

PermacultureWest: sharing the permie news

KAMBARANG, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2011

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PermacultureWest AGM:

Sat 22nd October 9.30am at Perth City Farm

PermacultureWest has grown from strength to strength this year with your great support and interest. We look forward to your continued and increasing involvement in the association with its growing outreach and re-education of WA.

The AGM will be followed by public nominations for non-executive roles then a panel discussion of permaculture concepts and methods with a focus on Q&A from the open audience.

Come along, get involved and take the opportunity to enjoy the City Farms Organic Farmers Markets and Cafe outside.

Perth City Farm, City Farm Rd, East Perth

<http://permaculturewest.org.au/news/permaculturewest-agm-announcement>

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 Dec/Jan Issue:

1. Use edges and value the marginal
2. Creatively use and respond to change

Please send contributions to enews@permaculturewest.org.au by Nov 25th for the next issue.

KAMBARANG

The Noongar people of the SW Coast of WA recognised six seasons. KAMBARANG (Oct/Nov) was the height of the wildflower season and accompanied a warming trend.

Mangles Kangaroo Paw, Blue Leschenaultia and Beaufortias offer a riot of colour in the garden & bush.

A note on this issues themes:

use and value diversity



'Don't put all your eggs in one basket'

Diversity reduces vulnerability to a variety of threats and takes advantage of the unique nature of the environment in which it resides. Permaculture examples utilising diversity include food forests, polycultures, and social and cultural inclusion.

use small and slow solutions

'Slow and steady wins the race'

Small scale solutions and activities are more likely to be adaptive to local needs, respectful of nature and able to see the consequences of actions. Incremental change can be more easily understood and monitored. As Bill Mollison notes in his *Designers Manual*—start small, get it under control then slowly expand the perimeter, in other words taking on too much, or making dramatic change can be overwhelming— for both the user and the system. Some permaculture examples of slow solutions include: Seed balls, worm towers and gravity fed drip irrigation systems.



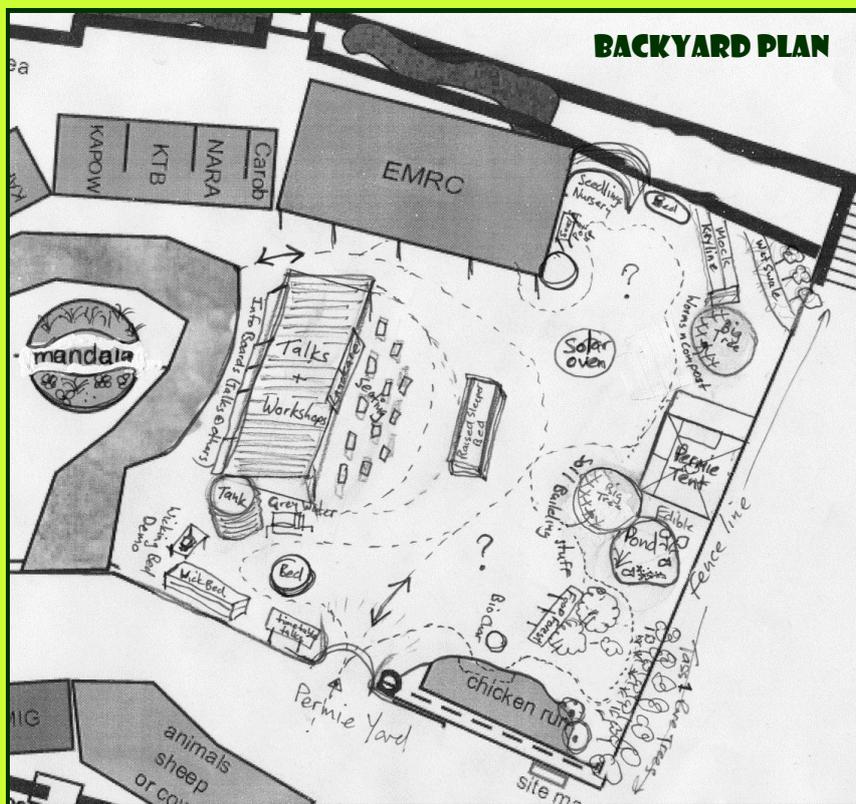
Text taken from: <http://permacultureprinciples.com/>
<http://www.permaculture.org.uk>

The steady snail photo comes from the blog of photographer chaukhat.com

VISIT PERMACULTUREWEST AT THE ROYAL SHOW 2011

Charles Otway

PermacultureWest has been invited by Conservation and Landcare to setup a sustainable living and demonstration food production oriented backyard to enlighten and inspire those looking to make lighter footprints on the earth. Working with EMRC we will be presenting talks/workshops daily every hour (9-4), and a visual and mental feast of sustainability, permaculture design and good ole fashion common sense ideas. See below for workshop timetables and backyard preliminary plans.



The backyard plan aims to introduce inspire and encourage the general public to make a sustainable and ecological lifestyle shift. Western Australia has the largest houses in the world per person, the highest water usage and poor waste management and reuse habits, but there is a change in the air.

We can all make a difference, and permaculture offers an excellent holistic model and design system to allow us to "Inhabit the Earth forever", in Jeff Lawtons, always succinct words.

