

Permaculture Cairns Inc. Established July, 2007

Web site: www.permaculturecairns.org.au

Permaculture Cairns News

Empowering communities with sustainable solutions

MAY 2013



MAY PUBLIC INFO & GENERAL MEETING NIGHT Tuesday 21stth

6:30pm for 7pm start.

Flexible Learning Centre, 90 Clarke street, Manunda

Clarke Street comes off Hoare on the Salvos Corner. Has wheel chair access.

If you can spare the time, come early (6.15) to help us set up tables and chairs.

Members please bring a plate of food to share when we have a break for dinner, or make a small donation towards the refreshment costs.

OOH and bring a friend, all welcome but !

Financial Members are free but un- financial members and non members pay \$5 for the info night and dinner

Guest Speaker: Dan Walton from Cairns Regional Council

Dan Walton, Councils Sustainability Officer spent his early years on a self-sufficient farm near Herberton before moving to Kuranda, the village in the rainforest for his high school years. Graduating from the University of Qld in 1996 with a Bachelor of Applied Science he has recently returned to the North after 15 years in Northern NSW where he worked for the local Council as their Sustainability Officer. Dan is passionate about on-ground delivery of urban sustainability projects and believes that collaboration is the key to making a real difference for planet, people and prosperity”

Dan’s topic of discussion will be the Councils new community education program called **Green Thumb – sustainable living for the tropics**. The program is all about getting a conversation going in the wider community on six sustainable living topics being, save energy, save water, reduce waste, food and shopping, active travel and backyard biodiversity.

Which just coincidentally coincides with the next topic

Principle 4 - Use & Value renewable resources & services.

We continue with the presentation of another of the 12 Principles of Permaculture as written by David Holmgren.

Tegan , Bruce and Leon are the organisers for the Monthly Meetings if you have something to add to the meetings please speak with one of these great people who all hold a Permaculture Design Certificate.

If you would like to know more about David Holmgren’s Principles and Practices of Permaculture see them at <http://permacultureprinciples.com>

News from the Management Committee

Permaculture Cairns is now a member of Lets so we can accept 50% Bartles and 50% Cash for workshop fees for the SKILLING WORKSHOPS SERIES.
We cannot accept Bartles for memberships fees.

For those that don't know what Bartles are, then you need to join LETS a local energy transfer system which keeps the energy and money within the local area. Once you have joined Lets you can trade with others in Lets for goods and services with no money changing hands or part money and part Bartels.

Sarah Jane has compiled and printed copies of the Notes from last years' Resilient Communities Workshops. The Notes are available for purchase at the cost of \$10. This is a very informative booklet, definitely worth having.

INTERNATIONAL PERMACULTURE DAY roundup

A busy day for the committee members and our wonderful volunteers, but we all enjoyed the great line up of Guest Speakers and Stallholders with their wares and information.

Andre Leu gave a very informative and thought provoking talk on the situation in Australia and the world of Organic Farming and also the problems being unearthed with Genetically Modified and Genetically Engineered experiments with our food. Andre is the President of the International Federation of the Organic Agriculture Movements and has made a submission to the Government Green paper on the National Food Plan. If you go online his submission is there to read. We should all be more aware of what the Government is thinking of doing with our food supply, especially the affect of GM and GE foods. In Australia there are no laws requiring the labelling of foods which have been Genetically Modified, this is a huge worry as a lot GM/GE food is imported from the US and is probably included in lots of items we buy at the supermarket. Eg: Corn, corn syrup, soy and products containing soy.

Kim Kruse brought us up to date with what is happening in the Agriculture nutrient area of growing food. The huge no of bio fertilizer companies now operating and the affect of chemical fertilizers on the soil and the microbes in the soil. He talked about what was happening in the area of soil rehabilitation with the help of the Regenag groups workshops. Lots of exciting things happening in Australia and South America.

