



# PSN News July 2011

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Robyn Williamson our beloved Seed Savers expert is currently in Westmead hospital following a minor stroke and is trying to keep her spirits up as she works towards recovery.

She is a gorgeous and much loved member of our community and we're sure she'd love to hear from her friends in PSN. If you'd like to drop her a kind word, please send your messages to Robyn at [ecogarden@yahoo.com.au](mailto:ecogarden@yahoo.com.au)

Penny has been in daily contact and reckons that Robyn will *'be back at the next seedsavers meeting with bells on.'*

**We all hope so and wish Robyn a speedy recovery**

## Presidents Report

Hi to all PSN members and friends,

If you didn't catch our last meeting you missed out on a cracker! Janet Millington's presentation on outdoor Classrooms was fantastic, and really illustrated how important it is for people (big and little) to develop a love and understanding of nature and their place in it. It's about creating environments where people can build a set of skills and knowledge that will enable them to engage positively with the world. This also stands true for an adult learning environment, and we are working hard to create the same experiences for our members. If you haven't taken part in a garden team or living skills event please check out our website to see what's coming up.

Mid winter is usually a slow time for a garden. We might do a bit of pruning, tool sharpening, or start a new compost heap, but generally things are fairly quiet until warmer weather springs. Winter is a great time for contemplation, planning and design. This is what we're doing in PSN, and it is really exciting to

see some of the emerging ideas about how we can refresh our approach to communicating with our members and the outside world. This organisation belongs to all of us, and four hundred minds are more powerful than one. I am really keen to

hear your experience of PSN, and any ideas you might have for improvement in what we do and how we do it, please contact me on [president@permaculturenorth.org.au](mailto:president@permaculturenorth.org.au). I look forward to hearing your thoughts - watch this space!

Thanks everyone for a great month, and I look forward to seeing you in July.



## Keynote Speaker: Gary Caganoff

Get ready for a challenging July keynote presentation. Not to be missed! Come to the screening of one of permaculture's best and most acclaimed documentary movies, "The Garden at the end of the World". Right after the screening, the film's director Gary Caganoff has kindly offered to discuss this landmark permaculture movie. Given the impact this film can have we will appreciate the director talking us through his work. The movie screens for 50 minutes followed by discussion.

Initially I thought screening Gary's film provided something completely different from June's presentation "Outdoor Classrooms" by Janet Millington. As I became more familiar with *Garden at the End of the World* I realize this work has an important message that connects to and massively reinforces Janet's "Outdoor Classrooms" especially with respect to food security.

*The Garden at the End of the World* came out in 2003. Gary journeyed to Afghanistan with his landlady, friend and documentary subject, world renowned permaculturalist Rosemary Morrow. The filming of this documentary has had deep and profound effects on them both.

In October last year this documentary was recognised with a global Human Rights award from the World Association of Christian Communication and its Catholic counterpart, SIGNIS. The irony of this award is that Gary is Jewish with Buddhist tendencies, filming in an Islamic country. Seriously, the film is

managing to dissolve the boundaries of differing beliefs and find common ground in our shared humanity.

Gary Caganoff is an award winning documentary filmmaker of twenty years, being one of the first single camera operators in the early 90's starting with the then new Hi8 handycam format. He specialised filming in remote locations, mainly the Tasmanian World Heritage Wilderness and the unprotected Tarkine wilderness in the State's North West. Gary has made documentaries for some of Australia's peak environment groups. In 2002 he won the Grand Prize at the Banff Mountain Film Festival with his film, *The Second Step*, on double above-knee leg amputee Warren Macdonald's epic journey to Federation Peak, in the heart of SW Tasmania. The film also screened on the ABC.

Gary was the originator and organiser of the *Wild Spaces Environmental and Social Justice Film Festival* for five years from 1996 the first Australian festival totally dedicated to the environment and human rights. The festival screened across the country and was instrumental in inspiring activist filmmaking in Australia.

