

# PermacultureWest: sharing the permie news

BUNURU, FEBRUARY/MARCH 2011

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## TO CONTRIBUTE

The eNews is actively seeking articles. We welcome anything you'd like to share with the community, articles and event details.

### Themes for April/May Issue:

1. Obtain a yield and 2. Apply self-regulation and accept feedback.
3. Feature section of 'Designing your home for Catastrophe'

Please contributions send to

[enews@permaculturewest.org.au](mailto:enews@permaculturewest.org.au)  
or contact Rachel on 0411 478 424

## The buzz of new energy

Tash Levey, PAWA CoConvener

Welcome to our 2nd edition of PAWA's eNews 2011. I have to say I'm very excited to feel the buzz of new energy throughout the association. There are so many new faces and old faces that have made their way back home to be part of the next big move forward in all things Permaculture.

So what a year this looks to become, with one of the most exciting things I think to happen in WA for many years. I'm talking about the new batch of Permi teachers that have been released into the wild and eager to unleash their personal permaculture teachings to the world. Our one and only Dr. Ross Mars who has been at the forefront of permaculture teaching in WA is partially hanging up his tools and passing it onto the next generation of teachers. You'll find a swag of Introduction to all things Permaculture courses about to roll out and a couple of Permaculture Design Certificate (PDC) courses happening in Perth & down south. These are fantastic ways to meet great people, make solid connections in worthwhile circles and of course skill up for the future. So get cracking and sign up! (Of course I am slightly biased as Tod & I are running some of the previously mentioned intro & PDC's....but only slightly!)

On another note, I'd like to put a HUGE thank you out to Andy & Gill who are having a well deserved break from organizing with the PAWA committee. Andy was our master of all things web based and kept us together at the drop of a hat and Gill was our voice of all things reasonable, sensible and thoughtful while also being the secretary for our sometimes meandering yet fun meetings. So thanks guys, it's been great working with you both and let us know when you're ready for your well deserved Permablitz. That leads me to mention that the position of secretary is OPEN so if you'd like to help and have a blast at the same time, drop us an email or give us a call. We'd love to hear from YOU!

So that's my lot, time to get off the computer and into the garden.

happy growing, tash



## From the enews coordinator

Rachel Clifton-Simms

Welcome to the second edition of the Permaculture West enews. This issue is about observation and energy, using the permaculture design principals 1 and 2 as its central themes.

1. **Observe and Interact** *'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'*
2. **Capture and Store Energy** *'make hay while the sun shines'*

Both observation and energy take many forms and the wonderful set of contributions in this enews reflect this. Harry poignantly used a vetiver grass example to demonstrate how long range observation can save precious resources. In our seasonal permaculture section Charles shares observations from the insect life in his garden and highlights the key roles these critters play in developing sustainable permaculture systems. The Noongar calendar shares the observations of the traditional owners of the South West of WA, and hopefully inspires us all to carefully observe the seasonality in our own systems. Our permaculture in the community articles celebrate the energy people bring to these systems and the importance of community to capture and harness this energy. The Lockridge Community Garden is a wonderful example of how the energy of a community can be harnessed, do take up Tash's invitation and get involved! Bernie and Kendall provide inspiring examples of how observation and energy together in a permaculture context can make wonderful things happen, and David provides a scenario that begs for a community approach for a healthy future. Hopefully our inspiring ideas column will leave you with many new ways to observe, interact and so capture and store the energy of your community.

With the first two permaculture design principles in mind I invite all of you to share how you have come to permaculture and what it means to you and for the way you live. Your responses will enable the community to observe active permaculturalists and inspire people to interact with the association and the permaculture concept. With all this inspiration hopefully we will all catch, store and share some of the exciting permaculture energy that lives in you all. Below is short survey that covers some of this ground. Please answer with as much depth as you are comfortable, we'll share your answers in enews or on the website, and as you are all local permaculture superstars it would be great to have a photo next to your story – so please also send in your favourite head shot.

### Permaculture West eNews Survey

1. How did you first learn about Permaculture?
2. What is it about permaculture that inspires you?
3. Who is your Permaculture mentor or inspiration?
4. How would you describe permaculture to a stranger at a party (in 25 words or less)?
5. Describe a positive permaculture experience you have had?
6. How do you use permaculture design principles or ethics in your home or business life – can you share an example?
7. Which of the 12 permaculture design principles resonates most deeply with you and why?
8. How long have you been involved in PAWA?
9. What do you hope to get out of being part of PAWA?
10. What role do you see PAWA playing in WA?
11. In a permaculture context what do you see as your strongest skill, which area are you most comfortable with and which areas of permaculture do you struggle with?

**Thanks for taking the time to share your story!** Send responses to [enews@permaculturewest.org.au](mailto:enews@permaculturewest.org.au)

This editions header image comes from the lovely blog of Laurie Schneider. More of her photographs can be enjoyed at: <http://lauriesblog.lschneider.com/?m=200908>

The next issue of the Permaculture West enews will have a feature section on **'Designing your home for Catastrophe'**, compiled by experienced permaculturalist Warwick Rowell. Recent events in the East give us graphic reminders of how quickly and how devastating such catastrophes can be. Your contribution could be concerned with macro issues like location, massive construction at the building stage, zone analysis of water flows, or simple things you can do to insulate yourself from catastrophe where you live now. It might be about food supplies, rechargeable batteries, a back up generator... Your thoughts, considered articles, photos would be welcome. The last e-news had a survey of catastrophes undertaken by members of PAWA nearly twenty years ago. It might provide some ideas for an article for you. Send your material to [warwick.rowell@bigpond.com](mailto:warwick.rowell@bigpond.com), or mail it to him at Locked Bag 250, Dunsborough, 6281.

## Technology enabling Permaculture

Jason Nicholls, Tech capable permie

Jason Nicholls has come on board as the new tech guy for Permaculture West and he's making things happen (while he has the time!). The first thing is that we now have official email addresses [@permaculturewest.org.au](mailto:@permaculturewest.org.au) which is reflected in this newsletter. So please update your address books with the new addresses, although the old ones will still work for the moment.

The second thing is a revamp of the website which should be going live around the time this newsletter is sent out. To begin with the content is much the same as now, the change is more about enabling Permaculture West to easily update and expand the content and features. Note that initially the colour scheme and logo are *temporary* - it's just we needed something so we picked the standard Permie egg and went with green :) If you have ideas about what would be a good logo then please contact us as it's been an ongoing discussion with a few more discussions to come.



# PermacultureWest

*Permaculture Association of Western Australia*

With the new website comes the first of many cool new things, such as the ability to allow you to:

1) contribute content directly to the site, so for example if you want to write news articles or keep the Resource section up-to-date then please put your hand up!

