



# Earth Keepers

## The ABC's of Teaching Permaculture to Children

A guidebook for understanding  
our intentions and principles for  
our immersive online course



# Contents



- Our Course
- The Teaching Team
- Purpose of Guidebook
- What is Permaculture? Why teach it to kids?
- Montessori Cosmic Education Pedagogy
- Patterns in Nature & Design
- Permaculture Ethics
- The Power of Storytelling
- Gardening With Kids
- Guilds and Food Forests
- Compost & Soil Health
- Teaching Tools
- Earth Keepers Teaching Puzzle & Spiderweb
- Course Pricing & Details
- Create & Collaborate with Us
- Contact Information



# The Course



**Earth Keepers** is rooted in a deep desire to restore and cultivate a meaningful relationship between children and the natural world.

We custom-make and facilitate day, weekend and week-long camps. The children that attend our camps are both school children and homeschoolers. We currently run camps in Austria, Hungary and Germany.



**The ABC's of Teaching Permaculture to Children** is a unique online course designed specifically for educators and parents called to bring environmental awareness and the natural world closer to the children in their lives.

The course runs for eight weeks with a weekly live Zoom session, practical teaching materials and resources to creatively engage children in the practices and principles of permaculture as well as an active, collaborative Facebook page.



"The world will be different only if we live differently."

- Humberto Maturana

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# The Teaching Team

*Ange and Caitlin met through Morag Gamble's Permaculture Educators Program and formed a creative relationship to bring this unique course to life.*

Ange is founder of Earth Keepers Camps. She is a certified permaculture teacher, a trained Montessori elementary teacher and a forest educator. Ange worked as the School Garden Coordinator at a Montessori school in Portland, OR creating four on-site educational gardens and an accompanying permaculture curriculum. Ange launched Earth Keepers Camps as a direct way to connect children more closely with the wonders of the natural world.

After years of travelling, Ange now lives in Austria in an old farm house with her dog, Mila. She is fluent in English and German and teaches and organises camps in both languages.



Since first being introduced to permaculture, Cait has been hooked! Caitlin completed a Natural Building course in 2017 followed by an intensive Permaculture Design Course in 2018 and is currently enrolled in PEI's Permaculture Educator Program.

Cait's dream is to share the gift of permaculture with young people and those impacted by mental health challenges, so that they may lead thriving, ethical and regenerative lives whilst contributing to the well-being of the planet and all of her inhabitants.

Caitlin is the magician behind all our beautiful graphics and lives on the East coast of Australia with her partner.



"What we love, we protect." - Zoe Weil

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# Purpose of Guidebook

Welcome & Introduction	What Is Permaculture	Patterns & Biomimicry
Storytelling & Culture	Ethics, Principles & Zones	Garden Design
System Design & Interconnectedness	Guilds & Food Forests	Compost & Soil Health
Natural Building	Rhythm & Program	Forest Education & Teaching Tools



We have chosen a number of these topics to highlight in our Guidebook, to give you a clearer understanding of what awaits you in our ABC's of Teaching Permaculture to Children course.

"Action on behalf of life transforms." - Robin Wall Kimmerer

# What is Permaculture?

Founded on an ethical standard, permaculture is a design science that mimics the patterns in nature to create reciprocal and regenerative relationships between humans and their surroundings.



## Why teach permaculture to children?

Through permaculture, children receive a hands-on understanding of how everything in nature is connected and that they themselves are very much part of the interconnected web of life.

When immersed in the wonderful world of permaculture, we give children a closer look at why things work the way they do, and why things work better when they work together.

By being able to name and understand the natural processes that surround them, children are more likely to build a loving connection to the environment and ultimately become environmental stewards for our collective well-being.



"The only ethical decision is to take responsibility for our own existence and that of our children."

-Bill Mollison

# Montessori's Cosmic Education



We see a lot of parallels between the Montessori philosophy and permaculture. Both are holistic at their core and advocate for seeing all things as part of the whole. Both recognise that we humans are part of nature, rather than separate from it and that by working closely with nature and seeing her in her beauty, we can not only survive but thrive. Cosmic Education supports children to develop an awareness that everything is connected and interdependent and forms a harmonious whole.

## The Five Great Lessons

1. The Coming of the Universe
2. The Coming of Life
3. The Coming of Humans
4. The Story of Writing
5. The Story of Numbers

If Cosmic Education can be described as the soul of the Montessori elementary education, the Five Great Lessons can be said to be the heart. The Five Great Lessons relate that human beings are integral part of the universe and each story provides a theoretical base upon which all concepts and lessons are based. This creates a coherent and integrated web of knowledge for the children.

