



Wildwood

Permaculture - A brief introduction

Permaculture embodies many approaches that we are already likely to be using, but encourages us to think holistically about our woodland (or garden, or community, or life). It is a design technique engendering observation and planning, action and implementation in the best way for us, the environment and also the earth's resources. Permaculture is modelled closely on ecosystems and encourages us to think about how aspects relate together as part of a whole eg:

- ◆ Within a woodland - trees, people, the fire pit
- ◆ In a garden – salad plants, the garden path, water
- ◆ In our lives – our homelife, our worklife, our beliefs
- ◆ The cycle of water from collection, to our tap, to re-use in the garden

“The essence of permaculture is to work with what is already there: firstly to preserve what is best, secondly to enhance existing systems and lastly to introduce new elements. This is a low-energy approach, making minimum changes for maximum effect and has the least destructive impact on both natural and human communities.” Patrick Whitefield

Permaculture inspires us to ask questions such as - where does my/our food come from? Water? Energy needs? Where do these things go afterwards?

An important component of permaculture is creating edible ecosystems, using perennial plants where possible.

SOME PERMACULTURE PRINCIPLES

The following are some of the principles that we can apply when designing our garden or woodland, or indeed our lifestyle.

Diversity	Eg plant species, culture, activities
Work with Nature	Follow nature's example
Multi-Functions	Each element has more than one function Eg a woodland can provide timber, wildlife habitat, shelterbelt, firewood, a place for leisure, carbon fixing
Multi-Elements	Each function has more than one element providing it Eg for watering young trees we might have a pond, rainwater collection and use swales (contour ditches for irrigation)
Minimum Effort Maximum Effect	Think about resources and energy use when planning
Edge Effects	The interface between 2 environments is the most diverse
Cycles	In nature all cycles are complete and there is no waste, only resources.
Relationships Between Elements	Consider how things relate together Eg the coppice area to the woodstore to the firepit
The problem is the Solution	Try and think outside the box eg a boggy field can become a willow biomass resource

FURTHER READING

Permaculture in a Nutshell, Patrick Whitefield

Introduction to Permaculture, Bill Mollinson & Reny Mia Slay

The Woodland Way, Ben Law

How to make a Forest Garden, Patrick Whitefield

The Permaculture Magazine, Permanent Publications

www.permaculture.co.uk

