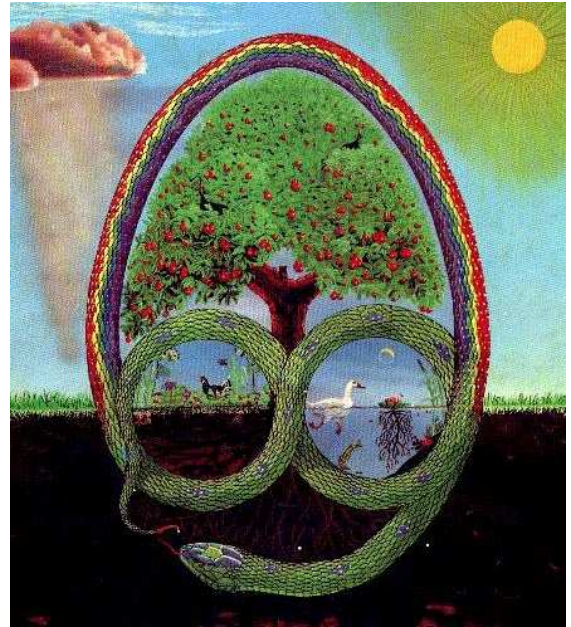


PERMACULTURE MANCHESTER

The term ‘Permaculture’ has been around since the 1980’s, and basically means “permanence in culture”. In the UK there is a strong and active network of permaculture activists, who have been developing solutions for sustainable living since the 80’s, well before the concept of sustainability became mainstream. The UK network is part of a growing international community of permaculture activists, in over 40 countries around the World.



Permaculture Ethics

Permaculture is built upon three **ethics**, which guide development and practise. These are:

- Care of the earth
- Care of (all) people
- Fair shares (or sharing our surplus)

Permaculture Design

The process of **design** is central to permaculture practise, and is applied to develop **systems** for **self-reliance**. Well designed permaculture systems are life supporting, and range from relatively simple house and garden applications, to complex neighbourhood scale developments, located in urban, peri-urban and rural contexts. A comprehensive permaculture design will incorporate a range of essential human activities, including for example:

- Food production, and water harvesting and purification
- Renewable energy systems
- Housing and low impact developments
- Appropriate technology, and IT
- Social, legal, and economic structures

The Permaculture Community

In UK permaculture community is comprised of many individuals and bodies:

- A diverse network of practitioners including for example: full time permaculture designers and teachers, individuals, community workers, social and community activists, artists, engineers, writers, educationalists, health workers, professionals such as architects, planners and policy makers, academics, futurists, farmers and market gardeners, woodland managers, social entrepreneurs, and small businesses
- The UK Permaculture Association, which provides advice, support and co-ordination for the network, in this country as well as abroad
- A deep knowledge pool of publications, including the Permaculture Magazine, many books and articles in professional and academic journals
- Teachers and trainers, who provide a range of services including:
 - Permaculture Introduction courses
 - Permaculture Design courses
 - Specialist training
 - Permaculture Diploma

For more information about permaculture in the UK, visit:

- The Permaculture Association: www.permaculture.org.uk
- The Permaculture Magazine: www.permaculture.co.uk

Permaculture in Manchester

Permaculture is just one part of a broad spectrum of environmental activity that is taking place in Manchester, including for example, grassroots direct action and campaigning, fairtrade and co-operation, broad scale public and private sector land and waterscape restorations, and local government initiatives. Within this spectrum permaculture fills the niche of providing a **grassroots, 'solutions approach' to sustainable living**. That is to say, it provides a flexible framework, to enable individuals and communities to make their lifestyles more sustainable.

There is already a considerable amount of permaculture related activity taking place in the City:

- **Courses:** 'Introduction to Permaculture' courses, plus '72 Hour Permaculture Design Courses' have been delivered over the last 10 years, involving a broad diversity of people.
- **Network:** there exists a network of activists, who are involved in a wide spectrum of permaculture related activities.
- **Projects:** including for example community gardens and food initiatives, local food initiatives, alternative economics, housing co-operatives and tenants and residents initiatives.
- **Academia:** recent academic work concerning permaculture, has been undertaken at the University of Manchester by two PhD students researching participatory approaches to planning, and local food issues.

In addition, there are many environmental and common-sense orientated individuals and projects in the area, which share the ethos of the permaculture community, but do not necessarily 'subscribe'.

Local permaculture activists are also engaged with broader permaculture networks, operating at the regional, national and international level. For example Manchester based permaculture activists recently attended the 2005 International Permaculture Convergence, in Croatia.

Case Study: Permaculture and Action For Sustainable Living



AfSL is a South Manchester based organisation, which exists to help people to live more sustainable lifestyles. They provide free home consultations focusing on simple changes that will make the world a better place to live in, for current and future generations. They also run activities in schools and give talks to local groups. AfSL currently has funding from DEFRA, and employs three sustainability consultants, who operate in the wards of Chorlton, Hulme and Trafford.

