



## Permaculture

Permaculture is the design of systems that create sustainable human environments.

The word itself is a contraction of permanent agriculture, as well as permanent culture, since cultures cannot survive for very long without a sustainable agricultural base and an ethical use of the land. On one level, permaculture deals with plants, animals, constructions and infrastructures (water, energy, communications, etc). However, it is not only about these elements themselves, but also about the relationships that we can establish between them, due to the way in which we place them within the landscape.

The aim is to create systems that are ecologically compatible and financially viable, that can provide for their own needs, do not exploit nor contaminate, and are sustainable in the long term. Permaculture uses plants' and animals' inherent qualities, combined with the natural characteristics of land and structures, to produce a system that can support life both in the city and in the countryside, while using the least possible physical area.

This living philosophy is built around three ethical principles: caring for the land, caring for the people, and fair distribution of profits. In this system, excess time, wealth and energy are reinvested back into the land and the people, to further benefit the community while also considering the global picture.

**It is based** on the observation of natural ecosystems, the wisdom contained in traditional farming methods, as well as modern scientific knowledge and technology. Following ecological models, permaculture creates a *cultivated ecology*, which is designed to produce more food for humans and animals than is usually found in the natural world.

Sustainable ecosystems, in which humans intervene and become a part of, can offer a positive future to a decadent humanity, in permanent search of external pleasures, while forgetting the simplest ones and disconnecting more and more from Gaia, our Mother Earth. Humankind, tired of internal and external conflict, is awakening en masse to the sound of our inner universe and the one around us, which are both a part of Nature.

We must not fight to control Nature, as we must not fight to control each other. We should learn to listen to her and use her inherent qualities to help her flourish, while giving us all we need to live a full and healthy life. This symbiotic and committed relationship between humans and their environment, as well as between human beings themselves, is perhaps one of the most logical paths available to us at the dawn of this new millennium.

Based on information from a book by Bill Mollison  
'An Introduction to Permaculture', Tagari Publications, 1994  
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