

GreenFriends Australia

Living Consciously Project

Step 3: Preserve and Regenerate Forests

As a Global community we need to stop the destruction and preserve what is left of our Old Growth Forests, they have evolved complex ecosystems over thousands of years and cannot be replaced. Old growth forests around the world are still being destroyed at a rapid rate. These forests provide us with the air we need to live. As individuals we can make choices that help protect existing forests.

We can support sustainable forestry and eco friendly agricultural practices. When constructing new buildings we can use ecologically sound and recycled building materials. Both Urban and Rural landscapes can be regenerated by: - planting indigenous trees, removing introduced weeds and protecting remnant bush land. By being involved in these activities and educating others we can help unify communities with a common cause.

We need to raise awareness on the delicate complex structure of the earth's ecological systems and the importance of these systems in insuring the survival of our own race. Through practical activities we can help others experience the joy and beauty that can be found in nature and help develop greater respect and love for the natural world.

We wrote philosophies, built faiths, and took every kind of comfort from trees. They gave language to our existence as we put down roots, stretched our limbs, budded in infancy and were felled in old age. They were mute companions to our lives and worshipped beyond ourselves as the better part of balance and aspiration. They offered steadiness and long patience even as we failed in those. They were meeting points and sights for rough justice. They gave the idea and supplied the material for shelter. They offered an image of completion, which was an illusion, but it was enough. Theirs was a whisper in the wind to the human ear both tragic and hopeful. Civilisation grew from exploiting, destroying, venerating and looking back on them. Trees led us to ourselves and we stood against them trunk to trunk, arms upon branches, our thoughts tangled in the stars.

Roger McDonald, *The Tree in Changing Light* (155-156)

What's happening in GreenFriends Canberra:

- Join us for a beautiful **Eco-Meditation** on Monday the 18th of April at 6:00pm, Weston park.
- Get your hands dirty! We will be coming together with the wider Canberra Community for a day of **Tree Planting**, yummy food and entertainment for the Canberra Centenary Tree Planting. Sunday the 1st of May, Lower Cotter Catchment. Details to follow.

This is a lovely short video discussing GreenFriends USA as well as Amma's teachings on the environment and reforestation:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTM0GjxGYPY>

**The Greenpeace Australia Guide to buying
Good Wood:**

<http://www.goodwoodguide.org.au/resources.php?topic=1>

Resources explaining Good Wood, related issues & how to be a savvy consumer

Question: Are the forests an indispensable part of the earth?

Amma: Yes, very much so. Science is yet to understand the various benefits that the forests bestow on Nature. The Forests are part and parcel of the life on this planet. They are indispensable. They purify and prevent the overheating of the atmosphere, they keep the soil moist, they protect and preserve wildlife, etc.

In order to meet the necessities of life, it is not wrong to cut down trees and collect medicinal plants from the forests. But do not exploit and destroy the previous forests. Nature knows how to protect and take care of herself. At present we are exploiting Nature in the name of protection and preservation. Birds and animals live happily in the forest. Man alone is their greatest enemy. By destroying Nature, man has become his own enemy. He knows not that he is digging his own grave when he brings down his axe on the foot of a tree.

Man and Nature, (33)

Imagine a time-lapse film of the Earth taken from space. Play back the last 10,000 years sped up so that a millennium passes by every minute. For more than seven of the ten minutes, the screen displays what looks like a still photograph: the blue planet Earth, its lands swathed in a mantle of trees. Forests cover 34 percent of the land. Aside from the occasional flash of a wildfire, none of the natural changes in forest coat are perceptible. The Agricultural Revolution that transforms human existence in the film's first minute is invisible. After seven and a half minutes, the land around Athens and the tiny islands of the Aegean Sea lose their forest. This is the flowering of classical Greece. Little else changes. At nine minutes—1,000 years ago—the mantle grows threadbare in scattered parts of Europe, Central America, China and India. Then 12 seconds from the end, two centuries ago, the thinning spreads, leaving parts of Europe and China bare. Six seconds from the end, one century ago, eastern North America is deforested. This is the Industrial Revolution. Little else appears to have changed. Forests cover 32 percent of the land.

In the last three seconds—after 1950—the change accelerates explosively. Vast tracts of forest vanish from Japan, the Philippines, and the mainland of Southeast Asia, from most of Central America and the horn of Africa, from western North America and eastern South America, from the Indian subcontinent and sub-Saharan Africa. Fires rage in the Amazon basin where they never did before, set by ranchers and peasants. Central Europe's forests die, poisoned by the air and rain. Southeast Asia resembles a dog with mange. Malaysian Borneo appears shaved. In the final fractions of a second, the clearing spreads to Siberia and the Canadian north. Forests disappear so suddenly from so many places that it looks like a plague of locusts has descended on the planet.

The film freezes on the last frame. Trees cover 26 percent of the land. Three-fourths of the original forest area still bears some tree cover. But just 12 percent of the Earth's surface—one-third of the initial total—consists of intact forest ecosystems. The rest holds biologically impoverished stands of commercial timber and fragmented regrowth. This is the present: a globe profoundly altered by the workings—or failings—of the human economy.

Alan Thein Durning, *Saving the Forests: What Will It Take?*