

Permaculture

Permaculture is an agricultural and environmental technology, which combines growing of fruits, vegetables and grain and the raising of livestock by creating a symbiotic ecosystem.

In 1996, the 3rd International Ecovillage conference was held in Dakar. This conference, organized by the Association for the Economic, Cultural, and Social Promotion of Yoff (APECSY), had, as its main theme “Integrating traditional African wisdom in a global process of ecological reconstruction.” At the end of the conference, around twenty members of the Yoff community were trained in the principles of permaculture with the advent of the APECSY’s Eco-Yoff program.

soil, whether working with a small plot or a large arable field. The scientific foundations of permaculture are the same all over the world, but the socio-cultural approach is specific to the community that practices it.

Permaculture could also be seen as a miniature model of a sustainable society. It is a way of life: an economic and cultural reality, or a way of regarding nature and finding its place therein. The permaculture garden is also a source of

renewable revenue, in as much as it can produce both food and money. Permaculture is a viable option for urban agriculture, since its integrated approach and flexibility, it is perfectly suited to prevailing city conditions, in the fight against poverty, food insecurity, loss of biodiversity and atmospheric pollution.

SOS Environment



Mobile Kitchen Gardens

Despite legislation that tends to discourage urban farming in many cities in sub-Saharan Africa, urban farming has thrived and has been identified as priority practice amongst the town dwellers. In the highly populated residential areas, where arable land is too scarce to facilitate meaningful farming, it’s advisable to plant vegetables in space-confined gardens.

In June 2002, a partnership was created between CRESP, USAID’s DynaEntreprises programme, and the NGO, SOS Environment, and a permaculture garden, the first in Senegal, was started. The garden aims to promote permaculture to farmers as well as private and public decision makers, by demonstrating its viability, effectiveness and business opportunities offered by such agricultural and environmental technologies.

Permaculture incorporates the principles of sustainable and organic agriculture. Organic farming, as a part of a sustainable agriculture, uses no chemicals as fertilizers or pesticides. Sustainable agriculture seeks to make the most of the land without degrading the

These gardens can be created by using materials like a fabric sack, polythene bags or plastic drums with a capacity of 90 to 100 kg. Between 70 to 100 small holes are cut all over the bag, which is then filled with nutrient rich soil. The farmer can use as many bags as required, as long as there is sufficient material and space.

After 2-3 weeks of bag preparation, the propagation of cuttings and seedlings (of kales for instance) can be done in the holes of the bag. This initial stage of propagation demands a lot of intensive care, like watering every morning and evening. Alternatively, propagation can be done by using seeds, but using cuttings or seedlings have proved more promising and viable.

family for a period of time, and thereby drastically reducing drastically expenses otherwise spent to purchase the same. Managing pesticides is very important to this practice, but weeding is not necessary which reduces labour requirements. Very little water is required for irrigation. As the bags are moveable, it’s possible the re-position it where convenient and can be transferred near the house to receive water from the roof catchment.

In many learning institutions in Nakuru, Kenya, this farming practice has been promoted to homes through demonstrating the methodology and benefits to children. It is currently being used by a number of residential estates.

Up to 150 seedlings or cuttings of sales can be raised in one given bag. This can sufficiently sustain an urban

Khaly MBENGUE, *Permaculture Project Coordinator*
Abdourahmane TAMBA, *Executive Secretary,*
SOS Environnement, Senegal, ✉ crep@crep.sn

Okoth Samuel Ondeng
✉ samondeng@yahoo.com