

International Permaculture Day events and activities,
Canadian energy and finance expert Nicole Foss visits Perth,
and the Gardening Australia crew films in Hamersley...



PermacultureWest

Permaculture Association of Western Australia

eNews

Autumn 2013



Rain glorious rain: PermacultureWest eNews

As I type it's finally, joyously raining! I was at the Sustainability Showcase at Perth City Farm last night and it started raining just as someone was talking about urban food production and the crowd erupted into spontaneous applause. Yes, it's been along hot summer and I don't know anyone who's not welcoming the cooler change and the rain with great relief.

I'm sure you're all busy putting in the last of your winter crops and looking forward to International Permaculture Day on 5 May. Read on for lots of activities around this global event, headlined by the [Freo Permies](#) crew.

Enjoy!

Jo, eNews Editor

Co-convenors' Report - International Permaculture Day



By Charles Otway

May 5th marks International Permaculture Day. All around Australasia and more significantly, the globe, permaculture groups are germinating, educating and building resilience in their local communities. Each locality has its own priorities: in African nations the priorities are survival, food and water. Thankfully, permaculture land regeneration techniques mean that a side effect to survival can be improving ecology rather than the usual degradation of it.

In WA we are very fortunate. Apart from coping with a overly inflated mining-centric economy, most of us are curiously looking at ways to improve the quality of food via homegrown options, reducing energy use, and skill sharing for those with the time and inclination to work on permaculture. But though we are currently fortunate, we need ecologically regenerative food production and inhabitancy systems as much as anyone else. I am inspired and encouraged by permaculture as it offers so many simple and integrated solutions to managing drying climates, water management, small scale ag, urban food systems and the ever-present degraded land regeneration.

I hope some of you can join us at South Freo High School and other gatherings around the state this International Permaculture Day 2013.

I am aware of [Freo Permies](#) South Freo High School event, a Bunbury gathering at Chris and Lin's, Fair Harvest farm tour and jam, Ross Mars' Home Open, Lockridge workshop, but there is likely even more going on. Check our [website](#) to find all the links and read on here for more details.

It's exciting to see sustainable communities rapidly growing in numbers, skills and capacity. This all builds resilience and in a time of economic instability and energy decent, these groups of well organised, self-reliant, resilient communities will be in a position to spread their skills and knowledge when needed.

Where to see some of them at South Freo School on Sunday morning, please note:

I hope to see some of you at South Freo School on Sunday morning, please park around the back, bring some bag space for the organic GMO free chook food as it is hard to get chook food without GMO canola. Also you might win the food forest raffle pack and you sure will have a lot to carry home.

Lastly the committee just agreed to extend nil cost membership to June 2014. We think it's most important to not be turning anyone away with fees in these tricky times. We also hope that at some point when we need fund liability insurance for the local groups, events or fund website hosting etc many hands will make lighter work.

Thanks for your increasing support, please find and join your local groups and continue observing, changing and growing stronger. The sun is still shining, it rains (occasionally), nature grows the plants for free and thus we should always increasing our happily little carbon farms.

Cheers, Charles



Freo Permies plan an action-packed day

By Sparkles Murphy

Come see the best urban Permaculture Perth has to offer on our Permaculture Day event here in Fremantle WA...

Beginning alongside our local farmers market at South Fremantle High School, we will have stalls to engage and inspire you including great examples of local permie tech, food forest plants to buy and a living-lawn mower section for the kids (that means real live local farm animals... yes in the City!).

With workshops running from 10am till 12:30pm, on everything from fermentation and beer brewing to food plants for a rapidly drying climate, the appetite for some permie-spiration should be just about ready for our Urban Permie Places tour. From 1pm you'll have the opportunity to visit a one tonne rocket stove, a backyard food forest, and a Joel Salatin-inspired urban small holding... and still it just gets better.

To keep our locavore project pumping, Freo Permies will be raffling off a Food Forest starter kit just in time for all those pioneers ready to catch and store the abundant rains of 2013, the whole of which will have been grown, harvested or created within a 5 km radius (except the Jeff Lawton DVD that is!)