This as a huge opportunity to show the public what permaculture is. Everyone is mad about all the buzz words but there is one group and thought process holding all this together in a working ethical, ecological system and that's Permaculture. Thanks Bill!!!

EMRC's will be presenting many talks also on reduction, reuse and recycling encouragement and tips and tricks. See the **TALKS TIMETABLE** below:

| | Saturday Oct. 1 | Sunday Oct. 2 | Monday Oct. 3 | Tuesday Oct. 4 | Wed Oct. 5 | Thursday Oct. 6 | Friday Oct. 7 | Saturday Oct. 8 |
|-----------|----------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 9-10 am | Perths Permie Plants: Charles | Wicking Beds: Charles | Look local: Community Gardens, groups & goods: Charles | Urban Chickens: Sue | Wicking Beds: Jason | Pest, Predators & Graden Ecology: Charles | Pattern Literacy - Designs by Nature: Clare | Ponds for Frogs & Food: Charles |
| 10-11 am | PD: Composting | NZ: Wonders of worms | PD: Composting | Living Ethically: Sue | NZ: Make your own worm farm | TW: Bokashi Bins | JS: Single Bin Recycling | LG: Recycle mysteries revealed |
| 11- 12 pm | Wholefood Cooking: Jude | Home Grown goodness: Janet | Wicking Beds: Jason | Design your Backyard: Charles | Soil Inputs: Paul | Blackfly Composting with Bonus Chooks & Fish Food: Annora | Sustainable House Design: David | Setting up an Organic Garden: Bee |
| 12 -1 pm | Organic Seeds & Seedlings: Leesa | NZ: How to reduce your plastics | Perennial Food Plants: Charles | Back Yard: QnA | NZ: How to get your compost cranking | TW: Make your own worm farm | Understanding Soil Life: Clare | LG: Make your own worm farm |
| 1-2 pm | Ponds for frogs & Food: Charles | Growing Community Gardens: Rick & Annie | Low carbon Footprint Home: Jason | Food Forrests: Charles | Water harvesting: Charles | Creating a Forrest of Food: Tod | Water Harvesting: David | Garden to Plate: Tash |
| 2-3 pm | Organic Growing: Helen Milagra | PD: Composting | RL: Avoiding Household Hazardous Waste | Back Yard: QnA | Back Yard: QnA | GA: Recycling Mysteries revealed | Intergrated pest Management: Clare | LG: How to reduce your plastic |
| 3-4 pm | Growing good Soil: Charles | Garden Structures: Charles | How to Make Soil from Sand: Charles | How to Make Soil from Sand: Charles | Food Forrests: Charles | Permaculture Trees: Food, Fodder & Fuel: Tod | Back Yard: QnA | Foodscaping your Backyard: Charles |

So many of those trendy things have always been part of the Permaculture knowledge and tool set; organics, soils, solar passive, water, food security, whole food, living smart, community building etc, it has always been there we just need to show people at an event like this.

A wander around the yard will find you bumping into the following and more, and if you want more information on any of the topics, workshops or displays please head to the Permie Stand and have a chat, jump on the eNews and mail list and get involved.

FOOD FOREST PLAN :



- Garden Beds of many designs and effort cost based trade offs, including vegetables.
- 50 different Fruit Trees in a Food Forest demo (cheers Joe at Tass1Tree trees for everything) with garden integration and plant stacking techniques.
- Backyard Pond - Water food plants, frogs, Integrated Pest management essential element.
- Soil Building - Organic methods, biodynamic tendencies, and simple info on how to grow soil with all the know how and Amendments on display
- Compost, Worm farm and chicken management of green waste.
- Bio Char - How to DIY - Demo Unit (drums)
- Yeomans Plow on display with contour based Keyline cultivation and swale system being installed for passive water harvesting and Contour Farming.
- Water Harvesting - Basics Demo Swale - Sunken plants - Rainwater - Grey Water
- Solar Panels - Solar cooking Oven - Solar Louvers etc - Solar Passive Posters or Demos
- Propagation Area - Techniques - Design - Seed Sourcing - Seed Saving
- Permaculture Urban and Rural Designs on Display - Related Texts
- Community Garden and Local Groups Display - Poster - Map of Perth.
- Chickens and Urban Livestock
- PermacultureWest Stand and promotion - Including peer associations OGAWA and other groups and affiliated 'permie ethic' business flyers etc.

Now if that can't get you down to the Royal Show nothing ever will! **Royal show dates Saturday 1st October to 8th October.** We will be in the Conservation and Landcare area, on the train station side.

Knowing your Weeds is Local Food Security

by Charles Otway

This will be an ongoing series on edible weeds around Perth, and given they are weeds even if your not in Perth there is a good chance they will be in your neighborhood to. This is part of the material from the edible weed tour in development for Terra Perma Design workshops.

Most people are shocked...or amused I just can't tell normally, at the things I try when I am asked if it's edible, but I have done lots of research prior to putting it in my mouth. The reason I will eat it rather than just saying yes is 'the power of the guinea pig', people are rightly worried about eating food that may be poisonous. Having someone show you what is and isn't edible and watching them eat it really is the only way to get people thinking about this readily available mineral rich food source.

