

1. A brief summary of permaculture

Permaculture, a portmanteau of ‘permanent’ and ‘culture’, was originally developed as a method for sustainable land management and settlement design, inspired by the thriving patterns observed in natural ecosystems. The concept was co-originated in the 1970s by Bill Mollison, his partner Reny Mia Slay, and Mollison's student David Holmgren. A key aspect often overlooked is the profound influence of the land management practices of Aboriginal Australians on the development of permaculture principles. Their deep understanding of and harmonious relationship with the land significantly shaped the foundations of permaculture.

Since its inception, permaculture has evolved from its initial focus on agriculture to become a broader approach to sustainable living. In the 2020s, as climate change became a pressing issue worldwide, permaculture was recognized on a larger stage as a solution to contemporary agricultural and environmental challenges. Practices like agroforestry, syntropic farming, and the development of food forests are examples of permaculture techniques that practitioners around the world have refined for decades.

Today, permaculture is acknowledged as a solution to a multitude of problems, ranging from the loss of biodiversity and food insecurity to the erosion of local communities. It is a testament to the enduring wisdom of indigenous peoples, particularly the Aboriginal Australians, whose sustainable living practices have provided valuable insights into creating harmonious, resilient communities in balance with nature.

Ethics

When I came to permaculture I found it hardest that no one ever wanted to discuss ethics on a meta-level with me. What are ethics, what are their limits? What are current ethics? How did they get defined? Back in the days I needed clarity for myself. Not about the permaculture ethics, but about what ethics in general entail.

Ethics refers to a set of moral principles or values that guide an individual's behavior and decisions. It involves the understanding and analysis of what is right and wrong, good and bad, and just and unjust. Ethics can be personal, societal, or professional, and they often vary based on cultural, philosophical, and religious beliefs.

In a broader context, ethics is the discipline of philosophy that deals with moral conduct, duty, and judgment. It concerns itself with questions like:

- What is the right thing to do in a given situation?
- How should people live their lives in relation to others?

- What are the principles that define good conduct?

Ethics can manifest in various ways, such as:

Personal ethics: The individual principles and values that one holds. These are often influenced by upbringing, culture, religion, and personal experiences.

Professional ethics: These are standards and practices that govern the behavior of individuals within a profession. For example, medical ethics guide the conduct of healthcare professionals.

Social ethics: This pertains to values and principles that govern the behavior of people within a society. They are often codified into laws and social norms. For example in Finland, significant importance is placed on the spoken word; words are chosen deliberately to convey a message effectively. This cultural norm emphasizes the value of meaningful communication, with a preference for saying less and avoiding superfluous small talk. Or as Pythagoras put it: “Be silent or let thy words be worth more than.”

Environmental ethics: This area of ethics focuses on the relationship between humans and the environment, concerning issues such as conservation, sustainability, and the rights of non-human entities.

Ethics plays a crucial role in decision-making, guiding individuals and groups to make choices that are not only beneficial to