

Permaculture Cairns Newsletter

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES WITH SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS FOR 10 YEARS



Care for the Earth, Care for people, Fair share the excess

Permaculture Cairns Incorporated Web Site: www.permaculturecairns.org.au

PERMACULTURE CAIRNS AUGUST MEETING

Tuesday 20TH AUGUST 6pm for a 6.30pm start

Venue: Endeavour Learning and Lifestyle Building
4 Warner Street Manunda

Members free, please bring some nibbles for cuppa break, non-members \$5
There will be Tropical Perennial Vegetable plants for sale...

AGENDA

Welcome to all and Info on upcoming local events.

Guest Speaker: Graeme Byrne, Horticulturalist will be talking gardening in the tropics with a question and answer session

Plants of the Month - Carol,

Member talk-

Practical demonstration - Cooking up a Stir fry with Tropical Perennial Green Vegetables, a fast cook & taste session. . Yujong Song will be demonstrating one of her recipes.

Anyone want to have a go, let me know at info@permaculturecairns.org.au???

Meeting closes 8.30pm now time for a chat, a cuppa and a snack with like-minded people

Gardening in the Tropics

Enjoy the good weather while it lasts. Cheers Carol

What to plant now

Tropical perennial Casava, Taro, Cocoyam, Ginger, Turmeric, Aibika, Arrowroot, Ceylon Spinach, Okinawa Spinach, Sambung Spinach, Brazilian Spinach, Kang kong, Leaf Ginseng, Sweet potato leaf, I am inclined to add Chicory and Watercress to this group as they both have been amazing, but will need some shade in summer.

Annual Greens, Wong bok, Bok choy, Pak choy, Silver beet, Rocket, loose leaf Lettuce, Kale, depends on how fast it gets hot but might be ok with a little shade.

Fruiting Plants. Cucumber, Melons, Pumpkin, Okra, Tomato, Capsicum, Egg Plant, Snake Beans, Sweet potatoes, Daikon radish, Radish

Herbs and Spices, Genovese Basil, Sweet Basil, Italian Basil, Thai Basil, Lemon Basil, Holy Basil, Garlic Chives, Chives, Bunching Shallots, Mexican Tarragon, Mexican Coriander, chilli, Shallots, Comfrey Rau Ram Or Vietnamese Mint, Anise Hyssop, Watercress, Parsley, Spring onions

Flowers for the birds and bees Cosmos Marigold, Dianthus, Sun jewels, Sunflower, Calendula, Gerbera, Pentas, Golden Candle, Zinnia, Basil All Sorts, Australian natives.



BIODYNAMICS FNQ Inc Field Day Information

Planning your seasonal food garden

Sunday 18th August 9.45am for 10am start to 3pm

Where: Tully Falls Road Ravenshoe, 8.4km from crossroads (turnoff from Kennedy Highway)

For more info see below

https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10156455552547688&set=p.10156455552547688&type=3&eid=ARCHg404Nbk_bu9FD7tfWtLRvECFFEBV-wjaU_gPW3-fDzwsqsmFo-RV-gxZmNOdanmsgIFi7N4nxmZR

THE CAIRNS INSTITUTE
Research in tropical societies



ALTAR Free Film Screening

Directed by Jumana Manna 2018 (66min)

WILD RELATIVES

Forced to relocate from Aleppo, Syria to the Lebanese Bekaa Valley due to the Syrian Revolution turned war, a research centre begins the labourious process of establishing a new crop from the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. The film is a succession of processes and observations of industrial and organic approaches to seed saving, climate change and biodiversity.

21 August 2019 | 6.30pm – 8.00pm | Cairns Institute D3-054

ORGANIC MOTION

SOCIOCRACY" FOUNDATIONS TRAINING Cairns August 23 to 25th



Heya Permaculture Cairns team,

We are flying Erin Young to Cairns in August to facilitate the Sociocracy Foundations Training and appreciate it if you could include this in the newsletter?

