



urban  
agriculture  
AUSTRALIA



## Permaculture principles

### What is Permaculture?

Permaculture is a design system inspired by nature, based on ethics and principles that guide you, your household and your community ‘beyond sustainability’. Adopting the ethics and applying these principles in daily life transforms us from *dependent consumers* to *responsible producers*. This journey builds skills and resilience at home and in our local communities that prepare us an uncertain future with less available energy.

### How do the permaculture ethics and principles work?

The foundations of permaculture are the ethics ‘earth care’, ‘people care’ and ‘fair share’. These ethics are applicable to our personal, economic, social and political reorganization, as shown in the permaculture flower below.

Ethics are culturally evolved mechanisms that regulate self-interest and give us a better understanding of good and bad outcomes. The greater the power of humans, the more critical ethics become for long-term cultural and biological survival.

The ethics earth care, people care and fair share are found in most traditional societies. Permaculture ethics have been distilled from research into community ethics, learning from cultures that have existed in relative balance with their environment for much longer than more recent civilizations. This does not mean that we should ignore the great teachings of modern times - but in the transition to a sustainable future, we need to consider values and concepts outside the current social norm.

The *ethics* earth care, people care and fair share form the foundation for permaculture design. They guide the use of the 12 design *principles*, ensuring that they are used in appropriate ways.

The 12 permaculture principles are shown over the page.



- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | 1. Observe & interact                         |  | 7. Design from patterns to details     |
|  | 2. Catch & store energy                       |  | 8. Integrate rather than segregate     |
|  | 3. Obtain a yield                             |  | 9. Use small & slow solutions          |
|  | 4. Apply self-regulation & accept feedback    |  | 10. Use & value diversity              |
|  | 5. Use & value renewable resources & services |  | 11. Use edges & value the marginal     |
|  | 6. Produce no waste                           |  | 12. Creatively use & respond to change |

Like the ethics, the principles guide our personal, economical, social and political reorganization. They are seen as universal, although the methods used to express them will vary greatly according to the place and situation.

Each principle can be thought of as a door that opens into whole systems thinking, providing a different perspective that can be understood at varying levels of depth and application

**Reference:**

David Holmgren permaculture principles website  
<http://permacultureprinciples.com>

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**For further information on this topic**

**Permaculture Canberra**

Permaculture Canberra is the oldest permaculture group in the ACT. We provide permaculture and sustainable living courses across the ACT and South East NSW.

To contact Permaculture Canberra or find out more about courses and workshops visit our website at [www.permaculturecanberra.com.au](http://www.permaculturecanberra.com.au).

