

Pacific Northwest Green Friends

Looking at Nature and observing its selfless way of giving, we can become aware of our own limitations. That will help to develop devotion and self-surrender to God.

Amma



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October Greetings

Donna Chantel who has served as the Seattle GreenFriends Coordinator for several years has recently resigned from the position due to health reasons. Thank you Donna for the many hours of work you contributed to organizing our local GreenFriends Projects, some of which included: planting trees, removing invasive plant species in our waterways and parks, hours of service at the GreenFriends table during Amma's tours, collecting and selling plants for our fundraising projects and keeping the community informed and involved in taking care of nature.

Maheswari Schaller and I have volunteered to co-ordinate GreenFriends in her place. We hope to grow the GreenFriends program to include all of the Pacific Northwest Community. You will notice as you read this newsletter that it is now a GreenFriends newsletter, with the Litter Project being one of several GreenFriends projects.

Please send in your GreenFriends stories in addition to your Litter Project stories!

Karuna

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)

For more information about Pacific Northwest Green Friends Projects write Maheswari at
PNWGreenFriends@gmail.com

To join the Pacific Northwest Green Friends Litter Project write Karuna at
pnwgreenfriendslitterproject@gmail.com

Pacific Northwest Litter Project

Interesting Reading

From Janani in India:



A group of monks in Thailand have built a temple from a million beer bottles that were donated to them.

<http://www.greenerideal.com/building/0916-million-beer-bottle-temple/>

From Ajayya in Olympia:



Art from plastic bags and tape

<http://www.lostateminor.com/2012/04/12/joshua-allen-harris-2012/>

From Achala in Tacoma:

In the Los Angeles area alone 20 tons of plastic fragments -- grocery bags, straws and soda bottles -- are carried into the Pacific *every day*.

Litter Project Membership

As of September 30, 2012, we had 275 members.
0 new members joined in September!

(“Members” are individuals who signed up for the project or who have participated in work parties.)

Litter Project Hours

In September 2012, 37 members and their guests reported picking up 112.49 hours of litter.

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

Members Average: 3.04 hours
Range 3 minutes to 18 hours
Median: 1 hour

The group has picked up 2435.62 hours of litter 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.

During September 2012 they sold 20 pounds of aluminum for \$9.20 which makes 281 pounds and \$134.67 for 2012 to date.

All funds were donated to the Pacific Northwest M.A. Center.

Stories and Reflections

From Kalavathi in Seattle:

Visala, Charlie and I went down to Mexico on a "Mother Mary" pilgrimage, as well as to visit Visala's friend Rosio in Mitla- a small town in the state of Oaxaca.

Family is a really central focus of life in Mitla, and beautiful hand-embroidered dresses and blouses are made there. The town itself is surrounded by beautiful rolling hills filled with cactus, wild flowers, and desert trees.

On August 12th, while all of you were picking up garbage in Seattle, Visala and I went on a hike in the hills with Rosio and her cousin. Our hike took us to the top of one of the beautiful hills where there is a giant cross. Many pilgrims journey there on a special day once a year.

While we hiked we would stop and pick up garbage along the way. (Visala is so diligent about picking up garbage; I was constantly inspired by her all throughout our trip.) Rosio and her cousin ended up helping out too, once they saw what we were doing, and so we all ended up hiking and picking up garbage together, and had a wonderful time.



From Shobana in Shoreline:

My brother was here, visiting for a few days and I went walking with him every morning. Turns out, he collects litter along his way. He picks up a can, paper or whatever and then throws it in someone's yard waste or garbage can when he comes across one. He does the same thing in California on his morning walks. I told him about the litter projects that "Mother" has going on throughout the world.

From Vern in Eugene:

Sixty-seven minutes of litter pick up from Vern in Eugene, including one dead squirrel from mid road, also a gas cap returned to owner. I was going downhill jogging and noticed a car in driveway with gas filler open. On my way back, about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile away, I spotted a gas cap in gutter. Well I picked it up and knocked on door of house. An elderly lady answered and said yep it was theirs, husband is forgetful and had been working on the car, maybe left on roof when drove away. Probably will happen to me some day also, if it hasn't already and I can't remember.

