

Synopsis for the first dedicated children's Permaculture illustrated book series to Permanent Publications June 2012

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Outline and vision

Our vision is to functionally interconnect our shared desire to creatively disseminate Permaculture design, ethics and principles to children through an engaging and holistic series of dedicated Permaculture books.

An 8 part series, detailed below, explores key concepts and elements of Permaculture design, following Raff and Tilly's adventures growing up on their parent's Permaculture smallholding.

Primarily this series serves as a vehicle for enthusiastic Permaculture minded parents to engage and share their passion with their children. These books allow and encourage children to explore and develop curiosity in the natural world regardless of their life circumstances.

Permaculture principles are clearly understood as relationships between people and the land unfold through the changing seasons with on-going opportunities for parents to connect practical learning through suggested activities around the theme of each book.

Following the life of Raff and Tilly, a brother and sister growing up on their parents Permaculture smallholding, this series will be the first dedicated Permaculture books for children encompassing the diverse central themes in a fun and relatable way for children aged 6-10.

Unique selling points

- First children's series of books dedicated to teaching permaculture principals and design- we cannot find any books out there for the kids!
- Clearly instilled sense of ethics and values congenial with Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share, missing in so much of today's media
- Provides a clear avenue for parents to share their passion and unique experience in Permaculture through activities and examples
- Encouragement to extend stories by applying learning to practical life circumstances
- Weaves story, learning, play and design in a way that conveys the diverse aspects of Permaculture in a coherent manner
- Develops visual imagination with story and roots this to a sense of place as the story continually refers to the large fold out design of the farm and the accompanying season's illustrations
- An ally to parents! Portrayal of a holistic world view with ethics and morals intended to support parent's views and understandings
- Easeful translation due to low word counts, we already have French, Spanish, German and Portuguese friends willing to assist

Design Ideas

Interactive fold out illustrations of the farm in each season allow the child to develop spatial awareness and contexts for the story whilst naturally fostering understanding for Pattern, Relative Location and Functional Interconnections.

(**Central themes**) and a (*Synopsis*) given below.

- **(Spring) 1) Soil, 2) Plants**, *Soil care, compost, soil life, soil tests, Sprouting, propagating, Observation, Planting, greenhouses, Polycultures, Foraging, Companion Plantings, Earth Care, Birth*
- **(Summer) 3) Building, 4) Play**, *Crafts, Recycling, Creativity, Observing, Living Sculptures, Natural Art, Patterns, Foraging, People Care, Growth*
- **(Autumn) 5) Harvest, 6) Fungi**, *Storing, Celebration, Preserving, Food, Cooking, Selling Produce, Swapping, Fair share, Wild food, Camping, Soil life, Trees, Death*
- **(Winter) 7) Trees, 8) Water**, *Ecosystems, Patterns, Diversity, Edges, Perennials, Soils, Trophic Pyramids, Interconnections, Decay and Fertility*

The initial book contains a large fold out Permaculture Design poster of the land as well as an artists 3D impression in Spring to make story telling and the development of design ideas visual and allow parents to develop their child's understanding and thinking as appropriate.

The series intertwines key themes in relation to the 4 seasons and the first book of each season has a large fold out 3D artists impression detailing the farm through each season. This offers opportunity for children to 'spot the changes', encouraging appreciation of the unique gifts the different seasons bring.

A selection of inclusive and participatory activities for parents to follow up with their children at the end of each book allows each book to be re-read and developed in a new context several times. This allows the ideas and learning to be transferred to real life regardless of individual life circumstances.

There are also "try this at home" tips for applying design ideas around the house and garden related to the theme of each book.

The books will be approximately 1500 words in length with elegant hand coloured illustrations and black and white line drawings throughout the text, bringing characters and activities to life. The books are aimed at 6- 10 yr olds as read together or read alone.

The sort of people, situations, events and culture of the people within the tales will represent the diversity of characters we meet in everyday life and include constant reference to Earth Care/ People Care/ Fair Share. We aim to skilfully align to the general Permaculture parenting ethos and behaviour through both story and image.

Consideration for consistent subtle placement of interesting related objects throughout the illustrations as opportunities for stories to lead in new directions, knowing that parents read the same stories repeatedly at times, as well as developing curiosity and observation for children. This is another element of how the books are designed for parents to observe and interact and offer their own perspectives and insights.

The activities laid out at the end of each book contain creative and inspirational projects for parents to follow up with their children. For example, this may involve making something from recycled materials around the house to monitor wind, investigate pond life, etc., with instructions and illustrations to inspire creative practical learning related to different aspects of Permaculture.

After the activities there is a final page with “thought clouds” of further ideas to consider in the home or garden, eg, to save water, obtain new yields, do some simple design, etc, aimed at further practical application and conscious decision making around the home.

Implementation

Crowd Sourcing to kick start the project! Understanding this is a longer-term project to develop the whole series we have decided that in order to ensure we have adequate finances to dedicate regular time to this work over the next year we are beginning the project by crowd sourcing some basic funds in order for Bethany to dedicate herself to illustrating at this stage.

By taking part in a crowd sourcing campaign we are stacking multiple functions, by supporting a friend and colleagues new Permaculture Crowd Sourcing website launching in a few weeks time, creating some initial momentum and clarifying our direction, phases, and the feel of the books whilst generally ensuring we are not compromising ourselves by taking this on amidst our other passions.

We aim to get the finished A3 maps and illustrations plus the first sample book finished by end August 2012, to send for feedback from prospective publisher and various parents.

We aim to regularly output a book every 4-6 weeks, making the estimated time for complete project delivery less than a year including the coming month for preparations for the Crowd sourcing campaign and feedback from others.

Market

With a lack of comparable books out there, this series represents a timely and functional approach to the emerging market of young parents switched on to Permaculture, “green” lifestyles and more holistic, conscious approaches to relating to life, learning and the natural world.

With Permaculture as the holistic foundation for a “greener” lifestyle, these books will be the first exclusively targeted books serving as a bridge for Permaculture minded parents to relay their knowledge and perspectives to their children.

At the same time, the books will be engaging and accessible for parents who are new to, or just discovering Permaculture. This leverages the ability to tap into the Green Parenting magazine readership, for example, and with no similar books currently on the market this represents a potentially wide audience.

With friends and colleagues around Europe, we are confident we can arrange rapid translation into various languages. From our basic searches and talking with colleagues around Europe it seems like there would be a market for translated books of this nature generally.