

Pacific Northwest Issue 118 August 2021

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



GREENFRIENDS®



CONTENTS

NEWS

Letter from Karuna 2

PNW GARDENING

Photos from Kristin's Garden (Seattle) 3

Our Cascadian Gardens 4

NATURE

Sarah's Photos (Eugene) 6

Butterfly Pea: A flower for immortality! 8

Flowering trees / large shrubs at the height of summer 10

Making a Rose Hip Drink 13

Washington State 16

NATURE INSPIRED ART

Robin Cake 17

PNW LITTER PROJECT

Litter and TerraCycle Stats 18

Letter from Karuna 18

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

Dear Readers,

I decided I would to do the gathering and organizing portion of next newsletter and as a result became abundantly clear that I am no longer in shape to continue doing that. I got two emails on the same day that said essentially the same thing and I realized they contained the answer to my dilemma. Both emails asked a version of: Why is the PNW GreenFriends newsletter still a PDF? Why is it not a blog or a website?

I realized we do have a website for the GreenFriends- North America. So my thought was we could end ours and encourage our writers and photographers and those who do other types of support to contribute to that website.

I talked with Vishwan and he agreed to the idea. So did Sw. Dayamritananda Puri and Swi. Ambikamrita Prana.

I would like to thank all of the people who supported our newsletter by writing, through their photography, by editing, by their graphic design or tech skills, by their legal or other advisory skills or by reading the newsletter.

What began as a WORD document newsletter for The Litter Project in July 2011 turned into a beautiful newsletter that in some ways I think was more like a magazine especially when it was nearly 40 pages long.

If you are willing to continue writing and or sending pictures or help him in any other way, please contact Vishwan at mswingard@gmail.com and let him know.

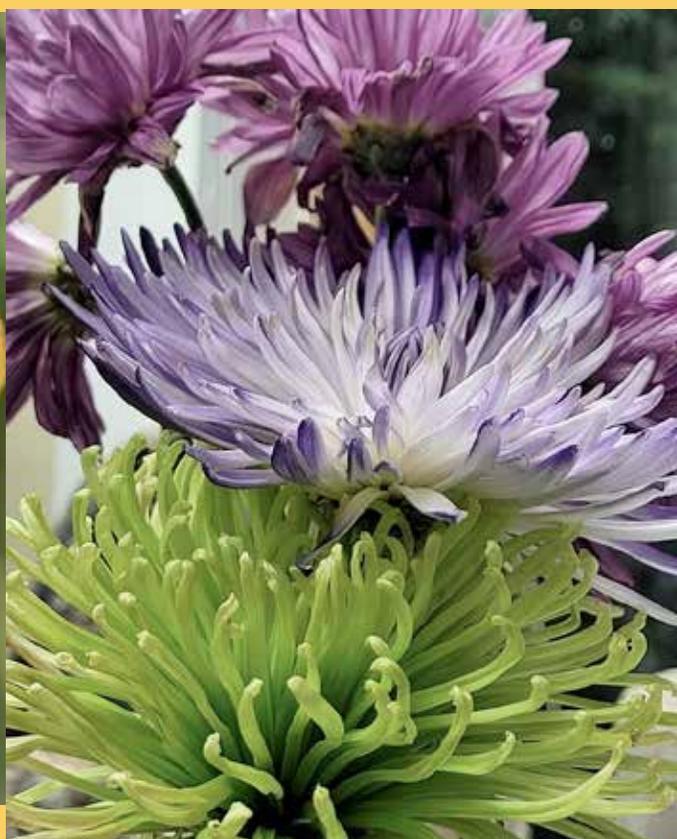
Last, I would like to thank Tony from the UK who put together this current issue and Lokesh from Salt Spring Island who was a new writer for this issue. I hope they choose to continue their support and contact Vishwan.

In the Service of Nature,

Karuna Poole

PNW GARDENING

Photos from Kristin's Garden (Seattle)



PNW GARDENING

Giving an Exotic Tropical Look to Our Cascadian Gardens with Albizia Julibrissin by Lokesh (Salt Spring Island)



Known as mimosa or silk tree, it was introduced from Asia in the 19th century. I recently learned in China they are known as the happiness tree, with flowers and bark used in TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) to calm the spirit. The leaves and flowers are cooked and eaten, and dried leaves are used as tea, something I will soon try.



It grows quite rapidly in a spreading vase shape that can reach 20 feet in 10 years. The bare branches create an attractive form in winter and are slow to leaf out in spring. The bipinnately compound leaves, like other mimosas, move in reaction to light and touch.

The showy flowers are clustered along thin brittle branches, formed from long densely packed stamens. When backlit each stamen glows from its white base, moving along the hot pink stalk to the golden globe.

PNW GARDENING

Later, flattened legume pods hang from the branches holding the hard seeds. With treatment, seeds will germinate and quickly grow.

