



# GreenFriends North America NEWSLETTER

FOURTH QUARTER 2022  
OCTOBER – DECEMBER



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Suggested by Amma, seed balls are a way to increase the number of plants, flowers and trees in the world, bringing ourselves more in harmony with Nature.

GreenFriends  
strives to  
communicate the  
importance of treating  
Nature with respect  
and gratitude.

We invite each of you Green Friends to share your ideas and experiences with your own gardening efforts as well as experiences with animals.

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# AMMA'S BIRTHDAY MESSAGE 2022



## **AMMA OUTLINES THREE THINGS WE CAN DO FOR NATURE ON OUR OWN BIRTHDAYS, AND MORE....**

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Speaking on the occasion, Amma addressed how it had been difficult during the pandemic for many devotees to come see Amma.

*“Amma knows that many of her children are sad that this year too, as for the past two years, they aren’t able to be with Amma,” she said. “Even so, Amma knows and experiences your love and*

*devotion. And you are always in Amma's thoughts—in my heart, in my remembrance, and in my prayers."*

Saying that she knew that many of them wanted to give Amma something on their own birthdays, Amma suggested they do three things:

*"Take a seed and put it in some soil with some manure and wrap it up in a piece of paper. Drop those seed balls in a place where they can sprout—either around your house or in some wooded area. The more saplings you can plant, the better. This would be the greatest gift you can give to Amma."*

(See separate article at the end of this issue regarding how to make and sow seed balls.)

The second thing Amma requested was that everyone clean one kilometer of land on their birthday.

*"Sweep the area and clear away all the garbage,"* she said.

The third request was regarding carpooling. Amma said she has been requesting devotees to engage in the practice for 15 years now:

*"Try to take at least two other people in your vehicle when you travel to work. But please make sure that they are not strangers; you should make sure that you are safe. You can also do the same kind of carpooling when you travel to a temple or when coming here to the Ashram." Amma pointed out that carpooling like this saves money, fuel, reduces environmental pollution and gradually reduces traffic and even road accidents.*

Amma then said,

*"Amma knows that all her children are trying to do selfless actions. They feed the poor how ever much they can. They try to keep their surroundings clean. But, Amma feels that we can still do more. We should try to use our birthdays as a day to serve the world."*

In her satsang, Amma also spoke about the importance of remembering just how dependent we are upon Nature and how it is through Nature that God blesses us. She said,

*"When we live in this world and enjoy the delights and bounties of Nature, there is one mistake humans, consciously or unconsciously, tend to make. They forget that they have received all these as a gift from that supreme power, God. They forget the truth of Nature, the reflection of God. We forget the invincible power of Nature. Over and above all, we forget the truth of love, which is the foundation of life. We may forget God and Nature in the hustle and bustle of daily life. But we should never forget love. Because only if we have true love will God and Nature shower their blessings upon us. But today, the entire human race is gripped with amnesia. Man has forgotten everything that makes life wholesome and beautiful."*

Amma also spoke about love and how we need to keep expanding and growing in love.

*“Most of us stand on the lowest rung of love,” she said. “Amma doesn’t say that this love is not love, but we should not remain there. We should climb up the rungs of love, step by step, and reach the highest peak of love. This is the purest love. This love is present within us even now. All we have to do is to put in the effort to awaken it. May this love awaken and spread out towards all humanity as universal love! This is the greatest blessing of life. We should become embodiments of love. When love awakens within, compassion, sacrifice and joy will awaken spontaneously. Love finds beauty in every ugliness. When love overflows from our heart, flowers of peace will blossom all around us. When we beautify our eyes with the eyeliner of unity, all differences will vanish.”*

