What is Permaculture?

Toby Hemenway

Permaculture is hard to define, but I think of it as a design approach for realizing a new paradigm. Humans are a problem-solving species. We uncover challenges—How do we get food? How do we make shelter? How do we stay healthy?—and then we develop tools to solve those problems. We live on a planet that for millennia was large compared to the human population, its needs and impact. We could focus for the last 10,000 years on meeting our needs by expanding agriculture’s immense power to convert wild ecosystems into food and habitat for people, and we could ignore ecosystem health. But our industrial civilization of seven billion is chewing up ecosystems relentlessly. Without healthy ecosystems, we now know that humans, along with everything else, suffer. So we cannot focus solely on, “How do we

Sharing Harvest Traditions

Micah Anderson, Seattle Tilth Farm Works’ Education Manager

Harvest season is in full swing at the Seattle Tilth Farm Works (STFW) farm in Auburn. Harvest carts and baskets swell with ears of fresh golden corn, juicy red and purple tomatoes, slender green beans, and a dazzling array of delicious produce ready for market. This amazing bounty fills 52 Seattle Tilth CSA (community supported agriculture) boxes, stalls at the Columbia City and Madrona farmers markets, and shelves at Central Co-op. While relaxing after fulfilling another successful weekly harvest, several farmers share stories about harvest traditions from their past.

Grain harvests are especially significant in Ethiopia, where Akil Eshete was born. Teff, maize, wheat and barley are all important staples that farmers harvested by hand, pressured to bring it in safely before the rains. Farmers depended on help from the whole community and the host family always prepared a delicious meal to share, using freshly harvested ingredients.

Tabitha Maina remembers harvesting maize, cabbage, broccoli and tomatoes by hand in the Central Provence in Kenya. On large farms, farm managers often relied on employees to complete the harvest, but in smaller villages, farmers still relied on their communities. Tabitha particularly enjoyed sharing mukimo—a dish made with potatoes, corn, greens and stew meat—paired with ugali—a staple made from maize—during harvest season.

“After helping bring in the harvest, neighbors would jump, dance and sing together through the night.”

The petals on David Holmgren’s Permaculture flower represent basic human needs that we work to meet sustainably on personal, local and regional levels.

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Food from the Heart

Andrea Platt Dwyer, Executive Director

While I’ve never wanted to be a chef, I’ve always liked to cook. When I travel, one of my favorite things to do is visit the local grocery store or marketplace. What people eat, and what’s available for them to cook with, gives me a glimpse into the local culture. What fruits and vegetables are in season? What herbs and spices are readily available? What about dairy, meat, fish and staples? The local economy and social structure have an impact on what people eat, as do geography and climate. I learn a lot and feel a greater kinship with those who live there just by wandering through the markets.

Here at home, I also find food to be a window into different cultures. Whether it’s sharing the lunch prepared by the East African elders who come to farm weekly with us at Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, or attending one of our after-school cooking clubs for teens, I always come away with a deeper appreciation for food as a cultural bridge.

Perhaps the best place to see this in action at Seattle Tilth is to visit one of our community dinners, where volunteers gather to cook a meal for community members. Community dinners can involve twenty to thirty volunteer cooks who prepare food for 150 (or more!) community members. Leika Suzumura, who manages our Community Kitchens NW program and supports many community dinners, is a master at drawing people together in the kitchen. With an array of fresh, locally grown produce laid out on the counter, she’ll ask each of the twenty or so volunteer cooks, “What dish would you prepare if you were in your own kitchen?” One by one, each person present talks about their family, offering cherished recipes or long-held traditions that still hold sway in their kitchens. The result is delicious, authentic food that comes from the heart – not from a box or a freezer – and a room full of diners who are happy, well-fed, and excited about sharing their cultural heritage with one another.

Meet Our New Staff

Growing organically is something we teach, but it is also something we do as an organization. From top left to bottom right; Amanda Boyle, Clarissa Allen, Jessica Armantrout, Joanna Stodden, Katie Vincent, Matt Denton, Matthew McDermott, Melissa Dison, Paul Haas, Renee Kok and Stubbles the chicken.

Read all about our new staff (and those who’ve been around a while, too) on our blog: seattletilthblog.org/seattle-tilth-staff/.