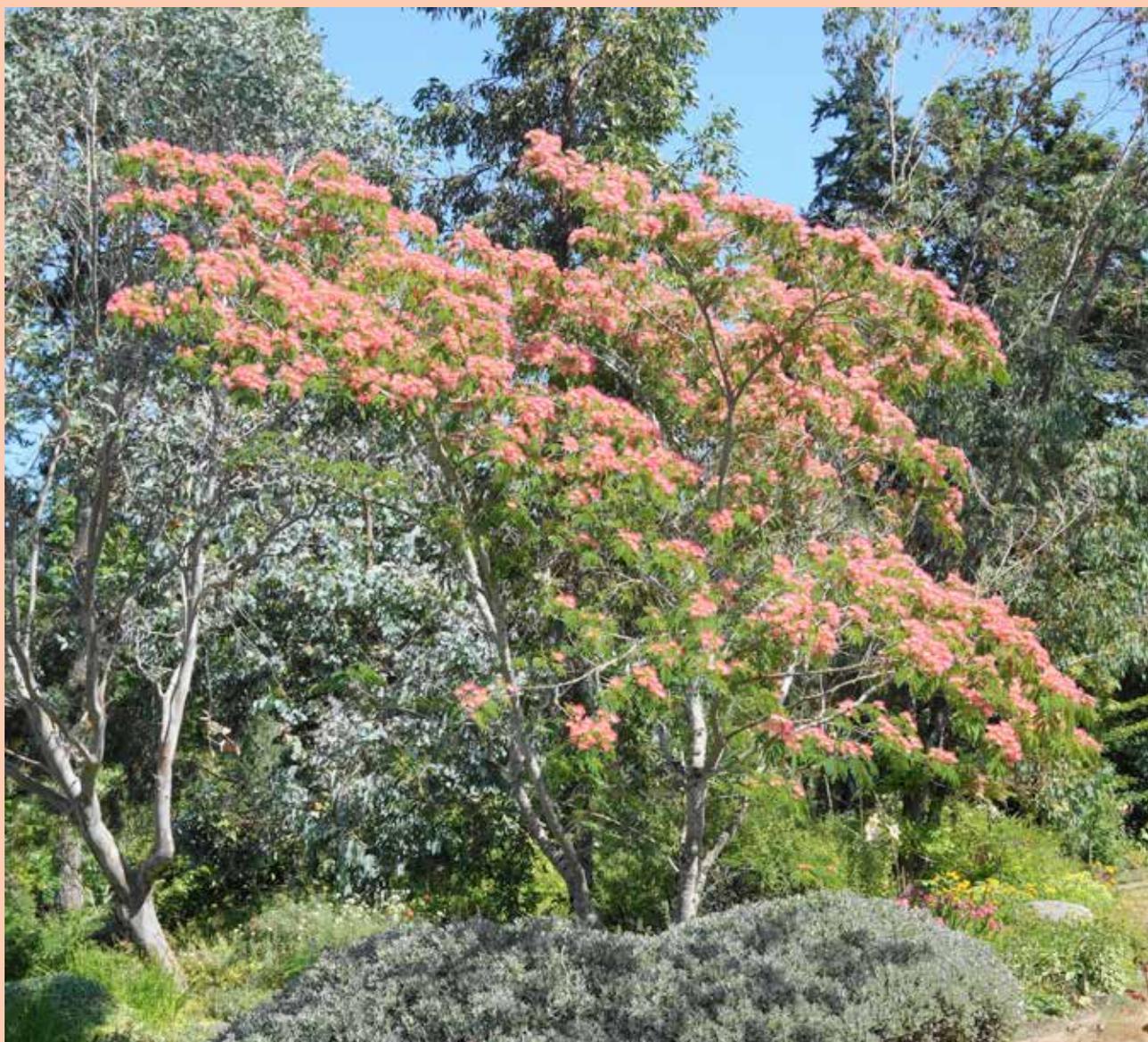
Like many flamboyant things that grow quickly they don't age well. In warmer climates they can be a naturalized vigorous pioneer species. In our harsher conditions in the Pacific Northwest they suffer and are susceptible to disease.

I have seen them thrive in a garden for years, then get diseased and slowly die over a few years. They seem to be increasingly infected by *Fusarium wilt*, a fungus abundant in many soils. It enters plants via damaged roots, taking up residence in xylem tubes that carry water through the tree. The fungus can block these tubes, causing acute or chronic disease.

When a gardener notices a diseased tree, there is little they can do to save it. Not much is known of how and when the fungus starts a disease process in a tree. Leaving a tree to die doesn't increase the spread of the fungus already living in the soil. Dead branches can be pruned so as not to introduce other fungi. Trees can compartmentalize diseases, so some infected trees can wall off diseased parts and continue growing.

