What is Permaculture?

Permaculture is a design system that works towards harmonious integration of landscape and people to provide food, shelter, energy and other needs in a sustainable way. It takes into account food production, structures, technologies, energy, natural resources, landscape, animal systems, plant systems, and social and economic structures. It is applicable to urban and rural conditions and any scale of design. The 10 basic principles of Permaculture design are guidelines that you can apply to any projects. They are demonstrated in the image below, can you find them?

Permaculture is about working with, rather than against, nature.

Permaculture is = PERMAnent AgriCULTURE + PERMAnent CULTURE

Permaculture draws upon traditional practices of earth stewardship integrated with appropriate modern technology. The term "Permaculture" was coined in the 70s by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. Today, Permaculture work is being carried out in over 100 countries by many thousands of permaculture design course graduates.

Permaculture ethics are:
Earth care • People care • Fair share

10 Principles of Permaculture

1. Diversity – Aims to integrate a variety of beneficial species of food, plants, and animals into design. This builds a stable interactive poly-cultural system which provides human needs and also for the needs of other species.
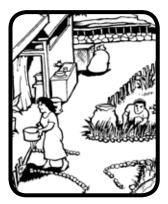

2. Edge Effect – In general, there is more energy and more diversity of life on the edge where 2 types of natural systems overlap. On these borders one can access the resources of both sides. Using the edge effect, and other natural patterns that you observe, creates the best effect.

**3. Energy Planning – ** Placing the elements of your design in such a way as to minimize the use of energy (including fossil fuels and human labor). Utilizing the energy and resources that you have, first on-site and then from outside the system, as effectively as possible. On-site energy resources include natural forces such as gravity, wind power, waterpower. This saves time, energy, and money.

4. Energy Cycling – In a natural system there is no waste or pollution. The output from one natural process becomes the resource for another. Recycle and reuse all of resources as many times as possible.

5. Scale – Creating "human-scale" systems. Choose simple, appropriate technologies for use in designs. Only create systems that are manageable. Start small and take achievable steps towards an ideal goal.

6. Biological Resources – Using natural methods and processes to achieve tasks. Find things in nature, like plants, animals, or microbes, that are supportive of the system design and minimize outside energy input.

7. Multiple Elements – Support each vital need and essential function in more than 1 way, so that a temporary failure in 1 element will not stop the functioning of others. Also, recognize that there is almost always more than 1 way to achieve any task.

8. Multiple Functions – Most things can be used in a variety of ways and for a variety of functions. One rule of thumb in Permaculture is to try to design 3 uses for every element of the system. This can save space, time, and complication in any particular project.

9. Natural Succession – Work with nature and the processes of natural systems. Anticipate future developments through research and observation when necessary.

10. Relative Location – Place every element of your design in relationship to others so that they benefit from each other. For example, store tools near where they will be used.