

Why Study Permaculture at The Food Forest Autumn 2027?

Join us for internationally-recognised permaculture training that will help you design sustainable, abundant homes, businesses, professions and communities.

Every action and choice we make can make a difference, no matter how small, and can influence the world around us. Discover the power of small and practical acts of care to create good lives, livelihoods and landscapes!

Whilst population growth and consumption levels are pushing our Planet towards a catastrophic environmental tipping point, permaculture design offers a way that we, as individuals and communities, can take control of our future and live sustainably.

Permaculture is a design system which draws upon the great truths of traditional knowledge, modern scientific understandings and the ethics of a peaceful and democratic society. Developed in Australia in the late 70's by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, it is now taught in over 150 countries. Over two million people have graduated from Design Courses and are using this tool to build resilience and diversity into their lives, local communities & workplaces.

Permaculture can be employed by anyone, whatever profession or skill, on any scale, anywhere on the planet and in any climate, at an individual level and household, urban or rural, to balconies, backyards & neighbourhoods, to farms, offices, factories, businesses, schools and cities. It offers a sustainable landscape and inclusive dignified human-scale living.

It offers a framework for successful ethical enterprises and helps setting goals.

Permaculture is based on three ethics: Care of the Earth, Care of Community and Acceptance of personal responsibility for consumption and population. Many practical design principles, technologies and strategies have evolved to make permaculture one of the most accessible and dynamic solutions to the issues we face in the 21st Century.

David Suzuki dubbed permaculture 'Australia's greatest intellectual export'.

Permaculture Design Certificate Course

10 days spread out over three teaching blocks during April & May 2027.

Dates TBC



This 10 day intensive design course, taught at The Food Forest focusses on exploring how you can integrate permaculture principles into all areas of life – it doesn't have to be on a piece of land. This course will present you with an opportunity to consider your life in a new light and give you increased confidence and many skills needed to design a sustainable and meaningful place for your future. In addition to the Brookmans, the course is supported by an experienced team of presenters, each with their own specialities.

The campus demonstrates strawbale building technology, active and passive solar design, food value-adding, running a permaculture business and successful collaboration with local government, Landscape Boards, refugee groups and educational institutions at all levels.

You will work face-to-face with a group of motivated fellow students with diverse skills and backgrounds and learn through a wide range of teaching styles which include lectures, practical activities, small group work, case studies,

films, field trips, games and from each other. In addition to our teaching team, you will have access to a wide range of printed and digital resources. Extensive course notes are provided.

The format of the course is designed to cause minimum disruption to other parts of your life. It will allow you to absorb and practise skills from one learning block before moving on to the next.



Over the 3 teaching blocks, there are some weekdays and these may need some planning to have off.

Whilst this extended format may seem less than ideal if you are from a distant location, many participants from further away use it as an opportunity to visit friends, permaculture projects or to WWOOF between teaching blocks.

As part of the The Food Forest PDC you will work on a **major design project of your choice**. We will take you through the design process, from the initial brief, to completion and the final presentation. Many of the excellent designs created during our PDCs have been implemented around the world. Please note, 'Homework' will be required outside the course hours & between teaching blocks.

Whilst many people study permaculture as a design system for their personal and/or professional lives, successful completion of the course will qualify you for a Permaculture Design Certificate which makes you eligible to practice or teach permaculture commercially. The course may also be recognised as relevant prior learning towards the completion of requirements for the nationally accredited VET Certificate IV in Permaculture.

You will need to attend at least 80% of the course and complete your part in the design project, in order to attain a PDC certificate.

Topics

The course at The Food Forest will cover such topics as:

- Permaculture ethics and principles
- Mapping, reading landscape, land capability assessment
- Personal, family and community strategies
- Social Permaculture
- Architecture: Passive solar design for houses and structures
- Appropriate human settlements and planning
- Sustainable energy sources, 'waste' and recycling
- Soil Health: improvements and maintenance
- Urban and rural farming and gardening
- Food forests
- Alternative social and economic models & legal structures
- Water management (at home, urban & rural) & catchments
- Animals in permaculture
- Biodiversity in both urban and rural settings
- Application of Permaculture Design in businesses, professions & trades
- And more.....



Whilst many examples will be drawn from warm temperate environments (as experienced in South Australia), care will be taken to make the teaching relevant to other climatic areas.

