

Building Knowledge: Exploring a Future

∞ Permaculture ∞

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∞ Inspiration ∞

"By healing the land, we heal ourselves; and by healing ourselves we can see more clearly what the land needs to return to health"

- Mary Reynolds

We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

- Native American Proverb

To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.

- Author Unknown

∞ Empowerment ∞

Permaculture is the conscious creation of a regenerative & productive space that reflects the inherent balance, stability, & harmony of nature.

Ecosystem refers to the community of living organisms occupying a delineated environment. The relationships between the various organisms are as important as each individual organism / species in creating & perpetuating the ecosystem. In Permaculture, we create a "cultivated ecosystem" that honours the role of the human hand and challenges the concept that humans are inherently depletive to the land.

Forest Gardening is a method of producing food by replicating a woodland system – an incredibly stable & resilient wild system of organization. Productive plants are organized into a multi-tiered arrangement that maximizes solar gain, promotes cooperation amongst plants, increases immediate biodiversity, promotes a healthy soil food web, & creates a productive, resilient, & harmonious system. Each "layer" can produce crops useful to humans for food or medicine!

Living Soils are incredibly important to the regeneration of land that has been overburdened by conventional agriculture or human settlement. A living soil is one with a healthy population of microorganisms – bacteria, fungi, & other critters. A living soil is naturally fertile, supports robust plants, sequesters carbon, & stores water efficiently.

Principles of Permaculture

These overarching Principles of Permaculture are useful thinking tools that can be applied to a garden, a home, or even a community. Taken as thinking tools, they equip us to creatively reconsider & redesign our landscapes, livelihoods, & lifestyles to adapt to a future of energy descent.

Use Edges & Value the Marginal

'Don't think you're on the right path, just because it is well-beaten' - The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place.

These edges are often the most diverse & productive parts in the system. There is value in elements that only peripherally contribute to a function or system.

Use & Value Diversity

'Don't put all your eggs in one basket'

Diversity reduces vulnerability to a variety of possible threats to the overall health of the system & fosters a balance created through many elements interacting.

Use Small & Slow Solutions

'Slow & steady wins the race' - By slowly developing our system over time, we can make better use of local resources, produce more sustainable outcomes, & avoid burnout through introducing small manageable changes.

Integrate Rather than Segregate

'Many hands make light work' - In nature, we find the connections between things are as important as the things themselves. We can place elements in such a way that each serves the needs & accepts the products of other elements.

Design from Pattern to Details

'Learn to see the forest for the trees' - By recognizing useful patterns that emerge in wild, self-organizing systems, we can apply initial designs to our human system that work from the overarching pattern down to the detailed level.

***Adapted from David Holmgren's Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability**

Produce No Waste

'Waste not, want not' - By valuing & making use of all the resources that are available to us, nothing goes to waste. Close the energy loop.

Use & Value Renewable Resources

'Let nature take it's course' - We can make the best use of nature's abundance in order to reduce our consumptive behaviour & dependence on non-renewable resources.

Obtain A Yield

'You can't work on an empty stomach' - Ensure that you are getting truly useful rewards as part of the work you are doing & learn to appreciate the diversity of yields that can be obtained.

Apply Self-Regulation & Accept Feedback

'Our sins are visited on the children unto the seventh generation' - By applying self-regulation we can avoid the harsh consequences of external negative feedback from the environment. With knowledge of the myriad ecological crises facing the planet, can we successfully apply limits to our resource consumption?

Catch & Store Energy

'Make hay while the sun shines' - By developing methods to collect & store resources when they are abundant, we can increase their value to our system in times of need.

Observe & Interact

'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder' - The good design of a productive permaculture system depends on careful observation & thoughtful interactions with nature.

Creatively Use & Respond to Change

'Vision is not seeing things as they are, but as they will be' - We can make the most of our change by deliberately & creatively incorporating the inevitability of change into our systems. Adaptation will be required to respond to the large-scale changes of a future of energy descent.

