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Combine the words “permanent” and “culture,” subtract a few unnecessary letters and you end up with one amazingly efficient term - [“Permaculture.”](#) How does that roll off your tongue? You have just derived another one of those brilliantly synergistic terms, a single word that signifies an entity bigger and more productive than its individual pieces. And this is exactly what the term Permaculture set out to do - Permaculture doesn't tell you what to do, but tells you how to think in a systematic and logical way that is efficient for you as well as the planet.

Permaculture ,coined by Tasmanian Author and Scientist [Bill Mollison](#) in the mid 1970's is often defined as an approach to designing human settlements. It specifically defines the development of perennial agricultural systems that mimic the structure and interrelationship

found in natural ecologies. It's these very natural ecologies that have worked so well for thousands of years on this planet and permaculture teaches that these successes should be our greatest teachers. Bill Mollison watched as important decisions for his island homeland were being made by the Australian government dealing with water treatment, garbage disposal and food production and was appalled by their short sightedness. These are critical decisions to our survival as a species and they are being made by people who may not have what is best for us and for our planet at the forefront of their minds.

I first learned about permaculture in 1998 after I had already been living for several years off the grid in Costa Rica. In fact, I was already learning and applying the [key principles of permaculture](#) learned from the Costa Rican native and indigenous people long before I had ever even heard the term itself. I quickly ran off to take a three-week intensive permaculture design course offered on the Big Island of Hawaii. It really rocked my world. It was more than just learning about the principals of designing community. It was about learning these principals while actually living in community where these very design decisions were in practice. We had a bicycle powered laundry machine and were planting things according to how much we used them and how much attention they needed. For example, large fruit trees that only need to be visited a few times a year to prune and harvest were planted further from our house and delicate salads were planted in areas nearby that received lots of attention. It just made sense.



[G Wards](#) [Jungle tropical jungle in Costa Rica](#) [Kopali](#)