We'd love to see you there so for more details please check us out at

www.freopermies.com

Open Day at Candlelight Farm and Mundaring Ecostay for International Permaculture Day



Ross and Jenny Mars' property in Mundaring will be open for International Permaculture Day on May 5. While the property is still being developed, there are things in place that should give visitors some idea of what the property will look like in 10 years time.

The 1 ha site has two strawbale buildings used for holiday accommodation, and while guests will be there, visitors can wander through and Ross can explain how they were built and the special features each has. There is rainwater tank collection, a greywater system, an aerated treatment unit, extensive use of recycled materials, and the buildings are passive solar designed.





Red Planet Plants, the wholesale nursery, is still being set-up so not currently operational, specialises in permaculture plants, bamboos and bush tucker. Stock gardens have many of these species in the ground.

4110 Phillips Rd, Mundaring. Open 9am to 3pm. Tours with Ross on the hour.

Lockridge Community Garden and Transition Towns Guildford join forces

Come and join us at the Lockridge Community Garden from 10.30am - 12.30pm for an interactive day of workshops, food and fun.

Transition Towns Guildford will be joining us with a brief talk on 'Victory Gardens' – a practical history of how kitchen gardening got its start, including some practical tips for people who have a small space or are uncertain about how to fit it in time-wise.

Plus a short talk on the community building side of TTG, recycling at your place and other interesting discussions.

Bonnie will be getting you active with some practical work and demos in the garden, so bring your gardening gloves and shoes.

Our world famous Wood Fired Pizzas will be on sale plus lots of other delicious goodies to choose from.

Throw in a raffle prize draw, face-painting for the kids (and big kids!), awesome company and you'll be in for great day.

Entry is by donation to the Lockridge Community Garden.

Bunbury Urban Growers

As part of National Permaculture Day, Chris and Lin will be hosting the next BUG open garden day on their 8-acre permaculture property not far from Bunbury.

Come along and enjoy a cuppa with other BUG members and see what Chris and Lin are doing to become more self sufficient in the future. See the attached flyer for a more detailed description.

If you are able to, bring a plate to share and/or any seeds, seedlings, fresh produce, worm wee, jams, preserves, recipes etc. to sell, to swap or even give away for free!

Time: 2:30pm

When: Saturday, May 4th, 2013

Where: 53 Bremer Lane, BEELERUP 6239

(~35 mins out of Bunbury, see directions below)

It is free and everyone is welcome, but please out of courtesy to our host do not bring any pets along. Shoes and long trousers / jeans are recommended.

You are welcome to pass this on to anyone else that might be interested.

Hope to see you all there,

The BUG team

Grim global message softened by
grass roots activism

The Sustainability Showcase: Strategies for Sustainability

By Jo Thierfelder, [Finesse Communications](#)





L-R: MC Peter Holland, Prof. Peter Newman, Nicole Foss, Adrian Glamorgan

Nicole Foss, Canadian sustainability, energy and finance expert was as devastating in her assessment of the state of global economics as the first time I heard her speak at the Ecoburbia Conference in Freo last year. Only this time I was prepared for it, which is not what I can say for everyone in the room.

Her argument seemed as irrefutable this time as it did the first time I heard it and it was interesting to get an update on current events, particularly the impact of Cyprus, Greece and Spain's economic woes on Europe and the world.

It's impossible to summarise Nicole's presentation, it's just too dense.

Visit <http://theautomaticearth.blogspot.com.au/> for more information.

Fellow guest speakers included Professor Peter Newman of Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute who presented significant research on the benefits of rail to Perth and the work CUSP is doing in this area. The third speaker, Adrian Glamorgan, gave an interactive presentation that focused on sustainability from a community and social activism point of view.

