

Amma in Calcutta



“After sitting for almost 12 hours of continuous darshan during the last day of programs in Calcutta, Amma still wanted to do more for her children. During the darshan, at about 6:00pm, she announced that the road had to be cleaned and in this way the ABC would be launched in Calcutta. She sent brahmacharis to inspect the area that was to be cleaned and procure the necessary equipment for the cleaning operation.

So immediately after darshan at 11 pm, getting up from the stage Amma walked down the long driveway out to Budge Budge Trunk Road, the busy street that passes in front of the ashram. Along with 800 odd devotees, Amma then spent the next three hours cleaning 3km of the road outside the ashram. Amma herself donned gloves and a mask and got right into the filth that had accumulated over the years along the roadside. The devotees fanned out along the roadside picking up garbage of all shapes, sizes and smells and bagged it all up for collection. After raking, shoveling and scraping up the trash from the pavement for three hours, Amma then walked the entire 3km stretch of the road to observe all the devotees hard at work and show her appreciation for their efforts. On her way back to the ashram a large lorry arrived to collect all the bags of trash that had been collected.”

For more:

<http://www.amritapuri.org/16187/13clean-kolkata.aum>

Kick Butts Day 2013 Work Party

One of our most successful Litter Project work parties last year was in support of Kick Butts Day 2012. Kick Butts Day is an annual celebration of youth leadership and activism in the fight against tobacco use. The event is organized by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and sponsored by the United Health Foundation. (<http://www.kickbuttsday.org>). Our way of celebrating that event was to pick up cigarette butts!

On March 25, 2012, twenty four of us gathered in the International District of Seattle and in two hours picked up 16,500 cigarette butts!



We will hold our Kick Butts Day 2013 on Sunday March 3, from 10 to noon, once again meeting in the International District. This year we will weigh the cigarette butts rather than count them. The other big difference is that we will be sending the cigarette butts to TerraCycle to be turned into plastic pallets rather than adding them to the landfill. More details will be given later but please SAVE THE DATE!!!!

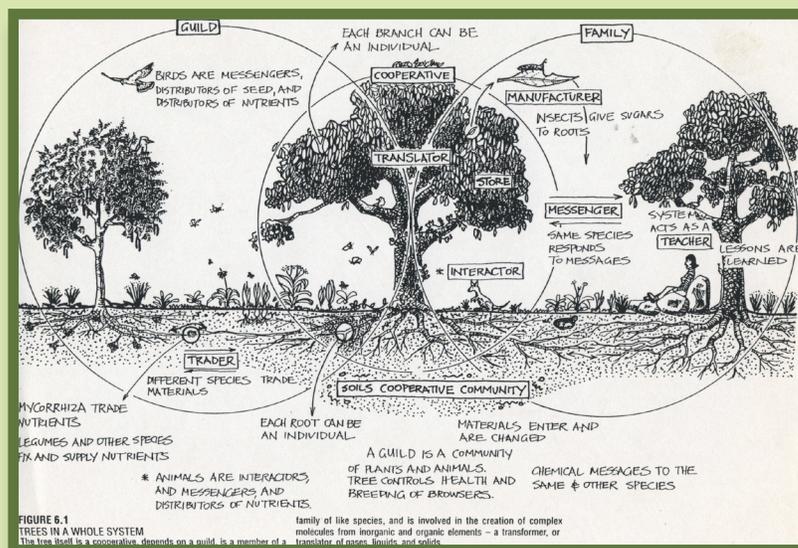
Come to Seattle and join us if you can. If that is impossible, then consider organizing a work party in your own area, on that day or another. And if that is not possible either, then please spend some time picking up extra cigarette butts sometime in March.

Permaculture – Designing for a Sustainable Future

By Maheswari



Mandala garden



“Permaculture is about designing sustainable human settlements. It is a philosophy and an approach to land use, which weaves together microclimate, annual and perennial plants, animals, soils, water management, and human needs into intricately connected, productive communities.” ~Bill Mollison

In the mid-1970s, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren started developing ideas about stable agricultural systems on the southern Australian island state of Tasmania. This was a result of the danger of the rapidly growing use of industrial-agricultural methods. In their view, highly dependent on non renewable resources, these methods were additionally poisoning land and water, reducing biodiversity, and removing billions of tons of topsoil from previously fertile landscapes. A design approach called permaculture was their response and was first made public with the publication of their book *Permaculture One* in 1978. By the early 1980s, the concept had broadened from agricultural systems design towards sustainable human habitats. In 1997, Oliver Holmgren explained that the primary agenda of the permaculture movement is to assist people to become more self-reliant through the design and development of productive and sustainable gardens and farms.

