



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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### Profound Thanks to Mechas

After three years of doing all of the graphic design work for the PNW GreenFriends Newsletter, Mechas has decided to pass it on to a sevite who wishes to remain anonymous.

Thank you Mechas for all you have done for us. You have taken the newsletter from a simple WORD document and turned it into a stunning newsletter.

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](mailto:karunap108@comcast.net)

For Organic Gardening and Permaculture write Maheswari at: [PNWGreenFriends@google.com](mailto:PNWGreenFriends@google.com)

For The Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project write:

[Ananya ammasananya@comcast.net](mailto:Ananya_ammasananya@comcast.net) and [Kalavathi annecrary@gmail.com](mailto:Kalavathi_annecrary@gmail.com)

# Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project

The most recent GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project event was to join the April restoration work party at the Warren G. Magnuson Park - Forest Remnant Zone on Saturday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The plan was to remove invasive plants such as bindweed and blackberry vines, spread wood chip mulch, and plant native plants and trees. Ananya wrote the following article after attending that event.

## We're All Optimists by Ananya

It was a cloudy cool morning, and we were pulling small non-native blackberries from the forest floor. The air was cool and refreshing, and the work was rewarding. I could feel the rain in the air, and sure



enough, it began to come down in buckets. Since it wasn't very cold out, I decided to keep working.

After some time, I told Tom, our kind leader, that I hadn't brought my rain coat so I would probably need to leave. His reply was, "Of course, we're all optimists." It was such a sweet reply. He meant that by not bringing my raincoat that I was being optimistic that I wouldn't get rained on. I thought it was such a great way to look at things. It reminded me of Amma's quote about how nature is so optimistic.

I am an optimist – I plan to still keep working on this little forest remnant with patience and love -- just doing a little piece. Just lighting one little candle there.

# ANNOUNCEMENT

We at GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration are sorry to say we have decided to discontinue our monthly tree planting event due to lack of attendance.

Ananya will continue to do volunteer restoration at Magnuson Park. If you are interested in joining her, please feel free to contact her and let her know. [ammasananya@comcast.net](mailto:ammasananya@comcast.net)

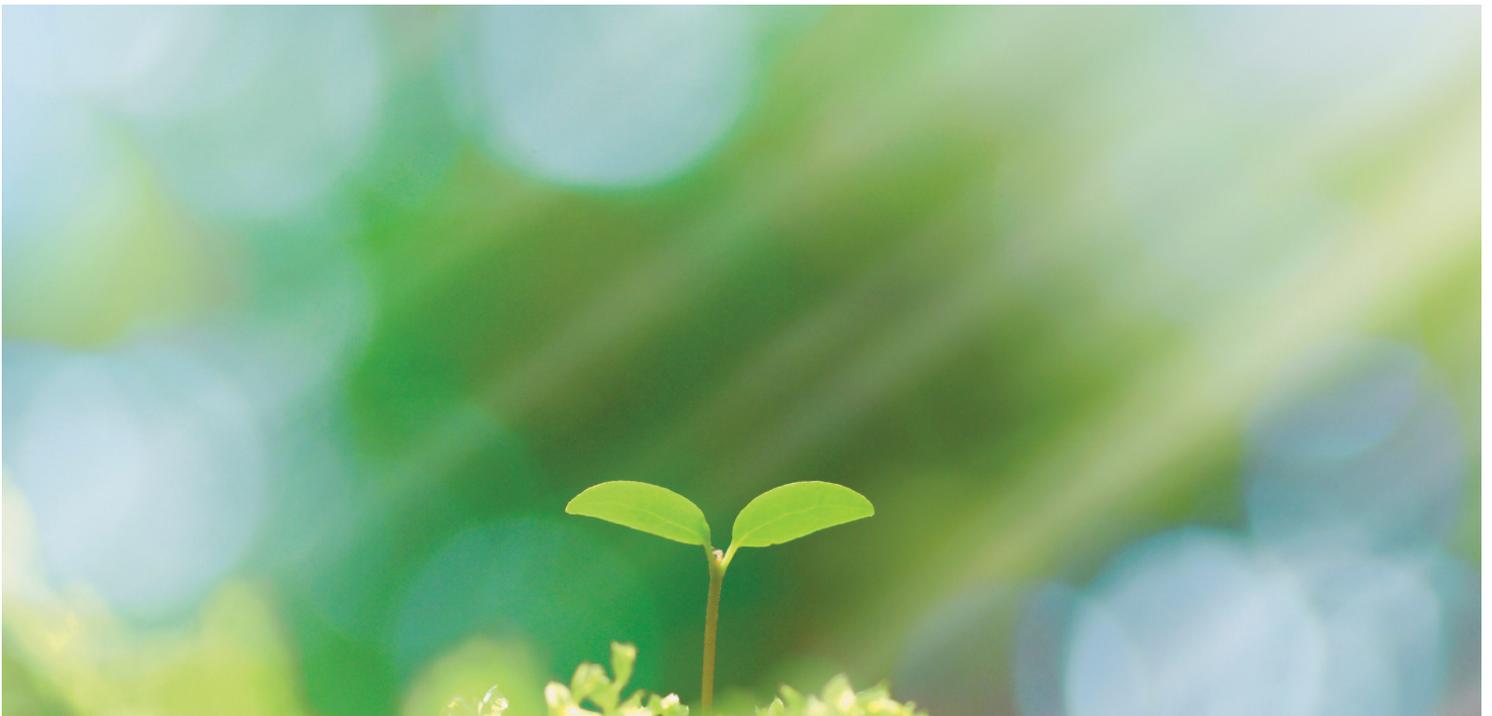
Kalavathi and PA are both looking for new ways to honor and serve Mother Earth, and hope that this project will be reborn in a new capacity down the line. Thank you so much to those of you who did show up and brought your love and enthusiasm (you know who you are!)