However, feed the mind, then the body, do your research !!

I highly recommend getting a \$35 copy of *Western Weeds – A Guide to weeds of WA* (http://www.wswa.org.au/pps_publications.htm), as a pocket guide, it doesn't tell you which are edible but it has clear photographic identification and botanical names so you can ID the plant. Once you know what it is, searching its edibility and medicinal uses is both easy and truly astounding. There is plenty of info on the internet which I will link later, but a few books you could look for, *Wild Food A.B* and *J.W CRIB*, and by the same authors *Wild Medicine* (good info on natives and weeds, very few pictures), and *Self-Sufficiency and Survival Foods* by Isabell Shipard.

Here is a great article by Friends of the Earth (FOTE) for those still unsure of the value of weeds (<http://www.foe.org.au/resources/chain-reaction/editions/chain-reaction-109/weeds-ecology-and-health>).

When eating weeds, diversity is the best approach, most are highly mineralized and powerful plants, eating them alone will normally not be enjoyable, but, putting a handful of mixed weeds in a salad greatly increases interest, nutrition and food security. Many of the tougher or strong flavored weeds/herbs can be used the traditional way of throwing plant material in a pot roast or drying to make a tea. Currently we are fortunate that we can mix edible and medicinal weeds with normal vegetables to introduce ourselves gradually and learn the names and flavors along the way. Take this opportunity now!

Again I advise you to take a lot of care identifying weeds prior to eating them, and for this reason I will only cover a few weeds per eNews edition as good pictures are crucial to identifying the plant. More detail will be presented on these and other species over the year in this segment and in edible weeds workshops run by Terra Perma Design. Also important when foraging anything: if it's not your own backyard ensure the food has not been sprayed/contaminated, if it looks sick don't eat it.

There are so many edible weeds that I will work with the most seasonally abundant ones now.

Capeweed – (*Arctotheca calendula*)

The young leaves of this plant can be safely cooked as spinach. While excessive grassing by cattle can cause deficiencies and problems an occasionally capeweed leaf quicke will be fine for us. http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/dpi/vro/vrosite.nsf/pages/sip_capeweed



Smooth Cats Ear and Flat Weed (*Hypochaeris glabra /radicata*)

Though these are very bitter, the young leaves and roots are edible. They are the Australian equivalent of English Dandelion, and while less palatable are still highly nutritious. As with capeweed excessive consumption can cause deficiencies with cattle.



Guilford Grass (*Romulea rosea australis*)

Sometimes called onion grass the green plump, 1 cm long fruit makes for a nice chewy sweet snack. I certainly ate it by choice as a child. When they exist in large numbers wait until winter rain then pull them out of the soft ground. The corms are also edible, they are similar to wa-



ter chestnuts or could be dried and turned into flour. Leaves are also apparently edible but given the lawnmower can cut them I shall pass at this point.

Sour Sob (*Oxalis pes-caprae*)

The leaves have a tasty sour edge a bit like the sour in sweet and sour sauce, it can therefore make a great sour sauce. While they are a tasty flavour to add to a salad and a good source of Vitamin C, they are also high in oxalic acid so unless blanching and draining the water eat in moderation or occasionally. Other Oxalis family, wood sorrel etc are the same.



Bullrush/Cattail (*Typha domingensis*)

In all parts of the wet area around Perth there is a slower growing native and a faster larger introduced species, both reeds are edible, with the best being young male flowers and the new shoots cores. Flower stems can be eaten like corn on the cob or have the pollen stripped into a dish, the cores of new shoots can be eaten raw or steamed like asparagus. The rhizome is also a good starchy source of



food, either bash roots and extract starch and dry (think arrowroot) or you can just put the root under campfire coals for 5 mins and have a good ole chew.

Back Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*)

The ripe berries (black and soft) are edible and very tasty, if you have ever had gooseberries they taste the same.

Note: The green fruits are poisonous. The

leaves are eaten like spinach in some African cultures but unless des-



perate its best to avoid eating all Solanum family leaves. I eat these berries daily as the weed is prolific, it does not suffer from spider mites like its mainstream gooseberry counterparts, so its very handy producer in my yard. The berries are medicinally regarded as a tonic, so who knows it might be the next supa food, but that's not likely as its free and no one will get rich selling it.

Further reading and research tools for those hungry individuals:

