

Belstone Environmental Walking Tour

The 12 Principles of Permaculture

“The central aim of permaculture is to reduce our ecological impact. Or more precisely to turn our negative ecological impact into a positive one.”

Patrick Whitefield

Permaculture ethics are:

- Earthcare - respects & preserves the biodiversity of the planet & creates new habitats;
- Peoplecare - care for ourselves & other people, & meet our needs in sustainable ways;
- Fair Shares - promotes equality, justice & abundance, now & for future generations. (some for all, forever)

Permaculture principles are:

1. Observe & interact. Active observing increases our awareness & stimulates our natural curiosity.
2. Catch & store energy. Working with natural rhythms & energy levels for greatest productivity.
3. Obtain a yield. From any system or activity e.g. job satisfaction, fun, play, friendship, growth as well as money, time saved, material gains
4. Apply self-regulation & accept feedback, both what needs to change & appreciation. Learn to hear it without feeling criticised, being aware of the consequences of our actions. Honesty & clarity are essential qualities.
5. Use & value renewable resources & services. Energy, knowledge, skills...
6. Produce no waste. Re-educate, refuse, reduce, rethink, repair, replenish, re-use, re-gift, recycle. Consider for all resources e.g. time, energy.
7. Design from patterns to details. Look at the overall pattern, & then address the detail. E.g. planning a meal, finding unique solutions
8. Integrate rather than segregate. The connections between elements in a system are as important as the elements themselves.
9. Use small & slow solutions. Don't try & do it all at once. Small steps.
10. Use & value diversity. Diverse systems are more resilient & stable.
11. Use & value edges & the marginal. The interface between 2 ecosystems is the edge; it is an active & productive space. It allows us to be brave & challenge ourselves, perhaps with new & exciting possibilities.
12. Creatively use & respond to change. Change is inevitable & often beyond our control, influence & even comprehension. How we deal with it is important.

Redefined by David Holmgren 2002. Taken from Looby MacNamara's book

Water Harvesting & Using Less @Ferndale. (2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 12)

Collecting water from the downpipes into a large container

-> syphon to tanks in the garden near/next to where they are needed

-> use hoses, buckets or watering cans as required.

Bonus - a leaky gutter fills one at the summer house, providing a lovely sound when it is raining.

Last year we still had one full tank of water on site after watering all the seedlings through April-May 2020.

Currently we do not need to change our systems unless we want to:

- go off grid completely (needs filtering systems, alternate bathing/toilets)
- have a pool for fish, storing water, reflecting light, swimming
- use the flow from top floor in energy production

Using less

House:

All toilets with rocks in to reduce amount/flush. A compost toilet uses none.

We have a smaller bath on top floor which is the one generally used for baths

Eco setting on shower reduces flow/time

Bucket of water from waterbutt for flushing downstairs toilet most times

Kitchen: mixer tap (Ikea) to mix air with water to reduce water use for rinsing/cleaning. Moved sink closer to hot water source (when reorganised kitchen) to reduce waste waiting for hot water to come through tap.

Garden:

Mulching - straw, paper, cut grass, composted kitchen waste, woodchips. This reduces evaporation from the soil (with the bonuses of making the fewer weeds easier to remove). It also is taken into the soil as it breaks down providing a better humus environment, holding water better than the original shale soil we inherited.

Perennial plants can often make better use of existing water in the soil with their extensive root system with polycultures of different shapes, depths and heights making more complete use. (Forest garden?)

Suit plants to environment, placing those that need wet in the damp zones.

Shelter from the wind reduces evaporation from soil and transpiration from leaves.

Finally, we have few pots, and we wash the car, rinse off mud etc from the water butt supply at the house.

Mostly taken from "The Earth Care Manual" by Patrick Whitefield 2006

Dawn and Graham Roe, Ferndale