For more information on AfSL visit:
<http://www.afsl.org.uk>

In November AfSL organised a 12 hour Introduction to Permaculture course for its network of 'community doers'. The course was hosted in a yurt (a traditional nomadic Tibetan shelter), provided by a local social enterprise called the



Yurt Experience. The location for the course was a newly adopted plot on Nell Lane Allotment, in Chorlton. The programme was designed and delivered on a voluntary basis by two local, experienced permaculture activists and teachers, called Julia Frankel and Rob Squires. The two day course was attended by 14 enthusiastic AfSL volunteers and staff.



The aim of the workshop was to introduce the concepts of permaculture, and to use permaculture design techniques to create a preliminary site design for the allotment plot, which will guide future work activities. Day one focussed on theory, and included a practical design exercise for the plot, whilst day two was orientated towards practical work, including footpaths, planting, and ground preparation activities.

- Workshop sessions included: basic concepts; ethics and principles of permaculture, observation and analysis techniques; practical permaculture design; practical work on the allotment; open space sessions; and opportunities for progression in Permaculture.

Permaculture Education

Community Development, Regeneration and Sustainable Communities

Permaculture education in the UK is guided by the UK Permaculture Academy, which consists of is a collegiate network of experienced permaculture teachers and practitioners, and is supported by the UK Permaculture Association. The Academy encourages a process of **peer learning**, whereby experienced teachers work with those less experienced, to pass on skills and ensure that teaching standards are maintained.

The main forms of education currently available from the UK permaculture community include:

- **12 Hour Introductory Course** – providing participants with a basic understanding of the concepts, ethics and principles of permaculture, along with practical tools and techniques for applying permaculture design. The Introductory course can count towards the first 12 hours of the 72 Hour Permaculture Design course.

- **72 Hour Permaculture Design Course** – flexible course, which can be taught during an intensive two week programme, or spread out over a number of weeks or months. The core curriculum provides participants with an in depth understanding of the concepts, ethics and principles of permaculture, along with tools and techniques for applying permaculture design. It is often run in conjunction with a specific site, or project, with a practical focus on the development of a comprehensive design. It also has the scope to include more specific information, according to the interests of the client group. Different versions of the course are available, with Open College Federation (OCF), and Workers Education Association accreditation optionally available.
- **Diploma in Permaculture Design** – 72 Hour Permaculture Design Course graduates have the option to progress towards their diploma. The diploma is based upon applied, project based learning, and students are required to demonstrate how their work integrates the concepts, ethics and principles of permaculture design. Diploma candidates are supported and assessed by existing diploma holders in the network.
- **Action Learning Sets** – This is a peer learning process, whereby small groups of practitioners meet together on a regular basis to support each other in their learning. Action learning set participants usually have a defined project, which they actively apply their learning towards.
- **Specialist Workshops** – Often, groups of permaculture practitioners come together, either as regional groups, or groups with a shared interest, to self-educate one another on specialised and / or advanced subjects.

There is broad scope for permaculture, in terms of vocational and pre-vocational education and training.

- **Pre-vocational** – courses are run workshop style, and it is the job of the teachers to facilitate the engagement of participants, and to encourage them to offer their knowledge and experience to the rest of the group, in a no pressure environment. Permaculture courses have proven to have the capability to focus the minds of those that are socially disengaged, and to provide them with incentives to participate in community activities.
- **Vocational** – the core knowledge and design skills passed on through the permaculture curriculum can be very empowering for those that are already engaged in a vocation. In particular, permaculture knowledge is relevant to those involved in activities such as teaching, community development, regeneration and sustainable communities. Permaculture

skills are becoming increasingly relevant, as global drivers of change, including population growth, food insecurity, peaking oil supplies and climate change begin to take effect.

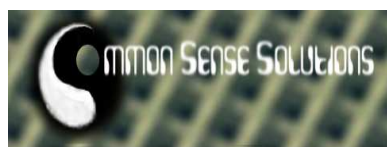
- **Tailored Training** – the core permaculture curriculum can be re-branded and tailored to suit particular projects and client groups. For instance the Bentley Bulk Local Food Project was delivered in Hulme in 2004, and featured an education component on ‘Community Economics and Local Food Issues’, which was based around the core curriculum of the 72 Hour Permaculture Design Course, with a special emphasis on local economics and food.

For more information on permaculture in Manchester, contact Rob Squires:

Email – Rob@SouthCentralCommunity.Net

Phone – 0161 227 8750

Mobile – 07974 658745



Produced by Common Sense Solutions, and donated to Manchester Health Inequalities Pool

**Manchester Alliance for Community Care
Swan Buildings, 20 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JW.**

Tel: 0161 834 9823

Fax: 0161 832 2352

www.macc.org.uk