



Introduction to Permaculture

Bill Mollison , Reny Mia Slay

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Introduction to Permaculture is an updated and revised version of the first two permaculture books, Permaculture One (Mollison and Holmgren, 1978) and Permaculture Two (Mollison, 1979), and replaces them. New material by Bill Mollison and Reny Mia Slay has been inserted, along with excerpts from Permaculture: A Designers' Manual and information taken from permaculture design courses taught by Bill Mollison (1981, 1986) and Lea Harrison (1985). Some of the illustrations in this book have appeared in Permaculture Two and Permaculture: A Designers' Manual.

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From Reader Review Introduction to Permaculture for online ebook

Justin says

I found this easier to read/more practical than the other books Bill wrote. A must buy!

Jena Buckwell says

I tried to read this about a year ago when I first introduced to Permaculture and felt completely overwhelmed and gave up on it. Fortunately, I came back to it after from hands-on experience and more time talking to others about Permaculture and really, really enjoyed (and understood) the entire book. Even though this is meant to be an introduction, I would recommend reading this after a bit of time getting your feet wet with Permaculture principals and maybe after reading Gaia's Garden, which I found to be much easier to digest early on.

Arda Alkkåskøgen says

ba?lang?ç için daha iyi bir kaynak var m? bilmiyorum, ar?yorum ama. sürekli refere etti?i fukuoka ile kombinleyince daha ??k olacak muhtemelen. merakl?s? ve heveslisi için ideal kaynak.

Jennifer says

Wow! Give me a million dollars and several acres of land and I'm following this book to the t! Ok, it does have advice on sustainability and permaculture for the less extravagant as well. The book covers efficiency in the most basic forms but in ways I hadn't thought of. Several times while reading it I would stop and think - yes! that's brilliant!

Topics include arranging your living environment, your garden, and your home to minimize waste and maximize resources.

In simple terms - it's living with elegance.

Cheryl says

This is a highly technical, and awesome way to view our relationship to the land. It involves a view for the function of each building, each resting area, east growing area, each forestland or prairie that you might be responsible for and how it all fits together. It is very comprehensive and surely expanded my attitude toward the whole of what I'd be working with. I will wait to read this completely until I'm actually on my land. Although it can be applied toward a small house and backyard, the vision is large enough to incorporate

acres and acres.

Nathanael Coyne says

An interesting book with lots of ideas and information about permaculture, although very prescriptive with little theory or evidence (although I'm hoping to get that from David Holmgren's book *Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability* which is sitting next to me). But my main issue for not giving this book a higher rating is that Bill Mollison just isn't a good writer. I didn't feel inspired about permaculture like I did with Toby Hemenway's book *Gaia's Garden* (which I read at the same time). As far as introductions to permaculture go I would definitely recommend Toby's book over Bill's.

Bryan says

Great book to begin wrapping one's thought process around Permaculture; I think this is something that should be required reading in the school system. It would make for an interesting change in the way things are done in the world.

Friday Gladheart says

A great way to start learning about permaculture. It has been many years since I read this book cover-to-cover, but I use it as a reference frequently. After spending a lot of time and money on "professional" permaculture classes, I've discovered that really, everything you need to know is in this book with the assistance of Google searches and deep thinking.

Stephie Jane Rexroth says

"After many years as a scientist with the CSIRO Wildlife Survey Section and with the Tasmanian Island Fisheries Department, I began to protest against the political and industrial systems I saw were killing us and the world around us. But I soon decided that it was no good persisting with opposition that in the end achieved nothing. I withdrew from society for two years; I did not want to oppose anything ever again and waste my time. I wanted to come back only with something very positive, something that would allow us all to exist without the wholesale collapse of biological systems."

"Fukuoka, in his book 'The One Straw Revolution,' has perhaps best stated the basic philosophy of permaculture. In brief, it is a philosophy of working with, rather than against nature; of protracted and thoughtful observation rather than protracted and thoughtless labor; and of looking at plants and animals in all their functions, rather than treating them as single-product system."

"I think harmony with nature is possible only if we abandon the idea of superiority over the natural world. Levi Strauss said that our profound error is that we have always looked upon ourselves as 'masters of creation,' in that sense of being above it. We are not superior to other life forms; all living things are an expression of Life. If we could see that truth, we would see that everything we do to other lifeforms we also

do to ourselves. A culture which understands this does not, without absolute necessity, destroy any living thing."

"Sitting at our back doorsteps, all we need to live a good life lies about us. Sun, wind, people, buildings, stones, sea, birds and plants surround us. Cooperation with all these things brings harmony, opposition to them brings disaster and chaos."

"Cooperation, not competition, is key."

"For myself, I see no other solution (political, economic) to the problems of mankind than the formation of small responsible communities involved in permaculture and appropriate technology. I believe that the days of centralised power are numbered, and that a re-tribalisation of society is an inevitable, if sometimes painful, process."