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WAY TO GROW
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Way To Grow is the bi-monthly newsletter of Seattle Tilth. Readers are encouraged to submit article ideas and photos c/o the editor at the address above or to tilth@seattletilth.org. Seattle Tilth reserves the right to edit submissions for interest, length and style, and print them as space allows. Printed with soy-based ink on forest friendly paper.

The mission of Seattle Tilth is to inspire and educate people to safeguard our natural resources while building an equitable and sustainable local food system.
Country & City Cousins Celebrate at Seattle Tilth’s Harvest Fair

By Mark Musick

Described as “a country fair in the city,” the first Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair was held in September, 1988, as part of the celebration for Seattle Tilth’s 10th anniversary. The fair featured the city’s first all-organic neighborhood farmers market, combined with gardening workshops and presentations on composting, food preserving, cider pressing and a ceremonial tree planting.

From the beginning the event brought urban gardeners and local environmental organizations together with many of our state’s leading organic farmers. Participants in the first event 25 years ago included Willie Green’s Organic Farm, The Root Connection, Kirsp Farm, Cliffside Farm, Nash’s Organic Produce, Cascadian Farm, and Quilliscut Cheese.

While the Pike Place Market downtown had been a venerable tradition for decades, the Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair was our city’s first neighborhood farmers market and it paved the way for many more to come.

Originally billed as the “Taste of Organic Seattle,” the first Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair attracted more than 2,000 people. Although the event has doubled in size over the years, it remains a perfect blend of food, music, education and fun.

The regional Tilth movement was born out of meeting with Wendell Berry in Spokane in July, 1974, and the Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair embodies his call to unite what he described as “the constituency for a better kind of agriculture.” Today that constituency numbers in the hundreds of thousands, and the neighborhood farmers market is one of their favorite places.

People are drawn to outdoor markets for many reasons. In part it’s the food, the convivial atmosphere and the gathering with friends and neighbors. On a deeper level, it is also a reenactment of a centuries-long pattern in cultures across the planet for people to celebrate the harvest and strengthen our sense of community.

This year’s Harvest Fair will build upon that legacy. Highlights will include hands-on activities for people of all ages, including the urban livestock area with chickens, goats and bees, chicken poop bingo, Seattle Tilth Food Preservers showing off canning techniques, a lively music stage, and up to 100 community organizations, vendors and organic farmers. The Harvest Fair is a hive of activity and we welcome you to be part of the buzz.

Mark Musick is one of the founders of the Tilth movement.

**SHARING HARVEST TRADITIONS** Continued from page 1

In Somalia, Ramadhan Mugasa remembers the harvest season as a time of joyous celebration. After helping bring in the harvest, neighbors would jump, dance and sing together through the night. They would also share meals of ugali and gazali – a harvest specialty made with beans and corn – that was specially prepared by the host to share the harvest.

The harvest season meant bright, red-stained fingertips for Janell Patterson. In her early teens, Janell spent many summer days picking strawberries at local Bellingham farms. Janell enjoyed the fruits of her labor via a punch card and paycheck at the end of the week.

If you are interested in sampling some of STFW’s current harvest, meeting and learning more about the farmers and their harvest traditions, please come see us at the Columbia City Farmers’ Market on Wednesdays, or Madrona Farmers’ Market on Fridays.
Three Cheers for Urban Farm Hosts

Twenty-five fantastic hosts welcomed the public on July 13 during our Chicken Coop and Urban Farm Tour. Expert judges from the community selected special awards. And the winners are...

- Community Star -- congratulations Birdsong Farm!
- Sustainable Oasis and Frugal Urban Farmer -- congratulations Gretchen Siegrist!
- Gardening to the Max -- congratulations Ingela Wanerstrand and Brian Genung!
- Righteous Recycler -- congratulations Thirteen Vegetables!
- People’s Choice – congratulations to Ingela Wanerstrand and Brian Genung!

Big thanks to our inspiring hosts, hard working volunteers and generous sponsors Portage Bay Grange and Scratch and Peck Feeds.

WHAT IS PERMACULTURE? Continued from page 1

meet human needs?” Now we must add the words, “while preserving ecosystem health.” This is a huge paradigm shift that makes us re-evaluate almost everything humans do in light of how it affects the whole web of life.

