



FOREST GARDENING

Trees

Plants are the basis of life. Trees are the maximum size of plant on this planet. Many families of plants have both trees and short term annual species. A good example of this is the rose family; the apple tree is related to the rose and also to strawberries. Most other life is dependent on plant photosynthesis, for both food and oxygen.

Trees may be grown as a crop on a large scale. Though many people don't like to see huge areas of Sitka Spruce or other "pine" trees, they are at least not contributing to carbon and other gas emission levels, but making a positive reduction while also providing building materials or fuel.



A forest garden would not include such mass monoculture planting.

The natural forest is a mix of trees, shrubs, climbers, undergrowth---all living happily together in symbiosis. The species of plants will vary as you travel around the world, and within a country, because those who live happily in the prevailing conditions will thrive. Those who are challenged will not. Thus, the forest in South America will look very different to the forest in Northern Europe, but both are of equal importance.

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Multi-Layer Planting

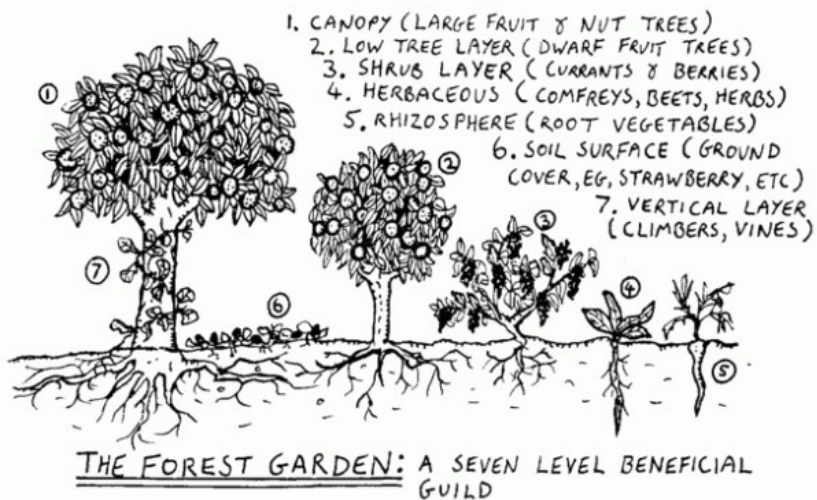
Before humans invented modern agriculture, much of the world was forest. People have developed many ways of surviving. Some of the easiest and most efficient methods have been based on re-creating the natural forest environment.

In 1929, Joseph Russell Smith, a farm researcher, wrote the book Tree Crops: A Permanent Agriculture, which became an inspiration to many, including: Bill Mollison, David Holmgren and Robert Hart. These researchers observed up to seven layers of a forest garden.



Seven Layers of a Forest Garden

1. Canopy Layer - the mature large fruit trees.
2. Lower Tree Layer - smaller fruit or nut trees or ones grown on dwarf rootstocks.
3. Vertical Layer - climbing plants.
4. Shrub Layer - bushes producing food at around human height.
5. Herbaceous Layer - standard vegetables and other plants that can produce food, medicines or other uses.
6. Ground Layer - plants that spread along the ground.
7. Rhizome Layer - underground plants like fungi or rhizomes and roots, etc.



⇒ [Video on How to Create a Forest Garden](#) ⇐

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