Gary has a Masters of Applied Science in Social Ecology, a Graduate Diploma of Transpersonal Psychotherapy, and a Permaculture Design Certificate. He lives in the Blue Mountains of NSW. *The Garden at the End of the World* DVD will be on sale on the night as well as Rowe's booklet and DVD on Retrofitting.



## Shows Team - Monique Unger

This year PSN has been asked to coordinate and run the feature kitchen garden display at the Organic Expo and Green Show, being held at the Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, between Friday 5th and Sunday 7th August. Bump in (set up) will be on Thursday 4th.

This is an exciting opportunity for us to demonstrate what we know and love about permaculture to a target market of Sydney-siders interested in organics and green living. The promoters of the expo are doing all the publicity for us so we can focus on what we do best – putting on amazing, educational, interactive and relevant displays and showing the public how they can integrate Permaculture into their lifestyles too!

## Living Skills - Barbara Clark

Living Skills Workshops are held on the 1st Saturday of the month and focus on home and living skills required to live sustainably.

We have been looking at ways of preserving foods when they are abundant for times when they are not readily available because of the changing seasons.

We have in previous workshops looked at ways we can preserve excess milk into dairy products such as cheese, yoghurt, butter etc.

For the June workshop we looked at Pickling as a way of preserving foods.



On a lovely Saturday afternoon we pickled eggs, fish, preserved lemons and prepared cured olives. I am hoping to see a selection of pickled products in some of the suppers over the coming months.

Our July Living Skills workshop on Saturday 2 July will focus on Wood Work Skills. We will be building a base with castors for a Styrofoam box so that it can be moved around easily to follow the sun.

There are still a couple of places left, so if you are interested please contact Barbara Clark on lyndoch75@gmail.com asap.

## Advocacy - Barry Hadaway

On 13 June 2011 the PSN Advocacy Team wrote to Premier Barry O'Farrell regarding Renewable Energy Policy. The original impetus for writing was the fact that several PSN members had invested in grid connected photovoltaic panels and were affected by the decision of the Minister for Resources and Energy, Chris Hartcher, to retrospectively abolish the 60 cents per kilowatt hour Feed-In Tariff.

However, before a pen touched paper the government had reversed its decision.

It seemed to me that this turn of events really presented us with an opportunity to 'join the dots' and connect the criticism, to which the NSW Government had been subject, with:

- The need for a long term Strategic Plan for energy generation in NSW
- The need to replace fossil fuel generators, both coal and further down the track gas, with renewable energy sources

We have suggested to Premier O'Farrell that any decision that the NSW Government takes with respect to energy generation will be widely criticised, if it is not part of a sensible long term energy generation strategy.

For example, if the government decided to proceed with the construction of new generators at Mount Piper and Bayswater such a decision would meet strong community resistance because it would be inconsistent with the need to have an energy strategy that reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

As Permaculturalists, who are committed to 'living sustainably', we should actively promote long term thinking by government decision makers.

Short term thinking is one of the greatest threats to our future.

The design of the display is going to be very similar to the balcony garden that the Willoughby Local Group set up for their seminar/workshop event in February. As such, anyone who helped out or lent plants or props for that event, please expect a call from Monique. To find out how you can get involved please contact Monique on shows@permaculturenorth.org.au.



Governments in Australia, in recent decades at least, have been slaves to short term poll-driven thinking with no long term vision for either their State or for Australia. It has appeared that they have had only one priority - to be re-elected.

It is easy to criticise. What we need to do, which is harder, is to be prepared to work cooperatively with government and to praise long term thinking when it is evident. There needs to be some incentive for our political representatives to think beyond one election cycle.