It changes the tools that we use and changes the mindset required to develop and use new, appropriate tools. It also restores a relationship between people and nature that agriculture, by treating nature like a mere resource to be subjugated and consumed, had severed. That’s quite a shift.

Many people come to permaculture knowing that there is something wrong with the old worldview, but they don’t yet have a new paradigm to replace it. They are attracted to permaculture as better gardening or as a means of social change, and gradually adopt the new worldview as they see it overcoming the flaws and damage of the old. Others come to permaculture after shifting to this holistic paradigm because permaculture supports it and offers an approach to working within it. In both cases, it takes time to fully grasp the depth of permaculture in part because nearly all of us were raised in the old paradigm. After twenty years of practicing permaculture design, I still have trouble defining it.

Permaculture, then, is not a philosophy or worldview, and it is not a single tool. It is the approach for using the tools—a way of working that is guided by the new paradigm.

The definition of permaculture can be muddled, but the one that must rise to the top is that it is a design approach for arriving at regenerative solutions. In more concrete terms, permaculture tells us how to choose from a dauntingly large toolkit—all the human technologies and strategies for living—to solve the new problem of sustainability. It is an instruction manual for solving the challenges laid out by the new paradigm of meeting human needs while enhancing ecosystem health.

This clarifies the task set by permaculture, and I think it also distinguishes permaculture from the philosophy—the paradigm—required to use it effectively and helps us understand why permaculture is often called a movement. Permaculturists make common cause with all the other millions of people who are shifting to the new paradigm, and it is that shift—not the design approach of permaculture that supports it—that is worthy of being called a movement. Permaculture is not the movement of sustainability and it is not the philosophy behind it; it is the problem-solving approach the movement and the philosophy can use to meet their goals and design a world in which human needs are met while enhancing the health of this miraculous planet that supports us.

Toby Hemenway is author of Gaia’s Garden and instructor for Seattle Tilth’s Permaculture Design Course starting on October 12.
No Interns = No Harvest:
We couldn’t do it without them!
Falaah Jones, Eastside Programs Coordinator

At our Pickering Barn community learning garden in Issaquah, we are bringing in the harvest. Last year we grew nearly one ton of food and donated it to the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank. Planting, watering, tending, harvesting and delivering all of that food takes a lot of time, much more time than I have as the garden coordinator. How then do we make it happen? Garden interns are the magic that make it work!

This year we have an amazing trio of talented garden steward interns (soon to become a quintet) that each put his or her own special spin on the art of gardening and growing food. Since the rainy days of winter, Sid Gupta, Mario Luppino and Angela Inglis have helped over two-hundred children, an ample share of adults and hoards of visitors to grow and harvest food for the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank.

Our goal this year is 1.5 tons of food and we have so far harvested everything from pearl onions and mustard to the most amazing purple kohlrabi and crispy chard. Sid, Mario and Angela always have on their smiley faces, are quick with a joke or two and keep the garden in tip-top shape. They are even game to soothe a visiting chicken or go out to the shipping container (way across the parking lot) to retrieve a worm-shaped watering can or an extra pitchfork.

Sid, a Master Recycler Composter-East 2012 graduate, makes a mean hot compost pile. He showed us how to create an herb spiral and has just started his first home veggie plot. Mario is a bee keeper and brings his props to educate garden visitors when not educating me on the finer points of my iPhone. Angela made an African keyhole bed at her house, was the architect of the garden’s insect hotel and has promised to make us soup at one of our Family Saturdays in the garden.

Interested in becoming a Seattle Tilth intern in our gardens, farms, events or office? Your help is welcome! Check our website for current opportunities.

Fun Harvest Facts

The Moon Festival is a popular harvest celebration in China, Taiwan, Vietnam and elsewhere in Asia. People gather together outdoors, enjoy tasty mooncakes, light incense and watch the moon, among other festivities.

A harvest moon’s size and color is caused by the moon’s proximity to the horizon, which makes it look larger, and redder because the thicker atmosphere transmits red light. It is the moon closest to the autumnal equinox.

Corn, beans and squash, companion plants known as “the three sisters” by indigenous people in the Americas, were domesticated in Mesoamerica around 3,500 B.C.

Washington state produces 59% of all apples grown in the U.S. and is one of the nation’s top eight producers of vegetables and legumes.