Jane "Manyleaves" gave us a great talk on tropical food plants and had lots of plants to sell which attracted many people.

Yvonne Cunningham showed us a lot of slides of insects we should be encouraging into our gardens and lots of tips on growing in the tropics. Yvonne also had her just released book a revised edition of Tropical Food Gardening on sale at \$28, a great buy with lots of pictures and pointers for growing in the Tropics. (We will have some for sale at the meeting)

Wim de Jong talked about Pollination in the north and what Bees and other insects can do for you in the garden.

Jaide ran tours of the Permaculture Garden during the day with lots of people interested in find out how to grow food at home.

Len was there with his water saving Wicking Beds which attracted much attention.

Andy from Andy's Sheet metal was there with his mobile Chicken house and Raised bed rounds/oblongs and a new chicken manure fertiliser product.

Di from Enviromart with her table of informative phamplets.

I would very much like to thank our hard working Committee Members, Bruce, Tegan, Jaide and Robert and our many volunteers, Sara Jane for holding down the Welcome Table, David and Niki for cooking the local Jervoise organic free range beef sausages, Jo and Carmel and Jude and Sam for working most of the day in the kitchen, especially with all those onions to slice. And everyone who made those scrumptious cakes. Thank you all very much.

SKILLING WORKSHOP SERIES

Saturday 25th May 9am for 9.30 start Finish 12.30

KICKSTART YOUR GARDEN WITH JAIDE BURKITT

Don't know where to start, then this is the workshop for you. Jaide will explain where best to grow your vegetables. What you need to do to bring the soil up to scratch. What to plant and how to look after your garden.

COST \$40 includes morning tea. LETS MEMBERS - 50% Bartles will be accepted for this workshop, please supply name and number when registering

Registration is essential - To register email:-

workshops@permaculturecairns.org.au

Payment is required by the Thursday prior to the workshop day. Payment can be made in person at Cairns Penny Bank in Grafton Street or ONLINE to Permaculture Cairns Bank Account BSB 704-966 A/c 100009440. (Please use your Surname & Kickstart as the Reference), by MAIL TO PO Box 6535 CAIRNS, OR at Permaculture Cairns Meetings.

MORE workshops coming up in the Skilling Series.....

THE WATER GARDEN WITH ROBERT VIRGINIE

Saturday 8th June 9am for 9.30 start – Finish 12.30

**Want a pond, Rob will tell you what you can grow
and have in the pond. More details later**

Ferro Cement Construction With Bruce Zell

Saturday 15th June 9am for 9.30 start – Finish 12.30

**Ferro cement is a very useful way of building,
garden pots, seats, sculptures and even houses.
More details later**

SOME GOOD NEWS

**Pesticides are banned by EU to save bees – despite
British opposition.**

Quote from Vanessa Amaral-rogers from the specialist conservation organisation
Buglife, says:

“It was a close vote, but thanks to a massive mobilisation by AVAAZ members,
beekeepers, and others, we won! I have no doubt that the floods of phone calls and
emails to ministers, the actions in London, Brussels and Cologne and the giant
petition with 2.6 million signers made this result possible. Thanks you AVAAz, and
everyone who worked so hard to save bees!”

We did it says the AVAAZ Community – Europe just banned bee-killing pesticides!!
Mega corporations like Bayer threw everything they had at this, but people-power,
science and good governance came out on top.

Bees pollinate two thirds of all our food – so when scientists noticed that silently, they
were dying at a terrifying rate, AVAAZ swung into action and we kept on swinging
until we won. But the EU ban is only in place for 2 years pending further review.
And around the world bees continue to die from the pesticides which weaken and
confuse them, as well as from loss of habitat as we plough up and build over the
countryside. In Europe and across the world there's lots of work to do to ensure
sound science guides our farming and environmental policies. And we're just the
community for the job.

This article is a book review but has some very interesting info.