**Please read our letter to Premier O'Farrell on the Advocacy Letter Page of the PSN website at [http://www.permaculturenorth.org.au/index.php?q=advocacy\\_team\\_page](http://www.permaculturenorth.org.au/index.php?q=advocacy_team_page)**

**If you can think of some long term strategies the NSW Government could pursue to protect the environment, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce waste or to otherwise promote sustainable living, send me an email at [advocacy@permaculturenorth.org.au](mailto:advocacy@permaculturenorth.org.au).**

The next Advocacy Meeting will be held on **Tuesday 6 September 2011**, commencing at 7.30pm at 3 Yerong Street, Ryde. Unfortunately the Advocacy Meeting scheduled for July has had to be cancelled. However, if there are matters with which the PSN Advocacy Team might be able to assist, drop me an email and give me the details of the issue, your concerns and what you think should be done to remedy the situation.



## Education Team - Diana Watson

The Education Team has prepared a suite of workshops and courses and events so we invite you to:

**Visit the Courses webpage** and tell your friends and colleagues.

<http://permaculturenorth.org.au/index.php?q=2011%20courses> The flyers are downloadable to put up in your local shopping centre, workplace, organic food baskets, or library. Also, you can send the links by email. Workshops coming up are - Rare Heritage Fruit Trees (14 Aug), Spring Veggie Garden (28 Aug), Presentation Skills (10 Sep). Courses coming up - What is Permaculture? (4 Sep), Introduction to Permaculture (22-23 and 29-30 Oct).

**Visit us on Facebook**

We are putting our events up on the Permaculture Sydney North Facebook page. There may be a discussion that you wish to join.

**Visit the Education Team web page** <http://permaculturenorth.org.au/index.php?q=education> We plan to write up the events and put up extra hints, reading material, and links. As an example

**Learn about Bushfire Resilience** a talk by David Holmgren in 4 parts. John Champagne has passed his thanks to Pat Raynor and the Permaculture Blue Mountains group for recording this and making it available on youtube.

<http://youtu.be/dfcOnYiISFs>

[http://youtu.be/jP5\\_XIJuvKk](http://youtu.be/jP5_XIJuvKk)

<http://youtu.be/junef8CiAts>

<http://youtu.be/WCjJcePJbSE>

**Come on a PSN Tour**

Dates for your diary 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> November 2011 when we shall be heading north. If you are planning to come on the tour and have a licence to drive the bus, please contact Diana 9416 2929 if you are prepared to be a backup driver.

Feedback and suggestions are welcome

[education@permaculturenorth.org.au](mailto:education@permaculturenorth.org.au) or call Diana Watson on 9416 2929.

## Lane Cove Local Group - Mandy Stubbs

Lane Cove Group has been enjoying a bit of a winter lull, giving members more time to focus on the community garden. A Lane Cove Council Grant has been won, giving us \$2000 to set up a permanent balcony display around the Permavan, which is kept at the community garden. The purpose will be to demonstrate to local unit dwellers and other small space gardeners, that a huge variety of edible plants can be grown, using vertical spaces. The Permavan will still be able to be moved and taken to shows, or wherever it's required. This is an exciting project and we're looking forward to getting started.

The workshops are continuing once a month at the garden, and recently we have had one on chooks. Next, we're doing another cooking workshop – always good in the winter for huddling in the warm kitchen! We're hoping to persuade garden members with Turkish heritage to teach us some of their traditional cuisine. Keep an eye on the Permapatch website, or the email we will send round to advertise it. [www.permapatch.org.au](http://www.permapatch.org.au).

The bees at the community garden don't seem to be having a winter lull and are as busy as ever making our next lot of honey. The first honey from the hives was delicious - how nutritious to eat something so natural and so local. Perhaps this would help to ward off allergies if people could eat products from local pollen early in life? My bee hive at home is also buzzing, after a slow start, and am hoping to see my very own first honey come the spring.

Our monthly open day saw a small number of members working hard and eating cake. The rest of the bed on the upper wall was weeded, dug and compost and straw added to prepare it for



spring planting. A huge load of compost was started, whilst we waded in mud and horse manure! Bamboo tripods were reinforced with short star pickets for a windy August; then yet more snap peas planted at their base. Old zucchini plants were cleared out and a general tidy up made it all look a lot neater. Next we will get the pile of earth behind the Permavan taken away, do the balcony display and build a chicken house and run.