The Freo Green Guide had this to say about the event: <http://www.freogreenguide.com/eco-event-sustainability-showcase>

Charles' Permie Patch "OMG it's raining" Job List

By Charles Otway

It occurred to me that the best way to make sure I get all my 'summer is over' jobs done is by writing a list and telling everyone I am going to do it. It could be the end of me but I suspect the list should be helpful for lots of folks who are thinking and observing. "Ok it's rained a bit what should I be doing now?"

- Take down shadecloth and other shade systems. The killer days are over.
- Have a look at your soil, expose it, make sure its not repellent of water, add clay, safe wetting agents, make reservoirs and avoid run off
- Prune trees to let in light and allow growth of crops underneath. Most this should go

straight below the plant it can from, the best fertiliser for each plant is its own compost.

- It's CHOP N DROP Season YEEHAR, get out the lopper, cycle, secateurs and chainsaw :}
 - I prune my weedy Japanese Pepper trees to leave only a wood canopy, you can make low value evergreen a deciduous mulch machine by pruning it very hard now and again as required, leaving time for a shady summer canopy to grow back in mid spring. (avoid pruning sub-tropicals in winter)
 - Plan low sun angles in winter and where sun will be to grow the best veggies. This for me is the verge garden, mine is now huge don't discount this 'commons' space the council is normally wasting it. It is not 'council land' but everyone's land to use appropriately with thought for others.
 - Slash lucerne bed edges and pathways, it get long and rank, cutting back creates mulch/compost material and allows the perennial rootstock to put out fresh new growth.
 - Slash arrowroot, sweet potato, thai eggplant and all other overly vigorous "fast carbon plants", I said it before it ChopnDrop time feed that carbon powered soil machine now it's got a lower evaporation rate than rainfall rate.
 - Start a compost pile, start by piling up greens, browns and other organic stuffs, only pile it up once you have 2m³ or so. Compost is a batch process not a continuous pile, i.e. don't put dirt socks in as the rest of the wash is spinning.
 - Fill 1/2 olive barrels up with seed/weed free compost to plant winter seeds/crops. The barrels are wicking barrels so they don't dry out and give you good sized seedlings to dig/prick out.
 - Plant seeds
 - Brassica's - broccoli, kale, collards, mustard, radish, colli's, and cabbages
1. Brassica's - broccoli, kale, collards, mustard, radish, colli's, and cabbages
 2. Leafy greens - dandelions, chicory, sow thistle, stinging nettle, plantain, loose leaf lettuce
 3. Try some Peas, snow peas and podding peas if space.
 4. Cooler Climate/continent 'summer crops' - I will be growing macca and other Peruvian crops that can't take the summer heat in their first year of growth.
 5. Everything that died in summer cause it was too hot.....plant that now :)
- Propagate perennials, cuttings, root cuttings, layering etc, make the most of the growth spurt with warm sun and rain. It got a bunch of huge collard greens 'pups' started by snapping smaller forked 'branches' off and stick them in the soil. Try everything it's free!
 - Eat dem weeds! The buggers keep coming up so don't stop till they are eaten by you or the chooks or composted. Remember most are dynamic mineral accumulators so cutting off at ground level and dropping back in the same spot keeps the mined minerals where nature wants them.
 - Plant cool season cover crops on open soil even if you want to plant seedlings there in a few weeks, cover crops smother weeds and add nutrient and carbon to the soil.
 - Move the chook 'tractor' (mobile run) around the yard and beds to control slaters and weeds.
 - Head out with a torch and start collecting snail & slug. If required put out a batch of