From Aditi in Iowa:

Just returned home on this beautiful last day of September after driving the back roads around Fairfield, appreciating clear blue sky, trees turning vibrant shades of yellow and orange, and.... roadsides dotted with beer and Mountain Dew cans. The full harvest moon was last night and warm and obviously an opportunity to celebrate with drink for some folks. SO, it was easy pickins' for a half hour or more, especially when someone(s) pitched a full 12 pack of Bud Lite at regular intervals. Ahhh, Iowa.....

Aditi also sent a newspaper article about a group called the Des Moines Green Runners. The group goes on a weekly jog, picking up any trash they see along the way. They pick a different place to run each week. They've noticed after doing it awhile it becomes nearly impossible to walk by trash so pick up litter at other times during the week as well. For more information: <http://whotv.com/2012/06/20/green-runners-picking-up-while-pounding-the-pavement/>

Organic Gardening Classes

Maheswari Schaller taught our first Green Friends organic gardening workshop on Saturday, September 9th. The topics covered in the workshop included: Defining organic gardening, soil enrichment, planning the winter garden, container gardening and garden beds and protecting the winter beds. The six eager students also enjoyed the sunny day planting vegetables and learning how to build a hoop tunnel to protect the winter garden. The rich sharing of information and questions about these topics and others filled the two hour workshop and inspired us to continue growing our own food. Future classes being planned include: Introduction to Organic Gardening, Soil Building-Compost & Worm Bins, Introduction to Permaculture, Container Gardening, Children's Gardens, Garden Design, Companion Planting, Spring, Summer & Winter Gardens and Culinary & Medicinal Herbs. For more information on the organic gardening classes write: amritagardens@gmail.com



Notes from participants:

I came home all inspired to build a hoop tunnel in my back yard.....I was particularly excited about the prospect of finding a way to continue a relationship with my yard during those long, dark, cold (and wet!) winter months. I find such peace working in the soil, but for much of the year, I can only gaze longingly at my seemingly dead garden. Now, I can get my fingernails dirty all year 'round. Your workshop was wonderful, a great mix of instruction and "hands-on" experiential learning. I enjoyed it immensely. Joyce

It was wonderful to learn how to create a mini garden for growing kale and other greens during our cold, dark and rainy Seattle winters. Maheswari also showed us how to easily make a mini greenhouse to protect the greens from frost. We had the opportunity to learn hands-on, and I left feeling like I could confidently begin growing my own mini-garden. Kirtana

I loved the class. We just touched the surface... can't wait to learn more about permaculture and organic gardening. I can imagine when we will plan a garden for the new center. I'd love to be part of it. Mechas

Vegetables and Flowers from Our Gardens!

October Organic Gardening Tip from Maheswari

If you enjoy eating onions, garlic or other alliums now is the time to plant them. You can also plant flowering bulbs for a spectacular show of spring flowers. These can include: daffodils, tulips, lilies, crocus, anemone, snowflakes, etc. Visit your local nursery to see their selection or get larger bags of bulbs at Costco, Lowes and Home Depot. If you have squirrels you can place a piece of chicken wire on top of the bulbs before covering them up with soil to keep those naughty little squirrels from digging them up.

Feed your garden!! If you have a garden bed you planted this summer or a new garden bed, you can increase the soil fertility by planting legumes, such as: American field peas, Lana or Common vetch, Crimson clover, Bell Beans/Fava beans and others to provide a certain amount of nitrogen to the soil when the legumes are turned under next spring. You can also purchase a "cover crop" from your local nursery or Walt's Products in Seattle.

With the fall leaves quickly hitting the ground, consider starting or adding these to your compost pile. Once the leaves are composted you can add this wonderful organic matter to your garden, the worms love it, and so will your garden next spring.