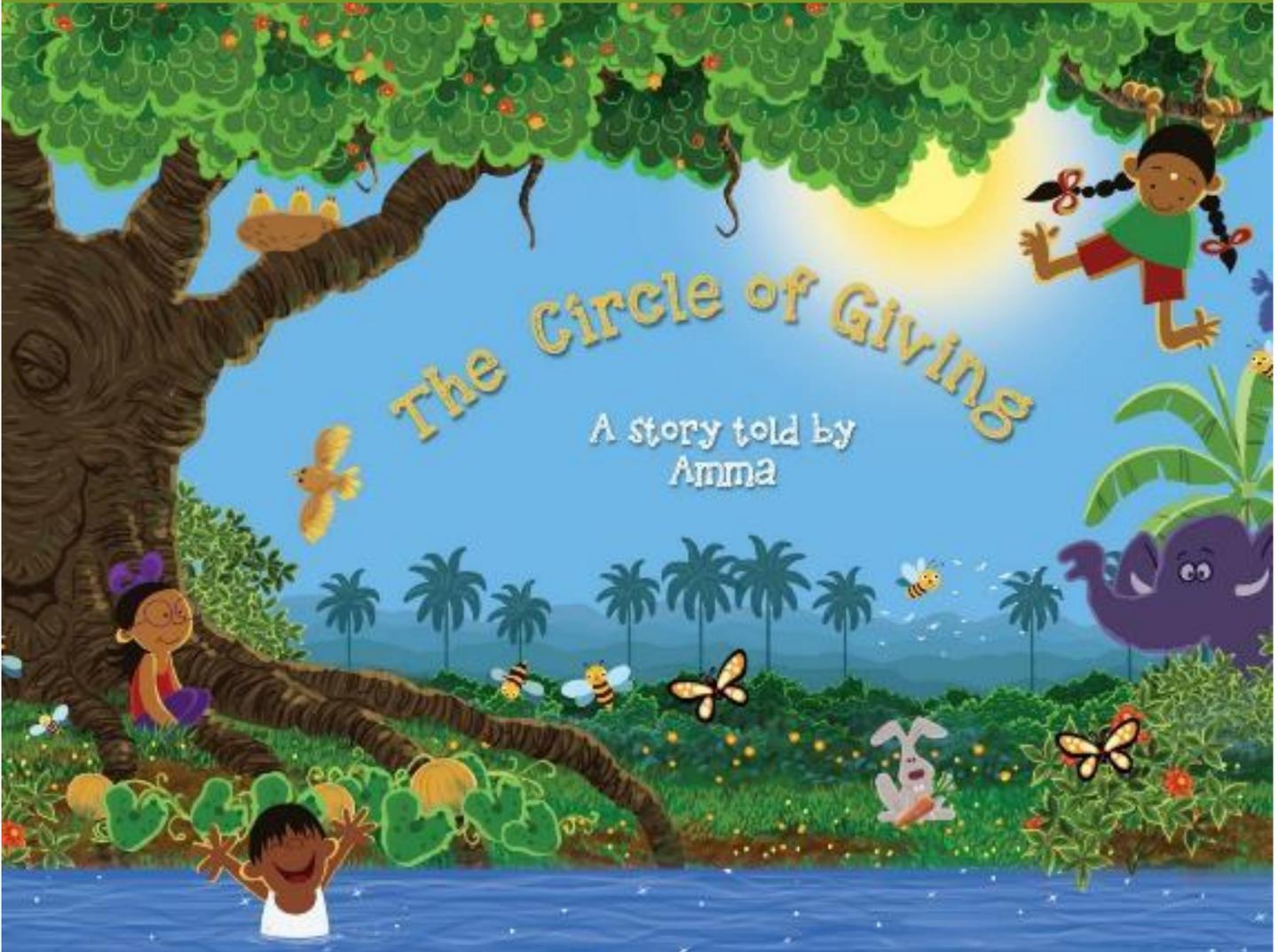
Amma concluded her satsang by saying,

*“Children, may your eyes melt with compassion. May your heads bow low with humility. May your hands be immersed in serving others. May your feet tread the path of dharma. May your ears be ready to hear the sorrows of the unfortunate. May your tongue ever speak kind words and the truth. Amma prays to the Paramatman that, in this way, the lives of my children become blessings for the world.”*

**~ FROM AMRITAPURI.ORG**



# AMMA SHOP CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEWS



AS WE ENTER THE HOLIDAY SEASON, YOU MAY BE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH THE YOUNG CHILDREN IN YOUR LIFE. THE AMMA SHOP CARRIES TWO ILLUSTRATED CHILDREN'S STORIES AS TOLD BY AMMA. THESE STORIES CONVEY BEAUTIFUL LESSONS FROM MOTHER NATURE.

In [The Circle of Giving](#), Ramu and his friends go to play at the river. While they are playing, they notice the beauty of nature all around them and find their own ways to contribute to others. The bright colorful illustrations animate all the animals and plants and show our unity with nature.

Amma says, “Nature is an indispensable part of life on Earth. Everything relies on nature to live. We are not different from nature; we are an interdependent part of it. Our lives depend on the well being of the whole. Therefore, it is one of our foremost duties to lovingly care for all living things.”

