

Permaculture Design at the area of the CSA-Cooperation "Vision Birchhof"

Project data



Permaculture-design as a forest garden (on 598m amsl), combined with polyculture and layered cultivation employing a variety of plant guilds.

common pilot project:
Nursery "Bio-Birchhof"
Co-operation "Vision Birchhof"
Matthias Brück "permatu"
Association "Permakultur-Landwirtschaft"

location:
„Vision Birchhof“, Co-Operative, President: Roger Gündel, Oberwil-Lieli (AG)
www.visionbirchhof.ch

project leader:
Matthias Brück, Landscape architect, Permaculture designer in training
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consultant:
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www.permakultur-landwirtschaft.org

About Permaculture

The expression permaculture is derived from the words „permanent“ and „agriculture“. It combines the know-how of traditional agriculture with new developments in other fields from around the world. Permaculture understands itself as movement, directed against industrialized agriculture. It seeks to stop the waste of energy and soil caused by highly specialized, mechanized systems of production, without reverting to the labor-intensive horticulture practices in the past. Permaculture systems do not work against, but with Nature. It does so by consciously fostering stable mixed crops and symbiotic relationships. It uses natural cycles to save both space and time - and to reduce the consumption of energy, water and non-renewable resources. Beyond the scope of agriculture, these principles also open new perspectives on educational, social and economic questions, especially with regard to an economy of commons.

The Vision Birchhof

Birchhof (598m above sea level) is a biodynamic farm, located near Oberwil-Lieli AG, Switzerland. The farm has founded a special co-operative named *Vision Birchhof* to further develop its operations and to promote sustainable agriculture. Birchhof is an existing CSA-farm (Community-supported Agriculture), and as such has already put some aspects of permaculture into practice. Members of the co-operative who work on the farm receive organic vegetables from the farm. They can also give financial support to the co-operative to receive the same benefits.

The farm has designated an area of almost 2.7 ha (approx 7 acres), which will now be cultivated according to the principles of permaculture to complete the vision. An eatable landscape has established itself as a well-suited possibility for the given geographic circumstances. Such a garden also accords well with the views of the farmer and members of the co-operative. It features a combination of polyculture and layered cultivation. Even today, the area is cultivated using yearlong vegetables and herbs with biodynamic methods.

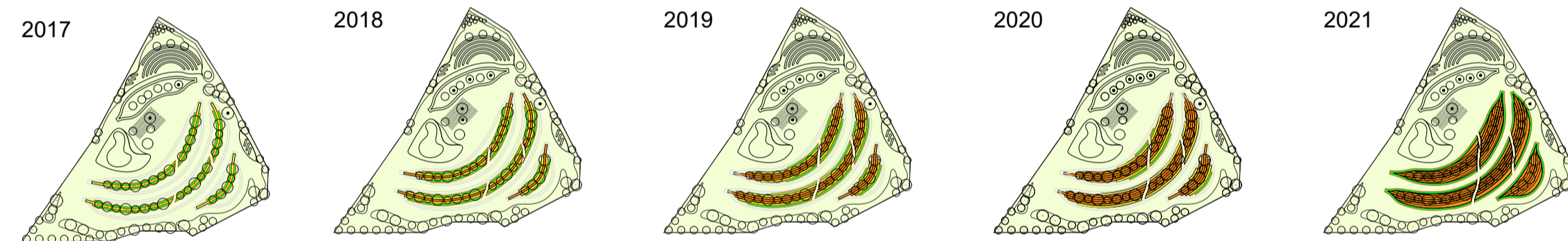
Within four years, we will create a series of areas designed according to the principles of permaculture. The first step consists of planting trees and hedges. Then, we will create the first cultivated area, the first compost garden and the first raised beds in the suntrap.

This project is a first in Switzerland. Permaculture has never been employed on such a large scale in this country before. We believe that this project can serve as an example of the enormous potential of permaculture. By observing and analyzing the methods employed in this project, our goal is to show that this kind of permaculture is capable of efficiently producing healthy and savory food. Simultaneously, it conserves energy and promotes biodiversity. We will also organize courses on a yearly basis, where participants can experience permaculture hands-on and spread their knowledge.

Key

- trees with large canopy (eg. walnut, legume, sweet chestnut ...)
- trees with small canopy (fruit tree, sorb-tree, legume, junberry ...)
- coppice trees (ash, hazelnut, poplar), includes fungal cultures
- bush tree - fruit tree and shrubs short life for short- and medium-term fruit harvest
- large to medium wild, fruit and berry bushes
- small to very small wild, fruit and berry bushes
- wild hedge with thorny wild fruit and g roves to feed birds; acts as protection from big wild animals
- flower meadow
- grain field
- biodynamically cultivated, with yearlong vegetables
- ground vegetation with tree guilds provider, crop and distractor plants
- mulch meadow; at least 3 times the tilled field, includes mulch for other areas and reserves
- mulched floor in the around the composts and hugelbeds
- swamp are for cultivation of wild vegetables (typha) and biomass (mulch)
- storage basin runner ducks and human well-being
- raised beds
- 1 compost area used in rotation
- meeting area
- shelter for indian runner ducks

Staggered Vegetation Layers



- mulched areas, in the 1st year with potatoes
- biodynamically cultivated
- mulched area, from the 2nd year plantlet with permanent crop

Examples of perenial vegetables



Snake bistort (*Polygonum bistorta*) Caucasian spinach (*Habitia tamnoides*)



Broadleaf cattail (*Typha latifolia*)



Ostrich fern (*Matteuccias struthiopteris*)