At *Earth Keepers*, we use the Five Great Lessons as the starting point of our teachings and then dive deep into the world of permaculture. For example, we will tell the story of the Coming of Life and how life came to be on planet earth and then follow this with a rich exploration of the importance of healthy soil.

“To teach details is to bring confusion, to teach relationships is to bring knowledge.”

- Maria Montessori

# Patterns in Nature & Design

Although it might not be immediately apparent, we live in a world of patterns. There are patterns in a leaf, patterns inside a flower, a giraffe is covered from head to hoof in a pattern, each snowflake has a unique pattern and even your own body is full of patterns!

Patterns are not only beautiful and visually striking, nature has a very good reason for them: for growth, efficiency and energy collection. This means that a tree gets its water from the pattern of its roots, a fiddlehead unfurls itself from its spiral pattern into a fern, a river meanders in a branching pattern, and when leaves fall in autumn they fall in a scatter pattern.



The patterns of nature are one of the fundamental foundations of permaculture. The idea behind permaculture is to take a closer look at nature, study its patterns and then emulate them in a way that is useful to humans.



Once we recognise these patterns - nature expressing its very truest form of intelligence - its impossible not to see them! The patterns in nature have informed some of the best designs humans have created. The fastest train in the world? Modelled after the beak of kingfisher. The tallest building in the world? Inspired by a flower. Permaculturists take these patterns and apply them to their designs when creating compost, planting vegetables and harvesting rainwater.



"If we surrendered to earth's intelligence, we could rise up, rooted like trees." - Rainer Maria Rilke



# Permaculture Ethics

Permaculture is a way of living, and designing regenerative systems which is guided by three core ethics - *Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share*.



Care of the Earth



Care of people



Fair Share

By evaluating the decisions we make against these ethics, we are encouraged to design systems and make choices which are life-affirming, and asked to consider the well being of the planet and all the beings which inhabit her - human and non-human.

Reflecting upon these ethics serves to encourage us to ask ourselves questions - is it good for the planet? Is my choice kind and just and for the benefit of my community? Am I living within my means - using only my fair share? If I have more than I need, how am I sharing it with those that need it? These three simple ethics can be applied to all aspects of our lives.

"But I think we are called to go beyond cultures of gratitude, to once again become cultures of reciprocity."

- Robin Wall Kimmerer

# The Power of Storytelling

It doesn't matter if you're a kid or an adult, stories quite literally create our realities; they're the way we make sense of the world.



We know that the best of stories are those that entice learning. We put a lot of care and attention into the types of stories we choose to share. We retell stories we find in books; stories about real people, stories about plants and animals; we share stories that we've made up ourselves; and stories we've dreamt up together.

*A story is an invitation to look at the world from a different perspective, to see what fits and works for you.*

They allow you to engage with ideas you never knew existed. Stories are a call to action and agency; they shape one's values and they inspire change.



"... God made man because he loves stories. The most important of all considerations in human experience: the relationship, the story between man and nature."

- N. Scott Momaday

# Gardening with Kids



Children learn best when their learning comes from their own natural curiosity, and a garden is a place rich with life for their curiosity to blossom. Friedrich Froebel is best known for establishing the first kindergarten, or "garden for children", highlighting the importance of exposing children to the natural world from a young age. Through this, the child fulfills its role and purpose: as the explorer in the garden.

Every single kernel in a cob of corn needs to be pollinated by a bee or a butterfly as well as by the wind.

*More than just gardening, permaculture offers us a way to see the world through the curious eyes of a child - full of wonder and wide with possibility.*

The unique gift of the young child is their wonder. As their caregivers, it is our duty to give them ways to discover the natural world and learn cultural ways.



