



Strawbale

26 & 27 Oct Workshop 2024

Course costs

We have partnered with Humanitix for bookings for our courses. Ticket sales will help donate funds to educational programs for children in need.

The information below shows our 'earlybird' prices and 'standard' strawbale course costs.

To register and pay, visit Humanitix:

<https://events.humanitix.com/building-with-strawbales>

- Course times: 8.45am-5pm both days
- Your place is reserved upon receipt of full payment for the course
- Group prices apply when bookings for 2 or more people are made at the same time. Payment for entire group is to be made in **one transaction**, ie 2 or more people would be paid for in one Humanitix registration.
- Registration includes morning and afternoon tea. (BYO lunch).
- Payment is transferable to another person, but non-refundable if you cancel less than 3 weeks before the course date. If a cancellation is made before Fri 4 Oct, a refund will be made, minus an admin fee of \$75.00
- In the event of insufficient registrations or other unforeseen reasons, the organisers reserve the right to cancel the course with one week's notice. In this case a full refund will be made. Unfortunately we can not refund travel expenses incurred.

Earlybird prices (before COB Fri 4 Oct 2024)

	Costs
Per person	\$550 + BF
Per person, group booking	\$525 + BF

Standard prices (after COB Fri 4 Oct 2024)

	Costs
Per person	\$625 + BF
Per person, group booking	\$600 + BF

Strawbale Building

People all over the world have been making houses from straw, grass and reeds for thousands of years. Once mechanical baling made the compression of straw quick and easy in the 1800's, big comfortable houses were built from straw in the treeless areas of the USA. More than 20,000 strawbale houses have been constructed in America and there are many specialist strawbale builders. Australia's 'strawbale revolution', has been mainly fired by people with a commitment to the environment who want to have practical input into their 'carbon responsible' building project. No building system is as easy for owner-builders to master or creates such unique forms. Satisfying and involving, 'strawbale' is unbelievably empowering.

The materials to build strawbale houses, studios and garden walls are easy to source. When you combine strawbales with good design, buildings will be inexpensive to run, beautiful and organic in form, strong, stable and council approvable.

Strawbale dwellings are not new to SA, some dating back more than 50 years. Many council approved strawbale projects have been constructed around the state. They are as varied as a 'load-bearing' cottage near Victor Harbour, several two storey homes in the centre of Adelaide, a studio and extensions to existing homes at Gawler, a Community Garden facilities-building in Fullarton, houses in many urban and rural council areas, a sound studio, and wineries in various parts of the state, as well as numerous garden walls and outdoor structures.

The Weekend Workshop

Oct 26 & 27

This 2-day intensive workshop will present you with an opportunity to assess the possibilities for strawbale building in your life, whether you wish to build your own home, construct a garden wall or chook shed or just decide if strawbale is the right medium for your project.

You will learn through lectures, practical activities (building a straw bale wall), case studies, slides and printed material and inspection of strawbale structures at The Food Forest.

Both days will run from 8.30am till 5pm.

Topics discussed:

- Basic construction techniques
- Load-bearing vs pole frame structures
- Design principles and site assessment
- Doors and windows
- Natural finishes, renders and their maintenance
- Floors, foundations and roof options
- Fire, termites and rodents
- Building regulations and Council approvals
- Costs
- Builders, Contractors, Owner Builder comparisons

The Venue

The Food Forest today is the result of the vision of owners Graham and Annemarie Brookman and is a remarkable 20 hectare Permaculture farm and learning centre. From its buzzing biodiversity come over 150 varieties of organically grown fruit and nuts, wheat and vegetables, honey and carob beans, as well as free range eggs, nursery plants and timber.

The Food Forest sells produce at the Adelaide Showground Farmers Market every fortnight.

The farm is on Kaurna country and we respect their connection to this land, water and community.

The original homestead was built within the first few years of settlement of South Australia and much of the history of the farm has been retained. The old barn, that once housed the horses that worked on the property, has been transformed into a Learning Centre for the presentation of courses and workshops. Visitors can also enjoy the 'loo with a view', a unique composting toilet and reedbed system which transforms human by-products into reeds for mulching, rich compost for fertiliser and bamboo for furniture and structural work.

Environmentally responsible building technologies are demonstrated in the Studio, the 'Eco-gazebo' and the drive-in coolroom, all of which are constructed with strawbales. The Cob Oven shows the ancient craft of building with special mud mixtures.