God bless!! and may we all continue to grow in our love and care for Mother Earth..

Jai MA!

with Love,

The GreenFriends Tree Planting Team



## Building from the Earth

### By Maheswari



On a beautiful sunny day in April I attended an Earth Oven building workshop. I have been curious about the process and the idea of building something using materials from the earth intrigued me. There were 15 or so participants that met on an urban permaculture site in south Seattle. At the end of the weekend I was deliciously full with new learning and gourmet meals.

### Ancient Roots

Earth is one of the oldest building substances on the planet and throughout history it has been used as a construction material. Today it is estimated that between two and a half of the global population lives in earth made dwellings. There are many forms of earth building: adobe, rammed earth, straw-clay, wattle and daub, sod, and cob. “Cob” is the British word for building with mud. It uses no forms, or bricks or wooden structures. Wet blobs made from a mixture of mud, straw, and sometimes sand or crushed shale or flint, were packed on top of each other to make walls and left to dry. Today, 500 year old “cob” houses still stand in Devon, England.

Resurgence in building with cob and using sustainable, affordable, and non-toxic building materials is encouraging; whether it is a stove, an oven, a wall, a bench, or a home. To get an idea watch this inspiring video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2E03Z8Jn2vw>

### Building the Cob Oven

We used various combinations of materials to make the cob. Sometimes it was sawdust, water, and clay, other times we used bark, water, and clay, or clay, straw, sand, and water.

Whatever recipe we used the preferred



## Building from the Earth (contd.)

method of mixing these together was placing all of the ingredients on a large tarp, picking up the corners and swooshing it together and then opening the tarp and mashing the concoction with our feet until the clay was incorporated into the mix and it was soft and pliable. It was a fun, yet gooey medium by which one can share stories, laugh, and make new friends.

The base of the oven was made from urbanite (re-purposed cement chunks from patios, decks, foundations, etc.) An opening is left in front where wood can be stacked.



Once the base was built we laid bottles inside the opening and stuffed a mixture of clay, sawdust and water in between the bottles. We then covered this layer with sand and leveled it. This acts as an insulation layer to keep the base from soaking up the heat of the oven.

We then very carefully set the floor of the oven with fire bricks placed on the thin layer of sand. It was harder than it looks. The bricks need to be level and part of the challenge is not pushing them around because getting sand in between the bricks is highly discouraged.

Next we sculpted the round shape of wet topsoil and covered this with wet newspaper. This is a mold. The cob layers will be built around it. Once the cob dries the topsoil will be scooped out.



## Building from the Earth (contd.)

A four inch thermal layer of more clay, sand, and straw was packed over the entire topsoil-dome. It was another challenging process to keep this layer an even four inch starting at the bottom and building it upwards.



The final step is very artistic and fun. We sculpted a “Frourtle”. Imagine a metamorphosis of a frog and a turtle. The front of the stove has the appearance of a frog with its belly as the door and the back of the oven is creatively sculpted to represent a turtle’s shell.

We left our project to dry which is estimated to take a couple of months because of the wet Seattle weather. After it is dry the topsoil will be removed from inside the cob oven. The oven will be “painted” with plaster to protect the exterior from the elements. A fire will be built inside the oven to continue hardening the cob while baking delicious pizzas, breads and other scrumptious delicacies for the community to enjoy while spending time together.