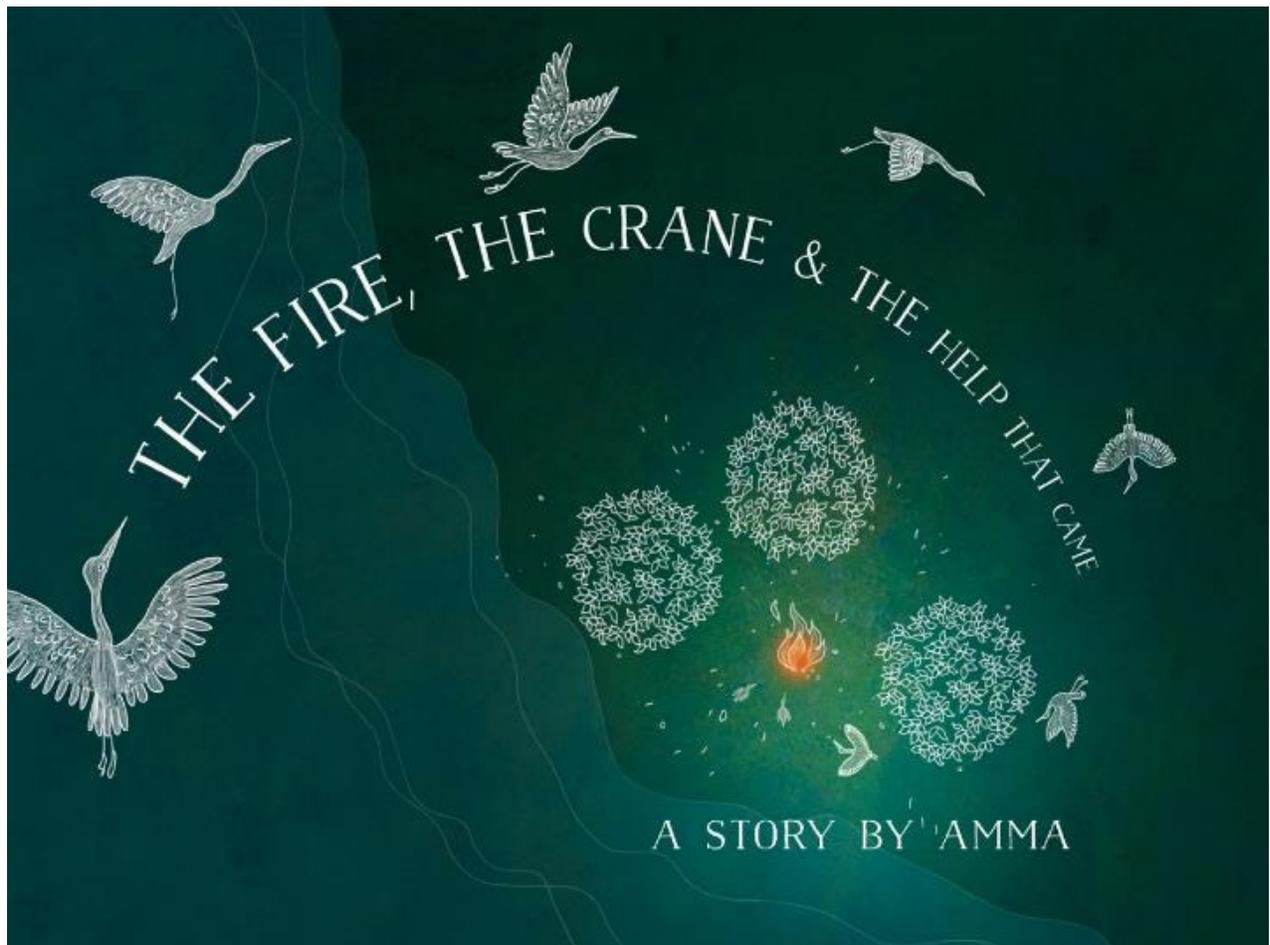
The children discover that giving selflessly comes full circle; the seeds they plant now will blossom and bring joy to all.

In [The Fire, The Crane & The Help That Came](#), an old crane feels too tired to fly away searching for food; he decides to stay behind with the baby cranes. What will he do when he notices a fire start nearby? Despite his limitations, the crane learns about the power of self-effort and unified action. The painterly illustrations highlight the beauty of the forest and the many birds that come to the crane’s assistance.

Amma says “You may wonder, ‘How can this dense darkness be removed if I light this tiny lamp?’ If each one of us lights a small lamp, the strength of the light will multiply and everything can be illumined.”

The crane and the reader discover that if we each do our part, great things can be achieved.

~ SHAKTI FLEISCHER, SAN RAMON, CA



# WRAPPING UP THE GARDEN FOR THE WINTER



## “EVERYTHING IN NATURE MOVES IN AN ENDLESS CIRCLE:

*"Everything in Nature moves in an endless circle: there is birth, death, and again, birth. The seasons move in a circle: spring, summer, autumn, winter, and spring again. The earth moves on its axis around the sun. A seed germinates and becomes a tree; the tree blossoms and new seeds are born." – Amma*

When I visit forests, I often see leaves drop to the ground. When I touch the ground, it is soft, moist, and dark, and smells richly like earth. When I dig under the leaves and into the soil, I see a few worms and other critters breaking down the leaves. And as I dig deeper, the soil is rich and spongy and holds together when I squeeze it.