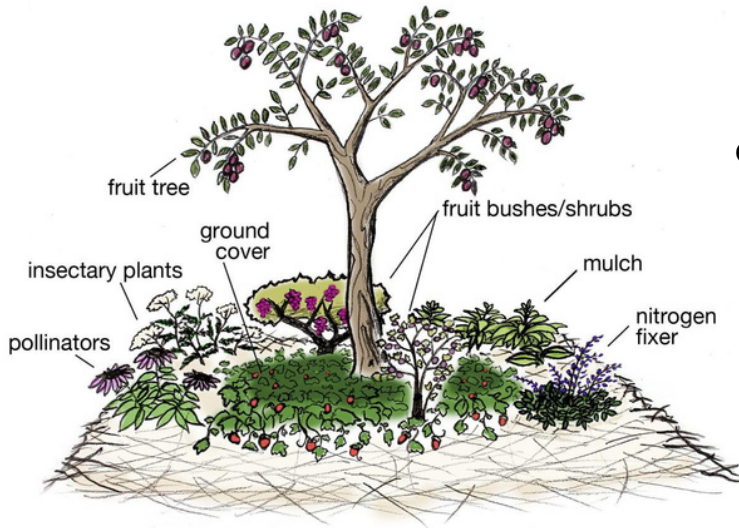
When in the garden, we shift our focus onto all the gifts that the garden gives us and discover the ways we may be able to humbly return these gifts.

"Why try to explain miracles to your children when you can have them plant a garden."

- Janet Kilburn Phillips

# Guilds & Food Forests

We believe nature is our greatest teacher, and learning from her is all about paying close attention to the patterns that she creates. The forest is a wonderful place to learn from nature - so many patterns at play and such an incredible, intact ecosystem!



A permaculture guild takes inspiration from the forest - it emulates the growing pattern and diversity of a forest. A guild is a group of plants working together to help support each other as well as the growth of the main fruit or nut tree that they surround.

**Nature's motto: collaboration not competition!**

We think it'd be really fun to create a story around a guild together during the course! By personifying the individual plants and having them embark on a common mission, we can help children understand the importance of working together and that each part plays its important role. Are you keen to join us create?!

**We've created our own interactive Earth Keepers Guild Teaching poster! Get access to the resources and full instructions during our ABC course.**



"The idea behind permaculture is simple: take care of the earth, and the earth will take care of you."

- Jessi Bloom

# Compost & Soil Health

Like human bodies have skins, soil is the skin of the earth. 95% of all food grown on the planet is grown in just a few centimetres of topsoil. Without soil, and the organisms which live within it, there would be no life on Earth. Soil health directly affects our environment, our health and well-being and our economy.

Soil takes thousands of years to form naturally and is a precious resource which we must cherish and protect. Large scale soil erosion caused by climate change & modern agriculture is having a terrible effect on our soils. The good news is that there are many ways that we can get involved and make soil health a priority whilst having fun too!



One teaspoon of soil contains more living organisms than there are people on the planet...



We will look into some of the ways which composting and other techniques can help us to build rich organic soil, decrease our food waste, and ultimately protect the health of our soil.

"Dirt is dead. Soil is alive." - Elaine Ingram

# Teaching Methods

## Joseph Cornell's Flow Learning

**Awaken  
Enthusiasm**

**Focus  
Attention**



**Offer Direct  
Experience**

**Share  
Inspiration**



## Montessori's Three Period Lesson

"This is..."

"Show me..."

"What is this...?"

