

Intro to Permaculture The Foundations of Permaculture Design Video Transcript

Music

The Permaculture design process itself is regenerative, like a tree. The process starts by studying the workings of the natural world. This part of the design process is like the tree's root system. We want to see how the water flows, how the wind blows, how the soils are deposited, how fire moves through the landscape and how the plants arrange themselves. We want to observe the norms and extremes of weather and climate. This is the study of ecology, botany, hydrology, climatology and many others. We also want to observe the patterns of humans. How did indigenous people inhabit a place? Where did they plant their crops? Where did they set up their villages?

After long and protracted observation, we conduct a site analysis. This is where we map the forces and flows of the site. If we have taken the time to do a thorough site analysis, the design becomes obvious. I always caution students about trying too hard on the design. If it's not coming easily, then perhaps you need to do more observation and study.

Design is the trunk of the tree. Permaculture has principles and methods to guide this process, which we'll be getting into later in the course. The Permaculture design system is where we get into the details of how to arrange systems for different climate types, from drylands to tropics to the temperate zones, mountains to valleys, coastal to inland regions. The design becomes an interconnection of systems, including water, roads, trees, buildings, gardens, fences and more.

After design comes implementation, building the systems. The system can be anything from a small balcony garden to a sprawling farm or ranch. The techniques will differ but the basic design system remains the same and that's what we'll be looking at in this course.

And finally feedback. This is where Permaculture stands out among other design systems in that the feedback loop is built in.

Just as the roots of a tree pull water and nutrients from far and near, deep and shallow, Permaculture design pulls knowledge from many areas.

With permaculture design, we look at every aspect of human settlements and the environment. Permaculture addresses political, economic and social systems as part of the design. Non-physical structures like commerce, governance, finance and access to land make the physical structures like ponds, orchards, homes and villages possible.

So the roots of the Permaculture design tree are fed by the fields of Energy, Finances, Economics, Ecology, Anthropology, Architecture, Geography, Horticulture, Agriculture, Biology, Botany, Engineering, urban planning, hydrology, forestry, marine science and many more.

Those nutrients are taken up into the wood of the trunk of the Permaculture design system tree, which is based on ethics and principles. That tree then grows leaves, and the fruits are harvested through the

design and development of farms, homes, villages, towns, communities, businesses, gardens, plantations, aquaculture systems, and others.

Permaculture is a way to steer our society towards a just, abundant and enduring future.

The Permaculture tree grows in a spiral, and has 7 major branches. As you learn the Permaculture design system, you follow the spiral through each of these branches, beginning at a personal and local level by putting your own house in order, and then moving into the collective and global level, as you expand out into your community and beyond. The seven branches are the Built Environment, Tools and Technology, Culture and Education, Health and Spiritual Well-being, Finance and Economics, Land Tenure and Community, and Land and Nature Stewardship.