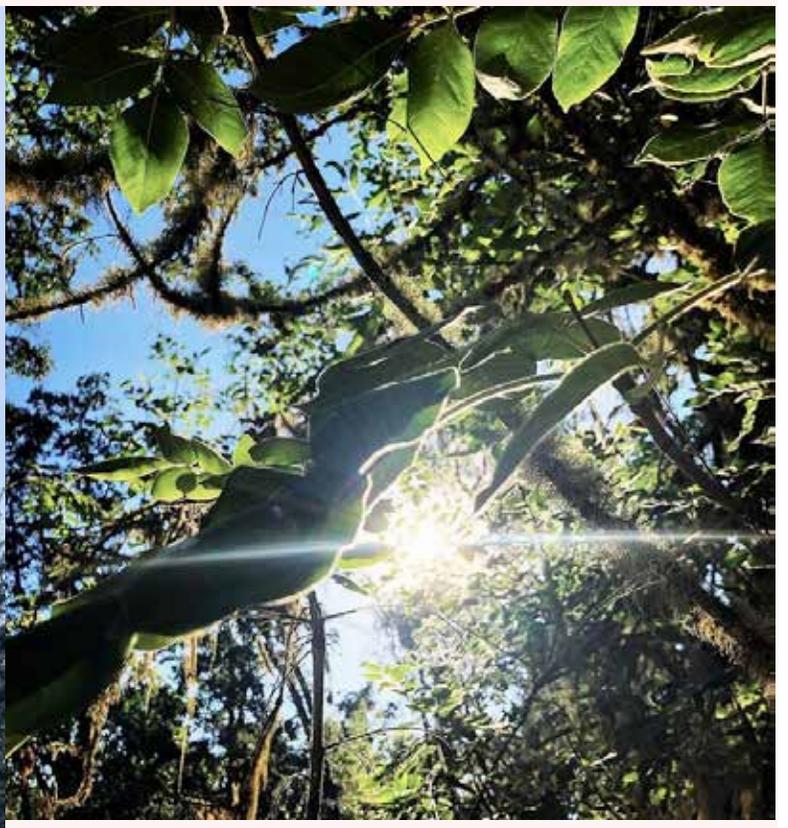
Stewarding mimosa trees, I have experienced their vigorous growth, in a few years providing an unusual dazzling display for our climate, then seeing a branch dying back, leaves wilting or turning brown. The following spring some branches may not leaf out, or they lose vigour—until one spring the tree doesn't wake up.

The silk tree provides an opportunity to participate with all the stages of a tree's life within a decade or two, and to be delighted with the remarkable display at the height of summer.