Our June Permaculture meeting saw members overseas or very busy, but a few of us decided to stay in the warm and brew up some potions (see photo). We based our ideas on Pat's book that we bought at her recent talk at Lindfield, using herbs from our own gardens. Gorgeous face cream was made with big fat aloe leaves, rose petals, comfrey, nettle and calendula. Fantastic for dry winter lips it seems. We also made citrus vinegar for cleaning. The chickweed soup got a mixed reception and had some unwanted effects later! So much fun 'playing witches' that we hope to do more in future, with perhaps a Permapatch workshop to pass on experience and ideas.

The July and August meetings will be helping members make plans for their gardens. July will be at the wonderful new premises for Riding for the Disabled, planning some water management and vegetable gardens – they certainly have enough fertilizer there!

Lane Cove members – please come along and see us if you haven't yet, at the community garden or at a local meeting. Call Mandy on 9436 2891 if you want to talk about local issues, growing food, sustainability, etc.

## North Sydney Local Group - Peter Pezzolesi

Our group usually meet on the second Saturday of month at the Coalloader at Balls Point but because of the renovations being done to turn the whole area into a sustainable centre, we instead are having the grand opening of the centre on Sunday 10th July from 9am-1pm. We will have a permie stall with Wendy Bishop doing a weaving demo and me giving away heaps of seedlings.

Council is providing some type of lunch to those who RSVP me as I have to let council know numbers.

This is a great exposure point for PSN as hundreds will be in the centre everyday and weekend.

For more information contact me at [Ppezzolesi@yahoo.com.au](mailto:Ppezzolesi@yahoo.com.au)

## *Warringah Pittwater Manly Local Group - Cameron Little*

The Warringah Pittwater Manly group continue to go from strength to strength. Our group used National Permaculture Day (NPD) as a great rallying point for our existing members to remind ourselves of the good that we do and to inspire us to seek out new people to join with us and since then we have continued to implement the changes we planned.

Prior to NPD we set ourselves some ambitious membership targets and a range of other areas that we want to achieve things in and our Committee stepped up to the challenge and pulled together as a real team. This has been fantastic to watch and to be a part of and it is already having really significant benefits to our group. For example I (Group Co-ordinator) have been very busy with work lately and the other members of the Committee saw this and stepped forward to carry some of the load that I would normally have shouldered without even having to be asked. Other members of the group may not have noticed this but I sure did. It has meant that our group was not so exposed to the ups and downs within any one or few member's lives.

We have also refocused and restructured our meetings. We now have separate Committee meetings (members are welcome to join us) so that we can focus on what our members want from our monthly get togethers such as workshops & social activities. At our May meeting, which we promoted heavily during NPD, we had over 80 people in attendance to experience a Fruit trees workshop with Peter & Ali Rutherford. It was a great night, we got some new members signing up and it was a great demonstration to us all what we can achieve when we put our minds to it!

In June we had another well attended meeting a couple of weeks ago. We reframed as a Winter Solstice Feast and our Chris & Lauren from our Education Team organised a presentation from Julian Lee from Food Connect. We had more than 30 people there on the night which was fantastic given that it was the middle of winter and that our membership is spread

over an extended area from Manly to Palm Beach. Following the inspiring presentation, the food and the great organic wine we got enthusiastic and have set ourselves the challenge to help increase the subscriber numbers for Food Connect in the Northern Beaches region from 20 up to 50. This would give it a solid base of members and help it to be a robust and sustainable group of consumers purchasing locally grown organic and chemical free foods, ideally from within a 100mile radius. If the buyers group is stable then our members should not wake up one morning to find out that our regular food supply has been terminated due to lack of numbers. Are any of the other PSN local groups working towards a similar food security challenges? If so I would love to hear about them and share your insights on your successes with our local group.

