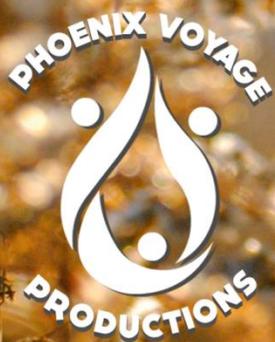


# AN INTRODUCTION TO PERMACULTURE



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Do you worry about the problems faced by humanity and the planet? Are you looking for practical solutions? Permaculture gives us the answers and shows us what we can all do - right now - to become part of the solution to the world's ills rather than part of the problem.

## What is Permaculture?



Permaculture is a design system and a philosophy. It shows us how to live ethically and sustainably on this planet by working with nature rather than fighting against it. Applied to food growing and more widely to all areas of life, the word permaculture was originally derived from the words 'permanent' and 'agriculture' but is now also often used to refer to 'permanent culture'. This design system, at its core, is based on three tenets: care for the planet, care for all humanity and the return of surplus to the system. Permaculture gives us a blueprint for growing food and for living in a way that allows us to act in accordance with these three core principles.

Permaculture was built on previous food growing systems and philosophies but the word was coined in Australia in the 1970s by David Holmgren and Bill Mollison, who developed a detailed design system that has since been hugely influential around the world. Many others now use permaculture's principles to create sustainable systems – large and small – in all climates and ecosystems. Permaculture has greened deserts, saved communities and has provided useful yield in even the most unpromising of areas.

*“Cultures throughout the world and throughout history that developed stable, sustainable relationships with nature did so through observation—a primary principle in permaculture.” — Juliana Birnbaum Fox*

## How to Apply Permaculture Principles in Your Garden:

Permaculture gives us hope for the future of our planet. Advancements happening around the world show that, though we've upset Mother Nature for some time, there is a way for us to turn things around. It is not too late for us to re-integrate with our surroundings. Each one of us can do our bit by using permaculture principles to our advantage as individuals and to strengthen our local communities.

Getting started is really easy. The first step is simply to observe. Consider the climate and microclimatic conditions where you live. Look at nature and see what grows well nearby. Why do those plants thrive? What wildlife lives nearby and how can you create a growing space that caters to

a degree for their needs as well as your own? A good design suited to where you live will be the best way to ensure a productive garden for you and your household or even the wider community.

Next, you need to consider what renewable resources are available to you. For example, you can store rainwater, take full advantage of the sun's energy and of the wind; you can put measures in place to protect and improve the soil, which is another important resource; you can compost green garden waste and household waste and return those nutrients to the soil. The key is to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible.

Making good use of the space in your garden and maximising yield is key to good permaculture in practice. Use every inch of your space productively and work to make the area as bio-diverse as possible. Layering plants over time and creatively utilizing the physical space available can help you make the most of your available resources.

An important key to remember is that people are part of your system, so while creating your garden, strive to keep the process of working the garden as effective and straight forward as possible. Arranging your garden in specific zones can help you determine how best to lay out your space for your benefit and everyone else involved.

Granted, there are bucket loads to learn about the specifics of applying permaculture in your garden, but the first step is as simple as looking out of your window, spending time in your outdoors space, and thinking about how to collaborate with nature to turn your garden into a lush and productive paradise.



*"All the world's problems can be solved in a garden."  
— Geoff Lawton*

## About the Author

### *Meet Elizabeth Waddington*

Elizabeth is a writer, passionate about getting the word out there about permaculture and what can be done to live more sustainably. She and her husband own a lush, green property in rural Fife, Scotland. This is where they experiment with various permaculture solutions, including a polytunnel, vegetable beds, a herb spiral, a wildlife pond, a mushroom patch, and a walled orchard where they keep chickens for eggs. In turn, she happily shares her gardening knowledge and experience on blogs for you to learn from.