Laying there underfoot, this debris protects and nourishes the soil, the plants, and ultimately the entire food chain. In the forest, there is recycling of all plant matter and all apparent waste is re-incorporated back into the cycle of life. In nature, circular systems are self-sustaining and last thousands if not millions of years without degrading. By contributing to, rather than interfering with the natural cycles in nature, we not only come into harmony with nature, but we provide a lot of benefits for our garden to abundantly grow next year's harvest.

When wrapping up one's garden for the winter, the no-dig bed technique mimics nature's natural soil enrichment process. Not digging the soil emulates a stage in the life cycle of a forest where the leaves and other plant debris are left on the ground undisturbed.

## Add greens and browns



When building no-dig beds, organic material is added right on top of the soil. Alternate layers of brown and green plant materials such as leaves, weeds, grass clippings, compost, soil, and manures are piled on top of each other to form a mound. Over the winter, the organic materials break down, becoming fertile spring soil.

When my husband and I built our no-dig beds, we asked our neighbors if we could gather some of their dried sycamore tree leaves. Not only did they say yes but they also offered us aged chicken manure.

The following steps illustrate how to build a no-dig bed. The process is flexible and does not need to be followed exactly in this order, or with these materials.

1. Clear the surface of the soil by cutting green plants away at their base at the soil level. Then lay them on top of the soil, leaving the roots in the ground. If the plant is diseased, remove the diseased material from the garden, however, the roots can remain in the soil. Level the ground a bit before adding your layers. Be sure to water your no-dig bed throughout the process as you add each layer.
2. Add some compost as your first layer to encourage the roots to go down. At our house we make compost from kitchen scraps, making note of which items break down the most efficiently. It is not uncommon to see an occasional eggshell, peach pit, or avocado pit in the compost layer. Sometimes we even see a few worms or other creatures. All these items will continue to decompose in the no-dig bed.
3. If you have a lot of weeds, place cardboard or newspaper over the first compost layer to prevent weeds from growing. Remove any tape from the cardboard, then wet it before you put it down. Whether you will be planting cover crops as mentioned in the next section or planting seedlings in the Spring, you will need to create small holes in the cardboard to let their roots reach the layer of compost on the bottom. You can use a digging fork to make the holes.

Leaves

Soil

Compost

Weeds

Sticks



4. Place a few 'drumstick' width sticks as the next layer to create pockets of air in the bottom of your bed. It is important to have some air space in your bed or the materials may become anaerobic and not decompose well. If sticks and woody materials do not break down before springtime, it is okay to leave them in the soil until they do.

5. Add greens, browns, compost, or soil in layers. Always finish your no-dig bed by covering it with brown mulch and watering it.

When choosing materials for your no-dig bed, some strong-smelling plants such as pine needles, have concentrated oils which prevent other plants from growing. Let these kinds of materials sit outdoors for a while to off-gas before using them in your no-dig beds. Once the odor is gone, strong-smelling plants can be used. Fresh wood chips are also strong smelling and will prevent plants from growing, so it is best to use them on the pathways.

In some climates, materials will break down more slowly. If you live in a dry area, you may need to water your no-dig beds over the winter to encourage the breakdown and formation of organic matter in the soil. In climates like Amritapuri, materials break down very quickly due to humidity and a myriad of creatures in the soil. In Chicago, with a colder

## Finished No-dig Bed



climate, it may take six months to a year for materials to break down. Even if materials are not completely broken down by springtime, you can still plant cover crops, veggies, or other plants on top of the no-dig beds in the spring.

The no-dig gardening technique is beneficial in the following ways: it saves you time, retains moisture and nourishes the microbes, reduces the number of weeds, and increases plants' immunity to pests and diseases. If you don't have time to build a no-dig bed, it is best to cover the earth with mulch rather than leave the soil bare. Mulch protects soil from drying out and becoming compacted.

## COVER CROPS

Cover crops cover bare ground in your garden to prevent erosion and land degradation. In regenerative gardening, we aim to never leave any bare ground.

Cover crops renew your soil over winter, protect and prepare the ground for future crops, breaking up compacted soil with their roots. They help keep beds clean and weed-free for spring planting, enriching the soil and keeping microbes alive by feeding them and boosting the soil's organic content.



The best time to sow cover crops is at the end of the summer growing season after the last crops are harvested from your garden. You can use any low-growing veggies to cover your soil such as arugula or lettuce, and it is also common to grow cover crops that don't create food to eat.

Cover crops are grown from three basic plant families:

1. Grains: oats, annual grasses like wheat and rye
2. Legumes: peas, fava beans, vetch, and soybeans,
3. Broadleaves; mustard, alyssum, and buckwheat.

