

Reviews



MANIFESTO OF THE POOR Solutions Come From Below

Francisco Van der Hoff Boersma
Permanent Publications, 2014
198 x 121mm, 88 pages
£5.95



Manifesto of the Poor by Francisco Van der Hoff Boersma, a founder of the Fairtrade movement, remains as pivotal and inspirational today as it did when first published in Canada in 2010. Boersma not only provides an overview of how the concept of Fairtrade works, but most importantly describes why it works and why it matters.

Grounded in nearly thirty years working as an organizer and campesino on coffee plantations in Mexico, Boersma's *Manifesto* offers a viable antidote to the current economic, social, environmental and political crisis. Fairtrade, a form of what he calls the social solidarity economy, is built around five principles: "...the economy serves the people; development is measured with people not objects; growth and development are two distinct concepts; no economic process can take place outside of what ecosystems provide; and the economy is part of the biosphere." Using these guidelines, the campesinos created a sustainable and just economy that changed their lives.

Boersma admits that implementing Fairtrade won't be easy. It stands in opposition to the individualism and boundless power of the free market, two principles of capitalism often accepted as truth. Yet, because Fairtrade appeals to humanity's innate desire to be

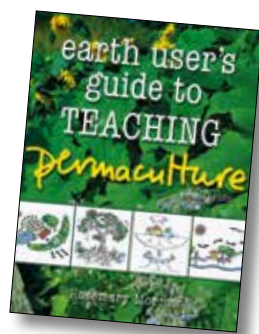
social, to co-operate and collaborate, it can and will work. The campesinos created a cooperative based on organic agriculture because it ensured fertile soil and clean water, an improved financial situation (no paying for pesticides and fertilizers), and allowed them to ask a higher price than they would have gotten through traditional coffee traders. This in turn allowed for the building of schools, improved housing, and the economic stability to consider further improvements in the community.

Manifesto of the Poor is inspired by, and draws on, the resiliency of the campesinos who, Boersma points out, are not looking for aid or charity. Rather, they are 'protesting and proposing', offering creative solutions that benefit everyone from the beginning of the supply chain to the end. For communities or individuals seeking new avenues for organizing or re-energizing local economies, *Manifesto of the Poor* is an excellent starting point.

Joan Bailey writes, *eats and farms in Japan and shares her adventures at:* www.japanfarmersmarkets.com

EARTH USER'S GUIDE TO TEACHING PERMACULTURE

Rosemary Morrow
Permanent Publications, 2014
280 x 210mm, 180 pages
£19.95



The market for permaculture books, while growing steadily, might still be considered quite a small one. The market for books about teaching permaculture must be significantly smaller, making

writing one surely a labour of love. Yet for me making my journey into teaching a decade ago, Rosemary Morrow's *Teacher's Notes* were a really great help.

Her *Earth User's Guide to Permaculture* (EUG) is one of my favourite permaculture books, so it's great to see this one getting the update treatment too. Unlike the almost doubling in size that the second edition of the EUG enjoyed, this new teacher's edition feels similar to the original with a little over twenty extra pages. It has a new cover and friendlier font, matching her other book, and while the basic structure of this book remains the same, some parts have been significantly rewritten and many of the original illustrations updated.

The first clear difference is that Rosemary's original one page introduction now fills seven. In it we read about her learner-centred approach, for me a more effective one than the less interactive 'lecture theatre' method. Interestingly she's also changed her view on 'who can teach', now encouraging us all to just get out and have a go, whilst also apprenticing with more experienced teachers whom she urges to make such opportunities available.

While the change to the title may seem subtle, it now more clearly describes a book designed to stand on its own rather than simply be notes to her first book. That said, most purchasers of this book will almost certainly have a copy of the EUG so it seems odd to me that she doesn't reference the relevant pages there under each unit. On that subject all the resources and references are now in one concise appendix rather than spread out through the book.

Like the original, the book centres around forty taught units in five sections, though some have been moved around and one or two changed completely. For instance 'Biotechnology' has been replaced by 'Permaculture and the ethical workplace'. Rosemary drops all of these units into a suggested Permaculture Design Course (PDC) timetable, which is based around the Australian format of twelve six-hour days. It seems to me



that many of her units would be hard to squeeze into the ninety minute sessions suggested. Perhaps though, it's better to offer too much material rather than not enough.