Our group is now very actively involved in the Sustainability reference groups of both Warringah and Pittwater Councils and trying to help to provide some permi thinking to the community inputs to the strategic processes in our local area. We have also started to look at biodiversity (Permaculture Zone 5) related issues on the bigger scale and are planning to bring interested members of our group together with our 3 Council Liaison reps along with Councillors to discuss the biodiversity corridors that link our region together. Once we have something worthy we plan to have it taken up to SHOROC on our behalf by a relevant Council/Councillor. I think that we will also start to look more into Sustainable Water Use in our area, from the household to the regional levels.

We have plenty more ideas that we are planning to pursue over the next 12 months. The objectives of them will be to create a more sustainable Northern Beaches region, to strengthen our membership base and to provide all of our members with what they want from our group whether it be social events with like-minded local friends, help in the garden, advice or educational workshops. After all we all joined PSN and our local groups for some reason so it is up to the group leaders to communicate with the members, to find out what it is that they want and then to try to engage as many of them as possible in some way to see that it happens.

## *Courses organised by the Education Team - Penny Pyett*

### **The Veggie Garden Workshop**

This Spring garden workshop will delight your senses and inform you of everything you need to know about growing veggies and fruits organically in Spring. Learn how to plan, grow and maintain the Spring veggie garden; what fruits and vegetables species to grow in Sydney and how to propagate, grow and harvest them. The workshop covers basic Spring care and maintenance activities like soil preparation, fertilization, mulching, propagation, pruning and more.

**Trainer** - Nicholas Crook has 30 years experience as a gardener and horticulturist, and studied at Pershore College of Horticulture, Worcestershire. He started growing vegetables at an early age, and worked in historic houses and nurseries in Great Britain, before emigrating to Australia.

**When** - Sunday 28 August 9am - 5pm

**Where** - 'Bandusia' Country Retreat, 1056 Upper Macdonald Rd, Upper Macdonald.

**Investment** - \$95 PSN members, \$135 non-members, \$195 Corp/ Government.

This includes lunch, morning and afternoon tea. Limit of 20 people for this course.

**For more detail contact** [education@permaculturenorth.org.au](mailto:education@permaculturenorth.org.au) or go to <http://permaculturenorth.org.au/index.php?q=2011%20courses>

### **Rare Heritage Fruit Trees**

This workshop will cover practical and theoretical information about rare and heritage fruit trees including what they are, why they are important, and how to make your own trees.

In particular participants will learn about the current status of heritage fruit varieties in the Australian collection, rootstocks, grafting techniques (including espalier) & propagating, selecting suitable species & varieties, planting and care of new trees, organic pest & disease control, pruning your trees or not and what to do with the fruit and especially the ones that most consider not saleable.

**Trainers** - Peter Allen (Pete the Permie) Dip Pc, PDC, BD Cert, TAA Cert IV. Author of Heritage and Dwarf Fruit Trees for Urban Backyards and Small Orchards, and Silvia Allen PDC

**When** - Sunday 14 August 9am – 5pm

**Where** - Eco-House and Garden, Kimbriki Tip, Mona Vale Road, Terrey Hills

**Investment** - \$95 PSN members, \$135 non-members, \$195 Corp/ Government.

**For more detail contact** [education@permaculturenorth.org.au](mailto:education@permaculturenorth.org.au) or go to <http://permaculturenorth.org.au/index.php?q=2011%20courses>

## *Margaret Bouttell - Does being passionate about numbers and fresh vegetables add up?*

I have always taken it as a compliment when people comment that I don't appear to be the traditional accountant. I don't dress in suits, don't carry a briefcase and I cycle to work. I happen to grow vegetables, compost my food waste, shop from the kerbside and live a life inspired by Permaculture.

But the best part is that my workplace is also inspired by Permaculture.

Being passionate about eating local sustainably grown produce and supporting local farmers, it should come as no surprise that my chosen workplace is Food Connect.

Aside from matching my personal values, it's professionally gratifying that I can apply my career in an organisation that embodies the Permaculture ethics of Care of the Earth, Care of People and Fair Share.

How many Permaculturists are fortunate enough to say that about their workplace?

