

Intro to Permaculture Solar Aspect Video Transcript

Music

I want to touch on the importance of the cardinal directions in evaluating your site. Because we are talking about the whole planet, we will talk about “sun facing” or “pole facing” instead of North or South. East and West have the same sun influences in both the northern and the southern hemispheres.

We are looking at the roof of a house up above. The sun-facing direction of a house or a hill or mountain or any vertical object is the hot and dry side. Like I said before, the further you move from the equator, the more relevant this is, and it’s completely irrelevant if you live near the equator. If you live on or near the equator, the direction of wind for cooling is more important than the sun sectors, but we’ll talk about that later.

The East-facing side of an object gets morning light. This means it warms up earliest, which is important, especially when there’s frost to burn off on a springtime garden.

The West is the hottest side because this is where the sun is shining later in the day, when the atmosphere has had time to warm up. The air is hot by midday in summer, and then that western sun makes it’s long descent in the West, and it can be brutally hot from that direction.

Finally we have the pole-facing side of an object, which is considered the cooler side. It is shaded during winter months, which also means that water doesn’t evaporate, and it is more moist on this side. This becomes more relevant the further towards the poles you are.

To understand more about how the sun moves through the sky, see the solar resources page.