



GreenFriends Australia Living Consciously Project

'It is high time to give serious thought to protecting Nature. The destruction of Nature is the same thing as the destruction of humanity. Trees, animals, birds, plants, forests, mountains, lakes and rivers—everything that exists in Nature—are in desperate need of our kindness, of the compassionate care and protection of man. If we protect them, they, in turn, will protect us.'

Amma (Man and Nature: 20)

A warm welcome to the newsletter for October-November! What a wonderful time of year for us to bring our attention to the natural world as we see it blossoming around us in spring. For this newsletter I have brought together Amma's teachings with other pieces of information, poetry and wisdom that I felt resonated with this theme, I hope it may help us to engage with this step!

At Amma's Feet, Kate

Step 1: Develop Reverence for Nature

Developing reverence, love and respect for the natural world is the most vital link to healing our planet. Through meditation in nature, offerings of prayer to the earth and gratitude for all we are given, we can reconnect and give back to that which sustains us. By accepting that we are not separate from Nature but part of Her and recognizing that it is the very earth herself that gives us life, we reestablish an earth-based consciousness by which we can lay the foundations for rebuilding a life in harmony with the natural world. This attitude needs to come from the core of our being and be reflected in all aspects of our culture.

For more details please see: http://www.ammaaustralia.org.au/Humanitarian/Amma_Greenfriends.htm#step1

Environmental news from India...

MAM ready to start cleaning efforts

2 October 2010

Amma (Mata Amritanandamayi Devi) announced that, as part of its environmental cleaning efforts, the Mata Amritanandamayi Math (MAM) is ready to start work immediately on constructing toilets and installing trash cans in government schools and along roads. Government schools that lack sufficient toilet facilities can apply to the MAM right away...

Read more at:

<http://www.amritapuri.org/10540/mam-ready.aum>

GreenFriends Events: Canberra

- 🌍 October 19th Satsang
- 🌍 November 28th Meditation and Picnic in Nature

For national events please see:

http://www.ammaaustralia.org.au/Humanitarian/Amma_Greenfriends.htm

Honour the sacred.
Honour the Earth, our Mother.
Honour the Elders.
Honour all with whom we share the Earth:-
Four-leggeds, two-leggeds, winged ones,
Swimmers, crawlers, plant and rock people.
Walk in balance and beauty.
~ Native American Elder ~

<http://www.unahi.org>

Events in Canberra that may be of interest to GreenFriends

- ❖ October 17 National Water Week (www.nationalwaterweek.org.au)
- ❖ October 20 The Great Green Debate at ANU
(http://billboard.anu.edu.au/event_view.asp?id=68596)
- ❖ October 21 'art + soul' series on ABC 1 at 8:30. A series about Indigenous Art and Artists. Part 3 of 3 (you may watch previous episodes on iview, see particularly episode 2 about connection to land).
- ❖ October 28 UNICEF National Day for Change (www.unicefdayforchange.org.au)
- ❖ November 8 National Recycling Week (<http://recyclingweek.planetark.org>)
- ❖ November 13 Broom clearing (18th year) at Cotter Hut
<http://www.canberrabushwalkingclub.org.au/program/index.html>
- ❖ November 27 Friends of the Pinnacle Guided Spring Walk
(<http://actlandcare.org.au/node/208>)

Question: What is the connection between spiritual practices and the protection of Nature?

Amma: Everything is pervaded by Consciousness. It is that Consciousness which sustains the world and all the creatures in it. To worship everything, seeing God in all, is what religion advises. Such an attitude teaches us to love nature. None of us would consciously injure our own body, because we know it would be painful. Similarly, we will feel the pain of other people to be our own when the realization dawns within us that everything is pervaded by one and the same Consciousness. Compassion will arise, and we will sincerely wish to help and protect all. In that state, we won't feel like plucking even a leaf unnecessarily. We will pick a flower only on the last day of its existence, before it falls from the stem. We will consider it as very harmful to the plant, and to Nature, if the flower is plucked on its very first day due to our greediness.

In days gone by, every house had a family shrine room. People used to grow flowers in the yard surrounding the house. Devoted care would be given to the garden. The flowers from those plants which were planted and grown with loving care by the family were offered to God during worship.

Whatever is provided by Nature, the very source of flowers and plants, should be lovingly returned to it. This is the symbolism behind the offering of flowers to God. It also helps to enhance our devotion to God. Worship performed with one-pointedness helps to diminish thoughts, and this in turn will cleanse and purify the mind.

(Man and Nature: 21-2).

Nature -- the Gentlest Mother is,
Impatient of no Child --
The feeblest -- or the waywardest --
Her Admonition mild --

In Forest -- and the Hill --
By Traveller -- be heard --
Restraining Rampant Squirrel --
Or too impetuous Bird --

How fair Her Conversation --
A Summer Afternoon --
Her Household -- Her Assembly --
And when the Sun go down --

Her Voice among the Aisles
Incite the timid prayer
Of the minutest Cricket --
The most unworthy Flower --

When all the Children sleep --
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light Her lamps --
Then bending from the Sky --

With infinite Affection --
And infiniter Care --
Her Golden finger on Her lip --
Wills Silence -- Everywhere --

Emily Dickinson

http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/emily_dickinson/poems/6245.html

Spending Time in Nature Makes People Feel More Alive, Study Shows

ScienceDaily (June 4, 2010) — Feeling sluggish? The solution may require getting outside the box -- that big brick-and-mortar box called a building.

Being outside in nature makes people feel more alive, finds a series of studies published in the June 2010 issue of the *Journal of Environmental Psychology*. And that sense of increased vitality exists above and beyond the energizing effects of physical activity and social interaction that are often associated with our forays into the natural world, the studies show.

"Nature is fuel for the soul," says Richard Ryan, lead author and a professor of psychology at the University of Rochester. "Often when we feel depleted we reach for a cup of coffee, but research suggests a better way to get energized is to connect with nature," he says.

Read more at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/06/100603172219.htm>

Many native cultures around the world illustrate a profound reverence for nature in their cosmology. Within Australia, Indigenous people honour the landscape as the creation and manifestation of ancestors and describe this connection through dreaming stories.

'Once the ancestor spirits had created the world, they changed into trees, the stars, rocks, watering holes or other objects. These are the sacred places of Aboriginal culture and have special properties. Because the ancestors did not disappear at the end of the Dreaming, but remained in these sacred sites, the Dreaming is never-ending, linking the past and the present, the people and the land.'

'Our story is in the land ... it is written in those sacred places ... My children will look after those places, That's the law.' Bill Neidjie, Kakadu elder.

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/indigenous/dreamtime/>

Ways you might develop a reverence for nature...

Practice meditation in nature, or Amma's Eco-Meditation.

Incorporate a loving prayer for nature into your daily spiritual practice.

Take a walk and observe nature, considering the selfless way in which it nourishes all beings.

Cycle where you can and feel the presence of nature as you travel.

Cycling and walking routes in Canberra:

http://www.tams.act.gov.au/move/cycling/cycling_and_walking_map

Spend time during spring nurturing and connecting with the environment by gardening, planting native species, tulsai or vegetables.

"Nature is our first mother," Amma says. "She nurtures us throughout our lives. Our birth mother may allow us to sit on her lap for a couple of years, but Mother Nature patiently bears our weight our entire life. Just as a child is obligated to his birth mother, we should all feel an obligation and responsibility towards Mother Nature. If we forget this responsibility, it is equal to forgetting our own self. If we forget Nature, we will cease to exist, for to do so is to walk towards death."

From: <http://www.amritapuri.org/activity/nature>

