

## Litter Stories and Reflections-cont.

### From Skya:

I'm reading the book *Garbage Land*, and I think everyone who does this work would get a kick out of reading it, as it is very reader-friendly.

[From Amazon.com: "Out of sight, out of mind ... into our trash cans go dead batteries, dirty diapers, bygone burritos, broken toys, tattered socks, eight-track cassettes, scratched CDs, banana peels.... But where do these things go next? In a country that consumes and then casts off more and more, what actually happens to the things we throw away? In *Garbage Land*, acclaimed science writer Elizabeth Royte leads us on the wild adventure that begins once our trash hits the bottom of the can." [http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_c\\_0\\_11?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=gabageland&srefix=gabageland%2Caps%2C390](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_c_0_11?url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=gabageland&srefix=gabageland%2Caps%2C390)]

### From Shawn in Seattle:

Today I bumped into a dumpster diver in the alley early in the morning when I was doing my litter/butt pickup. We both wore grubs and had bags and the metallic picker-uppers. I didn't have my temporary dentures in and I was unshaven. He evidently felt a kinship to me and I felt a little 'funny' about the similarities between us. Anyway he asked me if I had found anything good today. I told him not today but that at times I do. He then gave me the scoop as to where some target-rich areas are.

## PNW Green Friends Forest Restoration Update by Ananya



A few of Amma's PNW GreenFriends ventured forth on Saturday, August 17, to participate in a habitat restoration work party at Warren G. Magnuson Park in northeast Seattle. The natural areas of this urban park are undergoing extensive restoration efforts.

Amma's GreenFriends volunteers worked in an area of the park that is called the "Forest Remnant Zone." This zone is a serene natural area that has been undergoing restoration for about 6 years. The area has been planted with many native plants which now need to be tended to in order to prevent invasive species from regaining a stronghold.

Our main task for the day was to remove the invasive species of Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) from a section of the forest remnant. Our knowledgeable volunteer host, Tom, provided us with instructions, tools, and gloves. He taught us the technique for removing the Himalayan Blackberry

roots with a small hand tool.

One of the most important aspects of our task was to distinguish the Himalayan Blackberry from the beautiful, native Trailing Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*). The native species is already making a strong comeback in the area. It has lovely greenish-blue

# PNW Green Friends Forest Restoration Update -cont

stems and falls gracefully across the ground in a trailing manner. As many in the Pacific Northwest know, the Himalayan Blackberry has an aggressive upright growth habit with large thorn covered stems.

During our break, Tom served us cookies and gave us an informative tour of the forest remnant. He told us about the history of the park and of the ongoing native habitat restoration efforts. As we walked under the forest canopy, Tom pointed out and helped us to identify the native species of plants that are now growing in the area.

We were so moved by the peaceful beauty of this little forest remnant that we decided that the Amma's GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project will "adopt" the Forest Remnant Zone as a place to return to and work in on a regular basis. We will work in this area every other month on the third Saturday of the month. The next work party that we will attend will be on Saturday, October 19, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Please join us in



Trailing Blackberry



Himalayan Blackberry

serving Amma in this way. We would love to have you participate in the work party. If you have any questions related to native plant restoration and the Forest Remnant Zone at Warren G. Magnuson Park, please e-mail [ammasananya@comcast.net](mailto:ammasananya@comcast.net).

## Notice from GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration Project

GreenFriends Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration is in the process of planning the September work party. We will most likely \*not\* be doing the Beacon Hill Food Forest site as originally planned, but rather something closer to the center of town. An email announcement with time, date and place will be coming soon!

# Culinary Herbs

## by Maheswari



Are you wondering how to harvest and what to do with all of the herbs you grew in the garden this year? I hope these helpful hints inspire you to use those tasty herbs during the cold Seattle winters.

Although you can use herbs as food, medicine, and body products I am going to focus this article on the harvesting and uses of culinary herbs.

Herbs generally consist of fresh or dried leaves and they tend to have a mild flavor. This distinguishes them from spices which are usually seeds, roots, fruits, flowers and bark that tend to have a stronger, pungent flavor. Of course, there may be times when culinary herbs can also have a stronger flavor, as with the herb thyme.

The best time to harvest your herbs is in the morning after the morning dew has dried. You will need garden clippers or sharp scissors, a basket, and some rubber bands. If you are harvesting more than one herb I suggest having some small towels to separate the different herbs before putting them in bunches.



