

WHAT IS PERMACULTURE?



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Permaculture is a design system for creating sustainable human environments. Modern Permaculture is a way of looking at a whole system or problem, observing how the parts relate, planning to mend sick systems, and seeing connections between key parts. You can apply Permaculture principles to home-building and renovation; transportation and energy; business and economics; organizations; education; community projects; food production; landscaping; and all other areas of your life. It is a worldwide sustainability movement, founded in the 1970s by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren.

Practitioners learn from the working systems of nature to plan to fix damaged landscapes of human agricultural and city systems. It is about helping people make redesign choices, setting new goals and a shift in thinking that affects not only their home but their actions in whatever they do. The Austin, Texas Permaculture Guild offers courses in Permaculture Design.

There is a fundamental set of core values which remain constant whether you are creating systems for a town planning or trade, or whether the land they care for is a window box or an entire forest. These core values are:

Earthcare – recognizing that the physical components of the Earth are closely integrated to form a complex interactive system, that Earth is our valuable home, and that we are a part of Earth, not apart from it.

Peoplecare – supporting and helping each other change to ways of living that do not harm us or the planet, and to develop healthy societies.

Fairshare (or placing limits on consumption) - ensuring that Earth's limited resources are used in ways that are equitable and wise.

Modern thought about Permaculture began with the issue of sustainable food production. It started with the belief that for people to feed themselves sustainably, they need to move away from reliance on industrialized agriculture. Industrial farms use technology powered by fossil fuels and each specializes in producing high yields of a single crop frequently using artificial fertilizers.

Permaculture stresses the value of low inputs and diverse crops. The model for this is an abundance of small-scale markets and home gardens for food production, resulting in reduced food miles (the distance food travels from production to table.)