http://weedyconnection.com/database/complete_list.html

<http://www.weeds.gov.au/cgi-bin/weedidtool.pl>

<http://www.pfaf.org/user/default.aspx>

<http://www.naturalsequencefarming.com/phpBB3/index.php>

The Verdant Vista Community Garden of Ellenbrook is a great initiative to unite the community, enjoy and learn about aspects of sustainable, *organic* food production. We are located about 300m down the limestone track on Verdant Vista (behind Rainbow Waters water playground) in Ellenbrook. There are four communal beds, which for a \$20 garden membership (that is charged per household to encourage the whole family to get involved) are available to anyone who would like to help grow and tend to the various plants in those gardens. This is a great way to get involved in the garden as it helps foster friendships with like minded, interesting people, plus you get a share in the produce (always a delicious bonus!). There are also private lease allotments. These are 2m by 3m and are \$75 a year (plus the membership fee). All private allotments have enjoyed bumper crops this year. We enjoy sharing our produce and our knowledge with each other, and so far it has been a "blooming" success. We also have many exciting projects we are preparing for our Open Day at the moment, we are building a potting shed, a pizza oven and hope to have our "Food Forrest" and chickens established by the end of the year. **Our Open Day will be on Saturday the 22nd of October 2011 between 1 and 4pm**, we hope that you will join us and make the day a great success! We are always looking for willing volunteers to help out at our "Busy Bees" which are held every 1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday of the month. If you would like any information about garden membership or any of the exciting projects we have planned, you are able to find us on Facebook or you can email our Secretary at pippa.armitage@gmail.com. **We hope to see you down at the garden soon!**



MULBERRY MAGIC

Roz Hart

In Perth there are three main types of mulberry tree that grow and fruit well: the traditional English (sometimes called Persian) mulberry tree which fruits at Christmas time, the Hicks Fancy which fruits in October and the white mulberry about which I am just learning. This is also an October fruiter. All are big trees and require a lot of space. Mulberries are also very messy trees so don't, as I once saw, plant one by the back door unless you want your white carpet turned pink by the passage of many mulberry laden feet. It's better to plant your mulberry tree in your far-away permaculture zone, the place for trees visited a lot for a short time of the year. Having your tree hanging over the back fence into the lane means you can share your bounteous crop with the neighbours as well as with the birds. You are also providing mulberry leaves for the kids who raise silkworms and all can share in the harvest without invading your backyard.

So, mulberry season is fast approaching. What can you do with your zillions of mulberries over the 6 week period? To start with, enjoy them straight from the tree, they are such tasty juice bombs especially when picked warm on a sunny day. Mulberries provide a wonderful tree for children to climb and to learn about gathering and eating ripe fruit. It's wise to have old long sleeved shirts available at the back door for family and visiting friends so that their parents don't hate you for turning all their children's clothes purple! Secondly, a quick picking before dinner makes a lovely fruit salad dessert, either mixed with other berries or alone with yoghurt. A quick sprinkle of lemon juice onto the berries really brings out the flavor both raw and when cooking them. Mulberries do not store well, they develop mould quickly so either eat or cook your daily harvest. I don't even try to store them overnight. This I'm sure contributes to the lack of commercial use of mulberries, making them a very special home harvest crop.

Taste-wise the two types of black mulberries are very different and most people strongly prefer one over the other. My favourite is the October mulberry as it fruits when there is not much other fruit ripe and I love the taste. Others prefer the Christmas mulberry which has a sweeter and stronger taste but fruits right in the middle of the summer fruit season. In our family we refer to them as the "superior and inferior mulberries" but we disagree as to which is which!

Mulberries make great pies, stewed mulberries, colourful pink/purple mousse, good crumble dessert and can be substituted for most fruit in other recipes. However although they make a lovely cake, it needs icing. As my boys observed "a congealed lava cake?" Gray is not a usual colour for the outside of a cake. The inside is pink and lovely but it's better iced to cover the unusual colour.

Some points worth noting are that mulberries are in my opinion much better to grow than other berries because there are no spines to scratch and hurt young fingers, important when you have children. Mulberries picked on a warm sunny day have a lot more flavor than those picked on a dull day. You don't have a dud tree, it's the sunshine that brings out the sugars and flavour. Also if you encourage your young pickers to eat as they go and collect you some, instant feedback means they should reward you with better flavoured mulberries.

My favourite way to keep mulberries for a later date to enjoy is by making mulberry port. This takes 12 months before its ready to drink so is not for those in a hurry.

ROZ'S FAVOURITE MULBERRY PORT RECIPE

Makes 5L wine which all my friends tell me is more honestly named and enjoyed as Port!

Ingredients

- 2 kg fresh ripe mulberries, picked on a sunny day when they are at full sweetness (this really does matter!)
- 1 litre cooled boiled water
- 1 Campden tablet
- 1 ½ litres sugar syrup SG 300 (ie 1 kg sugar dissolved in 1 litre v hot water then cooled)
- 1 tsp citric acid
- 1 tsp yeast nutrient
- 1 tsp yeast (all purpose wine yeast), no pectinase is needed for this wine

Method

1. Add enough of the cooled boiled water to cover the mulberries in a fermenting bucket and mash the fruit (potato masher works fine, but as squirting mulberry juice everywhere makes a big mess, its important to do under-water)
2. Add the crushed Campden tablet
3. Add the remainder of the 1 litre of water and leave for 24 hours for the Campden tablet to kill the wild yeast.
4. Activate commercial yeast at the same time. To do this sprinkle the 1 tablespoon yeast onto the surface of about 100 mls warm (NOT HOT) boiled water and allow to dissolve slowly for about 5 mins. Then add 1 teaspoon sugar, stir gently, cover and wait for yeast to activate ie start to froth. This may take several hours. Be patient!
5. 20 hours later make up the sugar solution with boiling water.
6. After about another 4 hours, when this has cooled (ie allowing 4 hours for this), add it plus the activated yeast, the citric acid and the yeast nutrient to the mulberry pulp in the plastic bucket. Add lid to keep other yeasts out.
7. Ferment for 4-5 days, stirring often with a long handled metal spoon, at least 3 x per day. Strain through clean (boiled) cotton, old sheet material works well. The mixture is sometimes but not always really hard to strain, can take 2 hrs to strain 4 litres so allow enough time!
8. Put into 5 litre demijohn, top up with water if necessary but should just about fill bottle anyway. Want very little airspace on top. Add airlock. Should bubble steadily and noisily for at least a week and then slows down. Rack wine after about 6 weeks.
9. Taste and add sugar if the fermentation has slowed down, this helps it become port.
10. Rack again after 6 months and then after a year. Will be ready to drink after 12 months.