When choosing the best type of cover crop, legumes and grasses photosynthesize more quickly, providing more nutrients to your soil when cut and dropped later in the season. Grain cover crops are best for breaking up and aerating compacted soil. Red clover is a frost seedling and can be sown later in the season on frozen ground, surviving in the cold and sprouting when the weather warms.

### **HARVESTING A COVER CROP:**

It is best to chop the cover crop down to the level of the soil, cut it up to and leave it on the soil as a layer (chop and drop) when it has flowered. Once the cover crop begins to form seeds, nutrients in the roots break down in the soil from the foliage and flowers, and roots are lost. Although the plant offers the soil the richest amendments when chopped and dropped before seeds are formed, letting cover crops produce edible veggies and beautiful flowers before chopping and dropping still benefits the soil-building process, although the nutrient return to the soil is diminished.

My husband and I planted peas as a cover crop. The pea plants grew strong and tall up a trellis, with deep green leaves, and blooms too beautiful to harvest. They began producing delicious crunchy sweet peas. We couldn't bring ourselves to chop and drop the plants until all the blooms were done and we had harvested the last of the peas.

### **END OF SEASON JOURNAL**

One way to review and reflect on your growing season is to keep a garden journal, noting what grew, what the weather and soil conditions were like, and which gardening practices worked and didn't work. This can be a practical journal to help you plan for your coming season, or it can be a spiritual practice that also allows you to review your inner transformation and experiences. Some gardeners keep a journal season after season to help them track changes and develop better planting schedules, irrigation systems, soil care, and more. For organic gardeners who need to deal with growing challenges, critters, and climate change without chemical intervention, seasonal journaling can be particularly helpful.

Mother Earth has generously provided us with greens, roots, veggies, and fruits. It is time now to give back to our mother and thank her. We can give back to her by restoring the minerals, microbes, and organic matter in the soil. By feeding and protecting the soil in the fall, we not only create an oasis for spring plants, but also an oasis for future generations.

**~ MRS. BARI ANUPAMA, SALINAS, CALIFORNIA**

# INFORMED FOOD CHOICES



## MAKING INFORMED AND RESPONSIBLE FOOD CHOICES TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

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Climate change is on more and more people's minds given the dramatic change in temperatures and rainfall seen this summer. Many of us are already thinking about ways we can live more sustainably. Food choices can have a significant impact on our environment, although many people don't consider how directly these choices can impact climate change, loss of habitat, or water shortages.

"Ignoring the current environmental situation is like a man on the top floor of flats being indifferent to the fire on the ground floor." - Amma

(The word "flats" in India refers to apartments.)

Following are some ideas related to environmentally-friendly and long-term sustainable eating practices.

# FACTORS INFLUENCING A FOOD'S SUSTAINABILITY

## 1. Water consumption

As water shortages around the world grow, the more water we conserve when buying, preparing, and eating food, the better. One of the largest consumers of water on the planet is meat production.

“Many people talk a lot about environmental preservation, but true greatness lies in putting these principles into practice and actually doing something about it.” Amma

In this [article](#), according to data gathered by Climate Nexus from multiple research papers,

*Animal agriculture puts a heavy strain on many of the Earth's finite land, water and energy resources. In order to accommodate the 70 billion animals raised annually for human consumption, a third of the [planet's ice-free land surface](#), as well as nearly sixteen percent of [global freshwater](#), is devoted to growing livestock.*

Beyond limiting or reducing meat and dairy consumption, one can also buy and use food made from “water wise” crops. Read more about food and water consumption facts [here](#) (World Economic Forum) and [here](#) (Food Revolution Network).

Vegetables generally take less water to produce than fruits. Plants with deeper root systems take less water to produce than their counterparts. Certain beans, black eyed peas for example, and tomatoes, squash, melons, tomatoes and potatoes are some of the more “water wise” produce options on the market. Surprisingly, [some of the water-high foods](#) we may be importing and eating on a regular basis include: almonds, avocados, rice and bananas. Consider researching and choosing low-water fruit and vegetable alternatives to eat, and skip the non-seasonal, highly imported ones.

## 2. Transportation

When we buy local and seasonal produce we limit the distance it travels to reach us. Can we shop at a farmer's market or join a community share at a local farm (first inquire about their water practices) where we can buy our produce? Buying local varieties of produce from our grocery stores supports both local farmers and reduces fossil fuels and emissions in the transportation of those goods over long distances and from overseas.



