

Permaculture and the City



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BULLETIN**

While most issues of Tree City USA Bulletin try to communicate and encourage best practices that are being used in urban and community forestry, this edition attempts to catch a wave of the future. It reflects a movement that some call the Urban Farm Movement, or an attempt to grow fruit and other food literally in one's backyard. A goal is not only to provide an affordable and available source of healthful food, but also to grow it in harmony with nature.

Principles and Examples for Urban Forestry

Permaculture is complex. Above all, it is a way of thinking or a way of approaching the stewardship of resources. Although not all-inclusive, here are some basic principles as modified from a list offered by Rosemary Morrow in *Earth User's Guide to Permaculture*. Examples have been added in an attempt to show how these might apply in urban forestry.

1. Everything works at least two ways (multipurpose)	A living fence or windbreak can be placed to provide privacy and control snow or wind. But a mix of species can be selected to provide food for wildlife and humans.
2. See solutions, not problems	Some municipal managers view pocket parks or odd parcels of public property as nuisances. Instead, they can be forest gardens.
3. Cooperate rather than compete	Form partnerships with groups not usually associated with urban forestry, e.g., social welfare agencies or food banks.
4. Make things pay	Recycle through reuse, including tree stakes, irrigation from water treatment plants, and cardboard for orchard mulch.
5. Work where it counts	Use inventory-based management planning, prioritized pruning, use of Plant Health Care principles of least impact for pest control.
6. Use everything to its highest capacity	Water retention techniques, green walls and roofs, Nature Explore Classrooms instead of asphalt playgrounds, and trees instead of sod or rocks in spaces between street and sidewalks maximize usable space.
7. Bring food production to cities	Introduce urban orchards and community gardens.
8. Help make people self-reliant	Offer workshops on the selection, layout, planting, and care of food-bearing trees and shrubs around the home.
9. Minimize maintenance and energy inputs to achieve maximum yields	Mulch around trees.



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An innovative homeowner takes advantage of a spacious tree lawn to plant garden crops in a raised bed. The city's ordinances provide no restrictions on this use of the right-of-way.



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