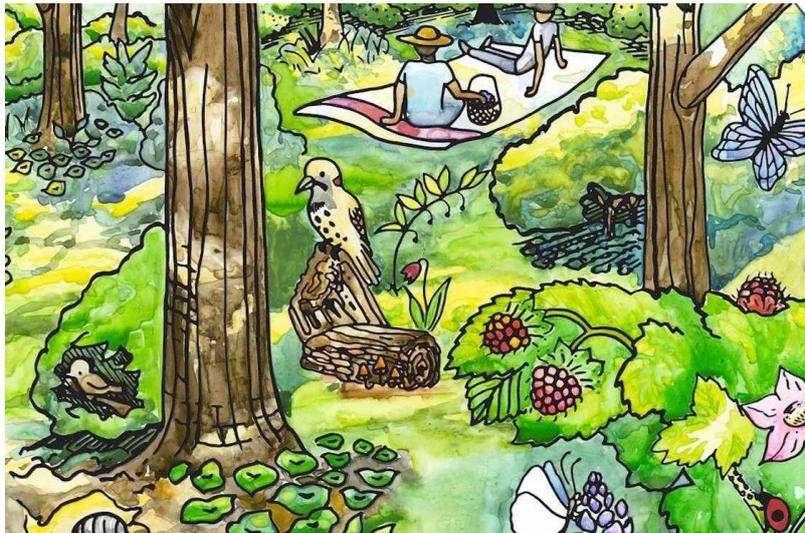
Here's the links for more info:

[Sociocracy Facebook Event](https://www.facebook.com/events/2297391230510335/) - <https://www.facebook.com/events/2297391230510335/>

[Organic Motion website booking event](https://organicmotion.com.au/events/sociocracy-foundations-training-cairns/) - <https://organicmotion.com.au/events/sociocracy-foundations-training-cairns/>

LEARNING ITEMS

This article is from the Permaculture Research Institute newsletter and there are some very interesting workshops coming up as well, better check it out.



10 (or More) Common Gardening Terms in Permaculture



Jonathon Engels 3 days ago

YouTube Video: [What are Annuals, Perennials, & Biennials?](#)

1. Perennial/Annual

Perennial plants are plants that live for at least three years, including trees, bulb flowers, vegetables, and shrubs. Annual plants are those that go through their entire life cycle in the span of one growing season. Biennial plants add one more monkey wrench to this equation in that they are plants that have life cycle of two years, typically growing leaves in the first and producing blooms and seeds in the second. Leeks, parsley, fennel, carrots, and swiss chard are all examples of biennial crops. The reason these terms are important to know within permaculture is that there is a specific focus on moving from gardens of largely

annual crops to gardens that include lots of perennial crops, such as fruit and nut trees, [perennial vegetables](#) (think rhubarb, asparagus, Jerusalem artichoke, Turkish rocket etc), and berry shrubs. There are many reasons why this is the case, but that's for a different article, like [this one](#).

2. Deciduous/Evergreen

Sticking with common plant terms that we are familiar with but might not be able to explain when questioned, deciduous and evergreen are generally associated with trees, but the terms apply to shrubs and vines and other plant life. Deciduous plants and trees go through a yearly cycle of dropping their leaves (typically when it gets cold or dry) and re-growing them (typically when it warms up and the rainy season starts). While evergreens do periodically shed leaves (or, often, needles), they manage to keep foliage throughout the year, hence the “ever” in evergreen.

Understanding these terms and these natural cycles is specifically important in permaculture because designs often rely on the foliage of deciduous trees or vines providing shade in the summertime, when they have leaves, but allowing sunshine and heat into a space in the winter, when they don't have leaves. This is often part of passive solar heating (and cooling), a term that can be explored more in [this article](#). On the other hand, a shade-tolerant evergreen hedge might be good for year-round insulation on polar walls, blocking the chilly polar winds from hitting the house directly.

YouTube Video: [Permaculture – Mono vs Poly](#)

3. Polyculture/Monoculture

With a bevy of impactful documentaries, such as [King Corn](#) and [Food, Inc.](#), monocultures have begun to get the bad rap that they deserve. Monoculture is growing a single crop in a designated agricultural area, and most mass-produced food, be it chicken or corn or sugar, comes from a monoculture system. When we see endless expanses of wheat or soy or grape vines or lemon trees, we are seeing monocultures. They were more or less developed to help the industrialised crop field be more easily sown, treated with biocides, and harvested.

