

Upcoming Permaculture Workshops

Many of Amma's communities, including San Ramon M. A. Center, Michigan M.A. Center and Amritapuri are beginning to incorporate Permaculture Design Practices. Here in the Pacific Northwest, Netsah Zylinsky, a Permaculture instructor from Oak Harbor, is excited to share her knowledge of Permaculture with our GreenFriends Community. We are currently looking at offering the workshops in January/February. We will keep everyone posted as dates and locations are confirmed.

In an effort to begin to introduce our community to Permaculture Netsah writes:

Permaculture is based on three primary principles:

1. Care for the earth
2. Care for the people
3. Return the surplus back to the whole (people, communities, earth, etc.)

In Permaculture, we design landscapes that mimic nature; with nature, we help to co-create a sustainable, diverse design.

The big picture of the design includes as many multiple functions as we can imagine. Every function is supported by many elements. For example, functions like rain water collection include all elements of water that enter the land. Other functions include soil building and food production, which include elements of organic gardening, composting, companion plantings, and designing sustainable food forests.

The concept of Permaculture also spreads into our lives and our communities. It includes our sources of energy, green building practices and diverse creative projects.

Bill Mollison "the father of Permaculture" shares, "Permaculture is the study of the design of those sustainable or enduring systems that support human society; agricultural and intellectual, traditional and scientific, architectural, financial and legal. It is the study of integrated systems, for the purpose of better design and application of such systems.

Permaculture is a philosophy of working with rather than against nature; of expanded and thoughtful observation rather than prolonged and thoughtless action; of looking at systems in all their functions rather than asking only one yield of them and of allowing systems to demonstrate their own evolutions. Permaculture is a diverse, complex ecosystem where the elements interact in mutually beneficial ways to produce a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts."



Lin and her "Green Friend"



November Gardening Tips from Maheswari

Driving west toward home this week, I was awestruck by the rich color of leaves glistening with raindrops set against an absolutely breathtaking sunset. Mother Nature's splendid pallet of ruby reds, golden yellows, and oranges cover her canvas this time of year. The warm remembrance of hysterical laughter while playing in the tall piles of fallen leaves raked by my father still makes me smile. The sweet smell of fall and the cool air blushing my cheeks still lingers in my memory as I go out to rake the bountiful supply of leaves Mother Nature has given me to use as food to feed my soil and grow next year's gardens.

If leaves are piling up in your yard, you can take advantage of their natural power. Leaves are the ultimate in green, even when they're brown. If you're not growing cover crops in spring vegetable beds, mulch them with three to five inches of leaves. This protects the soil from excessive rainfall and will increase earthworm activity, while adding valuable nutrients to your soil. Use autumn leaves to protect the roots of herbs, perennials, fruit trees, and berry bushes from heavy frosts. Toss the leaves lightly between the plants, while exposing the crowns.

Amma's new InDeed Campaign for Nature, <http://www.embracingtheworld.org/indeed/> encourages us to build safe havens for endangered insects and birds. Beneficial insects need cover from predators. Leaf mulch, rotting logs and piles of stone are excellent winter hiding places for many beneficial insects.

Before the age of soil-less, peat-based potting soils, composted leaves (called leaf mold) were a key component in the best potting soils. Tree leaves are the best concentrators of calcium, magnesium and trace minerals on the terrestrial world. These minerals are very important to seedling growth, and by composting the leaves, these nutrients are made easily available to young plants. Common leaves in order of best mineral content are: oak, beech, maple, ash and alder.

Leaves can be stored in a simple container constructed of a 3-foot-wide piece of chicken wire bent to make a cylinder and stood up on end. Secure both ends of the wire to each other to allow the bin to stand. Fill the cylinder with leaves, wet them down with a hose or let the rain wet them for you. Cover them in the summer to prevent them from drying out. Leaf-only compost can take up to two years to decompose into humus suitable for potting soil.

A faster way to decompose the leaves is to use them in your compost pile. Rich in carbon leaves can be layered in between the greens (lawn clippings, chicken/rabbit/horse manure, fruit/vegetable scraps) to accelerate the decomposition of materials in your compost bin.

I also add a light layer of leaves to my worm bins in the winter to provide additional insulation for my slithery friends.

In closing, I leave you with these fascinating videos to watch. Learn how composting is being done in India. I really enjoyed them and I hope you do too!

Chapter 1 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ebod1vnifBk&feature=relmfu>

Chapter 2 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cepEOBP1dCE&feature=relmfu>

Chapter 3 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ca41XK1gH1w&feature=relmfu>

Mung Bean Sprouts

Buy some plastic lids in different mesh sizes (to accommodate different sizes of seeds) and a canning jar that will fit the lids. Mung beans can be purchased in the bulk section at PCC.

1. Day 1 - Place 1/3-1/2 cup mung beans in canning jar (remember that the sprouts will expand so you want to leave plenty of free space). Fill the jar with filtered water.
2. Days 1&2 - Set aside to soak out of direct light (rinse and refill every 6-8 hours with filtered water).
3. Days 3 & 4 – rinse and drain thoroughly every 4-6 hours, each time turning the jar upside down in a container (to catch any drips) and setting it aside out of direct light so the mung beans can sprout.
4. Day 5 – as soon as roots are about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{5}{8}$ " long, rinse and drain thoroughly. Optional – fill jar with water and remove any husks that float to the surface (however, there's no harm in leaving them alone). Put the upside down jar back in its container and put the unit in the fridge to stop any further growth. Will keep about 3-4 days.

Sprouts are good sprinkled in salads or on top of cooked vegetables or an omelet... or stirred into soup when served. Remember that heat will destroy the enzymes of the raw sprouts, so don't cook them.

Sunflower seeds sprout well too. Almonds can be soaked for 6-8 hours and then refrigerated for 3-4 days. They will not sprout because law requires that US raw almonds be irradiated



Green Tomato Chutney

Yield: 4-5 pints

Preparation Time: 1 ½ hours (including cleanup)

Ingredients

2 cups chopped home-grown green tomatoes (about 3 medium size, or lots of little ones)
1 cup chopped Granny Smith apple
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup chopped organic green bell pepper (about ½ a pepper)
1/2 cup chopped organic white onion
1/4 cup organic cider vinegar
2 teaspoons grated organic lemon rind (Meyer lemon if you can find it)
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (or a little more)
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh organic ginger
1/2 teaspoon Himalayan or gray celtic seasalt
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ small jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced
Optional: 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper (if you like very hot and spicy chutney)

At the end of the simmering period, have a taste—add 1-2 chopped pears to smooth out the flavor if it's too hot.

Preparation

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan (non-aluminum, ceramic is ideal); bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, 45 minutes or until thick, stirring frequently. Cool; pour into airtight very clean containers.

Note: Refrigerate Green Tomato Chutney in airtight containers up to six months (last year's batch lasted a whole year). Use small jars so that when one is open and being used, it won't get exposed to air for long. Write an expiration date on the lid so you won't risk spoilage.