Like her other book there is no 'about the author' section, no doubt a personal choice but one thing I missed. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a book authored by an Australian there are references to her local culture and landscape. Perhaps my greatest frustration in this regard was that the 'Legal Structures' unit is effectively irrelevant for those of us who are not Antipodean. This is all small stuff though – it's a great pleasure to see this important book easily available again to all of us seeking to spread the word of permaculture as effectively as we can. *Aranya is a teacher and the author of Permaculture Design Step By Step.*

BUILDING A LOW IMPACT ROUNDHOUSE

Tony Wrench
Permanent Publications, 3rd edition
2014
210 x 150mm, 152 pages
£12.95



In the UK there are some trail-blazers when it comes to 'ecobuilding'. Firstly, Ben Law whose beautiful house in a Sussex wood was featured on Channel 4's *Grand Designs* more than 10 years ago and secondly Tony Wrench's roundhouse at Brithdir Mawr in Pembrokeshire. He built it in 1997-8 and retrospective planning permission was declined several times. The significance of ecobuilding pioneers like Ben and Tony cannot be underestimated as sustainable development has emerged as the overarching objective of the planning system.

Tony Wrench's book is practical yet unfussy, written with humour and full of valuable information with lots of photographs and illustrations. He tells the story of the building very well. It is very inspiring to read because it changes your perspective on what is possible.

It covers the design of the house using what is called a reciprocal frame roof (which is self supporting) and devotes attention to what is the skeleton of the

house. It then describes the construction of the roof, the walls, water management systems, what you can do on the outside of the house, electrics and a section on a compost toilet. Although principally a 'how-to' book, it is written with wit and in a clear way.

This new edition gives updates based on feedback and the learning since the house was first built, looking at what worked and what proved unnecessary. It also revisits some of the techniques used in building the roundhouse. For example, for new builds he now recommends using more than one waterproof layer (terram or another similar geotextile) for the roof to avoid leaks.

Moreover, Tony discusses adjustments made to the floor, compost toilet, the stove/fire, renewable electricity, reed bed, kitchen, windows and basic design/lifestyle issues. He offers lots of interesting small details gleaned from experience, having lived in the house now for more than a decade. The final chapter discusses planning, the all-important factor facing many potential ecobuilders. It is this issue that puts many people off their dream.

If you are interested in living sustainably then this book deserves a prominent place on your 'important books' bookcase.

Martin Holme carves spoons, makes wands and Gandalf-type walking sticks, knaps flint and spends a lot of time in the woods.

GARDENING FOR PROFIT From Home Plot To Market Garden

Kate Collyns
Green Books, 2014
176 x 108mm, 208 pages
£9.99



Knowing how to grow organic vegetables is one thing, but turning that skill into a viable business is another. When Kate Collyns started out as a small-scale market gardener she had a whole range of questions to ask but there was nowhere she could go to find all the answers in one place. Now she's written this handy guide so those who follow her don't suffer from the same lack.

It takes you through the process step by step, starting with the important question of whether commercial growing is right for you. Then it covers how to find land, how to find a market for the produce, the equipment needed and thus the money needed to start up, and how to raise that money. There's a short bit about financial and legal matters. This is reassuringly brief: there's not a lot of red tape for a market gardener but it's good to know what you need to do and what you don't.

There's a chapter on how to decide what to grow. Obviously you need to grow what people want to buy but you also need to know which crops are the most profitable. The author shows how to calculate the cost of actually growing a kilo of each one, supported by a chart of her own costings. There's also a link to a spreadsheet from the UK Soil Association which helps you plan how much of each vegetable to grow so as to balance the need for crop rotation with the needs of the market. This is followed by a chapter on the all-important subject of marketing, how to actually sell what you grow.

Every chapter is followed by a short summary of the points made, which combined with the author's clear and accessible style makes the book easy to use. There's also an extensive list of useful contacts on every subject covered in the book in the Resources section at the end.

The subtitle, 'from home plot to market garden' may be a little misleading. The book's not really about turning your home plot into a mini market garden but about making the leap from one to the other. The author's own market garden is two acres (0.8ha) but, although she uses her own experience to illustrate her points, the information she gives covers all sizes of enterprise, whether part-time, full-time or big enough to employ other people. I warmly recommend this little book to anyone who wants to grow vegetables for sale.

Patrick Whitefield is a permaculture teacher and author of The Earth Care Manual.

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MARKET FARMING SUCCESS The Business of Growing and Selling Local Food

by Lynn Buczynski
Chelsea Green, 2013
249 x 175mm, 288 pages
£21.99



Market Farming Success is a practical, helpful, and concrete guide to the business of farming. Buczynski, founder and editor of *Growing for Market* magazine, distills all of her knowledge and experience in these pages. Seasoned and novice growers alike will find this an invaluable reference as they navigate their way from field to market, restaurant, or super market.

First published in 2006, this revised and expanded edition includes websites, case studies, reference books and charts. Even though many of these are centered in the United States, readers in other countries will find a wealth of information. Buczynski's goal is to give growers the tools they need to make sound business decisions, which she does in spades. Everything from advice on choosing land (soil quality and water supply are of first concern) to deciding which crops to grow (micro-greens bring in the cash, but can be a lot of work, while salad fixings are profitable almost anywhere, anytime) and what equipment to buy are all covered in detail.