### 3. Loss of Habitat and Deforestation

*“Nature is an indispensable part of life on Earth. Everything relies on nature to live. We are not different from nature; we are an interdependent part of it. Our lives depend on the well-being of the whole. Therefore, it is one of our foremost duties to lovingly care for all living things.”* Amma

Certain foods we buy contribute to deforestation. [Three main drivers](#) of deforestation are meat production, growing soybeans to feed pigs and poultry for human consumption, and palm oil. Wood products are also a concern, in terms of paper and new furniture, as well as cocoa products such as cocoa powder.

Per the [World Wildlife Fund](#) (WWF), palm oil, a product used in many foods we buy regularly, “has been and continues to be a major driver of deforestation of some of the world’s most biodiverse forests, destroying the habitat of already endangered species like the orangutan, pygmy elephant and Sumatran rhino.” That being said, palm oil is actually [more sustainable to produce](#) than typical vegetable oil alternatives, and can be found in many foods under different names. Rather than entirely boycotting palm oil, purchase palm oil that has received the RSPO (Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil) certification. Otherwise, consider organic cooking oils [including organic olive oil](#).

### 4. Biodiversity

The WWF recommends we consider eating alternative sources of food, rather than commodities that may be overfarmed and overproduced. We could consider diversifying our plate to include fruits and vegetables, especially local ones, that contribute to a diverse food chain – and perhaps even divert waste. Kale stalks, for instance, can make a very tasty dish (e.g., sauteed kale greens), as could carrot greens such as in carrot green pesto. What could we use (ideally seasonal and local) that is different, and how can we reduce waste from what we already use? Could we grow some of our own food and practice crop rotation at home?

### 5. Packaging

*“What is needed today is that we begin to value Mother Nature as much as we value our own mother who gave birth to us.”* - Amma

It always bears repeating that how our food is packaged, in addition to the factors above, can contribute to its overall sustainability. Think about the three R’s – can I reduce the packaging? If not, could I reuse the packaging? If I cannot, can I recycle it?

Buying produce without using plastic bags is best. We can bring our own produce bags to the market and try to buy bulk with reusable containers. Some grocery stores offer bulk purchases of oil, honey, and more, where you can use and reuse containers.

## HOW TO EAT MORE SUSTAINABLY

In summary, when we select our food, consider:

1. What is the water usage for this product, and how can I find it out?
2. Is it responsibly sourced, and if not, where can I buy a responsibly sourced alternative?
3. Does it divert waste in some way?
4. Is it overfarmed, and if so, where can I buy an alternative?
5. Is it local and seasonal? How much packaging does it involve, and how am I planning to reduce, reuse, and recycle the packaging?

Keeping the above questions in mind around water, transportation, seasonality, biodiversity, and packaging may help us make more sustainable choices in the present and over time.

“Everything in the universe is interconnected. The universe is a net held by each of us. When there is movement in the corner of a net held by four people, it will reflect everywhere. All actions we perform knowingly or unknowingly, alone or as a group are being reflected in the corners of the universe. It will not work if we wait for others to change. Even if they do not change, we should be willing to change. We should see what we can do.” - Amma

~ DIKSHA, MARYLAND



# RESPONSE TO GREEN FRIENDS WATER BUCKET CHALLENGE



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Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.

## EARLIER THIS YEAR, I DECIDED TO TAKE THE WATER BUCKET CHALLENGE

*“Just as Nature is dedicated to helping us, we too should be dedicated to helping Nature. Only then can the harmony between Nature and human beings be preserved.” -Amma*

Water and the other natural resources that we consume are the wealth that needs to be left to future generations. Indeed, water sustains all life on this planet. Unfortunately, water systems all over the world are under threat due to pollution caused by human activity. Changing weather patterns have created severe drought, heatwaves and lack of rain, causing rivers to dry up drastically all over the

world. The earth's natural ecosystems have suffered as well, reducing fresh water reserves. Drinking water in many areas is becoming scarce. It turns out that the way we farm, our energy choices, and many daily activities impact the world's water supply. Without a doubt, water is one of our most precious resources. Fortunately, there are many things we can do to conserve it.

In the Q4 2021 GreenFriend's newsletter, we published the [Water Bucket Challenge](#) and asked readers for their experience or learning from taking the challenge. Charles Lucas, residing in Southern California, shared his experience with us.

Earlier this year, I decided to take the Water Bucket Challenge, committing to it for nine full days. The tenth day being the first day of Swamiji's retreat, was my own personal Vijayadashami\*. As a sign that my efforts were timely, at the end of the retreat Amma made some remarks about the deteriorating quality of our shared water supply, saying, "One day we may be drinking water from powdered packets along with our tears." While I feel that my efforts overall did little to earn any divine grace in this regard, as Amma says, "If we take one step toward God, God will take ten steps toward us." With that in mind, let me share my reflections on the steps I took. In planning my personal Water Bucket Challenge, I chose to focus on three areas:

1. Mechanical interventions
2. Metabolic/consumption interventions
3. Devotional interventions

**Mechanical interventions** included using a cup to rinse after brushing my teeth instead of letting the tap run, washing my face with just one handful of water, flushing solids only, and taking "Swedish showers" (only running the water to moisten and rinse the body of soap). I also avoided all plastic bags including food sold in plastic bags, and disposable coffee cups. I consolidated laundry to one load and saved water used for cleaning veggies and soaking beans to be reused in the garden. I also filled a soaking bowl in the sink to reduce water wasted though drain off.