We stress that the PDC is a **design** course covering the topics listed above equipping you with knowledge for your Permaculture design toolkit. There is insufficient time to address the fine detail and practical skills of, for instance, caring for chickens or growing mushrooms. We, and others, offer practical workshops on such skills outside the PDC .

Principal Tutors



Annemarie Brookman began her permaculture journey in 1983 and is co-owner of The Food Forest and runs its organic market garden and busy office. She organises the educational programs, The Food Forest's stall at the Adelaide Farmers Market and coordinates staff at the property. She has observed societies, crafts and cuisines in many countries. Her passion for local, wholesome, delicious and visually beautiful food and her skills as a designer are expressed in a direct and practical manner. She is expert in the integration of poultry and vegetable production and is a keen observer & photographer of insect ecosystems. Time management, making community connections, small scale marketing, engaging children in gardening and the natural environment, mentoring to empower people to get involved with the future of their food and sustainable home-building are included in her talents. She is a qualified teacher in permaculture design & training, art and craft, and is a strong contributor to the permaculture movement in SA.



Graham Brookman has experienced land use all over the world and his search for ecologically sustainable farming systems led him to the permaculture model devised by Mollison and Holmgren. Graham has put the model to the test and teaches his findings in an energetic, interactive and practical style. Discovering how to build with straw bales has given Graham free rein with the construction of a series of beautiful and environmentally responsible structures. He has taught hundreds of others how simple it is to use straw bales in building anything from a garden bench to a house. He is a qualified horticulturalist, teacher and permaculture designer and was founding chairman of the Adelaide Showground Farmers Market and the Gawler Environment Centre. Though first a farmer and horticulturalist, he has been involved in town planning and has made numerous educational films. He is passionate about water and sunshine, their capture and efficient use. He has created a new breed of mini sheep for use in orchards, vineyards and farms and dedicates much time and effort to the [repair of the Gawler River](#).

Guest Tutors and Field Visits

A wide range of guest presenters, selected for skills and qualifications in their particular field and their commitment to sustainable living and permaculture, will also teach in the course. Tours will visit a wide variety of outstanding examples of permaculture and the people who are making it work, in & near Adelaide.

COVID

This course will be managed in accordance with the government guidelines in place at the time of the course dates. If you are/become unwell leading up to or during the course, please contact us to discuss options for your participation.

The Venue

Our land is on the country of the Kaurna people, and we respect their connection to this land, water and community. We are celebrating more than 20 years of running PDCs at The Food Forest with Graham & Annemarie Brookman, David Holmgren and other amazing guest presenters. The property is a remarkable 20 hectare, certified organic permaculture farm and learning centre that is the result of the passion and vision of owners Graham & Annemarie. From its buzzing biodiversity come over 150 varieties of organically grown fruit and nuts (including pistachios, pecans, macadamias), cereals and vegetables, honey and carob beans, as well as free range eggs, livestock, nursery plants and timber. Most of The Food Forest's produce is sold at the Adelaide Farmers Market. We'll be harvesting and eating some of the products during the PDC!

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Logistics

Food

Lunch, morning & afternoon tea each day, are included in the registration and include vegetarian, vegan and omnivorous options. Delicious, healthy, local and seasonal is important to us! A lot of the food served at the course will be harvested from The Food Forest, including many varieties of fruit, nuts, vegetables and herbs. We have also

preserved produce from the different seasons. We don't produce everything; milk, cheese, bread and some grains, pulses & meat will be sourced locally, in many cases direct from the producers. We do our best to cater for different needs but as we are cooking for a substantial number of people, please note that for *very specialised* dietary requirements you may need to bring some of your own supplies.



Accommodation

We are not able to offer accommodation at The Food Forest. If local accommodation is required, there is a wide range of options available in and near Gawler to suit your needs, from the local caravan parks to Airbnb.

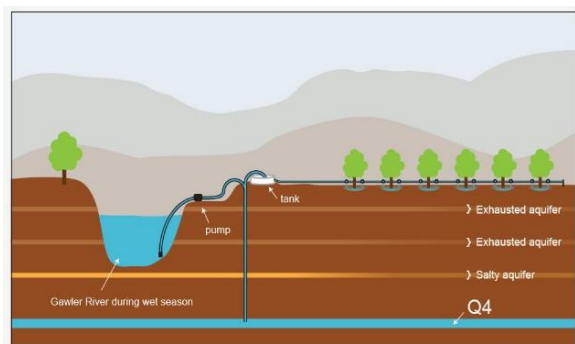
Of course, if you don't live far away, you may want to commute and there is a good train connection to Adelaide.