Polyculture is when more than one crop is being grown in an area. This can be as little as two crops, but in permaculture, it more often involves several and easily up to dozens in the case of food forests. The purpose of polyculture in permaculture is that biodiversity establishes resilience within an ecosystem. Polycultures are usually carefully arranged groupings of plants that work together in productive relationships and are often referred to as guilds, which is yet another common gardening term to be aware of. Guilds can be food forests, or they can be simple groupings of [companion plants](#) like tomatoes, garlic, and basil.

4. Food Forest

Food forests are cultivated forests that are filled with productive, particularly food-producing, plants. Generally, food forests are working at many levels. There are (1) overstorey trees, such as pecans or apples, that grow vertically above everything. There are (2) understorey trees, say American pawpaws or elderberries, that fill in the vertical space beneath the overstorey canopy. There are (3) vines, maybe grape or vanilla or passionfruit, growing up the trees. (4) Shrubs, for example rosemary or lavender or hazelnuts, fill in the vertical space left beneath the understorey canopy. (5) Taller herbaceous plants, like fiddlehead fern, grow betwixt the shrubs. (6) Bulbous and tuberous plants, like hostas (plaintain lilies) or ramps, grow in open spots on the forest floor, and the forest soil that is exposed to sun would ideally be concealed with (7) groundcovers, such as chickweed or creeping thyme. Additionally, (8) mushrooms can be cultivated in

food forests to provide more food, and (9) animals, like chickens or ducks or turkeys, can be reared on the forest floor, feed off of the insects and windfall. Food forests are the ultimate in low-maintenance polyculture.

5. Nitrogen-Fixing Plants/Trees

Some flora, particularly legumes, have the ability to take nitrogen from the air and exchange it with bacteria in the soil, a trade which creates deposits of nitrogen in the ground. Because nitrogen is one of the main elements that helps plants grow, nitrogen-fixing plants are a popular all-natural means of fertilising plants.

For example, when food forests are first cultivated, the forest will be comprised overwhelmingly of nitrogen-fixing plants to support the productive plants that will eventually be the food forest. The nitrogen-fixing plants are periodically cut back and their biomass left on the forest floor to create healthy soil (This technique is called chop-and-drop, our next term). As the productive plants near maturity, the nitrogen-fixing plants are thinned away because their nitrogen deposits are no longer needed. Similarly, beans and peas are usually nitrogen-fixers and can be grown in garden beds to help revitalise the soil. Often these plants are grown in garden beds so that the entire plant is chopped back onto the soil to keep fertility levels high.

6. Chop-and-Drop

Chop-and-drop is a commonly used permaculture term that refers to cutting down plants or branches and simply letting the organic matter fall to the ground to act as a mulch and fertility builder. This technique is very commonly used with nitrogen-fixing plants because they'll release more nitrogen into the soil, at the root level, when cut above the ground. Furthermore, their branches and leaves provide a boost of nitrogen and organic material atop the soil as well. Chop-and-drop, however, can be used with other plants, too. Comfrey is an herbaceous plant that is highly respected for delivering trace minerals only available to plants with deep taproots to the other plants when comfrey leaves are allowed to rot atop the soil. Palm fronds can be chopped and dropped to add silica to the soil. Some plants are prized because they create a lot of biomass that adds regular doses of organic material to the topsoil.

7. Coppicing/Pollarding

Not to be confused with chop-and-drop mulching, [coppicing and pollarding](#) are methods of cutting trees down without killing them to harvest the wood. Coppicing is when the trees are cut down near the ground, and pollarding is when the cut is higher, often around head-level.

This is done with trees that will regenerate from the stumps to continually supply wood harvests for crafting, fuel, timber, and so on in the future. Often coppiced and pollarded trees will live longer than fully grown trees. This is one way of supplying renewable energy—firewood—in our permaculture systems. With firewood, we can heat our homes, heat water, and cook, activities that have come to rely on unsustainable power sources like fossil fuels and/or electricity.