I researched multiple **metabolic/consumption interventions** for possible future adoption. First, I explored the benefits of eliminating tea and coffee from my diet. At a physical level, both are diuretics. By eliminating tea and coffee, one needs less water, and one uses that water more efficiently. At an ecological level, tea and coffee products are often shipped over long distances and are mostly grown using plantation-style labor and pesticides.

From everything I've read and heard from Amma, our **devotional interventions** are essential and the most impactful. For instance, in *Awaken Children! Volume 1*, Amma said we should bow down to the water with which we will take a shower. When we see the Divine in everything, our attitude changes. Recently, during bhajans, Amma mentioned that without gratitude, the corrective steps we take won't be able to right our wrongs. To be frank, during the days of the challenge, I didn't feel any gratitude—I felt mostly felt deprived and anxious. Since then, I think I've become more conscientious, and I think

that is one way to express gratitude. I'm in Los Angeles, and with the ongoing water shortages in this area we are definitely skating on thin ice. I feel some relief and gratitude each time I consider that this "thin ice" hasn't cracked yet.

Amma says "Just as the filter fixed on the water tap absorbs the impurities in the water, so should we absorb the impurities in us with the filter of meditation." This speaks to the importance of our sadhana as a devotional intervention as well.

After joining the Amma live stream meditation every morning, I say goodbye to Amma on my altar, saying "I'll see you soon, at the beach." I arrive shortly after sunrise. Once I'm there, I like to chat with the ocean about anything Amma mentioned after the meditation. Just seeing the ocean makes me feel happy. I know we have a fragile future here in "civilization," and while seeing and being in the ocean doesn't make me feel any more secure about our future, I do feel that Nature is always blessing us, surrounding us with an intelligent love despite the mess we have made, which is something to be grateful for too.

These were my activities and reflections during my nine-day Water Bucket Challenge. The mechanical interventions are easy enough to keep practicing, and I'm still doing them, with a little less than absolute strictness. The metabolic interventions are in progress, and I think that diving deeper into gratitude will give me all the strength and inspiration needed to engage in selfless tapas. Even if that's not completely true, at least I feel happy thinking that.

As for the devotional interventions, as part of my practices, I would like to expand on them further. Amma tells us to enjoy the beauty of Nature with the awareness that these are all expressions of the Divine. By taking steps to conserve water and put Amma's teachings into action, I pray that my small actions, when combined with others' conservation efforts, have a ripple effect that creates positive change in the world's water supply.

~ CHARLES LUCAS, LOS ANGELES, CA

*\*Vijayadashami marks the culmination of Navaratri, the nine days of worshiping God in the form of the Divine Mother. Navaratri is a time of sadhana, of conquering our inner negativities to gain greater willpower and self-control, and of awakening the right knowledge from within. Vijayadasami, 'the tenth day of victory,' marks the successful completion of this occasion.*



# SEED BALLS



## NATIVE SEED BALLS ARE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO SOW MANY SEEDS

Amma encourages us to think not only about ourselves on our birthday, but to also think of others. She suggests that one way to do this is to give back to Mother Nature in gratitude for all that Nature provides for us. Seed balls are a suggestion from Amma to increase the number of plants, flowers and trees in the world, bringing ourselves more in harmony with Nature.

Amma said, *“Take a seed and put it in some soil with some manure and wrap it up in a piece of paper. Drop those seed balls in a place where they can sprout—either around your house or in some wooded area. The more saplings you can plant, the better. This would be the greatest gift you can give to Amma.”*

Native seed balls are an effective way to sow many seeds in a manner which gives them a head start with nutrition and protection from birds and other animals. All without ever having to dig into the ground! There are many recipes for seed balls so these instructions are a general guideline.

This can be a fun activity for children that also teaches them about the importance of native plants in the environment. You can use this technique for trees, shrubs, wildflowers, perennials, annuals, etc. If you are not sure what seeds to use, check with your local botanical society to find out what native plants are easy to germinate and will thrive in your area.

## SEED BALL RECIPE

Recipes for seed balls, or seed bombs as they are sometimes called, usually call for potters clay. However, if you live in an area with natural clay soil you can dig up soil and run it through a sieve. Likewise, if you have your own homemade compost (good for you!) you can sieve it to make it easy to roll.