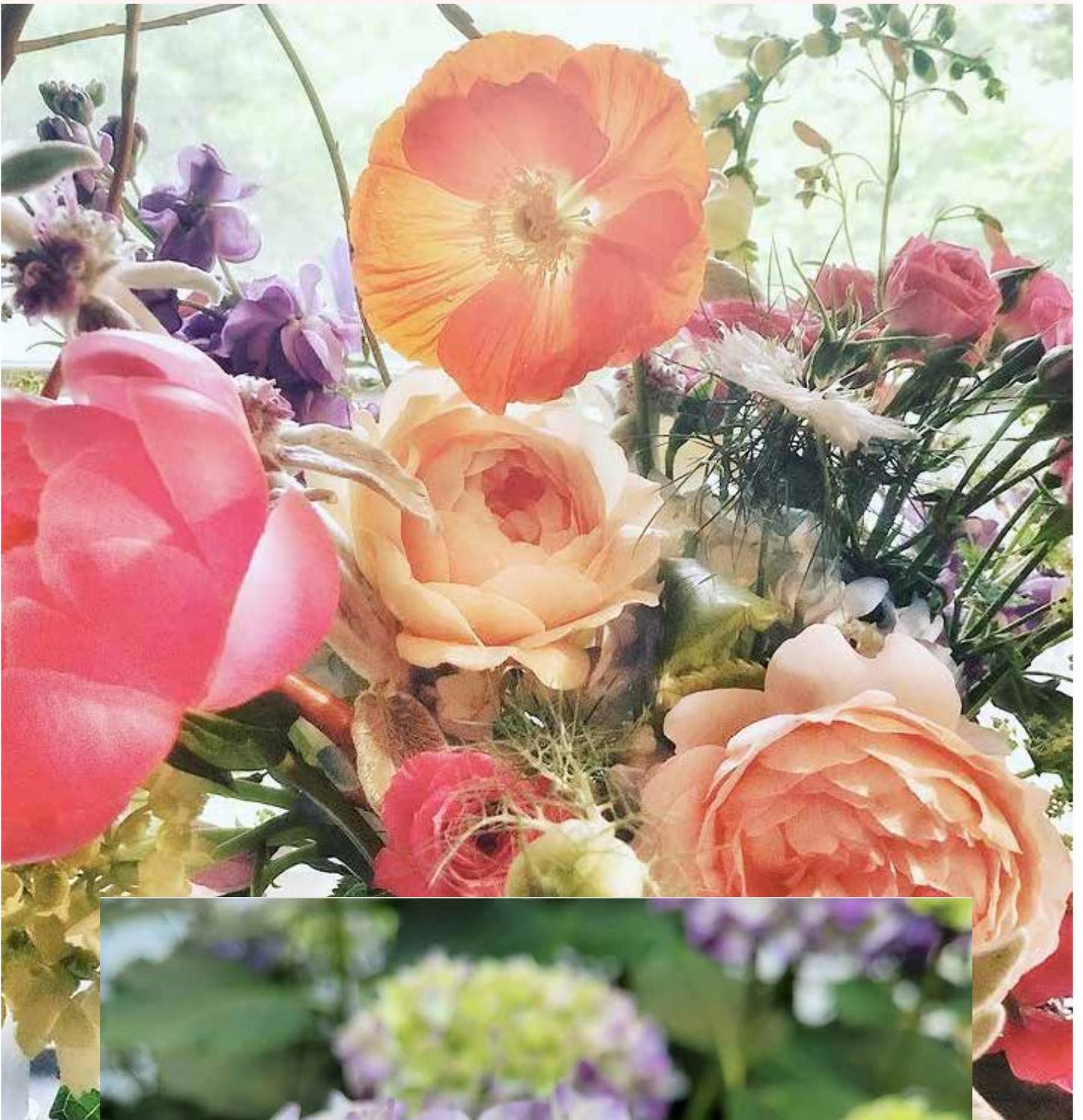


NATURE

Sarah's Photos (Eugene)



