

Friends of the Earth Sydney Permablitz - “Changing the World one Garden at a Time”



Information Sheet:

What is a Permablitz?

A Permablitz is based on the principles of permanent agriculture (Permaculture) which arose during the 1970s in response to Peak Oil. A Permablitz is when people come together to achieve the following:

- create or add to edible gardens where someone lives
- share skills related to permaculture and sustainable living
- build community networks
- have fun

Permablitz in Australia

Permablitz in Australia started with a group called Codemo (Community Development and Multicultural Organisation) a local community group composed primarily of South American immigrants.

Permaculture enthusiast Dan Palmer met up with Codemo crew in Melbourne, and has since enjoyed the benefits of free organic food from his infamous Thomas Street garden.

The first permaculture backyard makeover was held in Dandenong at the home of Vilma from El Salvador. Permablitzes have been spreading since throughout Melbourne and now Sydney ever since.

The first Sydney Permablitz was the Wigram Road Blitz held in November 2007 by Friends of the Earth Sydney in Glebe. Given its success the second “Orphington Street’ blitz will happen in January 2008 with plans to extend to other homes and schools and community gardens.

How does a Permablitz happen?

While there is no hard and fast rule to dictate how a Permablitz happens there are some defining characteristics.

- **Design Process.** Permaculture design means creating sustainable garden systems that ensure that the garden continues to be viable and productive.
- **Peer Review.** Prior to the Permablitz, FoE Sydney encourage burgeoning and expert permaculturalists to come together to design a garden. We conduct design ‘peer-review’ process to encourage skills sharing.

- **Scavenging.** Once a design has been agreed-upon, the Permablitz host goes about sourcing materials. Attendees are encouraged to bring seedlings, compost, newspaper, hay and other useful things.
- **The Permablitz.** On the day of the blitz the host usually provides lunch and nibbles though most people bring along a plate of food to share. True to Permablitz cultural roots, latin music particularly salsa, provides a good working soundtrack though *Rage against the Machine* also proved quite invigorating toward the end of the Wigram Road blitz.
- **Post-Permablitz Party.** Festa! Nothing like a beer and a boogy after a day in the dirt.
- **Ongoing reflection and improvement.** In order to ensure the ongoing viability of the initiative, gardens are revisited in the months following the Permablitz to see what has and hasn't worked to improve designs.

What a Permablitz is not

- a well-funded community group that puts in permaculture gardens for everyone and anyone. Permablitz hosts either:
 - i) have been to past Permablitzes to help out or they commit to helping at future blitzes, or
 - ii) intend to build a local permablitz network.
- about garden aesthetics and veggies, though these are both important, at the forefront of permaculture principles are sustainability, community building, the environment and food security.

What is Friends of the Earth Sydney's long term objective for Permablitz?

Edible streets!!! We hope to achieve a Permablitz network throughout Sydney armed with the skills, knowledge, resource and support to conduct multiple Permablitzes. We hope to put in sustainable permaculture gardens in private yards, schools, public spaces and anywhere else that grass can be turned into food.

In the long-term we hope that organic food is available to everyone, not just wealthy inner-city people. We predict that the ability to grow food in urban spaces will become crucial as the cost of fresh food increases due to the diminishing availability and increased costs of oil for its production.

What we need to achieve these objectives.

In order to continue to conduct Permablitzes we need to get as many people involved and learning permaculture design as we possibly can. We hope to involve experts to share their skills and knowledge and in future conduct free workshops for anyone interested.

We also need to get the word out about Permablitz to procure resources - these can range from newspaper, hay, compost, lawn clippings, recycled building materials, seeds, tools, small plants and more. We would like to have

a drop-off system where people can donate these resources so that Permablitz continues to be free and accessible to all. We encourage local government, small business and the media to get behind what we believe is an important initiative.

Some other helpful resources:

Resources:

<http://permablitz.net/>

http://permablitz.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id+17

(Asha Bee article)

<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2007/07/16/1184559700758.html>

(article on Permablitz)

<http://permaculturesolutions.com.au/thomasstreet/> (blog of the original permablitz site in Melbourne)

<http://www.earththesuburbs.org/> (creative responses to climate change and peak oil)

http://globalpublicmedua.come/the_power_of_community_how_cuba_survived_peak_oil

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