2) become part of our *Community Blogs*. Some of you may already keep an online blog talking about Permie stuff and the idea is that we simply pull these separate blogs into the one place. That way anyone visiting our website can view what all Permie bloggers have been up to! If you want to be part of this then please contact Jason with the address of your blog.

Jason can be contacted at [tech@permaculturewest.org.au](mailto:tech@permaculturewest.org.au).

## The Permaculture West Library

Warwick Rowell

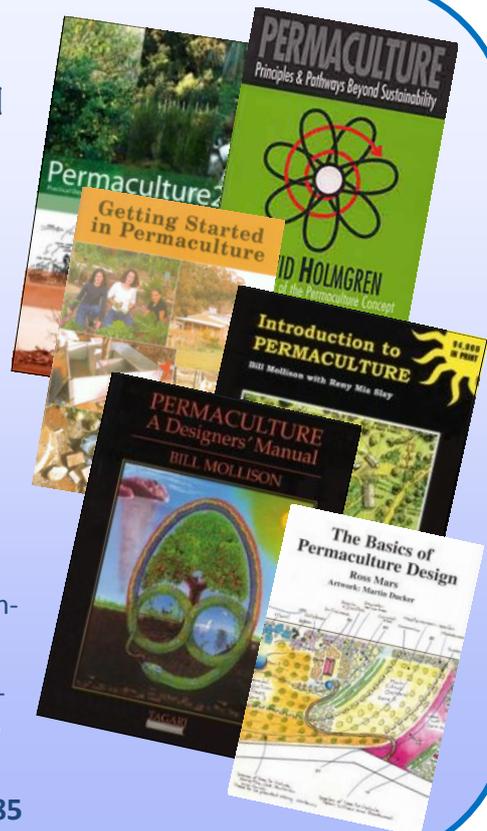
Our Permaculture library is at last together again! This is a serious resource that is wasted just sitting there. PAWA members are welcome to visit to consult this collection, amassed over thirty years. In some circumstances, you may be able borrow from it. One project scheduled for this year is an annotated bibliography.

Some snippets from the collection:

- The Albrecht Papers, all four books
- Complete collection of Christopher Alexander's works.
- All PAWA Magazines.
- All Permaculture Edge Magazines.
- All Land Management Society magazines and papers.
- Frank Sewell-Cooper's 1930s works on organics and gardening.

Interested in old copies of the PAWA magazine or the International Permaculture Journal? I have a number of duplicates to give away to anyone interested.

**To access the Library call Warwick on 0447 994 885**



## Pol-e-cultures II:

### *Why we can't afford not to wait --- Some reflections on Permaculture in East Timor.*

Harry Wykman, Travelling Permaculturalist

In Timór-Leste, most people cannot afford instant gardens. As a result, it is much easier to see the strategies of a Permaculture design come into fruition. I can't but think that this is a lesson in patience for we who can afford to continuously prop up broken systems by importing materials from outside.



Vetiver Grass



Cut clumps



Vetiver Mulch

These were some of my reflections on my return to Timór-Leste while in transit to the UK in December. In July and August of last year, Joshua Hobby (of Design to Produce) and I assisted with a garden project at a malnutrition clinic in Dili, Timór-Leste (see the Peacetreer Permaculture website for more details). As a part of the installation of a diversion swale, we planted a line of six stems of vetiver grass for soil stabilisation. Now six stems of vetiver are of rather limited use in holding the soil together on around 30 metres of swale but that is all we were able to gather from an erosion prevention project we came upon by chance. Six we had so six we planted.

About five months later those stems had become sizable clumps. With the Timorese gardeners, I cut them back severely, dug them up, divided them and planted the whole berm with each stem at about 20cm apart. That is, six stems yielded about 150 plantable stems of vetiver grass in five months. Rather than buy 150 plants, sun, soil and rain were allowed to provide their bounty to the plants who in turn yielded their habitual abundance. In another five or six months, there will be 150 clumps which will stabilise soil, provide habitat for beneficial insects and which can be regularly cut for use as mulch. The six five month old clumps yielded material to mulch two garden beds. 150 mature clumps will be able to thickly mulch around 50 garden beds. That is enough to mulch all the intensive garden beds in the garden twice a year. This vetiver grass example is one amongst many "small and slow solutions" which will ultimately and ongoingly build fertility in this garden.

It seems to me that too many of us do not have the patience to assemble and foster such stability. We import rather than plant our fertility. We cannot afford this any longer. We cannot afford not to wait for a slow but tremendously potent natural abundance to grow up around us. One of the most impoverished nations in the world cannot afford impatience. We from one of the wealthiest must learn when our money is no good.

Any correspondence will be welcomed:  
(harrybw@peacetreerpermaculture.com.au)  
and in addition to this forum, I will be

writing in more detail on my blog which can be found at <http://www.peacetreerpermaculture.com.au>.

Next time from a one bedroom flat in Oxford  
May your polycultures be over-yielding,

Harry  
Oxford, United Kingdom



# 'Lockridge Community Garden- An invitation to Participate.'

Tash Levey; Garden Coordinator at Lockridge Community Garden

Places are open to all people who would like to be part of a grass roots community garden. The mission for the garden is to become a valuable community hub where the focus of activity is on community connectedness & sustainable food production. We encourage you to register as a 'Friend of the Garden' and get involved. There is no membership fee or individual plot allocation, as the garden's focus is on connecting people and food garden education.

## The Garden's principles are:

- To operate the Garden as an open & inclusive community facility and activity.
- To be accountable to all involved through the observance of good governance & procedures.
- To operate the garden consistent with the ideals of permaculture & organic gardening.
- To operate the Garden as a food garden where education & empowerment are a priority.
- To operate in a manner that facilitates optimum community input & activities.

## What happens at the garden?

- Local volunteers work in the garden on planting, maintenance, plant care and harvesting and in the process make friends and learn new skills.
- On the first Sunday of each month\* there is a very popular free morning workshop on a wide variety of gardening related topics and is followed by a great value lunch menu from the pizza oven, freshly brewed coffee from the Garden Cart and much more...
- There are busy bee get together's every Wednesday & Thursday mornings from 9 am - 12 with a shared morning tea. So come along and join in. All are welcome.
- If you have time and energy but don't necessarily want to get your hands dirty, there are several volunteer roles that give much needed support to the running & promotion of the Garden. Helpers are needed now so call us to find out more, there's something for everyone.



## Free workshops

**Sunday 6th February 'Getting your garden ready for Autumn; what to do now'**

**Sunday 13th March 'The topic will be Garden to Plate, a harvested food workshop'**

## Contact details

The garden is located on the corner of Arbon Way & Diana Crescent, Lockridge.  
For more information on any of the above please contact **Tash Levey**; Garden Coordinator at  
lockridgecommunitygarden@gmail.com or call on 0414 230 571

See you there!