- Head out with a torch and start collecting snails or slugs. If required put out a batch of Iron Chelates snail pellets or upside down oranges/grape fruit or beer traps. Some of these need 3-4 days of fine weather. Slugs and snails are on the move towards your food, either sort out that duck deficiency or control them yourself.
- Put in another pond, 3 is not enough, 200 micron builders plastic makes a easy cheap pond, take some plant from the other ponds as they need to be cleaned out now. Instant ecosystem boost and food producing zone. Water is the most productive growing medium, and the edge is the most diverse dense ecology point. Get the best of all worlds.
- Start looking for empty spaces to plant evergreen nitrogen fixing shrubs to host your soon to be purchased bare root deciduous fruit trees. Trees like company, shelter and shade a cheap fast growing nitrogen fixing 'host' plant will double the growth rate of you high value fruit tree.
- Check backyard animal systems have enough deep carbon to allow encapsulation of nitrogen (poo/wee) and drainage to keep it smelling and looking healthy.
- Check animal shelters are weather proof.
- Turn off reticulation and automated watering systems, I will still water with the bore if its needed but it will be rare occasions or just keeping new seeded soil from drying out.
- If you are in cool areas start to consider protecting Subtropicals soon. In Pemby we are growing mangos, tamarinds, and other rainforest edibles, they are growing well but like a ventilated but snug wrap of clear plastic to stop cold wind and frost in winter.
- Go to International Permaculture Day and your local group meetings, you will learn new stuff.

Gardening Australia and Costa at my place!

By Tash Levey, [Terra Perma Design](#)

Tod and I recently had the awesome experience of having the crew from Gardening Australia come over and do a story on our suburban permaculture block in Hamersley. The theme of the story was about the "Fruits of our Labour" as the whole episode is focused on fruit in one way or another.

The producer and Costa were particularly interested in our before photos of the backyard showing cooch grass and the worst Perth sand you can imagine! We then explained how over about 5 - 6 years we've built up a fast carbon pathway to beautiful humanic soil and biodiversity beyond any backyard for miles.

We showed them our 'Chop and Drop' method of composting - essentially mimicking a forest environment which is sped up dramatically with human input. Our closed loop nutrient cycling was an important aspect that also enables us to speed up natures system and wasting nothing that is produced on our block; from the pond systems and flood irrigation for its high nutrient content to the chooks and rabbits valuable contributions.

Plant selection and placement in our design was another crucial element. Costa was particularly into our bamboos, bana grasses and nitrogen fixing tree species. Tod even took him through a demo on how to propagate bamboo which he loved, and by the time they did multiple takes of the scene to get it right....well lets just say we're lucky we have lots of bamboo to spare!



The behind the scenes perspective is something I was quite fascinated in seeing first hand. Of course there was Costa who flew over from Sydney for a week in Perth, and there was the producer, a camera guy and a sound engineer. They all rocked up to my front door and Costa was in the lead with a big hug to greet me, he certainly knows how to make you feel comfortable straight up!

They straight away went scoping the backyard, checking out from which angle would suit this and that scene. Tiger, our rather large bull mastif x Amstaf was on hand to give them a full tour, for a pat of course and who become the real star of the show!





There wasn't a script as such, but from the researcher corresponding with me in the weeks prior to gather info and ask a million questions, they knew what they were going to cover and loosely the content. Costa would run through each scene with the producer; which way to enter the scene, exit this way, do this...do that and Costa would basically just ad lib what to say. It took about 4-5 hours to film, all for one of those several minute segment that you're used to on TV. This was with lots of stopping of filming to wait for planes to fly over as the sound guy said it messed with things too much.

Overall, Costa and the crew were amazing to work with and have in our home. They were so interested and charming and loved the lunch mum and I put out for them which was sweet. Good food always helps!

They have told me it will air on Saturday 29th June, but that could change. We'll send out a big email and confirm closer to the date, so stay tuned! And don't forget to check our website for upcoming courses on what we covered for the episode and so much more.

www.terraperma.com.au

Tash & Tod

Eating my way around Tasmania Part II King Island

By Ross Mars

This is a follow-up piece to last edition's article by Ross on his visit to Tasmania.

Jenny and I stayed at King Island for about a week. It's an island about 60 km long and 25 km wide, reasonably undulating, with lots of low-lying swampy ground, and lots of

wallabies.

King Island is famous for its dairy products (cheese and milk), and its beef. Due to the climate being mild all year round and rainfall steady throughout the year, the pasture is always green so milk and beef are guaranteed consistent.