What you will need:

- Equal parts clay\* and compost
- Native plant seeds
- A little bit of water

\*If using your own clay soil you may adjust the recipe to 2 or even 3 parts clay-to-compost.

## DIRECTIONS:

- In a large bowl or on a cookie sheet, mix equal parts clay and compost.
- If you're doing wildflower or cover crops, mix in seeds. If doing trees or food crops you will roll one seed into each ball as you make them.
- Slowly mix in a little bit of water (a spray bottle works well for this) until it has the consistency of play dough.
- Roll the mix into little balls about the size of a large marble.
- If using tree seeds, roll one seed into each ball.
- Allow the balls to dry.
- Take them where you want them to grow.
- Simply drop the balls on the ground. The seeds will be protected from the hot sun and from nibbling creatures. Dropping the balls on bare soil, or partially bare soil, will give the best results.
- When the rain comes, nature will take its course and the germinating plants will have a great head start.



In theory, nothing needs to be done to care for native species when planted this way. However, if you give them a gentle watering if the rains are not steady during their first year it will help them become established and grow to a good size. Seed balls are an effective way to propagate native plants without the need to even be present when the plants sprout.

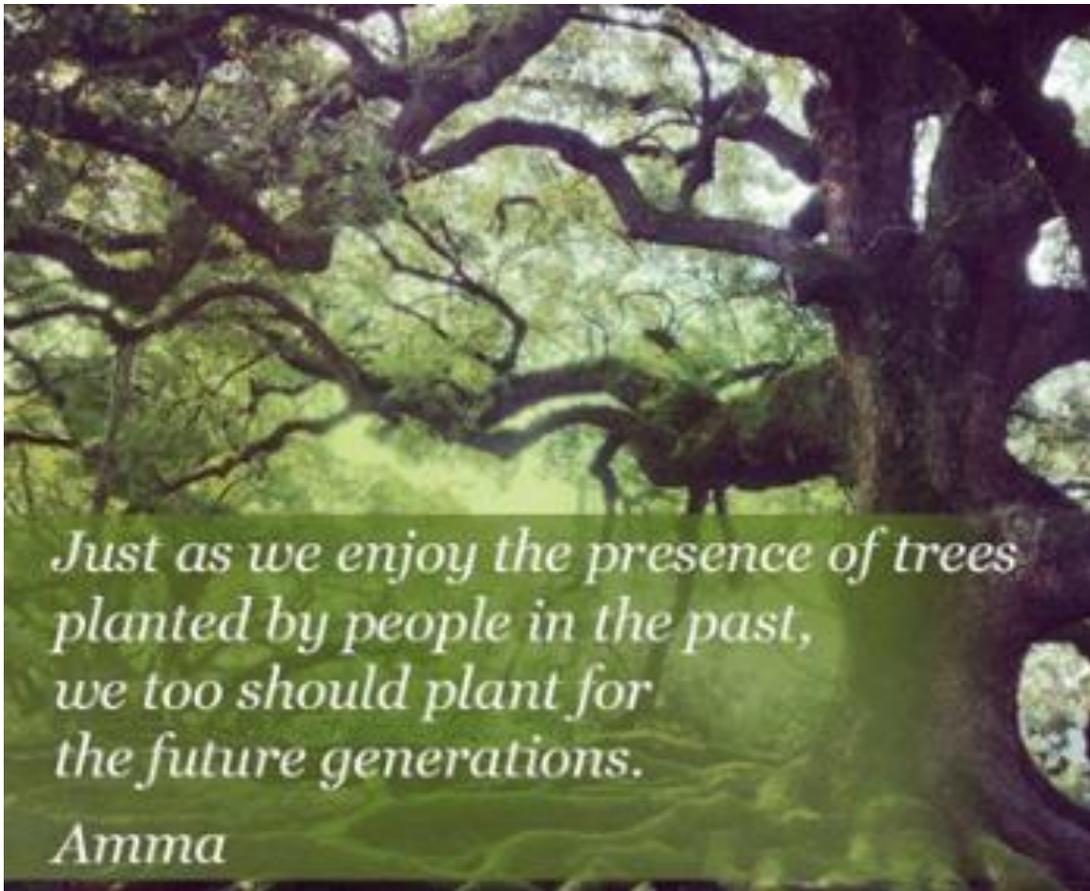
What a wonderful gift to Amma via Mother Nature for our birthday. And remember, every day it's someone's birthday, so any day is a great day to make seed balls!

**Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu  
May all beings everywhere be happy.**

~ ABHAY, SAN RAMON, CA



San Ramon sevites making California wildflower seed balls.



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