



NEWS IN BRIEF

We were sad to hear that Ann Napier, co-founder of our friends at Cygnus Review/Books died from breast cancer in July. Her intelligence energy and understanding will be sorely missed on planet earth: cygnusreview.com

The world's first Permaculture International Research Network has been launched, providing summaries of permaculture related research: permaculture-research.blogspot.co.uk

Check out Permalogues, a series of audio conversations with permaculture people: soundcloud.com/permaculturepeople

We like this cross-cultural initiative within permaculture: blackpermaculture.network.org

This year's National Diploma Gathering takes place at Castleton Losehill Hall, High Peak, Derbyshire, 28 - 30 November 2014. For tickets and further info: www.permaculture.org.uk/noticeboard/event/ndg2014

Permablitz Rainforest Singing Fundraiser, 7 December 2015, at Cecil Sharp House, London: www.permablitzlondon.com/event/su-hart-fundraiser

The permaculture garden at Cecil Sharp House in London, a Permablitz project, won first prize in the Camden in Bloom, best business entry: <http://tiny.cc/garden-award>

The Universe Story Event, 14 March 2015, London features *Permaculture* editor Maddy Harland speaking about *Transformational Heresy – Permaculture and Beyond*: www.greenspirit.org.uk/uni-story-event

Future NOW, the pioneering Spiritual Ecology conference, takes place 8 November 2014 in Bristol: www.futurenow.consciousfrontiers.com

Casitas Valley Farm, USA is again hosting a 30 day PDC and Apprenticeship, 5 July - 2 August 2015. Interested? www.casitasvalley.com/#!courses/c144e

Convergence in Oz Extreme Salad Competition Delights Crowds

The Northwest Environment Centre, Penguin, Tasmania plays host to the 12th Australasian Permaculture Convergence, 9 - 12 March 2015.

This is the first time a Convergence has been held in Tasmania, which was the birthplace of permaculture over 40 years ago.

The theme is 'Honouring the Past, Transforming the Future: The Challenge to Permaculture'. Speakers include David Holmgren, Rosemary Morrow and many more. For details view: http://tiny.cc/aus_convergence



In a competition amongst three Danish gourmet chefs, each chose and mixed over 80 edible greens and flowers from the vigorous and colourful Fantasy salad beds (Fantasilater®) at Grennessminde's organic farm at Taastrup, just outside of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The chefs had one hour to create the world's best Fantasilat®. Each chef had a horticultural assistant who recorded their ingredients and helped with the cleaning and preparation of the picked material.

The attending public and invited head referee Stephen Barstow (who devised the competition) sampled and then chose the winning salad. Barstow, known as the 'extreme salad man', has an incredible garden at his home in Norway which has over 2,000 edible plants.

The competition proved that any beautiful garden can be full

of food. These salads are served within an hour of picking, which is part of the concept of Fantasy salads, the other being the large variety (minimum 80!) and many flavours attempted.

The salads are finely chopped and mixed to be full of interesting flavours and colour, so eating more greens is no longer a strain but creative, fun and an act of easy permaculture gardening.

"This event was completely out of the norm" said Chef Kasper Leander, "we had to pick our own ingredients from plants that are normally regarded as flowers and ornamentals."

The Fantasy salad beds can be visited at Grennessminde www.gminde.dk, and from 2015 the Farm will be offering courses and lectures in Fantasy salad making in both Danish and English.

Read about Stephen Barstow's new book *Around The World In 80 Plants* on page 73.



Permaculture Voices

The biggest permaculture event in the USA next year is Permaculture Voices (PV2), which takes place 4 - 8 March 2015 in San Diego, CA. Early bird tickets have just gone on sale, so be quick to snap those up.

PV2 is a gathering of some of America's and the world's most prominent permaculture people, with the likes of Toby Hemenway, Mark Shepard, Paul Stamets, Gunter Pauli, Starhawk, Marcin Jakubowski, Dr. Elaine Ingham and Larry Santoyo already confirmed. We are also proud to announce that *Permaculture* magazine's editor Maddy Harland has been invited as a keynote speaker to the event.

To keep abreast of all of the latest additions, news on special events (such as performances by the Formidable Vegetable Sound System) and to watch talks from last year's event please view and share: www.facebook.com/permacultureVOICES and www.permaculturevoices.com

National Permaculture Library Launched

The Permaculture Association has launched the National Permaculture Library. It opens with over 800 books ranging from introductory permaculture titles to university text books on ecology, geology and agriculture, rare and antique books and permaculture titles published by Permanent Publications.

"This is probably the best library of permaculture related books available to the public anywhere in the UK," says volunteer librarian Nicola Graham.

"It is wonderful to finally be able to share it with the permaculture community."

The library is based in Headingley, Leeds, and is open every Thursday and Friday. For further details about adding to the collection and to book a visit (do this well in advance) email: office@permaculture.org.uk

The full library catalogue is available online to view before you visit: www.permaculture.org.uk/research/national-permaculture-library



The Not So Green Revolution

Kristof and Stacia Nordin describe why the 'green revolution' hasn't worked and present the alternatives

all photos © Gail Harland

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

There is currently a global debate taking place over the use of genetic engineering to help solve the world's increasing problems of food insecurity and malnutrition. While much of this controversy tends to focus solely upon the *safety* of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), many people have yet to stop and ask the much more fundamental question: Why are GMOs being created in the first place?

Genetic engineering has supplied scientists with an ability to manipulate specific traits in plants and animals through the insertion of 'foreign' genetic material. While it's true that humans have always exerted a certain influence over seed selection by saving and replanting the best seeds from the healthiest plants, the breeding of new varieties really came to a high point around the end of World War II when plant biologists made strides in 'hybridization' – a process

of cross-pollinating, or 'inbreeding' within various species. Although the resulting cross has what is known as 'hybrid vigor' and grows well for the first year, successive generations of seeds tend to be sterile or unproductive, forcing farmers into the necessity of purchasing new seed each year.

Another fact seldom considered is that the hybridization process takes an extra growing season just to produce hybrid seed, so throughout the world vast tracts of land are annually set aside for seed production at the expense of land that could be used for food production. The increased production of hybrid varieties became the impetus behind the post-WWII campaign to alleviate global food insecurity known as the Green Revolution. This movement has most commonly been attributed to the work of the American biologist Norman Borlaug; often regarded to be the 'father of the Green Revolution'.

The promotion of hybrid varieties of crops however, also came hand-in-hand with new methods of production. Diversity, which had once been inherent to traditional agricultural systems, was now discouraged and farmers were advised to eradicate the complex networks of natural ecosystems in favor of monocropping (the practice of growing a single crop in a large area, year after year on the same land).

DIMINISHING DIVERSITY

To get an idea of how far we have actually moved away from diversified food production, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has estimated that: "Current research has identified approximately 250,000 plant species ... about 30,000 are edible, and of these about 7,000 plants ... have been used throughout the world's history as food. Today however, only three plants (wheat, rice, and maize)