## Bird houses by Mechas

After reading the bird house article in the last GreenFriends newsletter, I decided to put up some bird houses in my back yard. I put the small bird house I made at the winter retreat by a small tree. There is already a little bird nest inside but no eggs so far!

I also bought three three bird houses kits that Eswar had made for GreenFriends. My husband helped me put together. We placed two bird houses on the wall of our shed in the back. We haven't seen any birds in them yet.

Our back yard has a lot more birds this year. We put a bird bath on our deck and they love it. Two weeks ago we saw six robins taking turns taking a bath. By the time they were done, there was only a little water left in the bird bath!

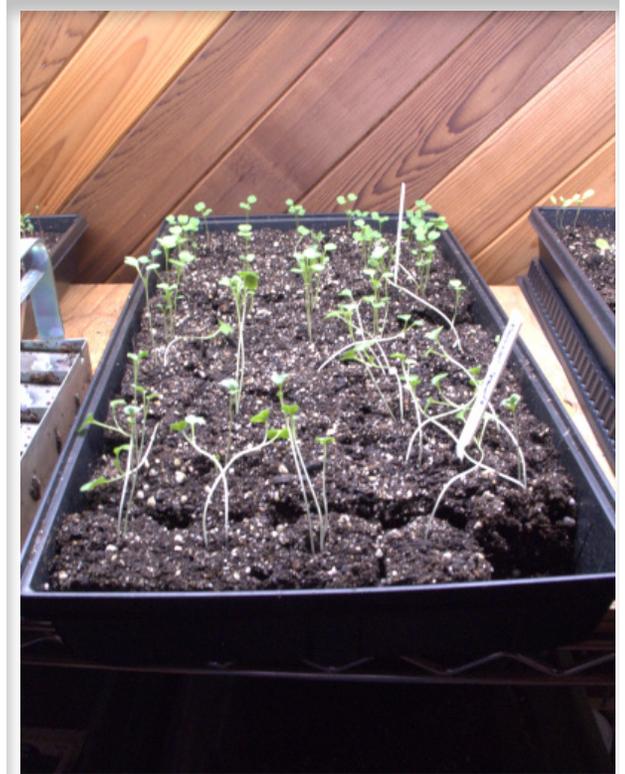


**One of the instructions Amma has made of us through her InDeed project is to Build Houses for Birds and Bugs!**

**Completed bird houses will be available for purchase at the Local GreenFriends table during Amma's PNW Retreat. Birds sometimes take a year or more to decide where to build their nest so it is not too late in the year to put one up.**

## Seedlings by Mechas

I love spring because is the time for getting seeds planted. Trying not to use so many plastic containers to start the seeds, I bought a new tool that makes squares to plant seeds without using pots. You can buy the Soil Blocker at Amazon and it is pretty easy to use.



Everything in Nature  
moves in an endless circle:  
there is birth, death,  
and again, birth.

— Amma

## Touch the Love



Touch the love  
with all your senses  
see, hear, smell  
feel the glow,  
Mother Nature's awe  
spirits sprinkling bliss.  
Feel the calm  
soundless soothingly  
comforting  
reducing  
unnecessary,  
unpleasant musings.  
Disregard  
berating self-talk  
humbly plead  
to be the  
better person in  
every breath you take.

# PNW LITTER PROJECT



## PNW Litter Project Stats:

As of April 30, 2014 we had 352 members.

Thirty-two members and their guests reported picking up 106 hours of litter during April 2014.

Those members average pick up was: 3.3 hours; the range was 2 minutes to 30 hours and the median was 1.5 hours.

Members of the project have picked up litter for 5179 hours since the project began in July 2011.

TerraCycle credited us with turning in 13,954 cigarette butts in 2014. We have turned in 153,484 butts since we started sending them to TerraCycle in January 2013.

## Articles of Interest

### 10 beautifully useful things made from 'useless' trash

[http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/recycling/blogs/10-beautifully-useful-things-made-from-useless-trash?utm\\_hp\\_ref=mostpopular](http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/recycling/blogs/10-beautifully-useful-things-made-from-useless-trash?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular)

### Plane search hampered by ocean garbage problem

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/03/21/world/missing-plane-ocean-garbage/>

This report came out three weeks after the search began for Flight MH370.

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**Darren Doherty** has delivered over 180 courses and seminars to more than 12,000 attendees since 2001, including 40 PDC's (14 solo). Darren has also completed more than 1600 property development plans since 1993 in 47 countries and is widely recognized as a leader and pioneer in the Permaculture and Regenerative Agriculture movements.

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