



Claire White

Permaculture & Forest Garden Teacher

Claire is a well known established teacher and practitioner. Educated in fine art, horticulture and permaculture design she blends the aesthetic with utility by following nature's patterns. Her gardens work with nature to grow beneficial productive, sustainable spaces from country to city.

Creating your Forest Garden

Forest Gardens are food producing gardens based on the model of a natural woodland forest. Usually made up of fruit and nut trees, fruit bushes, perennial vegetables and herbs.

This system of gardening suggests a subtle change in our relationship with food growing. A series of guilds create a number of plant communities, and can be repeated in principle to any scale including small gardens and yards.

Fruit trees, shrubs, climbers, ground cover perennials, herbs and roots make up a guild. Each element participates in a network of multiple positive relationships.

Leaves and debris are left to return to the soil, as in a forest, which reduces evaporation - this is a low water system and after initial planting watering is not required.

Apart from harvesting the only significant time commitment is the task of mulching.




CHURCH FARM, ARDELEY
AGRARIAN RENAISSANCE



The Forest

Garden Course

Permaculture at Church Farm, Ardeley




Church Farm is a 175 acre small mixed farm ecologically producing local food. We are delighted to have had input from Patrick Whitefield in the design of the farm and to have Claire White here to create our forest garden.


Claire is running a 6 day Forest Garden Course where participants will learn and apply the principles of forest gardening in and around the 6 acre Kitchen Gardens.

Permaculture, of which Forest Gardening is a part, is about recognising, utilising and creating local resources with the minimum of energy inputs.


Existing resources on the farm used during the course include the existing woods, growing the forest garden plants in the poly tunnels, card waste from office and farm deliveries utilised for covering the soil, and energy from people.



The woods are a sustainable growing system, many elements make up a series of beneficial relationships within it, the older and more recent forest systems are used as teaching tool to explain and show the plant community and diversity to be established in the forest garden on the south-facing slope. The course will make several visits across to show and explain Forest succession and building soil.



Keeping back succession has been the aim of agriculture, this is a highly energy intensive system. Forest gardening is poly-culture system, which accepts and works with the direction of nature, reducing energy use in the form of fossil fuels.



The design will start off around the pond and recently planted trees. This is to support what has already been started then the designs can roll out from this point across the site.



Forest Garden Course Dates

1. Saturday 7th November 2009

- Defining forest gardening.
- History and Design Process.
- Windbreaks/Hedges.

Practical: Survey and observation exercise, Planting windbreak and sowing seeds for ground cover in the forest garden. Mulching areas to be planted.

2. Saturday 5th December 2009

- Designing, Guilds and Forest succession.
- Edges.
- Developing a planting plan.

Practical: Surveying the site, Potting on, Mulching, assessing and identifying needs of farm in the design

3. Saturday 23rd January 2010

- Polyculture, Design principles rolling out across site.
- Growing with perennials. Ground cover, trees. Microclimates.
- Detailed plant list.

Practical: Drawing out design, mulching, planting out.

4. Saturday 27th February 2010

- Clearings and edges in design, water.
- Surplus, realising resources.
- Swales.

Practical: Planting out Trees, ground cover any other practical work.

5. Saturday 13th March 2010

- The Underground and Mycorrhizal fungi.
- Soil and soil surface.
- Canopy density and design.

Practical: Planting trees, shrubs and ground cover.

6. Saturday 25th April 2010

- Rolling Permaculture and forest gardening.
- The social element and our part in the poly-culture.
- Native/naturalised plants on the farm and foraging.

Practical: Planting, mulching observing developing garden.

Course Outcomes

The course has been created to enable you to see the whole process of design of a forest garden, ideas as well as learning practical and principle skills. At the end of the course you should be able to create your own forest garden on a small or large scale.

Who the course is for

Open to anybody, no prior knowledge required.

What to bring

Sturdy boots and clothes you don't mind getting a little dirty, and a notebook and pen.

Reunion and Follow Up Day – Summer 2010

Final planting, succession any other tasks outstanding. Review design process.

To Join the Forest Garden Course

To book a day session costs £60.00.

To book the whole course of 6 sessions costs £50 per day.

The course runs from 9.00am through to 4.00pm and includes coffee and tea as well as a delicious lunch from ingredients grown on the farm.

Please call Church Farm direct on 01438 861 447 or 07522 466 355 to reserve your place.