**INTRODUCTION**

**IDENTIFICATION**

**RECALL**

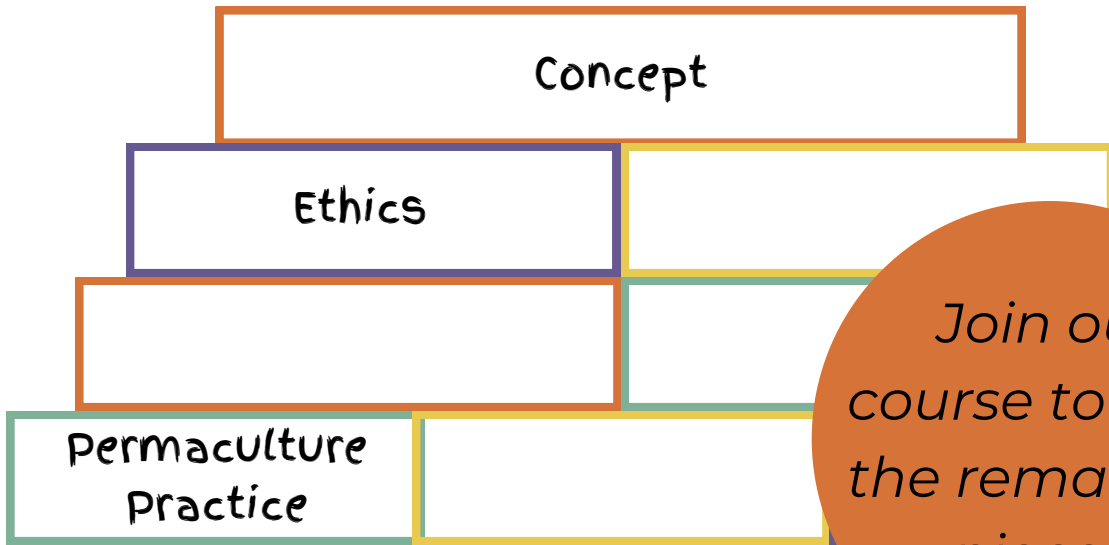
*The child  
listens*

*The child  
points*

*The child  
speaks*

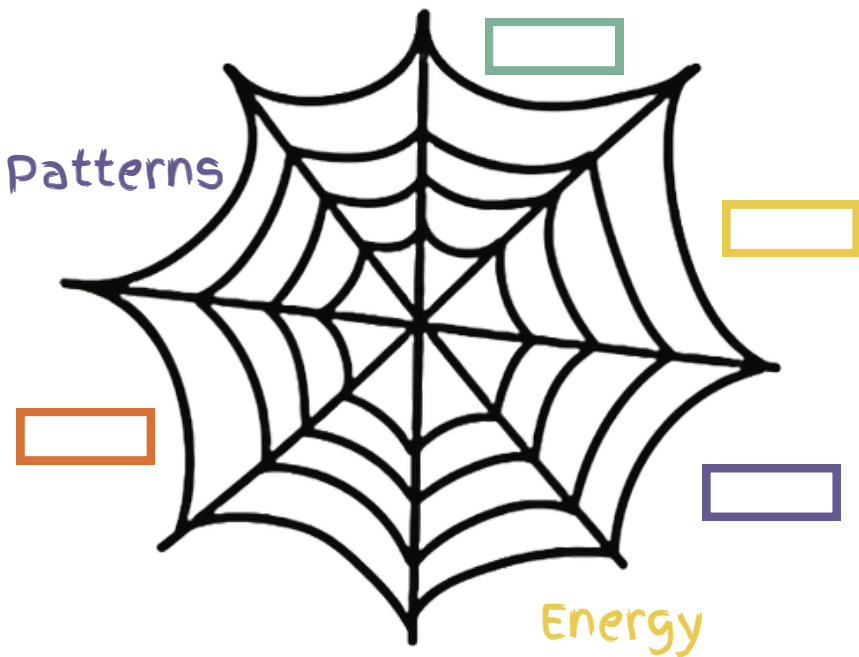
"Look at everything as though you are seeing it for the first time, with eyes of a child, fresh with wonder." -  
Joseph Cornell

# Earth Keepers Teaching Puzzle



*Join our course to fill in the remaining pieces!*

# Earth Keepers Teaching Spiderweb



"Man did not weave the web of life. He is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."  
- Chief Seattle

# Course Pricing & Details

**Regular price:** 275EUR

**Reduced price:** 200EUR

*Cost is self-determined, we trust you to choose a fair and honest amount.*

**Scholarship:** 150EUR, with skill trade, reach out with your ideas

**Full ride:** For every 10 regular price enrolments, we gift one scholarship

**School / organisation:** customisable programs available

**"Bring a friend" offer:** 10% off regular price for both of you



**Australia Guild:**

3 October - 21 November

**(Tuesday Evening)**

7.30-9.30 pm AEST

**Europe Guild:**

5 October - 23 November

**(Thursday Evening)**

7.30-9.30pm EU

"Permaculture gives us a toolkit for moving from a culture of fear and scarcity to one of love and abundance." - Toby Hemenway

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# Create & Collaborate with Us

## Camps in Europe with Ange!

Do you live in Europe and want to bring a camp to your location? Or know someone who could host a camp on their property? Alternatively, if you speak German - come join our Austria or Germany team



## Camps in Australia with Caitlin!

If you're on the East Coast and would like to co-create and facilitate a camp with Caitlin, we'd love to hear from you



## Educators / Schools

Are you an educator keen to bring Earth Keepers Camps to your school? Or could your school benefit from a teacher-wide training course? We love collaborating with schools, contact us for a customised offer

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

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# Contact Information

In gratitude and reverence for the generations to come

**Website:** [www.earthkeepers-camps.org](http://www.earthkeepers-camps.org)

**Email:** [info@earthkeepers-camps.org](mailto:info@earthkeepers-camps.org)

**Instagram:** [@earthkeeperscamps](https://www.instagram.com/earthkeeperscamps)



"Permaculture is a dance with nature - in which nature leads." - Bill Mollison