NATURE

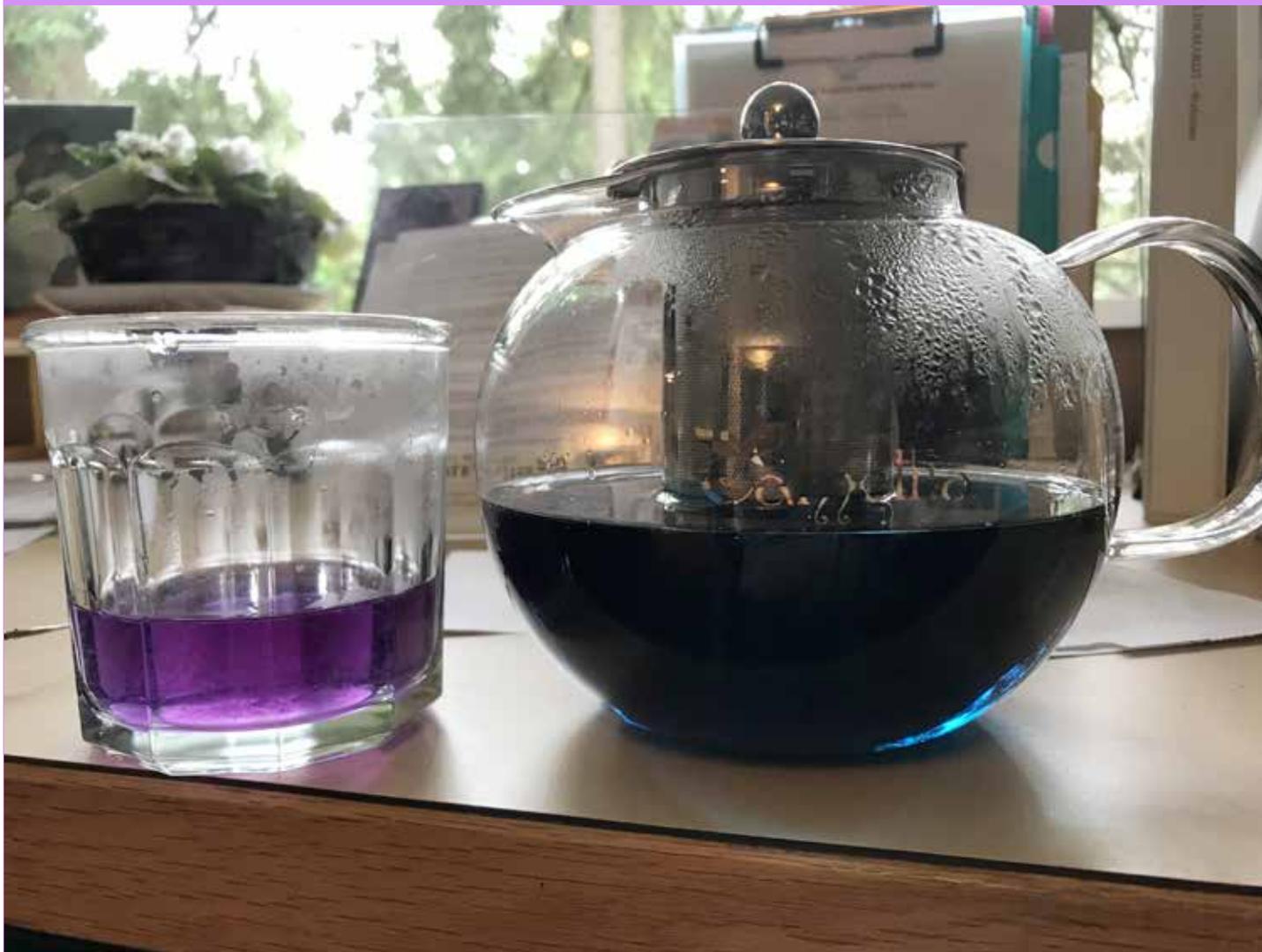


NATURE

Butterfly Pea: A flower for immortality!

By Lin (Bellevue)

My first pot of tea made from the dried flowers came out a beautiful azure blue. It was gorgeous. Then I added a splash of freshly squeezed lemon juice and the tea changed hues from pink to magenta to deep purple. I've been drinking it out of a glass instead of a mug in order to enjoy the brilliance of its stained-glass colors. On its own, there's no flavor—but the lemon juice gives it a nice zing, especially when the tea is served cold.



If you want to find out whether its medicinal properties are beneficial for your particular body, here's a fun test...

Flop forward without any strain at all, letting your arms dangle (I call it the "flop test"). This isn't a yoga challenge. It's just to locate your natural "end range." Take note of how far your fingertips are from the floor. You yogis will flop right down to your feet, but the test will give results anyway.

Now do it again, this time holding a package of tea (or anything else you want to test—supplements, food in the grocery store, you name it). If it's beneficial for your body (as opposed to neutral or even negative), you will spontaneously drop closer to the floor (giving you a sensation of release)—again, no straining. Just let it happen. This is not subtle. There will be a surprising release or nothing at all. If you have less range of motion, the item is actually bad for you. Pretty funny, eh? But you'd be surprised how accurate it is. I'm guessing that the spinal cord and brain (i.e., central nervous system) react to the energy field of whatever is being tested and either welcomes or braces against it. It's the same concept as muscle testing, except that no one else's energy field is involved—it's only your own.

NATURE

I learned of the test method while reading *The World's Strongest Librarian* by Josh Hanagarne, his story of dealing with Tourette's Syndrome. <https://www.amazon.com/Worlds-Strongest-Librarian-Lovers-Adventures/dp/159240877X>

I couldn't resist going online to find out more about the butterfly pea flower. There was an excellent article by Shalini Jaiswal, dated June 7, 2018 with beautiful photos of the flowers. <https://i0.wp.com/www.theayurveda.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Herbal-uses.jpg>



"Aprajita Flower" by viKalp kuMar° is licensed with CC BY-NC-SA 2.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/>

She says the flower is well-known in India as 'Aprajita' in Hindi. Sanskrit calls it Ashwakhura, Adikarni, Vishnukanta and other names. The flowers grow on prolific thorny vines and can be either white or blue. The creeper bears its flowers and pea pods mainly during the rainy season. The flowers are mostly offered in worship of Lord Shiva, but they also make a colorful tea. In Malay cooking it's used to color glutinous rice. Its medicinal benefits include treatment for liver disorders and boils, breathing problems or asthma, and migraine headaches; it's an antiparasitic for microfilaria (elephantiasis); and it can help promote conception.

You can get butterfly pea flowers online, but I got mine from Visala's Farm Stand in Maltby since proceeds go to Amma's Embracing the World humanitarian initiatives. Have some fun and give it a try!

For questions, visits or to help out; please contact

Visala at vhohlbein@msn.com or Tirtha at mechasmc@gmail.com.

NATURE

Flowering trees / large shrubs at the height of summer

by Lokesh on Salt Spring Island

Ancient Chinese farmers divided the year into 24 seasonal periods, describing July 22 through August 6 as the time of major heat. During this time, along with many flowering annuals, perennials and bulbs, there are some noteworthy flowering trees.

This week walking through the garden, looking at flowering trees, I see:- glowing pink mimosa, smoke tree's golden clouds, *Leycestra's* purple pendulous racemes, yellow tubes of night jasmine, velvety *Clerodendron*, rococo intergeneric *Chitalpa*, and frothy white hydrangea cones.



Leycesteria Formosa Himalayan honeysuckle



Hydrangea paniculata peegee hydrangea

NATURE



Cotinus coggygria 'Young Lady' smoke bush



Cestrum parqui willow leaf jessamine

NATURE



Albizia julibrissin mimosa tree, silk tree



Clerodendron trichotomum harlequin glorybower

NATURE

Making a Rose Hip Drink by Eileen (Seattle)

Dear Friends:

Another year of gathering delicious and nutritious rose hips. See them in their natural state (these were gathered in Richmond Beach, Seattle area in early June), the process they go through and the finished absolutely yummy drink!