8. Keyhole Bed

One of the more popular ways to design garden beds in permaculture is [the keyhole bed](#). In general, permaculture designs avoid the conventional row system that has become associated with gardens because the troughs between rows waste a lot of growing space. Instead, permaculture designs try to

maximise the square footage used for cultivating food and minimise the area devoted to footpaths.

Keyhole beds are one method of doing this.

A keyhole bed is most often circular, roughly two-plus metres across, with a single, thin entrance path that leads to the centre of the circle. From the centre, the inner half of the circle can be tended and harvested, and the outer edges of the circle can be cultivated from the outside of the circle. The path and centre space of the planting circle resembles a keyhole. Variations occur, such as putting a compost cage in the centre of the planting space so that it feeds the bed as it decomposes.

YouTube Video: [Lasagna Gardening](#)

9. No-Dig Gardens

No-dig garden beds are becoming popular in and out of permaculture circles, but understanding what they are and why they are used is important. No-dig garden beds are gardens that are created without digging or tilling the soil as is done conventionally. Instead, they are constructed by adding soil and organic matter atop what's already there. The main reason for doing this is to preserve the soil life that is doing the work of aerating, fertilising, and processing organic matter. Soil life, from bacteria to earthworms to groundhogs, help to keep soil naturally rich and textured.

One of the most popular methods for building a no-dig garden is called [sheet mulching, or lasagna gardening](#). This method includes stacking several layers of organic material, generally alternating between high nitrogen material (manure, grass clippings, coffee grounds, compost, etc) and high carbon material (cardboard boxes, straw, leaves, wood shavings, etc) This method can be planted in right away by opening up a small hole in the bed and adding soil there. Then, as the lasagna layers decompose, they leave behind a very rich raised bed garden. The trick after that is to add some new layers each year to continually reinvigorate the soil.

10. Niche

We often hear “niche” paired with “market”, with the phrase referring to recognising specialised products that fulfill the wishes of a very specific group of consumers. Permaculture cash crops are often centred on niche markets. Permaculture growers try to find specific crops that will fill voids in the local supply. In other words, rather than jumping into trying to compete with the multitude of corn growers, a permaculture farmer would grow market crops that aren't overabundant and often sold at higher prices, such as gourmet mushrooms or elephant garlic.

With that in mind, the term niche also functions in another way when referring to permaculture design: the ecological spaces that plants fill. When discussing the food forest earlier, it was much more than just trees. In reality, all sorts of other plants—vines, shrubs, groundcovers, etc—are growing in a forest, filling different niches.

This becomes particularly important in design because those plants we often refer to as weeds are just filling ecological niches. They aren't malicious or out to get us. They have simply found a spot with room to grow. If we don't want them to grow, we have to cultivate a plant that we do want to grow to fill the niche the unwanted plant was occupying.

I hope this has been helpful to a few folks who were confused about or unaware of some of these basic terms we use rather second-naturedly in permaculture talk. If it has been of some assistance, please do let us know in the comments below. I've got several other lists of terms—for energy, water-harvesting, design, ethics, etc—that could comprise similar articles.

Please PRINT – SIGN – SCAN and RETURN by email to
info@permaculturecairns.org.au.

Permaculture Cairns

Membership Form 2019

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

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Household membership \$30 | <input type="radio"/> | Renewing Member | <input type="radio"/> |
| <input type="radio"/> Individual membership \$20 | <input type="radio"/> | New Member | <input type="radio"/> |



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

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Payment may be made at Meetings, at Cairns Penny or Online Direct Deposit to Permaculture Cairns A/c at Cairns Penny in Grafton Street. BSB704-966 A/c No. 100009440 please include your Surname as reference.

If you have a Permaculture Design Certificate could you please complete the following survey.

YOUR NAME:.....

Who was the Course Presenter:.....

When did you do the Course:.....

Where did you do the Course:.....

Enquiries

President:	Carol Laing	info@permaculturecairns.org.au
Secretary:	Craig Phillipson	info@permaculturecairns.org.au
Treasurer:	Jenny McGrath	info@permaculturecairns.org.au
Newsletter	Carol Laing	newsletter@permaculturecairns.org.au
Website:		www.permaculturecairns.org.au

You can join online and pay into our account or join at our meetings, third Tuesday of the month.