Mushrooms on the mind

Todd Mansfield, Green.Globe.Notion, greenglobenotion@hotmail.com



Phoenix Oyster

In permaculture we are interested in making connections between elements. It is not so much a focus on the quantity of elements in the design but the beneficial interactions that exist between them. We look to nature and design based on natural processes. In nature mycelium, the vegetative stage of the mushroom life-cycle, is constantly hard at work building soil by breaking down organic matter into thick layers of humus rich soil. Infiltrated in most, if not all land masses on earth, mycelium is constantly hard at work

breaking down logs and stumps into mulch, mulch into humus, and humus into topsoil.

To bring the magic of fungi into a permaculture system I believe the low-tech outdoor methods work best. Methods such as log and stump cultivation take a few materials. Hardwood logs from suitable tree species must be cut and left to age for two to six weeks. Keeping the logs off of the ground limits the competition from wild fungus, and keeping them moist is a must so shade is recommended. After the aging period simply drill holes along the length of the logs and insert dowel spawn of selected species such as Shiitake, Elm Oyster and Phoenix Oyster. After adding the dowel spawn, a method mycologists call *inoculation*, the logs are stacked in a pile horizontally off of the ground for approximately six to twelve months. This process is called *incubation* and the logs must be kept moist and out of the sun.



Pearl Oyster

During the *incubation* period the mycelium from the dowels grow throughout the log. When the mycelial colonies meet, they merge to form one continuous, interconnected organism. After six to twelve months the logs are submerged in water for twelve to twenty four hours. This will shock the mushrooms into forming. Remove the logs from the water and stack them vertically. Keep them moist by watering daily and harvest your delicious mushrooms when they look full grown.

Permaculture systems can easily flourish with gourmet and medicinal mushrooms. From Elm Oyster mulch patches fruiting in swales, Shaggy Mane and King Stropharia mushrooms growing in the garden, and crops of Shiitakes and medicinal Turkey Tail mushrooms popping out of logs in the food forest and woodlots. Mushrooms can be integrated in most systems of the permaculture farm and will provide crops of high quality produce.

The perennial mushroom patch takes minimal care including annual top ups with wood chips or dunking of logs to maintain humidity. If the interest is in minimal care, inoculated logs can be buried in the ground in a moist shady area and left to fruit seasonally. If constant dependable crops are needed to supply a market then simple shade structures with irrigation misters can be built. The system can be scaled up or down and can take more or less time to manage, the choices are up to the designer as well as the person who will manage the mushroom project. Mushrooms are adaptive as long as their needs are met.



Shiitake

Fungi is the foundation of all woodlands, providing among other things nutrient rich soil for trees to grow. They can filter water, support plant guilds, and even break down some serious toxins! The more the Fungal Kingdom is explored the more astounding and ground breaking discoveries are made.

To find mushroom dowels and supplies simply contact Green.Globe.Notion mushroom supplies on greenglobenotion@hotmail.com.

A local inspiration: Cecilia Omlor of Unique Organique

Brooke 'Sparkles' Murphy

Cecilia is the softer side of permaculture and runs FANTASTIC workshops on all things raw and fermented. A real mumma of nourishing traditions and permaculture food prep. Cecilia Omlor is the founder of Unique Organique.

Unique Organique believes in traditional real foods, living foods and nutrient dense wholefoods that are authentically organic for Health. Life. Energy. Their philosophy is digestive friendly foods, with a love for raw wild fermented foods which are the pinnacle of nourishing and healing foods...and are so delicious!

"My real reward is education of nourishing wisdom, especially to children, about real nourishing foods, how to prepare them to maximise their health potential and flavour, and the importance of food as our medicine." Cecilia

Check out Cecilia's upcoming Paddock - to Pickling - to Plate MasterClass -
Sat Oct 22nd \$ 225

For more information see the Unique Organique website: www.uniqueorganique.com.au



Planning for Catastrophe: part 2

Warwick Rowell

Bill Bonner writes a daily financial newsletter. In a recent one he pointed out a core contributor to this issue:

"We never completed our reflections on why you need a refuge...a place to retreat...a family stronghold.

As society becomes more complex, each man depends more on his neighbours...and on people he has never met on the other side of the world. The Arab demonstrators in Tripoli, for example, have to eat. Their bread may have been baked by a local bakery, but the wheat may have come from Australia, France or Canada. And the oven in which it was baked may have been assembled in Germany or Ireland...with parts imported from China or India.