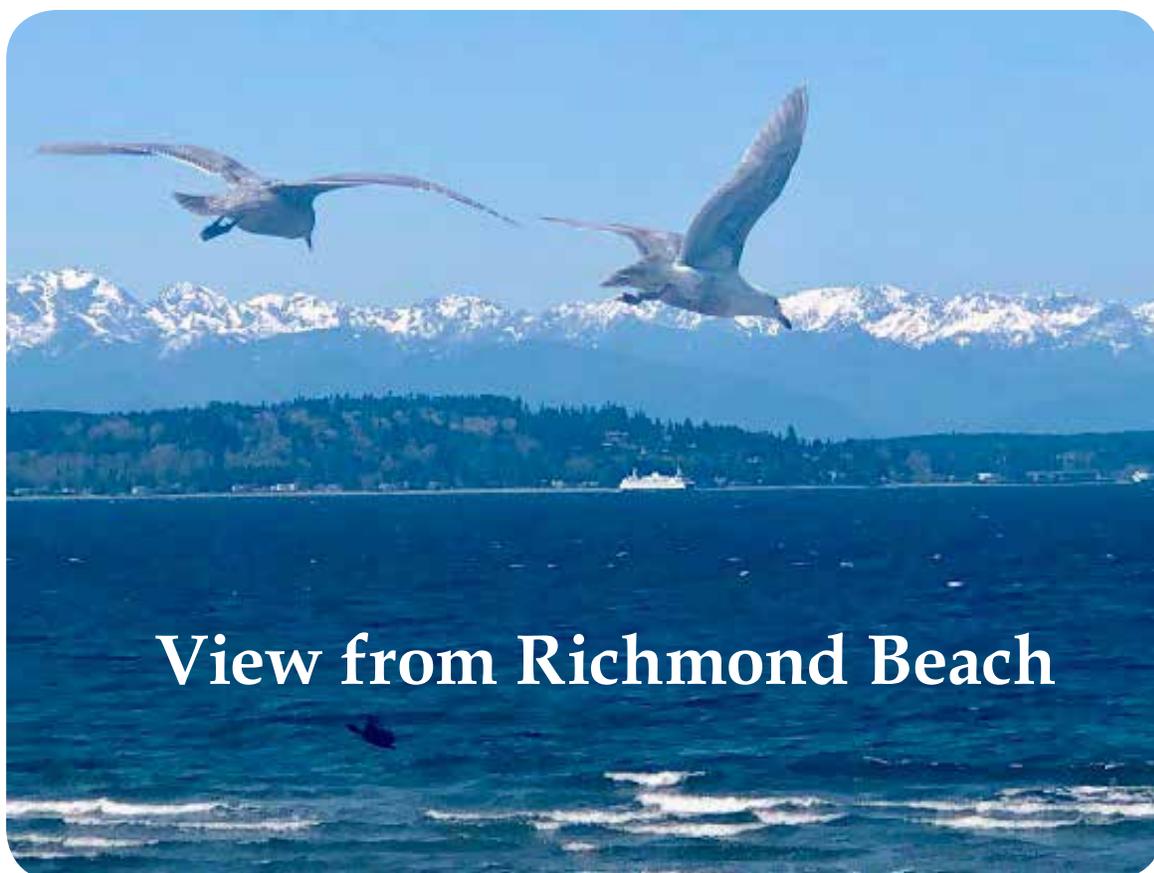
Normal timing for harvesting the rose hips is the late summer or during the fall. It is okay to harvest them after a frost, but it should be before they have brown spots on them. Just wash, boil, blend and strain, then add organic lemon juice and alternative sweetener (monk fruit), or organic sugar, and some Calistoga sparkling water to make the drink. Stir before drinking. Enjoy!



NATURE



Read more about rose hips and the things you can make from them at: [Wild Foods and Medicines](#).