We met with Paul and Cynthia Daniel, who had returned to the island from the mainland a few years ago to work on the family farm. They use biodynamics to grow the produce organically, and now supply many of the Island's restaurants and have a small shop in the heart of Currie, the main town.

Paul explained that the biggest issue facing organic growers is labour. Production is labour-intensive and sometimes it is difficult to find good workers. This makes the cost of the product relatively expensive. While there is a growing interest in organic foods, the market is still small. Growers have to also contend with providing the right conditions for particular crops (tomatoes like 26°C but zucchini prefer 30°C), and it is difficult to isolate some crops from others to prevent cross-pollination (beetroot can easily cross with silverbeet to get 'rainbow chard').

The other highlight was a visit to Caroline Kininmonth's Boat House. Here, you bring your own lunch or tea and cook it yourself. It's a small fully contained café overlooking the bay. There's even old tapes to play background music.

Thoughts on Permaculture

All of us would acknowledge our own work as modest; it is the totality of such modest work that is impressive. Great changes are taking place. Why not join us in the making of a better future.

Ingenio Patet Campus. The field lies open to the intellect.

Bill Mollison- The father of Permaculture and Co-originator of the permaculture concept
2 May 2012

Permaculture is design for sustainable living and landuse. From its Australian origins in the 1970's permaculture has spread around the world creating positive and future-proof environmental solutions. Over more than three decades permaculture activists have pioneered many of today's mainstream environmental solutions from landcare to school gardens, from passive solar design to compost toilets, from ethical investment to farmers markets. But the autonomous, diffuse and decentralised nature of permaculture has tended to hide its great contribution to improving communities across the nation.

David Holmgren
Co-originator of the permaculture concept

Permaculture is practical, grass roots sustainability in action. It provides immediate tools for people to reduce their environmental footprint and build resilient

communities.

**Josh Byrne,
Gardening Australia**

What permaculturists are doing is the most important activity that any group is doing on the planet.

David Suzuki Geneticist, broadcaster, & international environmental activist

Permaculture ... is all about combining age old truths and skills with new and innovative thinking and technologies ...people, plants and landscapes growing together , designing and nurturing a healthy community along the way.

Costa Georgiadis

Permaculture is Australias offering to the world as a real and viable solution to the crisis that we now face worldwide due to the excessive and unsustainable lifestyle of a minority of the worlds population. Permaculture gives us guidelines for repair to damage already done and to cease continuing our damaging practices, starting with three basic governing principles:

- Earth Care-Care for all living and non living things eg. animals, plants, land, water and air.
- People Care-Promotion of self reliance and community responsibility
- Return of Surplus-Passing on of anything surplus to our needs eg. money, labour, information

Geoff Lawton

Director, Permaculture Research Institute Australia

Swap Shuffle Share

Autumn Greetings!

Come along to the first "SHWAFFLE!"- Swap /Shuffle/ Share day! Bring along spare or excess Seeds, Seedlings, and Fresh produce. Bring a fold up table if you need, there are plenty of chairs though.

We will be having an update on Balingup Community Garden news also..so bring along any questions or ideas!

Also every 1st Sunday of the month at the Bronze (same day as the Shwaffle) from 6pm onwards Fran is cooking up her monthly delicious homestyle dinners. Please book on 0427 990 500. The next meal will be Roast Chicken with Couscous and Vegies. Come along for a great family friendly night!

Hope to see you there,

Jesse



Classifieds

Marketing solutions for your business



Finesse Communications can take your business to the next level with holistic marketing and communications advice tailored to your business. Whether you need a sharp, professional brochure or a multi-faceted, integrated marketing and PR strategy - Finesse can help.

Finesse is headed up by Jo Thierfelder, a communications professional with journalism qualifications and 12 years of experience in corporate, professional services and consultancy roles. I have also completed a Permaculture Design Course and a Certificate III Permaculture from Eltham College in Victoria.

"I am inspired to work for organisations with similar ideals and ethics to my own. I have a passion for property, urban design and planning, community engagement, placemaking, sustainability, agricultural urbanism, permaculture and resilience."

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