There were once 15,000 apple varieties grown in the United States, today 15 apple varieties account for almost 90% of production.

The New Yam Festival for the Igbo people in Nigeria, Ghana boasts a carnival atmosphere at the end of the growing season with cultural dances, fashion display, role reversals, masquerade jamboree, drinking of palm wine and sharing of food. In some communities the feast is dubbed “Homowo” or “To Hoot at Hunger” Festival where the people ritually mock against famine and invite a good harvest in the coming year.

Canning became popular in the U.S. in the early 1900s, when the USDA’s Farmer's Bulletins recommended canning as an economical means of preserving farm harvests. Even so, the Ball Brother Company produced their first jars in 1884.

See more fun harvest facts (and our sources) or share your own on our blog: seattletilthblog.org.
Garden To Table: Eggplant

Leika Suzumura, Community Kitchens Northwest Program Manager

Ever wonder why those deep purple shiny vegetables drooping off the vine are called “eggplant”? Turns out the early varieties were white and yellow and did in fact look like an egg. What you may be finding in your garden now are the narrow long purple Japanese eggplant or the more rounded European varieties. Eggplant’s unique color boasts of phytonutrients, special plant nutrients including anti-oxidants that help protect our cells, especially in our brain. This is quite contrary to the folklore that eggplant caused a person to go insane due to its relation in the “deadly” nightshade family. Its spongy interior makes it easy to soak up the flavor of many different cuisines. Have fun with this miso glazed eggplant, a traditional Japanese dish called Nasu Dengaku.

Grilled Eggplant with Miso Glaze (Nasu Dengaku)

This sauce can be enjoyed on any kind of grilled veggie, fish or firm tofu. Make a double batch of sauce and have it ready the next time you grill. Makes 4 servings.

Ingredients
- 4 small eggplants
- Vegetable oil

Miso Sauce
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon mirin (Japanese sake-based flavoring)
- 1 tablespoon cooking sake
- 3 tablespoon white miso
- 1 teaspoon grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon water

Instructions
- Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise. Score a criss-cross pattern about ¼ inch deep to help the sauce absorb into the eggplant when cooked.
- Brush the eggplant surface with oil and place onto a grill, or broil in the oven until the tops are evenly dark brown and soft all the way through.
- Brush on the miso sauce on the cut side of the eggplant and put it back on the grill or in the oven for about 3 minutes to soak in the flavor. Be careful not burn the sauce.

August Gardens

Carey Thornton, Adult Education Coordinator

Spend time in the garden during August to enjoy the impressive summer growth, keep things alive and plan for fall. Here are some quick tips to keep in mind.

• **Harvest your garden.** Some veggies, like green beans and zucchini, will produce more the more you pick. Garlic should be ready to come out by mid-July.

• **Hunt for bugs and disease.** Avoiding letting a bug or two become an infestation by monitoring your plants regularly. Prune away any signs of diseases, before they have a chance to spread.

• **Plan and plant your winter garden.** July and August are prime times for planting veggies to harvest throughout the fall and winter. Fall will be like a second spring if you replant radishes, peas and lettuce.

• **Water deeply and mulch.** Summer time can be dry in this area and our most delicious veggies are made mostly of water. Mulch can discourage evaporation and keep down weeds that might compete for water.

• **Let it bolt.** Flowers from some plants like cilantro, parsley and dill attract beneficial insects – so, don’t be too quick to pull them out. You can also try saving some seeds for next year.
Q. How can I get my tomatoes to ripen?

A. This is definitely a hot question in our climate! As we near the end of the warm season, we must take marginally abusive measures to guarantee a delicious crop; tomatoes will produce better tasting fruit more quickly when stressed. Beginning in mid-August, start pinching off any new flowers. By the end of the month, prune away all branches that don’t produce fruit or any new suckers that might bear fruit. For larger tomato varieties, it also helps at this point to pluck off any immature or small fruits to ensure all the plant’s energy will go toward ripening the largest tomatoes. Lastly, reduce your watering regimen to slowly stimulate drought and force all the energy into fruit maturation. How to tell when your tomatoes are ripe? Harvest when the blossom end (the bottom) yields to your touch, or when the fruit breaks off easily from the stem when twisted. If, despite your efforts, you end up with a bumper crop of green tomatoes, either cook them up in chutney or muffins (look at our blog for a delicious recipe!) or bring them inside to ripen at a temperature of 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit.