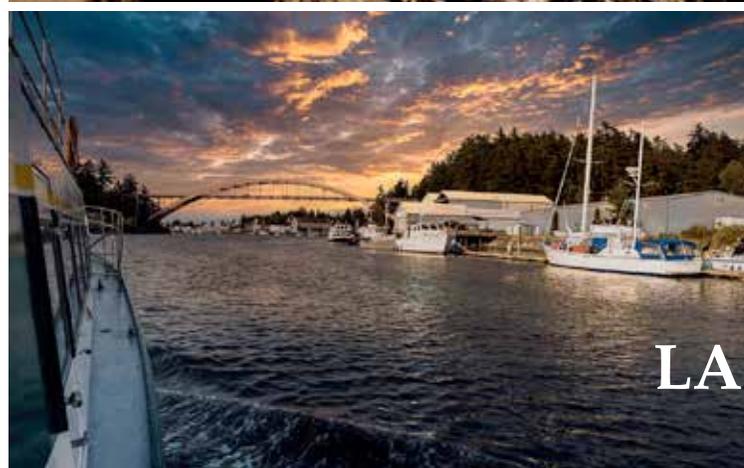
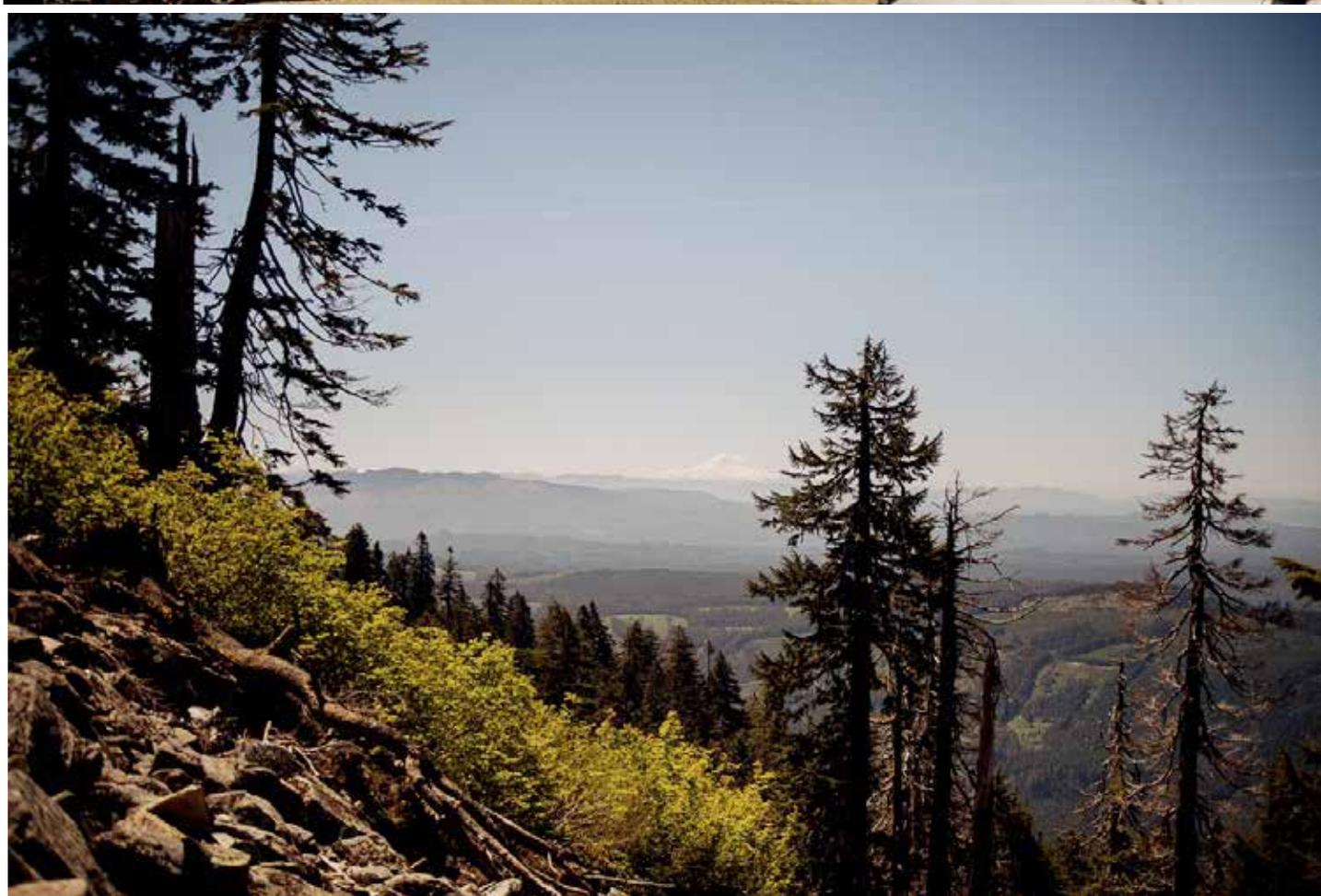
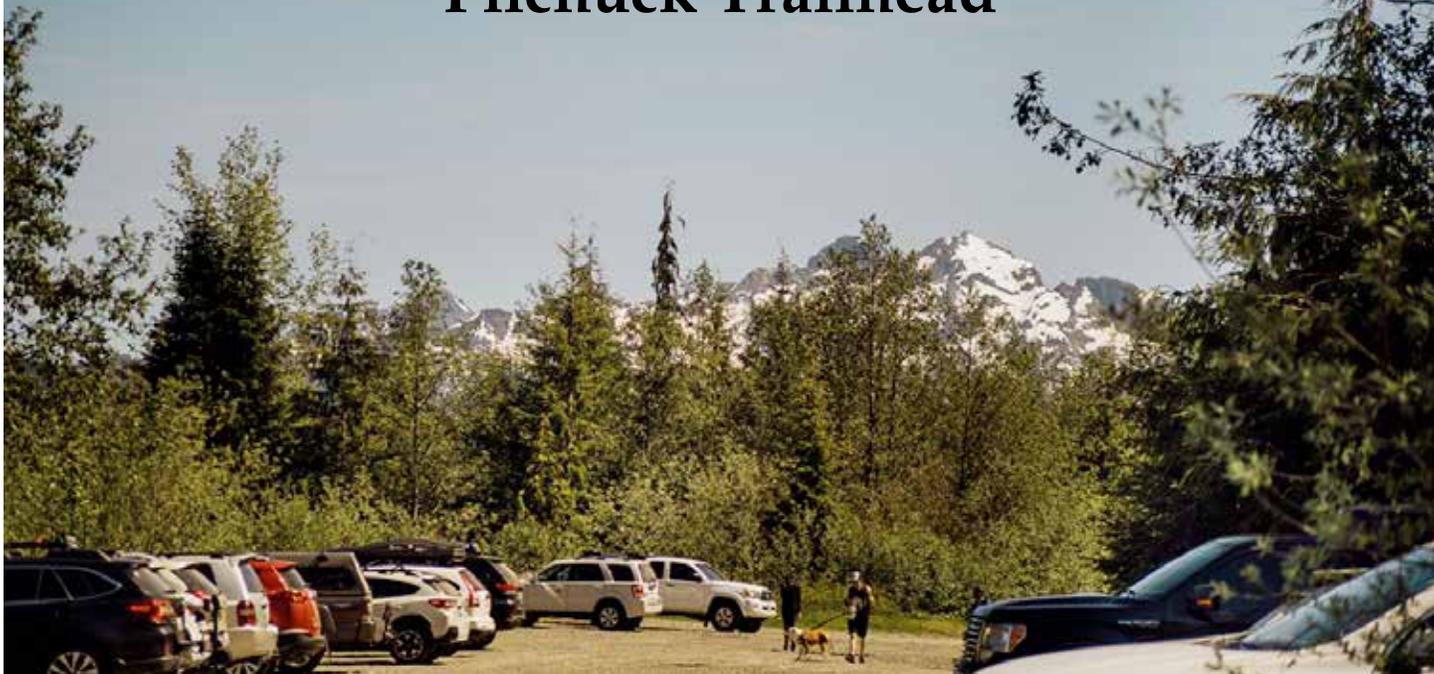
View from Richmond Beach