More information about The Food Forest

Teaching and research

The farm conducts research into organic growing and climate change adaptation, and hosts collections of tree crop varieties representing a unique genetic resource, willingly shared with others wishing to establish sustainable plantings. New structures have been designed and built to enable more efficient growth of crops, providing shade, shelter, bird protection and trellising, which massively improve water use and yields.

Valuable information about the hydrogeology of the Adelaide Plain has come from the farm's scheme to draw water from the Gawler River and recharge the aquifer underlying the locality, to offset declining water levels and quality.



After visiting an inspirational permaculture farm in India in 2019, The Food Forest has drawn upon inventive technologies for water harvesting and underground water storage observed there, to capture and transform stormwater into a valuable input. More recently, the farm has had to adapt to rising salinity in both groundwater and the river, through the transition to some alternative species and design and installation of a desalination plant.

The Food Forest has a long history of demonstrating and teaching permaculture at school, TAFE, University and community levels, including the foundational Accredited Permaculture Teacher Training course in SA. The Food



Forest also has an extensive short courses program which complements the PDC. The property operates as one big teaching area and course participants will be involved in a hands-on permaculture project such as revegetation or garden construction.

History

The heritage-listed pioneer homestead and much of the history of the farm have been retained. When the Brookmans bought the property in 1986, it was not much more than a bare barley paddock; only a few towering River Red Gums remained along the Gawler River from the time when the Kurna Aboriginal people lived on this land.

The riparian understorey had become a mass of boxthorn, prickly pear and sour sob and the soil was degraded from years of continuous cropping. The indigenous riparian ecosystem has now largely been restored creating diverse habitat. It is now expanding kilometres downstream thanks to the lead from our local revegetation group (GRRR), whose revegetation systems have been adopted by other groups.

A movie made about the river repair is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_r62zvWKhk



Sustainable building technology

An old stone barn has been transformed into a versatile Learning Centre for the presentation of courses and workshops. It is equipped with data projectors and areas for small group work/breakout sessions. Nearby is the government-approved 'loo with a view', a Clivus Multrum composting toilet & reedbed system which transforms human by-products into reeds for mulching, rich compost for fertiliser and saves many thousands of litres of water every year.

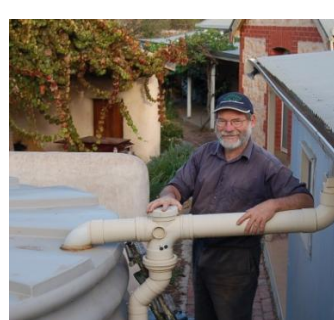
Environmentally responsible building technologies are also demonstrated in 'The Studio', Cellar-door, an Eco-gazebo, the tiny 'Cosy Cottage' and a cool room, all of which are constructed with straw bales.

The Cob Oven shows the ancient craft of building with special mud mixtures.

The extension to the heritage-listed homestead is an exemplar of passive solar design using a fusion of straw bale, stone and well-insulated corrugated iron. You are able to view a segment about the extension, that was part of the National Sustainable House Day in Sept 2020. For the Food Forest homestead extension photos and facts:

<https://sustainablehouseday.com/listing/the-food-forest-homestead-extension/> and the video is available on YouTube: https://youtu.be/vB_RfJEO-oU

Rainwater is collected for use in the house; both grey and black water from the house is treated by a reedbed system and used in orchard irrigation. Solar panels heat the water and photovoltaic cells provide the house with almost 7kW of green electricity; surplus power is fed into the grid. A 26kW PV system sits on the food processing facility to supply



electricity for food storage & processing and water pumping.

Come Prepared

We strongly recommend reading some of the following texts. Check out David Holmgren's abundant [on-line store, or](#) you can visit your local bookshop, 2nd hand bookshop or local library:

Books & magazines:

