

Intro to Permaculture – Permaculture Trees in the Drylands

Video Transcript

Music

In the drylands, getting trees established in degraded landscapes is an important step towards regenerating fertility and water cycles.

One strategy is to use earthworks to intercept the flow of water over compacted land and absorb it with swales placed on contour.

Many hardy species of pioneering trees are also nitrogen fixing, meaning they actually take nitrogen from the atmosphere and release it into the soil through their roots or leaf litter. Integration of trees into any kind of field cropping is essential.

It's not just the shelter from wind and sun that trees can provide for desert food plants, but salts tend to build up on desert soils when irrigation waters evaporate, and trees transpire and keep the salts from accumulating at the surface.

Once soils are improved around the hardy pioneering trees and water is now soaking into the ground, more valuable fruit, nut, and timber trees can be integrated into the newly improved microclimate.

Long term irrigation of exotic fruit and nut trees may be necessary in the desert, but many hardy natives produce yields as well without irrigation.

So you can see this is by no means exhaustive of all of the different possible uses and ways to plant trees in the drylands, but it gives you a little picture of how trees can integrate to restore and enhance the dryland ecosystem.