NATURE

Washington State Photos

by Kelvin (Seattle)

Pilchuck Trailhead



LA Conner

View from Discovery Park Lighthouse



Ebey's Landing Historical Reserve



NATURE INSPIRED ART

Robin Cake by Sonali (Sammamish)



Last year, we found out that we had some temporary residents living in our backyard – a robin had decided to create a nest and lay her beautiful eggs right behind our house, and we got the pleasure of watching the eggs hatch, and eventually seeing the nestlings ready to take flight right in front of our eyes. In fact, the robin came again twice this year—in the exact same spot—to raise her hatchlings!

For a video compilation of this beautiful journey, click here: [Watching Miracles of Nature - Robin Nest](#)

To read Part 1 of the article, click here: [Watching Miracles of Nature- Part 1 \(Page 23\)](#)

To read Part 2 of the article, click here: [Watching Miracles of Nature- Part 2 \(Page 10\)](#)

We were all especially fascinated by the beautiful and vibrant blue hue of the robin's egg, and so I wanted to replicate the nest with the eggs in a cake. The cake was a dark chocolate vegan cake topped with a chocolate glaze, and the eggs were colored fondant. The nest itself was made out of dried rice noodles which I covered in melted chocolate and shaped like a traditional nest by wrapping it around a bowl. After letting the chocolate set overnight, the nest was ready.



PNW LITTER PROJECT

Litter Stats

We have picked up litter for 12,037.77 hours since the project began in July of 2011, up to March 2021.

TerraCycle Stats

We have sent TerraCycle 363,224 cigarette butts since 2013. [TerraCycle is an organization that recycles items which are normally considered unrecyclable.]



To Readers

The litter project has been going on since July 2011. In all that time I have never forgotten to collect the litter times. It was several days into August before I realized I hadn't collected the July 2021 times. I also realized we haven't done any official litter project work parties since March 2019.

I acknowledged too that I am not well and I don't have the energy to do this anymore. If somebody wants to take over organizing work parties and collecting data they are welcome to do that. Or maybe members have integrated picking up litter into their daily lives and a litter project isn't needed.

So in this issue, we reprint the last litter stats page that was published. When I feel better I will finish the statistics from April, May, and June and send them to you.

Thank you for all you have done to serve Mother Nature.

Karuna