- Permaculture: 'Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability', David Holmgren. His website: holmgren.com.au, has an abstract of this book as a free download. Look for 'Essence of Permaculture'. Easy to read and not too long. *This abstract is a 'must-read before the course'*
- David Holmgren's 'RetroSuburbia: the downshifter's guide to a resilient future': <https://www.retrosurbia.com>
- The Milkwood Permaculture Living Handbook, Habits for Hope in a Changing World, Kirsten Bradley, Murdoch Books 2023
- The Good Life, How to Grow a Better World, Hannah Maloney, 2021, Affirm Press
- Good Life Growing How to grow Fruit and Veg anywhere in Australia, 2023)
<http://goodlifepermaculture.com.au>
- Costa's World, Costa Georgiadis ('easy-peasy' permaculture, and more), www.costasworld.com.au, 2021
- Earth Restorer's Guide to Permaculture, Rosemary Morrow, 2022
- Introduction to Permaculture, Bill Mollison & Reny Slay, Tagari, <https://www.tagaripublications.com/>
- People & Permaculture, Looby Macnamara, Permanent Publications 2012: <http://loobymacnamara.com/home/>
- Tropical Permaculture Guidebook - McKenzie and Lemos www.permacultureguidebook.org
- [PIP magazine](#): Australia's permaculture magazine. Full of great articles –wonderful to subscribe to!
- And many more books and good resources...

Web based:

- Good Life Permaculture, based in Hobart, Tasmania, inspirational!: <http://goodlifepermaculture.com.au/>
- Milkwood Permaculture; excellent info: www.milkwood.net
- [Holmgren Design - Permaculture Innovation and Vision](#)
- Richard Telford's website: <http://www.permacultureprinciples.com/> Excellent! Has easy to read info about permaculture. Lots of photos and diverse examples.
- Brenna Quinlan (also publishes books & awesome posters): <https://www.brennaquinlan.com/>
- Charlie McGee, 'Formidable Vegetable', permaculture put into music: <https://formidablevegetable.com.au/>
- Dan Palmer, Author of Making Permaculture Stronger. www.makingpermaculturestronger.net
- Delvin Solkinson: [Home / Permaculture Design, Home | visionary permaculture](#)
- Queer and other vulnerable communities: : [About Us — PermaQueer](#)
- Morag Gamble: permacultureeducationinstitute.org
- An explanation of The 12 Principles Design of Permaculture By David Holmgren - YouTube
- Geoff Lawton's website: www.permaculture.org.au . It includes a segment on The Food Forest:<http://www.geofflawtononline.com/videos/video/commercial-dryland-food-forest/>
- Many more websites and YouTube clips

There are many other Permaculture book titles, DVDs and there is a lot to Google about Permaculture. Have fun!

Awards & ABC TV:

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| 2026 | Snail of Approval from Slow Food SA, for Championing of Good, Clean and Fair food.
Philippa Dean Award, for Annemarie's Contribution to Gawler's Environment and Ecology |
| 2020 | 2020 Craig Walsh, 'Monuments' celebrating sustainability at WOMADelaide. |
| 2016 | Permaculture Elders Award for Contribution to Permaculture |
| 2013 | Winner, Barossa Regional Food Awards
Finalist Premier's Natural Resources Management Award: Service to NRM |
| 2012 | Honourable mention in The (En)Rich list: Post Growth Institute |
| 2011 | Adelaide Showground Farmers Market: Chef's Inspiration Award |
| 2009 | Australia Day Corporate Citizen Award, Town of Gawler |
| 2007 | Winner SA Premier's Food Awards: Environmental Sustainability |
| 2006 | Finalist National Banksia Environmental Awards, Education category |

- 2005 Winner Nature Foundation SA, Good Business Environment Award for Environmental Responsibility & Leadership
- 2004 Winner Premier's Food Awards Leadership in Sustainable Industry
Finalist Year of the Built Environment, Exemplars Program
- 2003 Winner Organic Federation of Australia National Award Best Organic Producer
Runner up for the Best Organic Education Project
- 2005, 2001 State finalist National Landcare Awards

ABC Gardening Australia: Episode 10: A farming special on June 2, 2012. See the 7 minute, permaculture focussed segment on: <http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/food-glorious-food/9433756>

YouTube- Channel 'Food Forest TV'

The Food Forest has made 30 micro movies with experienced cinematographer/video editor Sam Collins, to create 'how to' videos, ranging from practical straw bale building techniques to controlling codling moth in your apple trees and restoring your watercourse.

See the films at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheFoodForest>

Costs

The costs are still TBC for the 2027 course

For Details

Annemarie Brookman at The Food Forest:

Postal: PO Box 859, Gawler SA 5118, Australia

P: 08 85226450 E: info@foodforest.com.au W: www.foodforest.com.au

Location: 80 Clifford Rd, Hillier, SA 5116 (20 min walk from Tambelin Railway station on the Gawler line).