“Permaculture uses the inherent qualities of plants and animals combined with the natural characteristics of landscapes and structures to produce a life-supporting system for city and country, using the smallest practical area.” “The aim is to create systems that are ecologically-sound and economically viable, which provide for their own needs, do not exploit or pollute, and are therefore sustainable in the long term.” ~Bill Mollison

What Bill Mollison describes is an integrated design system that’s modeled on nature. In a natural forest nobody digs and sows, plants and weeds, or sprays bugs. Those chores are taken care of by nature. The forest grows and feeds its inhabitants. Nature is the ultimate recycler. There is no such thing as “waste”. Everything is a resource.

And most importantly the natural forest is sustainable. It’s something that works in the long run, not something that is based on inputs that will eventually run out, not something that creates waste and problems that will eventually upset the system. Design is the keyword. In permaculture you learn how to observe nature and mimic this by placing the design elements together to enhance and sustain one another.

The beauty of permaculture it is that the design principles work everywhere, in every climate and on every scale. They can be applied to whole villages, a farm, a tiny backyard or a balcony garden.

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GreenFriends invites you to join us for our first Permaculture Classes in the Pacific Northwest. Netsah Zylinsky, a certified Permaculture instructor from Oak Harbor, will teach an “Introduction to Permaculture” class in Seattle and one in Port Townsend this spring.

The class will introduce participants to Permaculture, its definition and its principles. It will go over the ethics of the concept and demonstrate how its users observe and use the design to follow nature. Participants will learn what it is, how it could work for them, and how it is working for the planet. Netsah Zylinsky notes that her approach also included a Zen element, and that Permaculture design reflects a sense of harmony and abundance.

According to the Permaculture Institute, the design includes but is not limited to the principles and practices of sustainable development of soil, water, crop, forest, architectural, business and financial systems, domestic food and water security, community development and micro-banking. It can create self-sustaining environment in situations as different as on a large tract of land or a small urban setting.

The development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient.

PERMACULTURE CLASS

GreenFriends is happy to announce our first Permaculture Class in the Pacific Northwest. Netsah Zylinsky, a certified Permaculture instructor from Oak Harbor, will teach an “Introduction to Permaculture” class in Seattle and in Port Townsend this spring.

- Permaculture principles and ethics
- Basic Permaculture design
- Permaculture strategies for the Pacific Northwest
- How to get started and implement Permaculture design and sustainable living
- How to create a self-sustaining environment in an urban or rural setting

Seattle: March 23, 9-5pm, Mechas’ home in Bellevue, WA

Port Townsend: April 13, 10-6pm, Vandy’s home in Port Townsend, WA

Cost: sliding scale \$65-\$75. Price includes a vegetarian lunch.

Registration:<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/view-form?fromEmail=true&formkey=dDcxUlctSzhxWjU0bH-d4aFVUZEZLakE6MQ>

Register now! Class size is limited and Permaculture classes fill up fast. This class is open to the public, so invite your friends.

TerraCycle

TerraCycle is an organization whose purpose is to eliminate the idea of waste. They collect previously non-recyclable or hard-to-recycle waste and turn it into a wide variety of products.

TerraCycle is now recycling cigarette butts!!!! That means that the butts we collect can now be kept out of the landfill and turned into products such as plastic pallets.

Please bring cigarette butts you collect to Seattle satsang and give to Karuna or Visala. Those of you in other areas might want to open a TerraCycle account in your own area.

U.S. TerraCycle www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/
Canadian TerraCycle <http://www.terracycle.ca/en-CA/>

composting class



Eager class participants listen and explore as Maryellen, Master Soil Builder & Composter from the Seattle Tilth, explains the different micro-organisms found in a worm bin.

Look for a full report about the composting class in the next newsletter.