Plants with woody stems can be harvested any time, al-



though your biggest harvest will most likely be during the summer months. These herbs are very forgiving and not very affected by the way they are pruned. Herbs, such as marjoram, savory, French tarragon, oregano, rosemary, sage and mint will grow new stems just below where they are the cut. This is also a good time to shape the plant and remove damaged growth.

It is best to harvest tender herbs such as, French tarragon, cilantro, and basil before the first cold snap. These herbs favor a little more attention to how and when they are cut. Basil and Cilantro should be cut at least four to six leaves above the ground to allow for re-growth and a subsequent crop, unless the weather is getting cooler, in which case you can harvest the entire plant.

Depending on where you plant parsley, you may or may not lose it during the cold months. Mine is on the back deck and I usually pick fresh parsley year round.



After the herbs are harvested, take several branches and wrap a rubber band around them. Hang the herb bouquets in a cool, well-ventilated area away from direct sunlight, on hooks made by opening up a paper clip in the shape of an "s". Do not make the herb bunches too thick or they will mold in the middle. Another method of drying herbs is to lay them on a flat basket. I have several large, shallow, flat baskets that I use to dry different herbs. The baskets allow air to flow and help with the drying process.

## Culinary Herbs-cont.

Once the herbs are dried I remove the leaves and put them in glass jars, which I have labeled and stored in my pantry.

### A few more specifics:

**Rosemary** - Can be harvested year-round. Cut 4-inch pieces from the tips of the branches, never removing more than 20% of the growth at one time.

**Thyme** - Harvest the entire plant by cutting it back to 2 inches above ground in midsummer and, again, at the end of the season.

**Mint** - can be harvested almost as soon as it comes up in the spring. Young, tender leaves and stems are the best. It usually can be harvested year round.

**Tarragon** - Harvest until leaves turn yellow in the fall.

**Dill** - Harvest seeds as soon as seed heads are brown and dry.

**Chives** - Cut leaves 2 inches above the ground.

**Thyme**- Mounding Thyme, English, Lemon and Lime Thyme, requires special care. If you shear the whole plant it may die. Always leave at least 20% of the plant unpruned. (Creeping Thyme doesn't need this special treatment).



### FAVORITE RECIPES

Unfortunately for my friends I am not a cook who weighs and measures. Instead I pinch and taste and pinch and taste again. I add a little at a time until it is just right for my palette, which usually works for me and my guests. I will try my best to share some of the ways I use culinary herbs and I hope you can enjoy them just the same.

You can use either dried or fresh herbs. The rule is, if it is fresh, you use more; and, if it is dry, you use less.

**Wake me up Slowly** - Green tea with herbs

Green tea leaves – I love Morning Dew from the Kuan Yin Tea

shop in Wallingford,

I add lemon verbena, peppermint, lemongrass or a combination to my morning cup of tea.



### Refreshing Peppermint Ice Tea

Steep a bunch of peppermint leaves in hot water add lemon, sweetener and ice.

### Herbal tea apothecary

Choose one two or three herbs. You can use equal parts or more of one than other. Put them in a pot or a cup and steep them in some hot water, strain and enjoy. Let your inner alchemist blossom and feed your creativity with a signature cup of tea. Here are some of my wild and wacky combinations:

Basil and lemongrass

Lemon verbena and chamomile

Oregano and lemon balm (light on the oregano),

Peppermint, lemon balm and rosehips

Lemon verbena and roses

Chamomile, fennel and lemon

Ginger, lemon and oregano

You get the idea...

### Mi Bella Pasta

Mix together three parts of basil, one part rosemary, two parts oregano, and one part thyme.

Add the mix to a can of diced or fresh tomatoes.

Add a drizzle of olive oil and one to three cloves of garlic.

Add salt and pepper to taste.

Let it slowly simmer, allowing the fragrant herbs to waft throughout your kitchen.

Cook your favorite pasta and mix in the sauce....mmmm

### Peachy Fruit Garnish

Line a baking tray with parchment paper.

## Culinary Herbs-cont.

Thickly slice peaches and place them on the baking tray.  
In a bowl mix some chopped tarragon and basil with honey and olive oil.

Spread this on top of the peaches.

Sprinkle lightly with sea salt.

Grill in the oven until slightly brown and caramelized.

Serve with vanilla ice cream or as a garnish on a main dish with poultry, fish or tofu.