Why the Most Powerful Thing in the World is a Seed

By Abby Quillen

Janisse Ray celebrates the local, organic food movement but fears we're forgetting something elemental: the seeds. According to Ray, what is happening with our seeds is not pretty. Ninety-four percent of vintage open-pollinated fruit and vegetable varieties have vanished over the last century.

Ray begins *"The Seed Underground: A Growing Revolution to Save Food"* by explaining how we lost our seeds. Feeding ourselves has always been a burden for humans, she explains. "So when somebody came along and said, 'I'll do that cultivating for you. I'll save the seeds. You do something else,' most of us jumped at the chance to be free."

But, according to Ray, when the dwindling number of farmers who stayed on the land gave up on saving seeds and embraced hybridization, genetically modified organisms, and seed patents in order to make money, we became slaves to multinational corporations like Monsanto and Syngenta, which now control our food supply.

In 2007, 10 companies owned 67 percent of the seed market. These corporations control the playing field, because they influence the government regulators. They've been known to snatch up little-known varieties of seeds, patent them, and demand royalties from farmers whose ancestors have grown the crops for centuries. The result is that our seeds are disappearing, and we miss out on the exquisite tastes and smells of an enormous variety of fruits and vegetables. More alarmingly, "we strip our crops of the ability to adapt to change and we put the entire food supply at risk," Ray writes. "The more varieties we lose, the closer we slide to the tipping point of disaster."

However, *"The Seed Underground"* is not a grim story. It's a story about seeds, after all, which Ray calls "the most hopeful thing in the world." Moreover, it's a story about a handful of quirky, charismatic, "quiet, under-the-radar" revolutionaries, who harvest and stow seeds in the back of refrigerators and freezers across America. Sylvia Davatz, a Vermont gardener who advocates that local food movements produce and promote locally grown seeds, calls herself the Imelda Marcos of seeds, because she has a thousand varieties in her closet. Yanna Fishman, the so-called sweet-potato queen, toils over a wild garden in the highlands of western North Carolina, where she grows 40 varieties of sweet potatoes. Dave Cavagnaro, an Iowan photographer, teaches people to hand-pollinate squash with masking tape to keep vintage varieties pure.

Seeds, it turns out, don't just grow plants—they build stories, heritage, and history, which tend to be shared every time seeds pass from hand to hand. So it's fitting that Ray, an accomplished nature writer and activist, shares some of her own story in *"The Seed Underground."* When she was just a child, Ray got her first heirloom seeds from her grandmother—Jack beans, which resembled eyeballs. At 12 she set a brush fire trying to clear land for a garden. At 22 she joined Seed Savers Exchange.

Perhaps we learn the most about Ray from her present-day gardens at Red Earth, her Georgia farm. Ray writes that in the garden, she is "an animal with a hundred different senses and all of them are switched on." She grows crops like Fife Creek Cowhorn okra, Running Conch cowpea, and Green Glaze collard. Her barn is filled with drying seed heads; her kitchen is stinky with seeds fermenting. "Seeds proliferate in the freezer, in

my office, in the seed bank, in the garden shed—in jars, credit card envelopes, coffee cans, medicine bottles, recycled seed packets.”

Ray outlines the basics of seed saving in "The Seed Underground," but it is not a how-to book. It's a call to action, which often reads like a lyrical love letter to the land and to varieties of squash and peas most of us have never tasted. It's also a love letter to us, Ray's readers. "Even though I may not know you, I have fallen in love with you, you who understand that a relationship to the land is powerful," she writes.

The truth is, Janisse Ray is on a mission to turn you into a quiet, under-the-radar revolutionary, and if you read *The Seed Underground*, she just might succeed. At the very least, you will look at seeds—tiny, but vital to our survival—differently. "A seed makes itself. A seed doesn't need a geneticist or hybridist or publicist or matchmaker. But it needs help," she writes. "Sometimes it needs a moth or a wasp or a gust of wind. Sometimes it needs a farm and it needs a farmer. It needs a garden and a gardener. It needs you."