As each person becomes more specialized, the efficiency of the system increases. A man who focuses on a single thing is more likely to do it better than one who does several things. He is able to develop tools and tricks that help him be more productive, thereby defeating the generalist in market competition. Everyone gets a little richer.

But specialization makes the world more vulnerable to systemic risk. Small problems become much bigger ones. Local famines, for example, have the potential to become global famines.

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Obviously, the first protection against famine is wealth. There is almost always food available - at some price. Generally, but not always, it goes to the highest bidder. So, having some money is in itself a measure of safety. Always has been. (But that conclusion rests on some assumptions:)

Assumption one: Money is available - ie under the mattress.

Assumption 2: You can get your money out of the bank.

Assumption 3: You can sell less convertible assets for food and water."

A permaculturist might ask: Why not remove the assumptions by minimising paper money in your system? Minimize the outgo, rather than maximize the income?

Clean water, stored. Clean food, stored. Stocks of hard tack. Refer to the LDS website - their well worked out policy is to have a year's supply of food available. The principle is "store what you eat, and eat what you store.". They provide links to sites about freezing, vacuum packing, preserving, and so on.

Famines in Western Europe disappeared with the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte and the rise of better transportation systems. European wars closed borders and choked trade. Peace opened them up again. Then, canals and trains made it possible to move grain from one area to the next. The last major famine in Western Europe was in the 18th century. Since then, famines in Europe have been the result of politics.

The great famine in Ireland, for example, was triggered by a blight on potato crops. But had their land not been taken from them, and had they been allowed to buy and sell freely, rather than only with Britain on terms it set, the Irish would have fared much better. Thanks to the curious set of political circumstances in the mid-19th century, Ireland remained a food exporter, even while a million Irish peasants died of hunger. Likewise, in WWII, the Netherlands suffered 30,000 deaths in the "Hungerwinter" because of punishing restrictions imposed by the occupying German troops.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, many people have gone to bed hungry. Tens of millions died of starvation. But almost all the deaths can be traced to the murderous intentions or incompetent administration of governments. In this regard, as in many others, the Soviet Union and China were world leaders. Goofy theories and bad policies reduced the amount of food available. Then, communist governments used food shortages as a weapon against their internal enemies.

But people with wealth can also be popular scapegoats when times get tough. The easy money policies of the Fed during the last two decades have made America's rich richer than ever, while the incomes and wealth of 95% of the population has barely risen at all. If food supplies were short, it wouldn't be at all surprising if the mobs turned against "the rich," intentionally withholding food from them.

Hunger was largely responsible for the French Revolution. Mobs gathered in front the Tuileries Palace, protesting the high cost of food. Inflation and bad weather had driven up the price of a loaf of bread to almost an entire day's wages by an ordinary labourer.

Marie Antoinette, wife of Louis 16th, is said to have asked:

"What are they complaining about?"

"They have no bread," came the answer.

"Well, let them eat cake," was her witty, but ultimately fatal, reply.

She lost her head in the Revolution. So did thousands of others.

Mobs need scapegoats. And hungry mobs are not particularly careful about whom they choose.

Pointing People In The Right Direction

Awake Magazine, awake.com.au, September 2011

US president Barack Obama copped a bit of flak in 2009 for appointing a Harvard law professor to a senior White House regulatory position. The reason Cass Sunstein was viewed as a controversial choice by some people was due to his advocacy of an approach to policy known as “liberal paternalism”. Discussed at length in *Nudge*, which Sunstein co-authored with Richard Thaler, liberal paternalism takes the view that people need some help to make choices which are good for them and others. In essence, the policy-makers decide which option would be in people’s best interests (the “paternalism” part), then set up the system in such a way that they are channelled into that choice – but not forced (the “liberalism” part).

Many feel that this approach imposes values in an overly prescriptive way, although the authors of *Nudge* go to great lengths to discuss the ethics of liberal paternalism, and the boundaries which should be applied. The thing about nudging people is that it actually works. There are many examples which show that peoples actions can be easily influenced by the way in which a system is designed.

One of the examples give in *Nudge* relates to organ donations. The authors make the point that the fact that few people donate their organs is not reflective of a deliberate decision not to do so, but simply because they neglect to tick the organ donor box on their drivers licence form. In one study reported in the book, when people were required to tick a box to indicate that they wish to donate their organs, only 42% did so. However, in the reverse situation, where people were required to tick if they did not wish to donate, 82% of people chose to donate. In other words, most people just choose the default option.

Applying these lessons to the environmental field, there are many opportunities for applying which Sunstein and Thaler term “choice architecture” – by which decisions and choices are presented in such a way that certain outcomes are more likely. As previously mentioned in *Wake-Up Call*, a small German town tried making green energy the default option, and found that 94% stuck with it.

When people were required to actually choose green energy as an option, less than 10% did so.

We can also apply these principles to the way in which we design our environment. Many workplaces have taken the approach of moving recycling bins closer to peoples desks, and rubbish bins further away. Despite the occasional howls of protest, this simple change almost inevitably leads to a substantial reduction in the amount of waste-to-landfill generated by these offices.