**My Momma's Garnish** – This is great over a bowl of beans or as an addition to a Mexican meal

Fresh diced tomatoes

Chopped cilantro

Onions

A wonderful recipe for the surplus zucchini's!

### Healthy Vegan Chocolate Brownies

#### Ingredients

1/2 cup applesauce

2 small or medium bananas mashed

1 1/2 cup sugar

2 tsp. vanilla extract

1/2 cup cocoa powder

1 1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp salt

2 cups finely shredded zucchini

2 cups all purpose flour

1/2 cup walnut pieces

#### Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour an 9x13 inch baking pan. In a large bowl, mix together the applesauce, mashed bananas and sugar. Add vanilla and cocoa and mix together. Then add baking soda, salt, and zucchini and mix together. Add flour and walnuts and mix together. Spread evenly into a prepared pan. Bake for 25 minutes until brownies spring back when gently touched.

**Your garden is your mixing bowl.**

**Get creative and spice it up!**

## Deck Garden Bliss

Aaron's deck is about a 10'x4' space. It faces south and is enclosed on three sides. He decided to plant some vegetables, herbs and flowers this year in various size pots. Needless to say his plants are beautiful and abundant. He and the plants enjoy the warmth of the sunshine with a full view of Mt. Ranier. As someone who loves to cook gourmet meals Aaron looks forward to picking from the bounty of herbs and vegetables that are just a few steps away from his kitchen. Enjoy the photos and remember there is no space too small to grow a few herbs, vegetables and even a small fruit tree!



# Abundance from the Garden

by Karuna



If you have a garden at home then you are likely to have an abundance of produce. I know I sure do. In addition to simply steaming a lot of vegetables and giving many away, I've been on the lookout for recipes and web sites to give me some new ideas of what to do with them. I found an incredible recipe for canning Bread and Butter pickles at <http://sugarcrafter.net/2010/07/17/bread-butter-pickles/>. It uses a combination of cucumbers and summer squash. The pickles were easy to make and they taste wonderful. I have made 17 jars of them which are enough to last all year..... or at the rate I normally eat pickles there may be enough for the next 10 years..... and I still have cucumbers growing! Luckily I love these and so do my friends, so some of the jars now reside in other houses!



Another cucumber recipe I found is for cucumber gazpacho. So easy to make and so good! <http://zaikazabardast.com/2011/07/20/cucumbergazpacho/>

Zucchini and other types of summer squash are something else I had in abundance, or over abundance. I gave lots of them away and ate them twice a day for much of the summer.

A friend sent me a recipe for Mock Apple Pie <http://www.food.com/recipe/zucchini-mock-apple-pie-69270>. It was very tasty and really fooled people. I made it a second time and without thinking used cucumbers instead of zucchini. I certainly won't do that again. It was really weird! Yuck! But with the zucchini it was awesome.

Sri Lalita from Vashon sent me a jam recipe that she said was the best jam she ever has made, and it uses way less sugar than other jam recipes <http://www.nwedible.com/2012/08/how-to-make-pectin-free-jam.html>. She made Boysenberry Lime, Strawberry Rose, and Raspberry Currant jams so the potential combinations are endless! I haven't made it yet, but I'm going to Eastern Washington soon and plan to bring some fruit back from there and will try it when I return.

I will soon be looking for recipes for winter squash. Those I also have in massive quantity! The three trombonchini squash pictured here range from slightly less than two feet to five feet long!



## From Lin in Bellevue:

About a week ago I saw firsthand how gorgeous Karuna's vegetable garden is. When I dropped off a couple of big bags full of aluminum cans for recycling, she gave me a tour. The garden is lush and green; the plants are obviously healthy, and attractively interspersed with colorful blooming flowers. Karuna gave me some different types of cherry tomatoes to sample and, just before I left, handed me a trombochini squash to take home. It was a funny

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by Karuna



gourdy-feeling thing, soft sagey green in color. I went straight home to make lunch, which included steamed slices of half the squash. Wow! It was amazingly delicious... beautiful color, firm fine-grained texture, and an even nicer flavor than zucchini. A dash of butter and salt was all it needed. The other half got steamed for dinner. If I can find starter plants next year, like to plant some myself. ~Lin

[If you pick the trombonchini squash when they are small and green like the one below, they are similar to zucchini. Those are the ones Lin is talking about. If you let them grow, then they become very big winter squash like the ones in the pictures above. I purchased the trombonchini starts at the May Seattle Tilth sale! Karuna]