Abby Quillen wrote this article for [How Cooperatives Are Driving the New Economy](#), the Spring 2013 issue of YES! Magazine. Abby is a freelance writer in Eugene, Ore. She blogs at [newurbanhabitat.com](#). This article was published at NationofChange at: <http://www.nationofchange.org/why-most-powerful-thing-world-seed-1365173005>. All rights are reserved.

SOME BAD NEWS

Study Links Monsanto's Roundup to Autism, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's

By Genna Reed

A new [review](#) of hundreds of scientific studies surrounding glyphosate—the major component of [Monsanto's](#) Roundup herbicide—sheds light on its effects within the human body. The paper describes how all of these effects could work together, and with other variables, trigger health problems in humans, including debilitating diseases like gastrointestinal disorders, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

Glyphosate impairs the cytochrome P450 (CYP) gene pathway, which creates enzymes that help to form and also break down molecules in cells. There are myriad important CYP enzymes, including aromatase (the enzyme that converts androgen into estrogen) and 21-Hydroxylase, which creates cortisol (stress hormone) and aldosterone (regulates blood pressure). One function of these CYP enzymes is also to detoxify xenobiotics, which are foreign chemicals like drugs, carcinogens or pesticides. Glyphosate inhibits these CYP enzymes, which has rippling effects throughout our body.

Because the CYP pathway is essential for normal functioning of various systems in our bodies, any small change in its expression can lead to disruptions. For example, humans exposed to glyphosate have decreased levels of the amino acid tryptophan, which is necessary for active signaling of the neurotransmitter serotonin. Suppressed serotonin levels have been associated with weight gain, depression and Alzheimer's disease.

This paper does not claim to yield new scientific discoveries. Instead, it looks at older studies in a new light. Critics will say the links between glyphosate and health problems

made in this paper are purely correlational, but this work is important because it brings all of the possible health effects of glyphosate together and discusses what could happen: something the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Food and Drug Administration have failed to do.

Just as Monsanto **attempted to discredit** scientist Gilles-Eric Seralini's study on rats fed genetically engineered corn, the company called this peer-reviewed journal article "**another bogus study**" due to its "**bad science**." In a classic pot-calling-the-kettle-black scenario, what Monsanto doesn't mention is that the majority of research showing glyphosate's safety has been done by Monsanto itself, which could be called bad science as well due to its limited and biased nature.

The authors of the new review call for more independent research to validate their findings, stating that "glyphosate is likely to be pervasive in our food supply, and contrary to being essentially nontoxic, it may in fact be the most biologically disruptive chemical in our environment." If the body of independent research on **GE foods** and the herbicides used with them shows one thing, it is that there are unanswered questions begging for unbiased research. And while these questions remain unanswered, Americans have the **right to know** how their food was produced.

This article was published at NationofChange at: <http://www.nationofchange.org/study-links-monsanto-s-roundup-autism-parkinson-s-and-alzheimer-s-1367764115>. All rights are reserved.

Dont forget
Rotary Field Day, MAREEBA

29th and 30th May

INTERNATIONAL PERMACULTURE CONVERGENCE CUBA 2013

A Permaculture Design Course facilitated by internationally renowned teachers:
Ron berezan (CA), Brock Dolman (USA), Paulo Mellet (UK), Eric Toensmeier (USA) and Cuba's own
Roberto Perez Rivero.

A 3 day Conference with the theme "Island Permaculture, urban Permaculture and Permaculture and
Climate Change"

A 5 day Convergence

Visits to permaculture and sustainability sites in Havana and two provinces of Cuba to see examples
of Permaculture CUBA STYLE.