The drivers of the success of choice architecture are familiar to those who study behaviour change. Firstly, from a rationalist point of view, we will often do what is easiest, especially when it is something we are not really passionate about. Those who care deeply about where their waste goes will actively seek out the recycling bin. The rest will recycle if it doesn’t cost them any time and energy – otherwise the nearest bin will do. Designing the system for those who are relatively disengaged with the issue to do the right thing without having to go out of their way seems a bit defeatist, but is an effective way of achieving the desired result.

Habits are another reason why system design is important. Studies show that as much as 50% of our behaviour is habitual, meaning we do it unconsciously, supported by stable and repetitive environmental context. As a result, we are often on autopilot, not really thinking too much about the wider implications of what we are doing. In such a circumstance, we are seemingly not really in control of our decisions – our surroundings are doing the thinking for us. These surroundings can be designed to guide us towards actions which are beneficial to us, or not.

Which brings us back to the question about ethics. Do we have the right to design a system which imposes a particular way of acting? Sunstein and Thaler argue that all systems have to be designed in some way, and that there is always a value judgement made by the designers of choices. Where there is a demonstrable societal benefit in people adopting more sustainable behaviours, why not design a system which makes this the more likely outcome?

It is well known that supermarkets are designed in a way which guides us towards their preferred outcomes (i.e. more money spent), through tactics such as placing essential items in the far corners of the supermarket, and enticing us at the checkout with impulse buying opportunities such as chocolate. Imagine if a more responsible approach was taken, whereby as much effort was put into guiding people towards healthy and sustainable choices, rather than just profit.

Awake provides psychology-based services to support the development of sustainable behaviour in individuals, groups and organisations. Visit www.awake.com.au for more info

Exercise - Design Your Environment

We are influenced by how our choices are presented to us. The following exercise invites you to take stock of how your life is set up, to support sustainable or unsustainable behaviours. Make a note of how your physical environment and personal routines are set up to support behaviours or habits which you would rather change.

Work out a way to change some of these aspects of your environment and routines.

Here are some examples...

- Is it easy to reach the switch to turn off your appliances at the wall?
- Do you do your weekly shopping at a place which provides plenty of local or sustainably produced goods?
- Is it easier to get to your bike than your car in the garage?
- Could you hang a warm jumper over the thermostat to prompt you and others to put it on instead of turning the heating up?
- Can your printer (home or office) be set to print double-side by default?
- Can re-used paper (already printed on one side) be reached easier from your desk than brand new paper?

These all sound like small things, but often the slightest changes to our physical environment and routines can make a big difference in encouraging sustainable behaviours.

Is ELECTRICITY the only form of ENERGY?

David Brown

Energy is often conflated with electricity (eg, CWR Seminars: Mark Rayner, 3/08/11; Carmen Lawrence, 6/07/11; and others). Where the context is clear this imprecision does little harm. However, when the majority of solar input is ignored by only showing its contribution to electricity production, the energy accounts are distorted. In such an assessment, photo-voltaic systems are included but domestic and industrial solar hot water systems won't count even in the category, *solar thermal*, because they don't make electricity. Consequently, annual, global, installed, 'solar thermal' capacity is shown as only 0.6 GW.

Consequently, the solar energy in warmth and wind required to dry washing on a clothes line is not included in the national 'energy' accounts. If an electric dryer is substituted, the electricity shows in the accounts and the resulting higher 'energy' demand is used by planners and lobbyists to prove how much we need coal, oil, gas, nuclear or 'renewables' to generate that electricity. A return to drying on a clothes line will delete from the accounts the energy provided by the sun to provide exactly the same service as the dryer did: that energy becomes invisible because it is not electricity. Similar issues arise on a sunny day when blinds are closed and lights are on. When the blinds are opened and lights switched off, the energy is not shifted in the accounts from one column to another; it just disappears entirely. Most of the energy effect of rational, solar architecture is also invisible in such accounts. Remember, it is EQUIVALENT 'WORK' BEING DONE IN EACH CASE.

This wonky way of doing accounting is analogous to the non-recognition of unpaid, voluntary work done by millions of people (much of it by women in the home). Because no money is paid for these essential services, it has no economic value in the accounts. It is invisible despite that the economy would soon fall in a heap if it were not provided. Likewise, our 'energy' accounting is not sufficiently explicit in showing the contribution of reduced water consumption to significant energy savings – by local recycling, garden mulching, abandoning flush toilets, installing rainwater tanks, etc, and more importantly than all of these, auditing and reducing industrial water consumption.

Names like, *Verve Energy*, can easily mislead. Why is it not called, *Verve Electric*? Similarly, *Western Power*, and things called, *power stations*, only refer to electricity. The narrow focus on electricity also leaves out so much energy demand, eg, the whole transport system (not electric trains). Our 'energy' accounts suggest what it would be like if the 'power stations' closed down, but not if the Big Power Station (the sun) closed down. By obscuring many possibilities, this wonky energy accounting reduces the incentive and inventiveness needed to resolve energy issues, eg, where wave power is harnessed directly to energise desalination mechanically, avoiding the inherent entropy of two energy conversions entailed in using electricity.