I am very proud that Food Connect was founded as a social enterprise to support local farmers and connect consumers with the people that grow their food.

Our model of sourcing locally grown fresh (incredibly fresh!) sustainably grown produce **cares for the earth** (no chemicals!).

Our **care of people** is borne out in respecting our farmers through recognition, participation and not least, payment of a fair price for their hard work.

Our **fair share** ethics are visible in that we are not about making profits, but providing a fair share to our farmers, to our subscribers and to our staff.

I am empowered that I contribute to providing a practical solution and a valuable alternative to the current mainstream food distribution system – some would call this positively addressing future food security issues. Food Connect is also contributing towards building resilient food communities with

the focus on low food miles and ecologically sustainable farming. Most importantly though, we are providing consumers with a healthier alternative to shopping than the mainstream supermarket provide.

**Fact:** our subscribers have purchased more than half a million dollars (!) of produce through us, of which almost half has gone directly to our local farmers. That is half a million dollars that didn't go into the big supermarket coffers (!) who with their aggressive purchasing power result in little ending up in the hands of the farmers.

Food Connect has created over 30 food hubs (City Cousins) in communities around Sydney, giving people the opportunity to part of a local solution to food sustainability. Some of these City Cousins are PSN members who support Food Connect because, amongst other benefits, they see that we embrace Permaculture principles and put them into practice. This is one of my rewards working at Food Connect – putting Permaculture Principles into practice.

And furthermore, I've even extended my passion for combining numbers and Permaculture by assisting the Treasurer, Geoffrey Hawker, and taking on the role of Accountant of PSN.

It doesn't leave me much time for gardening!

So yes, I have found that by being passionate about numbers and fresh vegetables does add up!




## *Recommended by Rosemary Hadaway - THE CONVERSATION*

New online research site by authors who are academics and members of the research community, working with 12 professional editors to ensure that the complex issues presented, are readily understandable, including an Environment & Energy section.


<http://theconversation.edu.au/pages/environment>

## *Recommended by Jill Kaye*

  
**ANNUAL BOOKFAIR**  
**14th - 17th July 2011**

**THU/FRI 9am - 9pm**  
**SAT/SUN 9am - 5pm**

**AT KNOX GRAMMAR SCHOOL**  
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Thousands of second hand books, CDs, etc. 50 categories including gardening, crafts, cooking, philosophy, history, education, environment, astronomy, literature, novels, collectables, reference, mathematics, music and MANY, MANY more.

Jill scored a hardback 'Glowinski on Fruit Growing in Australia' for just \$4 at one of these. . . .

## *PSN Positions Vacant.*

**Permashop** - PSN is looking for volunteers to help with the Permashop at PSN meetings and National Shows.

Two people are required to help with setting up Permashop and sales at PSN Meetings and shows.

Two people are required to help with stock ordering, pricing and inventories

### **Treasurer 2012**

PSN invites all members to consider the position of Treasurer for next year. All positions will be vacant in December for the AGM however if you think you might be interested in this responsible and critically fundamental position please let us know now.

## Permaculture Sydney North

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*We're on the web . . .*

[www.permaculturenorth.org.au](http://www.permaculturenorth.org.au)

## PSN monthly meetings

PSN regional meetings take place every month except January, in the evening on the third Monday of the month. We have a great speaker every time, February through November. The December meeting is the AGM and end-of-year review and party.

Visitors welcome – \$5 suggested donation

Ku-ring-gai Centre for Seniors 259 Pacific Highway, Lindfield next to the Library, 5 minutes walk from the station.

7:00pm Doors Open, 7:30pm Keynote Presentation, 9:00pm Short Business Meeting and 9:30pm Light Supper and Refreshments

See PN's website [www.permaculturenorth.org.au](http://www.permaculturenorth.org.au) for all details.

## Opinion - Sonya Wallace

There is a lot of change happening in the world at the moment. Economic contractions that have been forecast for a long time are starting to happen and are leading most news bulletins.

Pressures on soil, food, water, energy and money are affecting governments and households.

