

Taking Further Action to Develop Local Food Systems

Minnesota has a healthy and diverse local foods system. The production backbone of this system is urban backyards, community gardens, CSA farms, and sustainable agriculture farms. The purchasing backbone of this system is farmer's markets, coops, direct marketing by small producers, and local foods restaurants.

Growing and purchasing local foods is an important step in combating global climate change since the average food item travels over 1200 miles to reach your plate.

Growing food in your own backyard can be healthy and rewarding. Nowhere is the food fresher and nowhere do you know exactly what went into its production.

Our edible gardens are an easy way to get a successful garden producing in a short amount of time. If you are interested in learning more about nutrient-dense food or growing your own, we welcome you to become engaged with your local permaculture community.

For more information, please visit www.permaculturecollaborative.us www.permacultureresearch.us or www.permaculturebusiness.us

Our Commitment

We are committed to increasing the beauty and abundance of the lands where we work by:

- Assessing the unique combination of resources – sun, water, wind, and microclimates – on the land and creating site-specific designs to make the landscape sustainable
- Improving and building soils
- Using the ecological functions of plants to solve landscape problems
- Optimizing biological diversity
- Matching plants to soils and microclimates
- Designing sustainable plant communities that will be productive for today and many years to come.

For centuries people have used plant knowledge to create productive landscapes. Ecological Gardens builds on this tradition by using knowledge from sustainable agriculture, ecology, and permaculture to design chemical-free landscapes that are biologically rich and ecologically sound.

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Jumpstart Edible Gardens



Urban Berry Guild – grow lots of berries in a small space

Ecological Gardens

Certified Permaculture Designers

www.ecologicalgardens.com



Compost tea provided by Ecological Tea

How the Plant Guilds Work

Plants are the primary producers of value in an ecosystem. They take energy from the sun and nutrients from the soil and convert them into valuable ecological services – building soil, purifying water, fixing nitrogen, and cleaning the air. They also produce products that we can use – food, medicine, fuel, fiber, and cut flowers to name a few.

Certain plants benefit from one another when grown together. Plant guilds are communities of plants that meet the needs of each plant in the community as well as provide more abundant and healthier products for ourselves.

Productive guilds are created by proper plant placement and healthy soil. We apply compost tea, a concentrated blend of high quality compost and essential nutrients, to restore large quantities of soil microbes. Microbial populations are lost when soil are compacted, tilled, and disturbances. The microbes, particularly fungi, link the plants to far off nutrients and make them available in a form the plants can digest and assimilate.

One of the ways you create nutrient-dense foods is by creating nutrient-dense plants. In this way we help restore a backyard ecosystem and our own health.

Plants - Functions & Uses

The plants in these gardens work together as a guild, providing many ecological functions and human uses. A few examples:

Wild blue indigo is a nitrogen fixer, a soil builder, and provides a home for beneficial insects. Indigo seeds have been used for treating exzema and reducing colic in infants.

Creeping thyme is a pest repellent preventing cabbage flies and is an important plant for beneficial insects. Thyme is aromatic and has been used medicinally for treating respiratory ailments.

Dill is an insectory plant for lacewings and swallowtail butterflies. It is also an herb used for flavorings.



There are several different gardens you can choose from:

- Fruit Tree Guilds
- Companion Vegetable Garden
- Herb & Edible Flower Spiral
- Urban Berry Guild

Care & Maintenance

The gardens are designed to be self-maintaining over time. The first 18 months is a period of establishment. During this time special care needs to be taken to insure your plants become strong. They need to receive ½” of water twice a week to build strong, healthy roots.

Periodic weeding may also be needed during this time.

In early spring the non-woody plants should be cut back to about 2” of growth for the next season.

For the first 2 years you may want to reapply compost tea to insure there is a healthy community of soil microbes. You can do this yourself by purchasing the tea in small quantities. For more information, contact Ecological Tea, info@ecologicaltea.com.



Fruit tree with companions