco-victories and the sevites who's spirit of unity, enthusiasm, and willingness to **Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Repurpose, Recycle** and **Rot** made the 2019 summer tour a cause for celebration.

NATURE'S JOY-

Amal, Manorama, Rajalakshmi and the entire Nature's Joy team deeply impressed and inspired me. Their awareness and sincere efforts to love, care for and protect Mother Nature by reducing, reusing, repurposing and rethinking their waste had a significant impact. Here are some of their Earth Warrior efforts:

- Washed and reused every plastic and glass container, throwing nothing away!
- Left **zero food waste** post-tour through meticulous inventory tracking and relentless effort from the team.
- Reused all of their packing paper, boxes and aluminum foil trays.
- Upcycled used fabric to make 'Mother Earth' bags to raise money. These bags sold out on the second day in each city!



GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest



THE TOUR DISHWASHING CREW-

Agreed to rinse all metal, glass and plastic food containers, increasing the likelihood they would actually be recycled. Not only were they willing to undertake this additional task, they did it with enthusiasm, humor and devotion. Thank you to Jeremy Belzer and the entire dishwashing crew for making a difference to Mother Earth by helping to keep recyclables out of the landfill!

THE CHICAGO ASHRAM-

When I arrived at the Chicago ashram during the tour, the first thing I did was drop my suitcase and run over to the nearest tree and hug it! I felt so much gratitude for nature and so blessed to be there after being in hotels for weeks. While I was there, I met with several local sevites and residents and we talked about ways to make the ashram more sustainable. Here's what they accomplished:

- A crew of local sevites cleaned out the ashram kitchen and removed 2 cart loads of single-use and unsustainable plastics products that had accumulated over the years. The items removed were donated to a local charity.
- Going forward, no disposable dishware (including compostables) will be used during Amma's summer tour. The ashram will be providing reusable dishware and utensils throughout the program. Thank you, Milind and Meetal for making this possible and for your efforts to reduce waste and care for Mother Earth.



SAN RAMON GREEN FRIENDS

I stopped by the Green Friends booth in San Ramon to buy some lip balm during the tour and was thrilled to see their new zero-waste packaging! The Green Friends team have been humbly serving Mother Nature for years and their dedication is an example for us all to follow. Here are some of their successes:

- Switching to sustainable packaging. This year, I was thrilled to see some of their newer products being sold

GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest

in sustainable packaging! They had lip balms and salves in compostable paper tubes and dried fruit in compostable bags.

- Planted 1000 trees! Prajna (Guinevere) has been overseeing the creation and cultivation of the ashram's three orchards, a truly miraculous accomplishment! With her careful planning and perseverance, and a lot of help from other dedicated sevites, what was once a barren landscape has become a haven for animals, insects, birds and anyone who visits the ashram. This year, Prajna presented Amma with the 1000th sapling to be planted, fulfilling Amma's request. Jai Ma!



THE TOUR PACKING CREW-

Going forward, the tour will be using reusable wraps to secure the pallets instead of shrink wrap – HOORAY! Thanks to Kannan and the tour packing crew for being open and willing to test this new product during the tour. The wraps are made in the US, can be used for several years and at the end of their lifespan can be completely recycled.



GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest

Walking Through the MA Center: Chicago Farmlands

by Karuna



This was the fourth year I attended Amma's programs in Chicago. Once again, I spent time walking through the farmlands. This year my friend Gopika also came to the Chicago programs; she explored the farm with me.

There were a lot of changes this year. The echinacea field is gone and new MA Center: Chicago plants are growing there. We were told part of the Center's property is being leased out to a vegetable farmer. Another part is still being leased to a farmer who produces hay. The new focus for the MA Center: Chicago fields seems to be growing dye plants and tulasi.

Last year, there were tomato plants growing in the greenhouse. This year there were indigo, tulasi, and a few marigold plants.



GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest

On the far side of the above field, there was a field where both tulasi and marigold plants were growing.



At the end of my visit to the fields that contained tulasi and dye plants, I walked to the orchard. There are many more fruit trees than there were the first year I attended Amma's programs in Chicago. The trees have grown considerably since that time.



Early in our walk, Gopika and I were able to get help in plant identification from a volunteer who was working in the fields. I have many more questions though. Some year, I will ask a resident to walk with me!

GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest



Indigo



Tulasi

The field that used to hold echinacea plants now consists of indigo and Hopi Black Dye Sunflower plants. The indigo plants will be used to make indigo colored dye and the Sunflower seeds will be used to make black dye. Yellow and orange dyes can be made from marigold flowers.



Hopi Black Dye Sunflower

GreenFriends Beyond the Pacific Northwest

Beyond the indigo and sunflower field, there was a field of madder plants. The roots from those plants will produce a red dye.



I don't remember what the field below contains. When I enlarge the photo most of the plants look like tulasi, but there seems to be another type of plant in the foreground. Tulasi is often called holy basil and is a sacred plant to Hindus. It is said to open the heart, cultivate devotion, boost immunity, and heal disease.

