



Home Schooling Permaculture

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It wasn't until reading Gaia's Garden, written by Toby Hemenway and published by Chelsea Green, that I began to understand permaculture and the science behind it.

The book is filled with examples of successful practitioners in urban and country settings and much, much more. It introduces the reader to the basics of biological life in the soil and water management techniques.

A host of useful and easy to understand charts identify plants by common and Latin names, sizes, and uses in the permaculture garden, whether tree, shrub, perennial or annual. It is here that gardeners can quickly lose themselves in designing their own forest garden.

If you are committed to truly understand what is going on with your plants and soil, try Edible Forest Gardens. Written by Dave Jacke with Eric Toensmeier and also published by Chelsea Green, it is a two-volume set described by farmer and permaculturist Mark Shepard as "the closest thing to a North American textbook we will get in a long time."

Each section is filled with beautifully done illustrations, easy to read tables and charts and resources for further study. The appendices alone are a treasure trove of information for creating a forest garden.

Volume One: Vision & Theory lays out the concept of the forest garden with a study of its ecology. The section on root systems alone will take the reader to a new understanding of plant structure and its relationship with the soil and soil life.

Volume Two: Design & Practice is hands on from developing a personal plan to implementing it. Sections on preparing the site, establishing the garden and managing it are all filled with valuable how-to examples as well as lists of tools and tips.

Next week, I'll take a look at permaculture courses. With Mark's help, we'll explore how to pick the one best for you.

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