Permaculture

Permaculture principles are applied at Earthsong in many ways, from the building and site design to the productive and edible landscaping, native bush and orchard areas.

Permaculture (permanent agriculture) is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems that have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems. The concept was developed by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in Australia and introduced with their first book 'Permaculture One' in 1978.

In Permaculture the needs of one element are met by a surplus in another, and waste from one aspect becomes a resource in another. The needs, effects and surpluses of every element of the whole system: humans, animals, plants, water, climate and soil, are woven together to grow a flourishing, self-sustaining ecosystem.

This is done through observation and design, placing species together which enhance rather than compete with each other, imitating and enhancing natural overland flows of water, recognizing and creating microclimates to support different species, and placing often-required plants within easy reach of houses while those requiring only seasonal attention can be further away.

At Earthsong:

- Buildings are sited to fit with the natural contours of the land and the direction of the sun for passive solar design.
- The overland stormwater system of vegetated channels follows the slope of the site to create water gardens and absorb the rainwater into the soil.
- Gardens flourish all over the site, from the large common vegetable gardens and orchard to individual gardens around the houses, and small areas tucked beside the path or around buildings.
- Edible plants co-exist with natives and ornamentals, giving an eclectic mix enjoyed by people, birds and beneficial insects alike. Grape vines shade houses from hot summer sun while producing sweet grapes; and even the stormwater channels produce food.
- A variety of methods from composting to worm farms and bokashi are used to turn food scraps and weeds into rich fertile compost.
- Our agreements include only using non-toxic organic methods of soil fertility and pest control.
- Bees from on-site hives help to pollinate the vegetables and fruit trees.
- We grow a surprising amount of food in our high-density neighbourhood, and are also linking with and supporting organic farmers through our local organic vegetable coop.

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