



# Strawbale

## Spring Workshop 2013

### Course costs

The information below shows our 'earlybird' compared to 'standard' strawbale course costs, as well as our direct deposit (or cheque) prices compared to online prices.

**To register and pay by direct deposit, cheque or online, visit [foodforest.com.au/courses/](http://foodforest.com.au/courses/).**

- **Course times: 8.30am-5pm both days**
- Your place is reserved upon receipt of \$100 deposit (final payment is due Friday 4th October, 2013) or full registration
- 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 people would be paid for in one online, direct deposit or cheque payment.
- Registration includes morning and afternoon tea.
- Payment is transferable to another person, but non-refundable, if you cancel after Friday 4th October, 2013
- In the unlikely event of insufficient registrations, the organisers reserve the right to cancel the course with one week's notice. In this case a full refund will be made.

#### Earlybird prices (before COB Fri 4th October, 2013)

	Costs
Per person	\$445
Per person, <b>group booking</b>	\$430

#### Standard prices (after COB Fri 4th October, 2013)

	Costs
Per person	\$515
Per person, <b>group booking</b>	\$500

## Strawbale Building

People all over the world have been making houses from straw, grass and reeds for thousands of years but 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 is experiencing the beginnings of a 'strawbale revolution', 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. Quick, simple, 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.

Fire tests for strawbale walls have been carried out by CSIRO. This has resulted in building approvals for strawbale houses in bushfire risk areas.

Strawbale dwellings are not new to SA, some dating back more than 50 years. Currently a number of council approved strawbale homes are being constructed around the state. Projects are as varied as a load-bearing bed and breakfast 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, a Buddhist temple in Whyalla and wineries in various parts of the state, as well as numerous garden walls and outdoor structures.

## Information Session

**Sunday Sept 1, 2013: 10am sharp – 1pm**

**Inspect:** Passive-solar extension to the over 160 year-old homestead, where strawbale has been combined with natural stone and heavily insulated galvanised iron: 80sq m, incorporating solar and slow combustion water heating, photovoltaic system, integrated plumbing for maximum use of roof water catchment, reedbed for grey/blackwater recycling.

- Passive-solar designed strawbale studio: 3 rooms, 70sq metre, with curved strawbale garden wall.
- Eco-gazebo, curved wall, strawbales on edge.
- Strawbale coldroom, seating and many other structures.

**See:** Displays and slides of strawbale construction.

**Hear:** How you can construct your own building and what it might cost from Lance Kairl, SA's most experienced strawbale builder, architect Bohdan Dorniak and engineer Gerald Wittmann, who all specialise in strawbale design

**Cost:** \$15.00 adults, children under 16 free. No pets.

If you are combining this with our permaculture property walk in the afternoon (cost \$10), discount applies. Day ticket \$20. If you are coming for both events, BYO lunch. Tea and coffee available.

*Please arrive at 10am as there is a sequential program. No need to book.*

## The Weekend Workshop

**October 26 & 27, 2013**

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.

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

An extension day of purely practical experience *may be* available on Monday October 28 to those who particularly wish to improve their strawbale rendering (plastering) skills.



## The Venue

The Food Forest today is the result of the vision of owners Graham and Annemarie Brookman and is a remarkable 15 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 Showgrounds Farmers Market every fortnight.

The homestead was built within the first few years of white settlement of South Australia and much of the history of the farm has been retained. The old barn 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 golden 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 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 outdoor sunlight to flood the area but cuts out 99% of the harmful UV rays which kill and make life miserable for many people in Australia. 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 PV system of 30 thin film amorphous silicon modules provides electricity to the house, farm and grid. The sun also heats our water.

## 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, 'SA 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 and was the inaugural chairman of the Adelaide Showgrounds Farmers Market.

**Annemarie Brookman** teaches and runs an organic market garden and a busy 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 Wittman** 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 at the least expense.

**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.

## Other Courses & Tours

The Food Forest offers topics such as Organic Vegetable Growing and Free Range Poultry, Property Planning, Fruit and Nut Growing, Water for Home and Garden, Preserving and Storing Your Harvest, Sustainable House Design, 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

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 and Leadership.  
Category finalist National Banksia Environmental Awards in Business Environmental Responsibility and 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

## Media & Contact details

- The Food Forest featured on 'Landline' on April 6th 2008 (visit: [www.abc.net.au/landline](http://www.abc.net.au/landline)) and on Gardening Australia on June 2, 2012. See the 7 minute segment: [www.abc.net.au/gardening](http://www.abc.net.au/gardening)
- **YouTube:** practical films including straw bale building techniques at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheFoodForest>. Click on "Uploads" on the Food Forest TV page to view all segments
- The Food Forest DVD '**Design for Life**' is available from the website

**Website:** [www.foodforest.com.au](http://www.foodforest.com.au).

**Contact:** Annemarie Brookman, The Food Forest,  
PO Box 859, Gawler, SA 5118, Ph/Fax: 08 8522 6450

**Email:** [foodforest@bigpond.com](mailto:foodforest@bigpond.com)

**Property Location:** 80 Clifford Rd, Hillier (see Adelaide UBD).

By train: Gawler line from Adelaide, check [www.adelaidemetro.com.au](http://www.adelaidemetro.com.au)



# Building with Strawbales

Spring 2013

Information Session  
Sept 1

Weekend Workshop  
October 26 & 27



*Energy efficient building using  
natural materials and forms*