"I believe we must change our philosophy before anything else changes. Change the philosophy of competition (which now pervades our education system) to that of cooperation in free associations, change our material insecurity for a secure humanity, change the individual for the tribe, petrol for calories, and money for products."

"But the greatest change we need to make is from consumption to production, even if on a small scale, in our own gardens... We ourselves can cure all the famine, all the injustice and all the stupidity of the world. We can do it by understanding the way natural systems work, by careful forestry and gardening, by contemplation and by taking care of the earth."

"To become a complete person, we must travel many paths, and to truly own anything we must first of all give it away. This is not a riddle. Only those who share their multiple and varied skills, true friendships, and a sense of community and knowledge of the earth know they are safe wherever they go."

"There is no other path for us than that of cooperative productivity and community responsibility."

Anna says

I dipped into this classic several years ago, then returned it to the library. Despite the wonderful illustrations, there wasn't enough information on any one topic to grab me during those early days.

However, with several more years of permaculture experimentation under my belt, Introduction to Permaculture strikes me as a definite classic --- I can't quite figure out why it's out of print. You have to read the book for what it is, an idea book full of hundreds of great thoughts to send you researching in other directions. I'm not sure whether Mollison stole his ideas from, for example, Joel Salatin and Art Ludwig, or whether they (and others) took a single page from Mollison's book and turned it into entire books. Either way, you can find many of the great ideas of permaculture summed up in this little book.

The other great thing about Mollison's book is that he (mostly) tells you when certain permaculture ideas aren't suitable to your farm. So many permaculture thinkers are just thinkers, and have no concept that their techniques might not be universal, but Mollison is definitely a doer, and it shows.

Dwight Walker says

Very good review of permaculture including many good diagrams of gardens using permaculture and a good list of plants in back.

David Koblos says

Seeing that this Introduction book was actually a collection of pamphlets, which in turn was a transcript of a Permaculture course back in 1981, I thought I might skim through it before putting it away. Boy was I wrong! It is filled with interesting ideas, making one want to try them. Mollison is a genius, and now I feel like attending one of his courses in person.

Levi says

A great (and not overwhelming) introduction to the subject overall. I'm sure I'll be looking back through tables, appendices, and drawings many times.

A few minor complaints: may be a suited a little more for tropical/subtropical climates, could have been clearer in a few areas (patterns/forms, for example), and some of the drawings are not explained very well. Again, these issues are minor.

Feels like a good starting point for me. Cleared up a lot of general questions I had and has made me excited to keep reading and trying things out as I get the chance.

Connie says

In my humble opinion, permaculture is the ultimate in intelligent sustainable living. In this introduction, Bill Mollison explains that permaculture is 98% observation and 2% action (hope I got those numbers right). If the whole planet lived by such a recipe, we would be on the road to solving the serious planetary problems which are moving us rapidly toward disaster.

I took a class in permaculture a few years back, in Boulder, CO (down the road from where I live). Ever since, I have longed to be part of a permaculture community, to "live the vision". Maybe I'll get there some day! In the meantime, I heartily recommend this book, and the practice it espouses, to all.

Amy says

An extraordinary book by an extraordinary person.

In starting this book, I expected to find lots of instruction, technique, information, dull stuff. What I didn't expect is a strong voice for hope, change, and philosophy.

I expected to learn how-to, but I didn't expect the wisdom.

For example, after unsuccessfully protesting the degradation of the environment for two years, he vowed never to waste his time opposing anything ever again. Instead, he created a way of living that leaves the land healthier for the efforts and could go on permanently.

He emphasized imagination and planning over back-breaking labor. He shifts your thinking from seeing problems to seeing a potential resource. How can the strong coastal wind be leveraged or at least mitigated, or sun, or wet. He encourages you to see waste items as products, e.g. chickens produce eggs and meat, but they also provide methane, manures, feathers, heat, etc. all of which can be leveraged and cycled back into the system.

Everything on the system can and should serve multiple purposes. It all takes thought and care in the planning stages, then continue refinement as your system matures and changes.

Bits of Bill's wisdom:

"Harmony with nature is only possible if we abandon the idea of superiority over nature."

"The only limit on the number of uses a resource possible within a system is the limit of the information and the imagination of the designer."

"Cooperation, not competition, is the key."

"Work where it counts. Plant a tree where it is happy to grow. Teach and mentor those who are ready and willing." (I think we feel the most success when we convert someone. But time and energy are better spent on those that want to know what we have to share and will run with it.)

"Tidiness is something that happens when compulsive activity replaced thoughtful creativity."

"To be a complete person, we must travel many paths, and to truly own anything we must first of all give it away."

I also learned many new and wonderful words. Like afforestation and polyculture. Instead of protesting deforestation, he speaks about creating forests. Instead of bashing mono-culture he encourages us to see and find polycultures as a system that will provide and support itself and insulates us from crop failures.

Well done Bill. From the momentum that permaculture is gaining, I think your time creating and teaching was indeed more effective than your time protesting.