The heritage listed homestead at The Food Forest was built with thick rock walls and tiny casement windows. This dark and 'defensive' building has been extended using passive solar design and a fusion of strawbale, massive rock and highly insulated galvanised iron to create a light, spacious and sustainable living space. Water is from roof catchment and heating is solar.

The 7kW photo voltaic-system provides electricity to the house, farm and grid. The sun also heats our water.

The severe demarcation between inside and outside made by the early settlers is inappropriate for our Mediterranean climate and has been revolutionised by extending the paving of the verandah into a strawbale-walled, vine-covered outdoor food preparation and entertainment area featuring a cob oven for making pizzas and bread, a barbeque and a raised herb bed.

The trellis over the area also incorporates polycarbonate cladding which allows natural sunlight to flood the area but cuts out 99% of the harmful UV rays. Together with the strawbale wall to the south-west it provides shelter against wind and rain. The area is also shaded by trees and is adjacent to food gardens.

The most recent building at The Food Forest is 'Cosy Cottage', an extremely solar-efficient single room studio built with bales on edge in just a few weeks on a shoestring budget.

Tutors

Lance Kairl is South Australia's most experienced strawbale builder. He is also passionately committed to helping people gain the skills to build or make practical decisions about their dwellings through workshops and on-the-job assistance. He has been in the building trade for many years and brings a fusion of the knowledge of conventional, energy efficient and alternative design and construction to each project he undertakes. His business, 'House of Bales', is involved in the construction of buildings all around SA. Lance's dry sense of humour and unflappable nature are welcome assets in the often frantic times of house construction.

Graham Brookman has experienced land use all over the world and his search for ecologically sustainable farming systems led to the Permaculture model devised by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren. Graham has put the model to the test and teaches his findings in an energetic, interactive and practical style.

Having designed a state-of-the-art composting toilet and reedbed system, his next project was a straw-bale cold room, big enough for the Food Forest's little tractor to drive into with bulk bins of fruit and nuts. The success of the cold room and subsequent structures has convinced Graham that strawbale construction is an ideal building medium for Southern Australia. He is a qualified horticulturalist, teacher and permaculture designer, was the inaugural chairman of the Adelaide Showground Farmers Market and has strong interest in regional planning.

Annemarie Brookman teaches, runs an organic market garden, a stall at the Farmers Market and a busy office and family. She has observed buildings, crafts and cuisines in many countries. Her passion for visually beautiful and natural fibres and structures and her skills as a designer are expressed in a direct and practical manner. Annemarie is qualified in Art, Craft, Permaculture Design and training. She has done more finishing of strawbale walls than anyone else at The Food Forest and designed a uniquely cheap and maintenance-free passive-solar slat system to allow winter sun into the extension of the homestead.

Gerald Wittmann runs an engineering firm which has amassed a great deal of information about the structural performance of strawbale walls. His role is to prepare a soil report, check architectural drawings and make suggestions about the ways in which a building of a particular shape/form can be constructed in a structurally sound manner.

Bohdan Dorniak owns an architectural firm which has designed many strawbale houses and special purpose buildings. Bohdan has had extensive experience with strawbale building so his plans are buildable with this particular medium. He has a number of projects in progress around the State. He is also one of the founding members of AUSBALE, the Australian Strawbale Building Association.

COVID

All events will be run according to SA Gov COVID guidelines.

Other Courses & Tours

The Food Forest offers courses on topics such as Organic Vegetable Growing and Free Range Poultry, Fruit and Nut Growing, Introduction to Permaculture and the Permaculture Design Certificate at different times of the year.

Various information days are in Spring and Autumn.

Tours: We can tailor a tour to deal with your particular interests or concentrate on any of the areas mentioned in our course descriptions. Please contact us for more information.

TOURS ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

Awards & Recognition

2020 Craig Walsh 'Monuments' at WOMADelaide

2016 Permaculture Elders Award for Contribution to Permaculture

2013 Winner, Barossa Regional Food Awards

Finalist SA Food Industry Award: PIRSA Regional Award

Graham: 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

The Food Forest has also won recognition for architecture, citizenship, sustainable food business, organic production, landscape and education. Visit our website for details.

Media & Contact details

- The Food Forest featured on **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:** practical films including straw bale building techniques at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheFoodForest>. Click on "Videos" on the Food Forest page to view all segments

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Building with Strawbales

Spring 2024

Weekend Workshop

Oct 26 & 27



Energy efficient building using natural materials and forms