

Further resources:

Available at Riverton Environment Centre:

Booklets:

- Edible and Useful plants – Jason Ross \$12
- Heritage Orchard Handbook – Robyn Guyton \$15

Online forums:

- www.facebook.com/TheForestGardeners/
- [ooooby.ning.com/group/foodforestsanz](https://www.ooooby.ning.com/group/foodforestsanz)

Videos of the Guyton's 25 year-old Forest Garden:

- Autumn Tour: Filmed autumn 2021. 80 minute guided tour: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mj-bnPKVBqw&t=4s
- "An Invitation for Wildness": Filmed spring 2016. 20 minutes with some great drone footage: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GJFL0MD9fc&t=543s
- "Welcome to the Food Forest": Filmed 2012. 8 minutes - a great introduction to permaculture and our centre: www.youtube.com/watch?v=qY2_17NTd7Q

Websites:

- National Permaculture group: www.permaculture.org.nz/
- International Permaculture group (articles from around the world): www.permaculturenews.org/

The Forest Garden

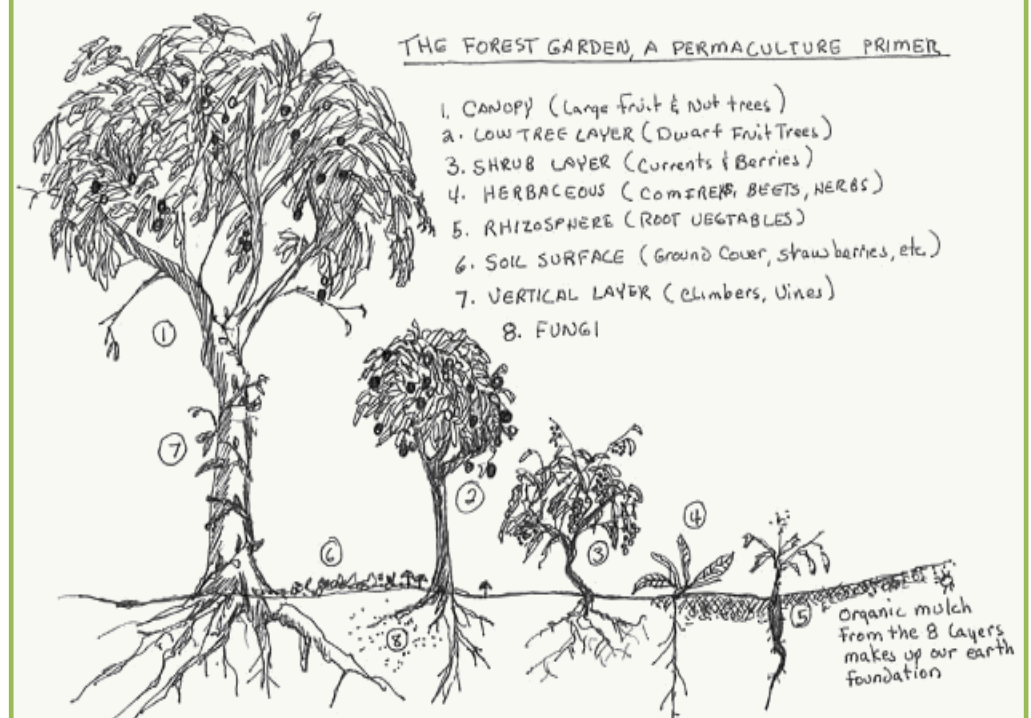
Diversity

Huge variety of plants for: insects, soil, birds & humans

Mulching

The forest floor is a natural 'sheet-compost'

Layering



The food forest is a stable system that will continue to produce food and feed the soil with little further intervention.

Forest gardens are wild by design

Forest gardeners:

- Model their designs on the natural forms and patterns found in nature, and the natural life-cycle of the plants is left alone.
- Do not remove fallen leaves for composting, leaving them instead to be incorporated into the living soil below. The forest floor is basically a mattress of compost that has all the fungi and wildlife to break down dead organic material, retuning nutrients to the soil.
- Allow annual and biennial plants to seed and spread naturally through the forest where they can find the places they grow best and from there spread and re-grow from then on.
- Do not use synthetic chemicals, as they know the value of the beneficial insects and the living soil web which supports the system: everything in nature is interconnected.
- Know that weeds are useful, although the value of some have been forgotten. Some balance soil deficiencies, others attract beneficial insects or protect soil. Many were brought by our early settlers who knew their health or culinary benefits, or their use in dyes, pest control and more.
- Only need simple hand tools, because once the garden is established, the forest gardeners become gatherers and foragers in their own backyard: lawns disappear...

Forest gardens are resilient

Forest gardens are being established around the world as people are learning that natural ecosystems are more resistant to extremes of weather.

- With frosts, the shade of the taller trees protects the tender plants below from early morning direct sunlight which would otherwise damage plant cells.
- Downpours won't wash away the soil because the ground is always covered in a variety of living plants or mulch (made up of dead plants).
- Sunlight removes carbon from bare soil but in a forest garden system the soil is shielded from the sun: carbon is recycled back into the soil.
- Droughts have little effect on the forest garden because the shade and mulch holds the moisture in the soil; you may never need to water a forest garden once it is established.
- Wind can damage plants and blow top soil away if it is exposed. The soil in a forest garden is well protected by the diverse plant cover.
- With climate extremes, monoculture such as is found in 'conventional' single-species orchards is very vulnerable, for example when a hailstorm comes at a critical time in the plants' cycle. With the diversity of plants in a forest garden there are always some varieties of fruit and vegetables that make it through, even though others may suffer: there is always a harvest.