# CHOOKS IN COTTESLOE? WHAT THE...?

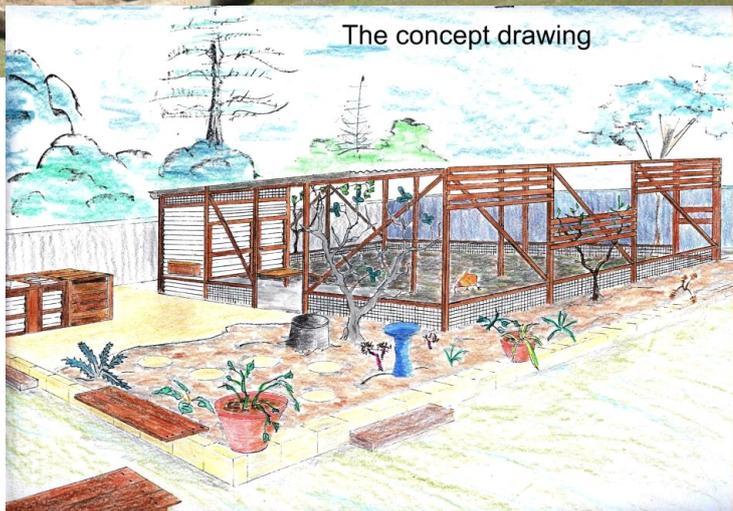
Bernie Elsner, Sustainable Alternatives

Well, yes believe or not there are some chooks in Cottesloe albeit living in rather fine surroundings if I do say so myself. Late last year I was contacted by the husband of a former PDC student and asked if I could design a backyard food environment with chickens, composting worms and of course food.

I was keen to see if indeed we could successfully have a chicken run in Cottesloe whilst meeting any shire regulations and guidelines. I downloaded the shire information and touched base with the appropriate health department officer the next day and was however not all that surprised to see that although it was possible to keep chooks the regulations seemed rather demanding. There were the typical points to adhere to such as **1.2m from any boundary, 15m from any dwelling** and **10m from any street** but a little further down the page and there it was in bold clear text.....**to be kept in a yard with an otherwise unobstructed area of at least 30m<sup>2</sup>** ! Shesh!

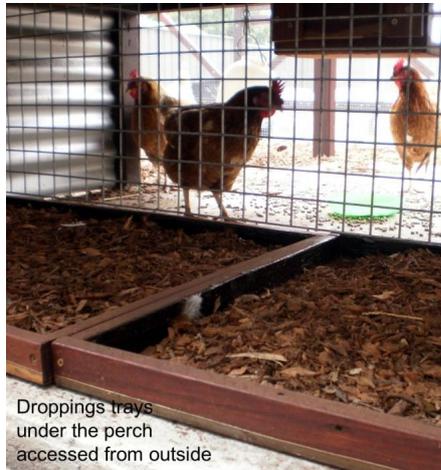
Could we Permie honestly expect folks to give up such an area (of prime real estate) to a few chooks? Surely the lap pool with outdoor alfresco or day bed courtyard thingy and bungalow will out vote a humble chook run and house?

Well my concerns were unfounded, as when I arrived on site and met the clients and listened to their needs and the lifestyle they wished to provide to their new growing family I knew that we could achieve such a result. As the husband said to me quite genuinely '*I would rather your chook house and compost bays in my backyard than have a Porsche in my driveway*'. Wow, now that was really something and so the design juices started to flow and I began to build the **Cottesloe Chook Bungalow and Compost Guild**.



The site was overgrown with winter weeds, a manic bird of paradise, old concrete slabs and several dozen house bricks. A planned water-wise lawn (Zoysia) was about to be installed by others so time was pressing to have the chook site prepared ready for me to commence construction over Christmas and New Year. As a Permie I asked for all the winter weeds to be piled up on my site for me so that I could make a super-sized compost pile that would be ready to spread in the planned food gardens when I arrive on site in a couple of months I also stacked the slabs and bricks to use later on in the design...the bird of paradise got the chop!

The chook house style was inspired by the rear neighbours skillion roof it reminded me of a beach shack and rather than contrast it I copied it. The chook house is raised 500mm off the ground and has a partly meshed floor under a perch for all droppings to fall through onto collection trays. Two igloo holes lead into the nesting boxes (the base is made from the back of an old filing cabinet) that can be accessed from outside to collect the eggs. The run is fully enclosed protecting the hens from intruders (cats & foxes) as well as keeping out crows and doves (flying rats) that steal feed.



Droppings trays under the perch accessed from outside



The girls surveying the new dwelling



Igloo holes to egg bay



Happy chook happy egg!



Gutter

Main gate

Egg bay

Drop tray access



Access to clean

Feeder

Cleaning tools

Chook's view

The structural timbers are all recycled Jarrah that I source and select myself and then dress down to be select grade. I use a linseed decking oil (3 coats) to preserve the timber and all in-ground timbers are treated with certified organic plant bitumen. The corrugated tin is also recycled only the mini-orb and batten timber is purchased either new or at salvage/liquidation auctions. The base of the house is a 100mm concrete slab with a fall towards to pen allowing easy cleaning and a strong and robust foundation. I have used aviary mesh on the project it is much stronger than chicken netting and has a higher grade of galvanising that will suit the close proximity to the coastal salty winds.

Folding lid to compost bay



Compost Bay with folding lid



High pressure hose to clean out pen



Some carpet on top of the worms to keep them cool works wonders



Storage and easy access underneath



As you approach the pen you pass the composting guild that has a large compost bay for bulk 'cooking' compost making, a recycled stainless steel laundry trough with a lid is a worm farm and a second recycled trough is a wash trough for veggies, hands and eggs too with the water dispersing to a nearby grape vine through a drain-coil pipe wrapped in geo-textile drainage cloth. This design also encourages the top of the guild to act as a potting and prep bench equally. A tap and hose mounted on the side assists in the cleaning requirements of the house and making of bulk composts. Two doors enclose the lower part of the trough allow for some storage of garden tools and or materials.



The idea is that a compost guild should be like our kitchen everything in immediate reach and all for a common result

Although this is a unique and very custom project with several more stages still to be created it is a strong indication that the demand to reclaim and invest in our homes for a sustainable return, to grow our food and medicines and own and manage our waste locally is definitely there.



Bernie making a point



A birds eye view of the entire 30m2 pen

Who says that you can't make it look bloody nice in the process as well? Bernie Elsner

The completed project



# CLIMATE CHANGE IN NATURE AND IN PERMACULTURE

David Brown

Climate is a global and a local factor that was always central to permaculture thinking. But now, permaculture must adapt to whatever climate change occurs and allow for more erratic weather patterns. In effect, this issue adds a further complexity to the design process and gives new meaning to the idea that permaculture design continues in an ongoing process, never completed.