But a lot of time is spent looking for just one solution to the problem.

For example the carbon tax debate here in Australia has taken a complex problem and dumbed it down to just one solution - should we have a carbon tax or not?

All the discussion about the many different things you can do have fallen by the wayside in the media. You don't see stories about streets of households getting together to work on saving money, or stories about what individuals or businesses can do to cut their emissions anymore. Its just all put over to the one solution - to tax or not.

And you'll never hear anyone talking about reducing consumption - that just doesn't even come into it.

We have rural areas and city suburbs alike being bullied by gas companies to give their land over to coal seam gas operations (watch Gaslands if you haven't already seen it). Yes even inner city suburbs in Sydney are under threat of coal seam gas. [Read the story here.](#)

On Sunday [Landline on the ABC](#) ran an interesting story on the future of food in Australia.

But again the arguments came down to finding just one solution.

I was pleased to see [Michael Mobbs](#) there talking about his project of planting food in the streets of inner Sydney where he and his group have planted around 2000 fruit and nut trees, vegetables and herbs.

Michael said that they have the capacity to feed up to 4% of the city just by planting out the verges with food.

Now of course this isn't a lot - but how do you measure the skills learnt and the number of backyard or balcony gardens this project will spark? How do you measure the community connections made by squatting shoulder to shoulder with your neighbours planting vegetables? How do you measure the conversations it sparks?

The story then went to Julian Cribb the author of the book 'The Coming Famine' - he all but disregarded the whole idea of planting out on city verges because "... they'll never supply more than a small percentage of their food." Which is exactly what Michael said in the first place.

The answer to these big problems won't come from one big solution.

Permaculture provides a way forward and if permaculture principles are applied you'd end up with a food system that is multi-layered, multi-functional, inter-related, dynamic, diverse, resilient and therefore more stable.

Planting out in the city footpaths is as important as food policy changes at Federal Government level and so is everything in between.

We need diversity in all systems - these complex problems need complex solutions (as opposed to complicated solutions).

Nature is complex, subtle in its structure and strong in its sophistication. That's what we need to replicate - so plant out your footpaths, your roofs, your balconies, start a community or school garden, join a community supported agriculture scheme, shop at local farmers' markets or start a local food swap.

Its all part of the solution.

*Ed. This is a post from Sonya's blog and received the following response from Julian Cribb:*

Thanks for referring to my comments: however I do not disregard planting urban verges. It is very important (provided the soil is uncontaminated).

Much more important however is developing "urban permaculture" the conversion of entire cities into food systems by recycling nutrients, organic 'wastes', water and energy in a plethora of different systems. These would include verges, but also hydroponics, aquaponics, roof gardens, urban allotments, balcony farms, green factories, algae farms, livestock and vegetable skyscrapers, the list goes on.

The problem with permaculture thinking at present is that it is not yet on a large enough scale - we need to be talking whole cities, not just verges and bits of garden. It needs to be a central focus of all urban planning, way ahead of roads and amenities. That's not happening. Yet.

*Ed. To which Sonya replied:*

Hi Julian, thanks for stopping by and commenting - I'm surprised you found my little blog! I've been working for many years in the realm of community solutions to problems and they do often get overlooked and yes we need a much 'bigger picture' approach to the way we do things. I've been involved in creating a Transition Town based Energy Descent Action Plan for our local council (who have adopted it as part of their energy transition policy) that integrates many ideas on many levels across many sectors and is very much aimed at strategic and urban planners and policy makers as much as individuals wanting to grow some food in their backyards, Sonya

*Sonya Wallace is director of Permaculture Pathways - education & design services. With her experience and extensive networks in permaculture, sustainable agriculture, local food systems, Transition Towns, community action planning, education, policy development, working with government and creative facilitation, Sonya is now focused on inspiring councils and communities to move toward a more sustainable and connected way of living and finding a greater sense of place where they live.*

*Visit Sonya's blog at [permaculturepathways.blogspot.com](http://permaculturepathways.blogspot.com)*