KEY EVENTS AND DATES

Pre IPC International PDC

11-24 November 2013 Havana, Cuba

Conference Dinner and Gala

24 November 2013

Havana, Cuba

International Permaculture conference

25 – 27 November 2013 Havana Cuba

Visit to Urban Permaculture sites
28 November 2013-04-08 Havana, Cuba

Convergence
29th November – 3 December, 2013
Los Cocos, Mayabeque, Cuba

Permaculture tours
From December 4th 2013

More Info - Web Site: <http://ipc11cuba.com>

In the Kitchen in the tropics

I havn't had a lot of time for the Kitchen this month, our International Permaculture Day seemed to take most of my spare time. Soon there will be loads of tomatoes, and Chinese cabbage to deal with, so more Tomato relish to make, and this year Kim Chee with the Chinese cabbage. One thing I did have was some shitake and golden oyster mushrooms for breakfast. I purchased a shitake log and a golden mushroom log from Fungi.net.au about two to three weeks ago and they produced about half a kilo in the first flush. They tell me after a spell they will do this a few more times.

May in the Tropical Garden

The cool season vegetable garden is going well, lots of tomatoes on the bushes, Chinese Cabbage starting to heart up, Chinese Broccoli, Kale, lots of Parsley, Rocket, and baby Coriander. Now is a great time to grow cool season vegetables, most things will grow at this time of the year. Keep seeding and planting weekly to ensure a continuous supply. Sharon, a friend, and I have just spent a couple of days in the Mareeba area preparing and planting a trial plot of Oriental Purple Garlic and the Russian or Elephant Garlic, which isn't really a garlic, but one of the Leek family with some garlic flavour. This will give us more information on growing garlic and the garlic leek in the dry tropics. On a huge learning curve at present.

Memberships are now way OVERDUE

If not paid at next meeting, the \$5 fee for non members will be charged at your next meeting attendance.

All memberships become due and payable on the 31st December each year. These fees help us to keep things rolling, for example, public liability insurance, stationery, equipment, garden club subscription, bank fees etc – only \$20 for Singles and \$30 for Households, unchanged since 2007.

AND our INSURANCE only covers people for FOUR visits to our meetings so if you have been to four meetings and have not become a financial member and intend to attend meetings you need to cover yourself and Permaculture Cairns by signing up as soon as possible.

You can pay at meetings, or online into our Permaculture Cairns Bank Account: BSB 704-966 A/c. 100009440 with your Surname as reference. And an email to the Acting Treasurer would be excellent - carollaing@hotmail.com, while Lania is away on holidays

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Lets start a PERMACULTURE MEMBERS CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT SECTION
for the bottom of the Newsletter, such as – **RESOURCES:** chooks/plants/manure/mulch etc
SERVICES: Permaculture Designers available to design your property. **SHARING:** Land sharing - Land for use on the tablelands for those living in Cairns
What do you think?????

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That's it for me, I hope to catch up with you at the meeting on Tuesday night.
Enjoy the wonderful weather we are having and good gardening.
Cheers and go lightly on the land.
Carol

Membership form coming up



Permaculture Cairns Membership Form

One year's membership fee - 1 Jan - 31 Dec:

- Household membership \$30
- Individual membership \$20

Name(s) of all applicant(s) & DOB if under 18yrs):

.....
.....
.....

Postal Address:

Postcode:

Phone(s):

Email:

Signature:

Payment may be made at Meetings, by Post to P.O. Box 6535 Cairns
Online Direct Deposit - Permaculture Cairns Account at Cairns Penny Bank in Grafton
Street. BSB 704-966 Account No. 100009440 please include your Surname as reference.

Office Paid Cash Date received Paid up to
Use only \$ ____ .00 Cheque __ / __ / __ Dec 20__

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Permaculture Cairns Public Meeting All Welcome

Third Tuesday of every month (except January). Doors open 6.30pm,
meeting starts at 7pm at: Flexible Learning Centre, 90-92 Clarke St.
(off Hoare St), Manunda

Enquiries

- President: Carol Laing carollaing@hotmail.com
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