Right is reproduced my poetic forecast in 1988, many years before the climate change issue became a fashionable media topic.

I wonder - Will the poetic forecasts in the final paragraph become literal? They don't have to. It depends on us. That is why human input is also significant to counter the effects – but more on that, below.

Even as early as writing that piece, it seemed to me that there were misleading beliefs, eg, an assumption of a predictable, linear change – a steadily rising temperature across the globe – with an obsessive reliance on the thermometer as the sole test for “global warming” (dubious term!). We must look at all factors and patterns across the board and

note the frequency at which freak weather events are occurring and records are being broken. If instead of three severe weather events per decade we experience three per year, things have changed and another record has been broken, even if no event is more severe than previously and no temperature is higher than before.

There is no scientific dispute that humans have changed the climate – by clearing forests, breaking down the Ozone Layer with CFCs, changing surface albedo, urbanisation, and so on. Probably the greenhouse effect is also a human induced cause but if so, it is not the ONLY human cause of change. Further, climate change is not the ONLY reason why we must move from a ‘carbon economy’. Rather it is YET ANOTHER reason to add to the long list of earlier reasons which stack up even without any climate change or greenhouse effect. Thankfully, the many diseases all require the same cure.

Australia's climate has always been somewhat erratic and unpredictable. To that extent we have been prepared for what lies ahead. Permaculture must anticipate and plan for change. We need flexible minds with a good memory. (Many people have already ‘forgotten’ that the recent flooding in Australia, followed years of crippling drought. That is the same pattern as occurred previously. Modern humans are such fickle amnesiacs, especially the city slickers dwellers!

It is not possible to predict the exact results of climate change by reasoning from first principles. For example, I have noticed that some unwatered fig trees are being very stressed, while species of a more rain forest origin, such as

## greenhouse blues

There is a general view that although we don't know the final outcome of the greenhouse effect, it will be a reliable pattern of some sort, where each region's climate will shift neatly from one type to another (presently existing) type. It is assumed that each region will be able to grow the plants appropriate to that other type — a sort of game of climatic, musical chairs. This is all wishful thinking, rather than established fact.

It is possible that the planet will move to a state of climatic dislocation in which “anywhere” can expect a constant extreme of unseasonal weather. Growing food would then be difficult, if not impossible. There are plants which will stand heavy frost, or humid heat, or extreme dry heat, or drought, or flooding, or lengthy semi-darkness, or intense light, or salinity, or sea spray, etc. However, very few if any, will stand all of these, especially if they all occur in the same month. Besides, it is not enough for plants to survive, they must produce. Plants bear within a narrower range of conditions than those under which they simply grow.

The greenhouse effect actually comes about in this way:

The self regulating processes of an organism (known as, “Mother Earth”) by which she has achieved relative homeostasis for aeons past, is attacked by an alien virus. (This parasite, known as, “homo sapiens”, or, “wise man”), multiplies to huge numbers, and colonises the whole of the Earth Organism in a short time. It afflicts her with a disease like severe influenza, but on a grand, cosmic scale.

In the early stages a few individual viruses “objectively” argue among themselves about whether the disease will cause her to get hotter or colder; but the answer is, both. When the sickness takes hold fully, she suffers stormy swings between high fever and cold sweats, to different parts of her body. These wild fluctuations are a natural defence process used by living organisms of many species to throw off an alien parasite or virus.

The unwanted, yet tenacious freeloaders, are finally expelled by Mother Earth, by means of starvation, drownings, heat stroke and other total disruptions to their living conditions. After millions of years of convalescence, she fully recovers.

David Brown (1989) *Western Permaculture Manual*, p 127 (Cornucopia Press, Australia) ISBN – 0 9593205 5 5

macadamias and bunya pines, are taking the dryer conditions in their stride (at least up till now!) – which is the opposite of what we might expect. That observation is not offered as a general rule applicable everywhere but rather as a warning against making dogmatic assumptions about the ecological consequences of climate change. What we do know is that natural systems all have a built in buffer to allow for change, for and calamities, so why should permaculture be different? In my very gloomy moments, I wonder if it is wise to eradicate feral olive trees (weeds) or whether these are the only trees that we will have here if the native plants die out.

Climate change has focused my thoughts on the human response, at individual, local and government levels. Australia's recent floods demonstrate the importance of human culture in dealing with nature's harsher moments. The main reason the Oz death toll is not much higher is because of a somewhat more open culture and reliable government than in many countries. In this regard, compare the radically different histories of calamities in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The different outcomes seem extraordinary if you remember that these two nations share the same Caribbean island. The former suffers catastrophic and cascading effects from Nature's hand while the latter manages much better, not so much because of Divine Favouritism as through the difference in their culture and style of government. So although we humans are subject to natural circumstances, the final outcomes are also determined by our culture.

Permaculture is about CULTURE and culture is always a shared thing. More than ever, we need a new paradigm in how we organise ourselves, to put permaculture back in community where it was always philosophically grounded. Community has often been a weak point, sometimes because it is falsely defined with the narrow ideas of communes in past times. That commune model was faulty in being presented as the only option to achieve community (when sometimes it worked to destroy it!).

To meet the physical climate change around us, we need a cultural climate change inside us. We need a change in cultural attitudes, starting with more appropriate language, eg, Why do we still use the word, *FINE*, to mean 'no rain'? *Fine* is good for places where the drizzle never stops but we go on using it in the middle of a drought. Even the word *drought* needs attention in Oz. Also, we could stop assuming that SW WA has a *Mediterranean* climate. Other people will think of other examples where our language leads us astray.

Permaculture offers a good direction – recommending that we observe, experiment, ponder, use cunning energy strategies, adopt local production & distribution & consumption, avoid a monolithic approach where all eggs are put in one basket, and so on. However, this is impossible for an individual in isolation (even for women with their fantastic multi-tasking skills!) especially in a situation where the ground is constantly shifting because of climate change and the many other huge problems bearing down on us. Individuals do not have the intellectual capacity to design the changes and adapt to unpredictable complexity, except in community with others. Some individuals are good at remembering the successes and failures of the past. Some are good at imagining the future. Some are better at noticing things, such as which plants are surviving/thriving. Some are good at inventing solutions to immediate difficulties. Some are good at performing practical tasks under the direction of non coercive leaders. Some sparkle and so are good in every way! (: It takes all sorts and no individual can singlehandedly do everything well.