Buczynski guides readers through the process of sorting out which markets (she recommends a diversity) will be suitable for a grower's personality (introverts may not enjoy selling at a farmers' market, but could sell directly to a local restaurant or supplier), location (long drives to market might not be possible, but a farm stand or you-pick option might be), and whether or not to opt for organic certification (the process can be lengthy and expensive but helpful for consumers). Finally, she also helps growers determine how much of a particular crop to grow, how to predict its yield, price it, and prepare it for sale.

Buczynski's background as a journalist and farmer makes *Market Farming Success* as engaging as it is informative. While she knows that new farmers crop

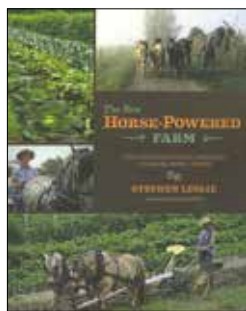
up all the time, she also knows many of them come from backgrounds other than farming with little or no connection to a community able to help guide them.

Market Farming Success helps growers find the information they need and get down to the business, literally and figuratively, of growing and selling.

Joan Bailey

THE NEW HORSE POWERED FARM Tools and Systems for the Small-Scale, Sustainable Market Grower

Stephen Leslie
Chelsea Green, 2013
251 x 201mm, 368 pages
£28.99



Right from the first word in this beautiful book, you can tell Stephen Leslie is an expert practitioner in his subject. As one of about 400,000 farmers in North America using horses to 'power' their farms, Leslie uses his wealth of experience and contacts with others doing similar work to produce a book which is an absolute pleasure to read.

Throughout the *New Horse Powered Farm* it is widely demonstrated how horses can be used within a closed loop system to provide essential power to farms and woodland creating resilient and regenerative systems. Stephen Leslie's fascinating, clear and in depth work is very much enhanced by the many colour photographs, charts and maps (I like pictures!). The high quality visual appearance of his work makes it all the more accessible to a wider audience.

Subjects covered in the book include: getting started with workhorses; different breeds; training systems; in depth coverage of tools and systems; using horses to work in various types of land based work, forestry, vegetable and grain growing, hay making; plus sections on farm economics, education, agritourism and more.

The New Horse Powered Farm is written from the perspective of a North American Farmer and uses other North American examples as case studies, but the style it is written in makes it easy to envisage how this can be applied and adapted to other geographical and cultural situations.

This is very much about solutions for a healthier future and is not only an invaluable manual and resource for anyone wanting to use horses for working on the land. It has much to offer anyone who is interested in resilience-focused farming and food production on a small to medium scale. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book and would now seriously consider using working horses as part a permaculture design on my farm.

Katie Shepherd is a hill farmer, carer and Diploma in Applied Permaculture Design apprentice

FERAL Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding

George Monbiot
Allen Lane, 2013
234 x 160mm, 336 pages, hardback
ISBN 978 184614 748 7
£20.00



The Guardian journalist George Monbiot needs no introduction. If you haven't heard of him, you have some catching up to do; he is a modern day Guy Fawkes armed with a pen. In his latest book, *Feral*, he lights a bonfire under wildlife organisations here in Britain. With a perceptive eye, he writes of why we have lost our most precious resource: the wilderness. He also suggests how we can regain it through 'rewilding' – to rewild is to restore an area of land to its natural uncultivated state and reintroduce the native species that once lived there.

We can all agree that we have a moral obligation to make sure megafauna such as the lion and the tiger are saved from extinction. We all agree that the decimation of the rainforest in Indonesia and Brazil needs to stop and we are quick to point fingers at distant governments who commit wildlife crimes. But what have we done to our own megafauna here in the UK? What have we done to our own ancient forests that once stood here? The answer is: we shot the megafauna to extinction and we have cleared the forest to make way for grazing animals.

When it comes to reintroducing megafauna, it instantly triggers the assumption that we are too many people,



or that there is not enough space for wolves, lynx or bears. George reveals to us, convincingly, that this assumption is wrong and misinformed. With the current migration from the farms to the cities, large tracts of land can be opened up and considered for large rewilding programmes, where native species – including the megafauna – can be reintroduced.

The book describes many obstacles for rewilding and there are two that stand out for me: The first obstacle comes from the wildlife organisations themselves. George writes: “Almost every national park in Britain is a sheep ranch and can scarcely be distinguished from unprotected places.” He described how the National Parks mandate is to preserve a cultural profile of the landscape rather than enhancing its ecological integrity. The consequence being bald hills, grazing animals, soil erosion, and scarcely any wildlife. George argues, quite rightly, that these are not nature reserves, but should be renamed culture reserves – most of the UK’s national parks are managed in this way.