Q. Do you have tips for harvesting?

A. When harvesting your summer crops—especially those producing throughout the season—it is best to pick them when the veggies are young and tender. Green beans are a great example; once a pod starts forming seeds, the plant will slow production. Gather beans when they’re about the thickness of a pencil. Cucumbers and summer squash are similar, tasting best and producing better when plucked at a smaller size (4-5” for squash, pickling or slicing girth for cucumbers). Winter squash are a little different as you must wait for the skins to harden before picking—enough that your fingernail doesn’t puncture the rind. Harvest eggplant after the fruit has finished rapid expansion and the skin is shiny and thin. Corn is ready when the silks turn brown, or if milky sap is released when you puncture a kernel. Peppers, regardless of heat, will ripen from green to red or from green to yellow as their skin becomes juicier, thicker and sweeter. It is important to wear gloves and refrain from touching your eyes, nose or mouth when handling hot peppers. A sharp knife and a sturdy basket or tray with handles are helpful harvesting tools.
Revel in Harvest Season by Taking a Class

Two or three prices are listed for each class; the second price is discounted for Seattle Tilth members and the third is a special price for a second member of your household. Become a member through our website or use the form on page 7. Advanced registration and payment are required for classes. Class details and registration information are found on our website under the “Learn” tab or by scanning the QR code. Questions? Call (206) 633-0451 ext. 101.

**Class venues:**
- GSC: Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave. N., Seattle
- BGP: Bradner Gardens Park, 1730 Bradner Place S., Seattle
- PBI: Pickering Barn, 1730 10th Ave. N.W., Issaquah
- VSP: Victor Steinbreuck Park, 2000 Western Ave., Seattle
- DP: Denny Park, 100 Dexter Ave. N., Seattle

**Apartment Dwellers**

**Summer Vegetable Gardening in Containers, Free**
Tuesday, August 6, 13; 5:30-7 p.m., VSP

**Grow Salad in Containers, Free**
Thursday, August 15; noon-1:30 p.m., DP
Tuesday, August 27; 5:30-7 p.m., VSP
Wednesday, September 11; 5:30-7 p.m., VSP

**Composting for Apartment Dwellers, Free**
Tuesday, August 20; 5:30-7 p.m, VSP
Wednesday, September 25; 5:30-7 p.m., VSP

**Herb Gardening in Containers, Free**
Thursday, August 22; noon-1:30 p.m., DP
Tuesday, September 3; 5:30-7 p.m., VSP
Wednesday, September 18; 5:30-7 p.m., VSP

**Organic Gardening**

**Manage Garden Pests Organically,**
$36/$25/$54
Wednesday, August 7; 6-8 p.m., GSC

**Start Your Fall & Winter Garden,**
$36/$25/$54
Thursday, August 15; 6-8 p.m., GSC

**Secrets of Companion Planting,**
$36/$25/$54
Saturday, August 17; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

**Build Unique Raised Beds,**
$45/$35/$68
Saturday, August 17; 2-5 p.m., GSC

**Save Seeds,**
$36/$25/$54
Wednesday, August 28; 6-8 p.m., BGP

**Comprehensive Organic Gardening,**
$275/$275
7 sessions, Sept. 11-Oct. 2; GSC

**Sustainable Landscapes**

**Prune Fruit Trees,**
$45/$35/$68
Saturday, September 14; 9 a.m.-noon, BGP

**Permaculture Design Course,** $1050
6 weekends starting October 12, at OM Culture

**Kitchen**

**Make Herbal Infusions,**
$36/$25/$54
Tuesday, August 20; 6-8 p.m., GSC

**Pickles and Fermentation,**
$45/$35/$68
Saturday, August 24; 2-4 p.m., GSC

**Basic Canning 101,** $45/$35/$68
Saturday, August 24; 10 a.m.-noon, GSC

**Urban Livestock**

**Hands-on Chickens,**
$36/$25/$54
Saturday, Aug 3; 2-4 p.m., North Seattle

**Beekeeping 301: Harvest Honey & Winterize,**
$36/$25/$54
Thursday, August 15; 6-8 p.m., GSC

**City Chickens 101,**
$40/$30/$60
Saturday, August 24; 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m., GSC