This is nothing new because there was never a time in history when one person knew everything, did everything, overcame everything – specialisation is normal for humans, in community with other people specialising in other areas. The village blacksmith would probably join in the harvest when all hands were required on deck but generally he would shoe horses and do the other work within his expertise. A jack-of-all-trades, individual approach is even more irrational in the modern, complicated world. Also, in community, expressions of permaculture can live on beyond the lives of individuals. But let's not condemn individuals who in the past have 'done' permaculture in isolation. In many instances, nothing else was open to them, except to do nothing!

Therefore, I urge the next generation in permaculture to invent new ways to share more in a voluntary 'community with others'. The internet offers some benefits in this regard but it will never replace face to face contact as the basis to express and breathe life into community. Action is needed so many individuals can share work and time, share insights, share gardens, share chooks, share housing, share equipment, share buying power, share seeds, share stories, share projects, share produce, etc. Perhaps, a core group is needed to encourage, initiate and arrange such sharing, after defining how it should work, eg, someone could be a chook expert and Do Chooks across many places even if they have no place of their own.

This article is my brownstorming. I would like to hear the ideas of others as to how we can build informal, working, permaculture communities that are appropriate to these tricky times and how we can bring the best ideas to fruition. First the Theory and then the Practice! (and then the revision of the theory, and ... etc.).

David Brown

# A journey toward a sustainable wilderness classroom

Kendall Clifton-Short, permaculturalist and educator



When I left Perth for a residential teaching job in a school in remote Victoria I wasn't sure whether my permaculture skills would be of any use. My role was created specifically to assist with a four year redevelopment project, centred around the key educational themes of personal, community and environmental sustainability, so I knew the concepts of a permanent agricultural system would possibly appeal, but how those concepts would actually translate to a working farm was a mystery. Three years later, some of those questions are beginning to be answered as we embark on redesigning the agricultural precinct with a centre for sustainable design as the hub. I have been talking about permaculture loosely since I arrived, and our personal garden draws much from permaculture design but the concept was very foreign to most at the school (and to be honest, fairly alternative and perhaps a touch too hippy). But things are changing as staff learn more about it and one of the architects on the project recently taking a PDC and embarking on a personal journey to learn how architecture and permaculture can go together.



Having felt the agricultural precinct to be one of the last aspects of the redevelopment, we have had plenty of time to observe the site and watch how the weather, the students, the staff and the animals all interact with the space. Orientation works well being largely north facing, but a large elevation loss to the north and west presents some challenges. With over 1000mls falling on

the site annually, rainfall is not an issue but summers can still be long and dry with potential bush fire threat making water security an issue. Bower birds present plenty of challenges for the gardener trying to grow anything that is not netted and most of the edible tree crops currently growing fruit right as school is concluding for the year and finish about as we all come back to work!! Similarly, our labour force in the form of students and staff leave right as the summer crops are beginning to ripen and can come back from their holidays to dead plants (or this summer everything covered in powdery mildew because the summer has been so wet!!) Prevailing winds come from the south west and temperatures can vary from nights below zero to 40 degree days. Lizards enjoy some of the eggs our Isa Brown, Langshan Bantam and Araucana chickens lay, sheep will eat all the new shoots if a gate to the garden is inadvertently left open and mice are rife in the compost.



So, where to from here? If the slate is effectively blank how can we best bring together the ideas of many: architects constrained by a time line and a



budget, various teachers at the school who have different ideas about food production and closed waste management systems, the long serving farm manager who well knows the challenges provided by the school term and the associated influx and exodus of people, and the greater College community? How can we most effectively catch and store energy and utilise the natural features of the site so the design is efficient and user friendly? How can we best create a learning space that

is at the same time inspiring, relevant, transferrable, easy to use for those not experts in sustainable materials and design *and* leading the way in sustainability education? And how can we squeeze all the learning we would like into an already full curriculum?

So, as we apply principle 1: Observe and Interact, we are off to Leongatha this week to visit Rick and Naomi Coleman at the Southern Cross Permaculture Institute (<http://www.southerncrosspermaculture.com.au>). It is a very exciting process to be a part of and to contribute to the evolutionary journey of our wilderness “classroom”.

If you have found this article interesting, stay tuned for our progress in the next newsletter!



## PERTH BUGS -

### A BALANCE BETWEEN BUGGER ALL BUGS AND BUGGER ALL PLANTS

Charles Otway, Treasurer and Memberships – PermacultureWest

Garden bugs are permaculture in action, I guess one could think, *Observe and Interact* and *Use Small and Slow Solutions*, but to truly *Use and Value Diversity* it is nice to know what we are looking at and have some idea what they are up to. That’s not to say we immediately kill the bad bugs, but rather we can evaluate what might happen should their numbers greatly change.

Having strong host plants (i.e. hibiscus for aphids vs lady birds) that house these “bad bugs” to allow a continual food source for their predators is a very handy way to stop the excessive plagues we often see. Having a resident population of all bugs allows a moderating effect, so in valuing the diversity in both plants and animals in our garden we don’t put all our eggs in one basket and or have debilitating crop failures.

Given its Summer and I have a camera and a garden what better way to provide some useful information than head out and observe. Most pictures are from my garden in Innaloo.

### BEES

The humble feral/  
European bee, an  
unloved feral, but it  
is a lynch pin in  
modern ecology.  
Obvious to most  
but some gardeners



Blue Banded (Amegilla)  
Burrowing



Leafcutter Bee  
(Megachile)



Euro Honey Bee (Apis mellifera)

rarely see bees and are losing productivity because of it. Grow some sunflowers to bring them down from their flight paths and let plenty of herbs; basil, garlic chives, leeks, hyssop, borage etc flower to keep them coming back. You will also eventually get native bees with these herbs. Hyssop seems a favorite in my garden. Just in case you think it’s not worth the effort there are 1,500 species of native bees in Australia.....feed them. Consider having a hive in your garden or on your roof nothing beats homespun honey and hardworking local pollinators. There are lots of Apiarist clubs and co-op bee groups to share equipment and extraction costs. See more here - <http://www.aussiebee.com.au/beesinyourarea.htm>

## PERTH BUGS CONT.

### WASPS

I have more wasps in my backyard generally than bees. The paper wasps are hard at work gathering



Yellow Paper wasp  
(*Polistes dominulus*)



Common paper Wasp  
(*Polistes humilis synoecus*)



Spider wasp  
(*Cryptocheilus bicolor*)

all the caterpillars off the Kale and Broccoli. If you plant an early spring sacrificial crop of mustard (shop seed is fine) you will hopefully breed up a good amount of Cabbage Moth and other caterpillars this gets the wasp numbers up early. Once you see enough wasps and have some other crops to provide food you can pull out the sacrificial crop. Oh and put the sacrificial mustard in a spot where you want to treat for nematodes as mustard is meant to deter them.

