

ETHICS & PRINCIPLES OF PERMACULTURE

Ethics:

- Care for the Earth
- Care for People
- Share the Surplus

Primary Principles for Functional Design

- 1. Observe and Interact:** Use protracted and thoughtful observation rather than prolonged and thoughtless action. Observe the site and its elements in all seasons. Design for specific sites, clients, and climates. Observe patterns in nature. Work from patterns to details.
- 2. Connect:** Use *relative location*: Place elements in ways that create useful relationships and time-saving connections. The number of *connections* among elements, not only the number of elements, creates a healthy, diverse ecosystem.
- 3. Catch and store energy and materials:** Identify, collect, and hold the useful flows moving through the site. By saving and re-investing resources, we maintain the system and capture abundant resources.
- 4. Each element performs multiple functions:** Choose and place each element in a system to perform as many functions as possible. Increasing beneficial connections between diverse components creates a stable whole. Stack elements in both space and time.
- 5. Each function is supported by multiple elements:** Use multiple methods to achieve important functions and to create synergies. Redundancy protects when one or more elements fail.
- 6. Make the least change for the greatest effect:** Find the “leverage points” (advantages) in the system and intervene there, where the least work accomplishes the most change.
- 7. Use small scale, intensive systems:** Start at your doorstep with the smallest systems that will do the job, and build on your successes, with variations.
- 8. Stability through Diversity:** It is not the number of elements in a design but the functional/beneficial connections. Consider the ecological, species (plants/animals), genetics, and cultural applications.

Principles for Living and Energy Systems

- 9. Use edge and value the margins:** The edge—the intersection of two environments—is the most diverse place in a system, and is where energies and materials accumulate. Optimize the amount of edge.
- 10. Accelerate succession:** Mature ecosystems are more diverse and productive than young ones, so use design to jump-start succession.
- 11. Use biological & renewable resources & services:** Renewable resources (usually plants, animals, some environmental) reproduce and build up over time, store energy, assist yield, and interact with other elements.
- 12. Recycle energy:** Supply local and on-site needs with energy from the system, and reuse this energy as many times as possible. Every cycle is an opportunity for yield.

Attitudes

- 13. Turn challenges into solutions:** Constraints can inspire creative design. “We are surrounded by insurmountable opportunities” (Pogo).
- 14. Obtain a yield.** Design for both immediate and long-term returns from your efforts: “You can’t work on an empty stomach.” Set up positive feedback loops to build the system and repay your investment.
- 15. Abundance is unlimited. Produce no waste:** The designer’s imagination and skill are bigger limits to yield than any physical limit.
- 16. Mistakes are tools for learning:** Evaluate your trials. Making mistakes is a sign you’re trying to do things better.
- 17. Integrate Rather than Segregate:** The connections between things are as important as the things themselves.
- 18. Creatively Use and Respond to Change:** Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be.

Derived from the works of Bill Mollison and David Holmgren