The second barrier to rewilding is our own fear of nature: he writes: “The United Kingdom has a peculiar fear of nature, and its conservationists a peculiar fear of letting go. Germany, France and Slovakia are permitting part or all of their national parks to rewild. Most countries in Europe now have large areas of self-willed land. Even the tidy, busy Netherlands is allowing nature to reassert itself.” Where this fear comes from and why it exists in the UK is an important debate to be had.

But perhaps the main topic that draws attention to the importance of rewilding is the concept of ‘trophic cascade’. A trophic cascade occurs when predators in the food web alter the traits of their prey. Since the reintroduction of gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park, George explains how the wolves changed the behaviour of the feeding patterns of elk. Elk, now being prey, would only remain in one place for a short while and they would avoid areas where they could be vulnerable to an attack. This behaviour resulted in big positive changes to the ecosystem as a whole; more aspens and willows started growing, and many other plant species. Scavengers too, such as ravens and bald eagles prospered from the carcasses of wolf kills. The grizzly bears increased in numbers and songbirds who utilised willow flourished. Beavers, which feed on willow trees, created sediment retention in the rivers, giving nutrients to even more animals, fish and plant life. This is a riveting new ecological finding and it offers us a great example of what happens

when we allow the land to be self-willed. It also presents us a glimpse of a positive future. The vision of rewilding bestows us with a sense of hope. The best mitigation against climate change, overpopulation and mass extinction is simply to permit the land to be self-governed.

A world without megafauna is what we are patently creating today. This prospect is a personal grief for George, and he writes his ideas from a more personal perspective than in his previous books, which makes for a welcome show of vulnerability and is instantly likeable.

I recommend this book because it shows us clearly that the wilderness is a necessity, both physically and psychologically. We can be sure, whenever the megafauna is left to roam freely, alongside them there will be pure water flowing in the waterways, clean air, fertile soils and mighty forests. This is positive environmentalism; through rewilding we can reveal a future for both the wilderness and civilisation. It is a vision worth fighting for.

Andreas Kornevall is the Director of Operations for the Earth Restoration Service Charity and a writer living in Lewes, East Sussex.

WILD MIND

A Field Guide to the Human Psyche

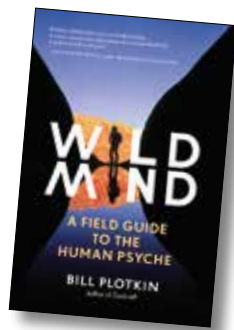
Bill Plotkin

New World Library, California, 2013

230 x 159mm, 320 pages

ISBN 978 160868 178 5

£15.99



Have you ever felt hijacked by such an intense emotion that you acted contrary to cherished principles? Maybe you possess an inner critic who pounces on your every creative expression? Or perhaps when you connect deeply with Nature, you experience an erotic frisson that feels too taboo to own?

Bill Plotkin’s *Wild Mind* has helped me integrate these aspects of myself and various previously puzzling modes in which I might behave whilst alone or towards others. Understanding that “having a map can make all the difference in a culture that does not adequately support human flowering”, the author has developed a map of

psychological wholeness, which unfolds through the pages of this brilliant and accessible book.

Clear that the map isn’t the terrain, this US-based ecopsychologist is an assured guide, a veteran explorer of the quick-sands of the mind. Drawing on the work of a wide range of visionaries and poets, his ‘Nature-based Map of the Psyche’ has been developed since the 1980s, and he acknowledges, “field-tested and refined” by many others.

Wanting to move beyond a focus on pathology towards a process of ‘wholing’, in which each person fully participates, Plotkin’s vision is of what he calls ‘the 3-D Ego’. Here the healthy Ego is “blessed with some degree of conscious communion and integration with Self, Soul and Spirit”, instead of being hijacked by a sub-personality. With insightful compassion, he sees these ‘subs’ – which include my inner critic – as having been formed in childhood. Sadly, our society does little to encourage us to mature beyond an adolescent state, and so it appears that many people end up functioning almost entirely by way of their own particular coterie of ‘subs’. Plotkin and other like-minds see this as in large part why wars begin and we face ecocide today.

Charting his imaginatively named facets of the mature Self – in the North, ‘The Nurturing, Generative Adult’, in the South, ‘The Wild Indigenous One’, in the East, the ‘Innocent/Sage’ and in the West, ‘The Muse-Beloved’ – the author takes his readers on a fabulous journey of self-discovery. Honest about himself, he includes an essential range of creative exercises to cultivate these four facets, and to liberate us from our immature aspects.

“A revolution in our understanding of what it means to be fully human”, states a puff on the cover. Personally, I find this an indispensable self-awareness tool to aid what radical ecopsychologist, Andy Fisher, refers to as our ‘counter-practices’, which support our revolutionary co-creation of a life-sustaining society. *Helen Moore is an ecopoet based in Somerset. Her debut collection, Hedge Fund, And Other Living Margins, was published in 2012 by Shearsman Books.*

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