SUGGESTIONS -

- Get the words right as well as the numbers. Using wrong words and labels makes the numbers 'wrong'. Cure distortions in the accounts by referring to *electricity* rather than *energy*, as appropriate.
- Compile generic energy accounts as well as specific electrical energy accounts. These will help to identify worthwhile options and investments.

Community Notices: Want to get involved?

Permaculture West

For an up-to-date list Permaculture Courses and Events visit the Permaculture West website:

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

PermaBlitz news: <http://permaculturewest.org.au/community/permaBlitz>

Perth Green Events

For a great calendar of Green Events in Perth (including Permaculture courses!) check out:

<http://www.perthgreenevents.com>

HOUSE-MATE WANTED IN STRATTON

I am looking for someone to houseshare, and thought Permaculture West might be able to assist. I am interested in Permaculture, and am trying to find someone who will enjoy living in a household that operates sustainably.

The details are:

- ensuite bedroom with own entry and lounge area, shared kitchen and family room
- option to establish permaculture gardens
- \$250 per week, plus utilities
- In Stratton, walking distance to John Forrest National Park and Talbot Road Bushland

Contact Helen: 0413 014 995

Productive water plants wanted!

We have three new ponds for water control after the engineers messed up the road to our north.

I want to make them productive, and would like to source some salvinia and some azolla.

Can any PAWA members help me please?

Many thanks, Warwick Rowell

Contact Warwick By Post: Rockneath, 101 Kinross Loop, Locked Bag 250 , Dunsborough 6281

Contact Warwick By phone: 0447 994 885

OGAWA AGM NOTICE

Organic Growers Association of WA (OGAWA) will be holding its AGM Saturday the 15th October at City Farm. They will be having an "Organic Festival", with the AGM at 9.00am and the Festival from 8.00am till 2.00pm. This is a great opportunity for you to go and see the "New Look" City Farm, catch a few workshops and demonstrations on Organic gardening and food, and support the group, local farmers and real food that we like to eat. So get behind them!

Introduction to Permaculture and Sustainable Living Course Terra Perma Design

2 day weekend course on 12 and 13th of November 2011. Price: \$250.

Contact Tash on 0414230 571 or <http://terraperma.com.au/> for bookings.

In today's more conscious society, people are desperately seeking ways to do the best they can in their own way. This is where Permaculture can play a large & diverse role in showing you alternatives to living more lightly on the earth. More than just organic gardening, it will open up a whole shift in perspective in how you live day to day. From recycling to retro fitting your home to water conservation and most importantly, building networks with like minded people to create local resilience where you live.

The 2 day introduction course will give you an insight into what permaculture is and how you can adopt ideas & techniques in your everyday life. There's always a hands on part in this workshop so you'll get some practical experience while having fun!

For more information and courses please head to <http://terraperma.com.au/>

EARTH SOLUTIONS – AVON VALLEY INC



BE PART OF THE SOLUTION FROM THE GROUND UP

www.earthsolutions-avonvalley.org.au

ABN 97 565 144 772

Postal Address: 30 Bouverie Rd, YORK 6302

Invitation to your Contacts & Members

Expressions of interest are invited from groups and individuals wishing to participate in the

H.A.E.F

HISTORICAL, AGRICULTURAL, ENVIRONMENTAL FESTIVAL

Fun Filled Family Day

Sunday 13 May 2012

Start time 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

(if groups wish to set-up prior, access to the site will be available from

12 noon Saturday 12 May 2012

Campover area available (self supporting)

Venue: Swan Hill Farm, 1175 Jennapullin Road,
Southern Brook, via Northam, Western Australia.

The program for the Festival will be offering diverse static and physical displays of historical, agricultural and environmental focus to attract a wide range of community interests and participation.

Featuring Working Clydesdale Horses, Environmental Displays, Donkey's, Horses in Harness, Scottish Entertainment with Highland Games, Farmers' Market, Music and physical entertainment, Animal Nursery, Shearing, Working sheep dogs, viewing of Largest Sculpture of a Clydesdale Horse in the Southern Hemisphere made from recycled fencing materials and many other sculptures from recycled materials, many childrens, youths and family displays and activities.

Nation wide advertising and marketing of this event will be circulated promoting this inaugural Historical, Agricultural, Environmental Festival, utilising all media outlets - radio, TV, internet, websites, 'flyers', posters, newspapers and magazines.

Expression of interest is sought from you in contributing to this Festival, to:

- √ Sponsoring of the Festival or part of,
- √ Making a donation – financial or 'in kind'

Festival Banking details – Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 A/c No. 141 160 960

- √ Static or physical displays of interest
- √ Entertainment
- √ Community groups providing a service
e.g., parking, gate, security, first aid post, marquees, bus transporting
- √ Stallholders
- √ Artists
- √ Participation

To contact for further information;

Roma Paton, Secretary HAEF Earth Solutions-Avon Valley Inc,
Email earthsolutions.haef2012@yahoo.com.au
Karen Ducat (t) 08 9622 3886, (m) 0438 223 886, (e) monabri@bbnet.com.au

Kind regards,
Karen Ducat
Festival Coordinator



PermacultureWest

Permaculture Association of Western Australia

The Permaculture Association of Western Australia 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:

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

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

Permaculture Ethics & Design Principles