Many of the wasps go unseen, small wasps are busy doing all sorts of jobs general parasiting some annoying garden insect. *Encarsia formosa* is a tiny wasp which parasitises whitefly larvae. Growing perennial kale always tend to carry a large population of Whitefly and without a crop brake it



Parasitic Braconid wasp



*Encarsia formosa*

can be difficult to control the buildup. *Encarsia formosa* was one of the first biocontrol agents developed for greenhouse use and is still the most common parasitoid in commercial production for whitefly control worldwide. See <http://manchilipmservices.com.au/beneficials-produced/> for some more information.

So while your'e being nice to bees be nice to these. Using nature to control nature is a hell of a lot easier than doing it yourself, as she has been evolving her techniques for a few more years than we have been around.

If you have a clear picture of an unknown bug you would like identified and added to the Perth Garden Bugs Section please let us know. Contact Charles on [charlesotway@hotmail.com](mailto:charlesotway@hotmail.com)

## "LOOKING A LONG WAY OVER THE FENCE."

Warwick Rowell

"What is at stake here is a model of government that began with Otto von Bismarck. It is a model in which the state supposedly serves the interests of the citizens. (Under the previous model, there were no citizens...just subjects who owed a duty of obedience to the sovereign...and in exchange received protection.) In Bismarck's model, citizens give up a portion of their output...and stand ready to protect the state with their lives. In return, the state gives them the right to participate (through elections etc)...provides protection from foreign states and domestic outlaws...and makes sure that their physical needs are taken care of.

This model seems to be headed for bankruptcy. The big question is: when the state is unable to provide the benefits it has promised...what will happen? Will the masses accept less? Or will they revolt? Or will a new model evolve...peacefully?" The Daily Reckoning.

(The principle of sector analysis – "what is coming/might come at you from what direction over the fence?")



# The Six Nyoongar Seasons

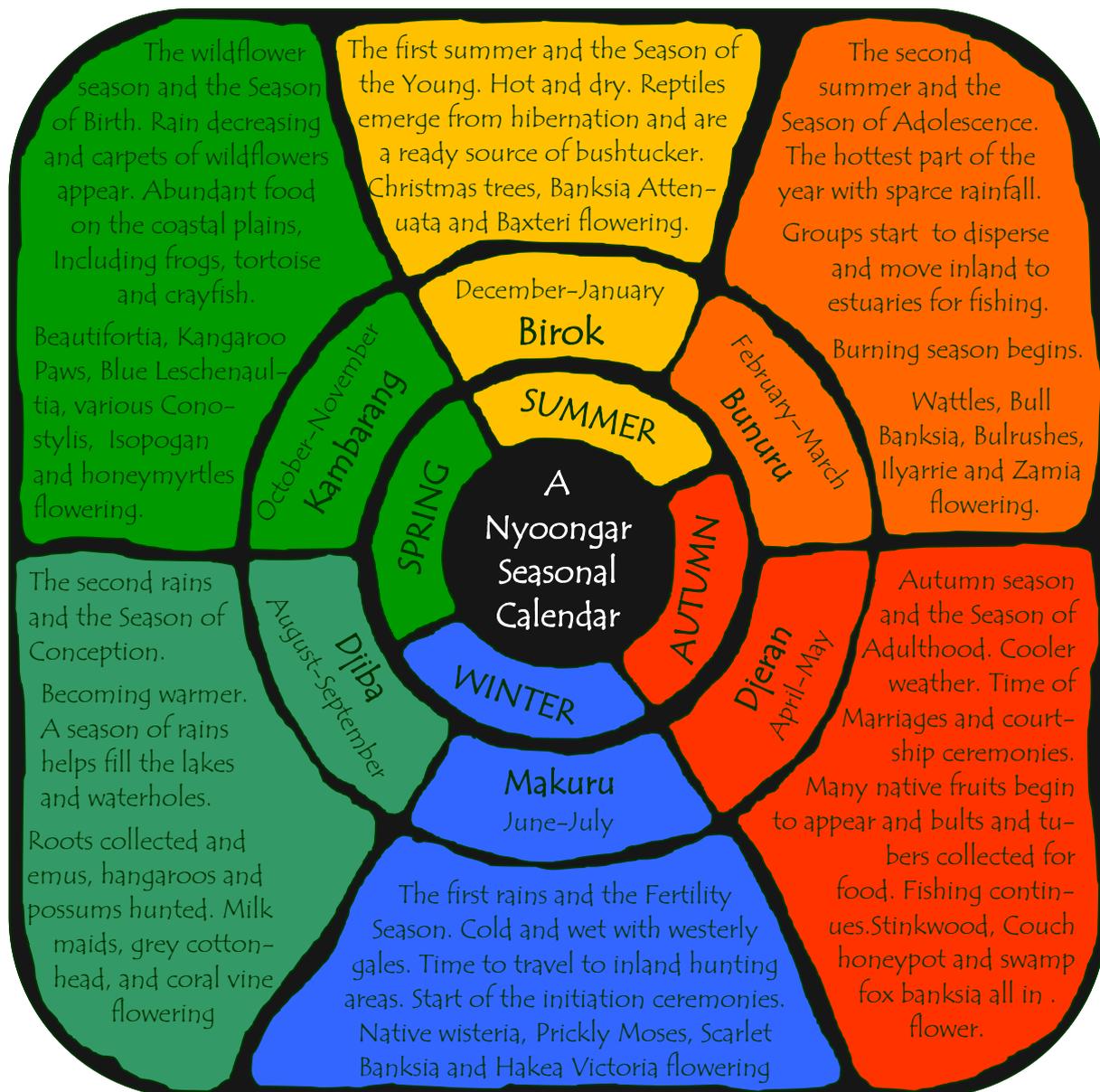
Rachel Clifton-Simms

*Wandju Wandju Nidja Nyoongar Boodjar* Translates as 'Welcome to Nyoongar Country'

The Nyoongar People are the traditional owners of the southwest of Western Australia and the owners and guardians of Nyoongar cultural and intellectual property. Over thousands of years the Nyoongar people developed an in-depth observation based understanding of the Western Australian environment and its many ecosystems. This understanding was woven into their culture, where people, animals, plants and seasons were all part of an interdependent system. The sophisticated land-management strategies practiced by the Nyoongar were underpinned by their understanding of the environment and their ability to read seasonal cues and thus know what approach was appropriate and when for sustainability.

The Nyoongar divided the year into six seasons each associated with moving to different habitats and feeding patterns based on seasonal foods. The Nyoongar seasons colour wheel illustrates how the Nyoongar calendar relates to the European model of four seasons. Even in Europe traditional nomad peoples use six seasons, using the summer and winter solstice as markers.

To move in harmony with the unique challenges of the WA environment, we too must observe and gently interact. To share an understanding of local seasonality and encourage observation, Permaculture West will publish an enews for each of the traditional six seasons.



## References:

<http://www.kaditj.com.au/web-data/Stationery/CulturalNotesSeasons.html>  
<http://noongarcountry.mysouthwest.com.au/The%20Noongar%20Story>  
<http://www.whalesandwildflowers.com.au/noongarseasons.htm>

Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Aboriginal Life Brochure, Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, West Perth, WA

## INSPIRING IDEAS

# **51 Ways to Spark a Commons Revolution**

**What you can do, alone and with others, to share life.**

*Jay Walljasper, extract from 'Yes Magazine', Oct 21, 2010*

### **Personal Life**

1. Challenge the myth that all problems have private, individual solutions.
2. Notice how many of life's pleasures exist outside the marketplace—gardening, fishing, conversing, playing music, playing ball, making love, watching sunsets, and much more.
3. Take time to enjoy what the commons offers. As the radical Brazilian educator Paulo Freire said, "We are bigger than our schedules."
4. Introduce the children in your life to the commons. Let them see you enjoying it, and working with others to sustain it.
5. Keep in mind that security and satisfaction are more easily acquired from friends than from money.
6. Become a mentor—officially or informally—to people of all ages. Be prepared to learn as much as you teach.
7. Think about living cooperatively with housemates.
8. Don't be afraid to ask for help.
9. Have some fun. The best reason to restore the commons is to enrich our lives.

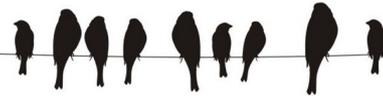
### **Community Life**

10. Put on a potluck. Throw a block party. Form a community choir, slow-food club, Friday night poker game, May Day festival, or any other excuse for socializing.
11. Walk, bike, or take transit when you can. It's good for the environment, and for you. You meet very few people while driving your car.
12. Treat commons spaces as if you own them (which, actually, you do). Keep an eye on the place. Tidy things up. Report problems or repair things yourself. Initiate improvement campaigns.
13. Offer a smile or greeting to people you pass. The commons begins with connecting—even in brief, spontaneous ways.
14. Get out of the house and spend some time on the stoop, the front yard, the street—anywhere you can join the river of life.
15. Create or designate a "town square" for your neighborhood—a park, playground, vacant lot, community center, coffee shop, or even a street corner—anywhere folks naturally want to gather.
16. Lobby for more public benches, water fountains, plazas, parks, sidewalks, bike trails, playgrounds, and other crucial commons infrastructure.
17. Conduct an inventory of local commons. Publicize your findings and suggest ways to celebrate and improve these community assets.
18. Organize your neighbors to stop crime and to defuse fear of crime, which can dampen community spirits more than crime itself.
19. Remember streets belong to people, not just automobiles. Drive cautiously and push for traffic calming and other improvements that remind motorists they are not kings of the road.

### **Money and the Economy**

20. Buy from local, independent businesses when possible. ([amiba.net](http://amiba.net), [livingeconomies.org](http://livingeconomies.org)).
21. Before buying something online, see if you can find it or order it locally. That keeps some of your money in the community.
22. Investigate how many things you now pay for you could get in more cooperative ways—check out DVDs at the library, quit the health club and form a morning jogging club, etc.
23. Start a neighborhood exchange to share everything from lawn mowers to child care and home repairs to vehicles.
24. Barter. Trade your skill in baking pies with someone who will fix your computer.
25. Look into creating a Time Dollars system ([timebanks.org](http://timebanks.org)) or locally-based currency. ([smallisbeautiful.org](http://smallisbeautiful.org)).
26. Organize a common security club. You are not on your own when it comes to economic woes. ([commonsecurityclubs.org](http://commonsecurityclubs.org))





27. Watch where your money goes. How do the businesses you patronize harm or help the commons?
28. Purchase fair trade, organic, and locally made goods from small producers as much as you can.

### **Social Change**

29. Oppose cutbacks in public assets like transit, schools, libraries, parks, social services, police and fire, and arts programs.
30. Support activists around the globe working for debt relief, environmental protection, human rights, worker rights, sustainable development, rights of indigenous people, and action on climate change.
31. Take every opportunity to talk with elected officials and local activists about the importance of protecting the commons. Do the same with citizens groups, nonprofit organizations, labor unions, professional societies, and business leaders.
32. Protest private profit from products created with research paid for by taxpayers. Demand that publicly-funded research data be available to everyone on the Internet.
33. Write letters to the editor about the commons, post on local websites, call in to talk radio, tell your friends.
34. Learn from everywhere. What can Germany teach us about health care? India about wellness? Africa about community solidarity? Indigenous nations about the commons itself? What bright ideas can we borrow from a nearby neighborhood or town?

### **Environment**

35. Pick up litter that is not yours.
36. Avoid bottled water. Tap water is generally safer. If you have concerns about your water supply, get a filter, then pressure local officials to clean it up.
37. Become a guerrilla gardener, planting flowers and vegetables on neglected land in your neighborhood.
38. Organize a community garden ([communitygarden.org](http://communitygarden.org)) or local farmers market.
39. Roll up your sleeves to restore a creek, wetland, woods, or grassland, or beautify a vacant lot.
40. Remember that everything that goes down your drain, on your lawn, in your garbage, or into your storm sewer eventually winds up in our water or air.
41. Seek new ways to use less energy and create less waste at home and work.
42. Form a study group to explore what can be done to promote sustainability in your community.
43. Purchase goods—beer to clothing to hardware—made as close to home as possible. Shipping goods long distances stresses the environment.

### **Information and Culture**

44. Patronize and support your public library.
45. Demand that schoolchildren not become a captive audience for marketing campaigns.
46. Contribute your knowledge to online commons such as Wikipedia, open education projects, and open-access journals. Form your own online community to explore commons issues.
47. Use Creative Commons licenses for your own writing, music, videos, and other creative pursuits.
48. Conceive a public art project for your community.

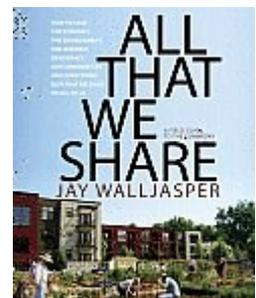
### **Commons Consciousness**

49. Think of yourself as a commoner and share your enthusiasm. Raise the subject in conversation, art, professional circles, and organizations with which you are involved.
50. Launch a commons discussion group or book club with your neighbors and colleagues, or at your church, synagogue, or temple. ([onthecommons.org](http://onthecommons.org))
51. Spread some hope around. Explain how commons-based solutions can remedy today's pressing problems.

This issue's inspiring idea comes from Jay Walljasper, co-editor of [OnTheCommons.org](http://OnTheCommons.org)

May you be inspired by its many small and slow solutions and its thoughtful suggestions on how to observe and interact. Spread some of his creative energy!

This work was adapted from a YES! Magazine article, Oct 2010 and based on *All That We Share: How to Save the Economy, the Environment, the Internet, Democracy, Our Communities, and Everything Else That Belongs to All of Us*, by Jay Walljasper, forthcoming from The New Press. It also features in the permaculture and regenerative design news blog <http://kjpermaculture.blogspot.com/>



## What's on....

Events, Courses and permaculture related community activities

### Permaculture West

For an up-to-date list Permaculture Courses and details of events around Perth in the Permaculture world please visit the Permaculture West website:

Events/Courses : <http://permaculturewest.org.au/events>

Perma blitz news: <http://permaculturewest.org.au/community/perma blitz>

### Nominate for 2011 World Environmental Awards

Nominations open 1 Feb 2011 and close 6 May 2011

June 5 2011 is World Environment Day, on this day the United Nations Association of Australia seeks to focus world attention on the environment, and in particular on positive programs that work toward protecting or restoring the worlds' natural heritage. The national awards program invites nominations from individuals, organisations, community groups, schools and businesses across Australia whose work demonstrates environmental leadership. Go on, nominate that inspiring program in your community today!

Find details at: <http://www.live.org.au/local-actions/wed-awards>

### CCWA Environment Matters Seminar Series

Thur 10 Feb 2011, 6.30-8.30pm, Lotteries House, 2 Delhi St, West Perth, WA

Should we burn our rubbish to power our homes? With WA's poor recycling record, plans to power Perth by burning municipal waste are back on the agenda. This seminar will bring you up to date on the current proposals and hear perspectives from both sides of the debate on whether we should be pursuing a waste to energy industry in WA. For details see: <http://ccwa.org.au>

### International Frameworks for Corporate Sustainability & Responsibility

24-25 Feb 2011

A two-day program with international sustainability experts Paul Hohnen and Jonathon Hanks. Learn from the experts who have been at the heart of the worlds top four international frameworks for CSR. The workshop will provide you with tools to integrate these frameworks into your organisation's strategy. For details see: <http://www.accsr.com.au>

### Clean up Australia Day

1 March 2011 Business Clean Up Australia Day

6 March 2011 Clean Up Australia Day

Clean Up Australia day: Be part of the nation's largest community-based environmental event! Every year hundreds of thousands of Australians get stuck in and clean up their local environment by collecting and removing rubbish on Clean Up Australia Day. Individuals and groups can register to clean up their local park, beach, bushland and streets.

Business Clean Up is designed to engage Aussie business to help make a difference to the environment. Organise a business Clean Up Day or become a Business Supporter.

To find out more, and how to register see: <http://www.cleanup.org.au>

If you have an event, activity or course you would like added to our next e-news (April/May 2011) please send an email with details to [enews@permaculturewest.org.au](mailto:enews@permaculturewest.org.au) by March 25th.

# PERMACULTURE COMMUNITY NOTICES



## **Possible business opportunity for a keen plant person, in Mandurah**



In tourist zone and on free bus route from train and around town. Central to high density zoning areas, both low income and wealthy waterfront. An attractive fenced area approx 220m2 containing a solid jarrah plank heritage stables/shed. Power, water from onsite well, security

Located immediately behind and on same land block as large 7 day cafe, behind kitchen and adjoining side fence, courtyard and carpark with easy access. Shed currently filled with recyclable materials removed during major renovation and conversion of old home to cafe. Shaded by large trees but open to the north. Clinker built "whaler" ( a boat) on blocks awaiting restoration and or use as display or feature.

My client owns this site and we are looking at it and thinking...hmmm .. food scraps from this and many other adjoining cafes, worms, bokashi, wicking gardens, aquaponics, home/potted food garden supply and maintain service for dense surrounding suburbs, herbs and greens etc for cafe restaurants, retail sales of related "stuff". Potential to refer enquiries to cafe office in quiet times etc.

If anyone would like to seriously explore possibilities further contact Paul on [pmeleng@gmail.com](mailto:pmeleng@gmail.com)

## EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

In a

## Semi-Rural Self-Sufficiency Eco Development

Are you interested in living a sustainable semi-rural lifestyle that enhances the wellbeing of your family, community and the environment?

We are seeking several families, couples or singles interested in developing a semi-rural, eco "village" with a focus on socially, environmentally and economically sustainable living.

Our concept is a mixture of green title and tenants-in-common tenures to achieve a blend of privately owned, two to five acre farmlets along with a collectively owned area to be used for small-scale, organic agricultural and horticultural production as well as a range of co-operatively owned, income producing enterprises.

Suggested areas include Serpentine, Jarrahdale, Keysbrook or North Dandalup.

This is an opportunity to join like-minded people in establishing a healthy, happy and economically viable semi-rural lifestyle that looks after the environment as well as ourselves.

Contact Sally for further details:  
Ph 9302 2563 or email [sal.gt@westnet.com.au](mailto:sal.gt@westnet.com.au)



# Permaculture West

Permaculture Association of Western Australia

The Permaculture Association of Western Australia (PAWA or Permaculture West) aims to help people learn and use permaculture in their lives. The Association provides the opportunity for members to obtain information and build skills to implement permaculture designs, by:

- Disseminating permaculture information and resources
- Promoting the design and construction of permaculture systems
- Providing opportunities for interested people to meet
- Seeking contact with any other related groups

## Permaculture Ethics



Care of the Earth



Care of People



Fair Share

## & Design Principles



1. Observe & interact



2. Catch & store energy



3. Obtain a yield



4. Apply self-regulation & accept feedback



5. Use & value renewable resources & services



6. Produce no waste



7. Design from patterns to details



8. Integrate rather than segregate



9. Use small & slow solutions



10. Use & value diversity



11. Use edges & value the marginal



12. Creatively use & respond to change



permacultureprinciples.com



HOLMGREEN  
DESIGN SERVICES  
www.holmgreen.com.au

## Join a local permaculture group

Belonging to a local permaculture groups can provide inspiration, motivation, hands on practical help and opportunities to share equipment, and plant resources.

They also provide a great sense of comradeship and connectedness. There are several active local groups around Perth.

Check out their websites to see what the groups are up to and how to join:

### The Hills Local Permaculture Group (HLPG)

Contact:

Silvia Rosenstreich

silviarose88@yahoo.com.au or

Rosemary Taylor (08) 9252 1237

### The Northern Active Permaculture Enthusiasts (APE's)

Contact Charles at

permaculturewest@gmail.com

### The Lockridge Group

Contact Tash at

lockridgecommunitygarden@gmail.com

### The Fremantle Permaculture Group

Contact Sparkles at

sparklemerchant@yahoo.com