

Planning Your Garden



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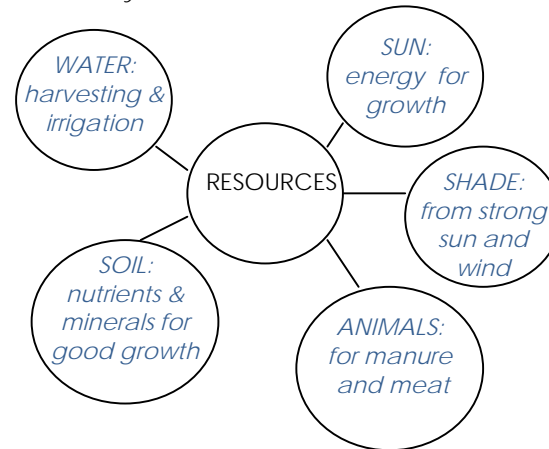
Illustrations by:



earthworm productions

Understanding your resources and needs

A successful and fruitful garden can be made by understanding the **resources** you have around you, and what your **needs** are.



1) **Protect your plants from the elements** including:

- Wind (burning plants)
- Sun (burning tender plants)
- Water (rapid run-off from roofs)
- Animals (grazing)
- People (theft)
- Fire

2) **NEEDS:** What do you want from your garden?

- Food
- Medicinal herbs
- Fruits
- Security
- A play area
- or all of the above.

Understanding your **needs** helps you plan your homestead. Divide your homestead into 4 **ZONES** – **Zone** planning helps to give the best solutions for your home design.

- ZONE 0 = energy efficient home
- ZONE 1 = Nursery, rainwater storage, seedlings, herbs
- ZONE 2 = vegetable crops, small livestock
- ZONE 3 = Staple alley crops (maize, pumpkins)
- ZONE 4 = Trees (fire & wind breaks), shrubs, bees

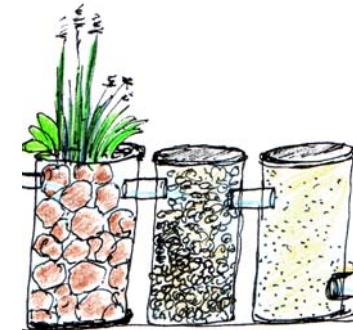


It is best to think about the area around your home as **ZONE 1**. Plant your thirstier crops (eg. seedlings) in here. You will save energy by carrying water over shorter distances if you harvest water in **ZONE 1**.

When it rains, the water falling from your roof, can damage the tender plants in **ZONE 1**.

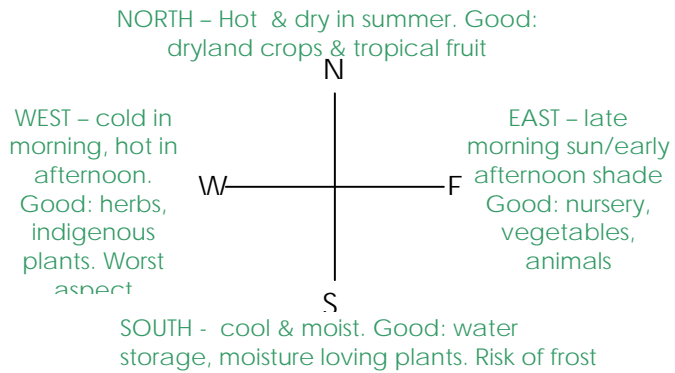
Collect rainwater using gutters, and direct the water into recycled (and well washed) drums or large containers, to make sure that you have the cleansed water that you need for your homestead.

(For more information see the **WATER** leaflet.)



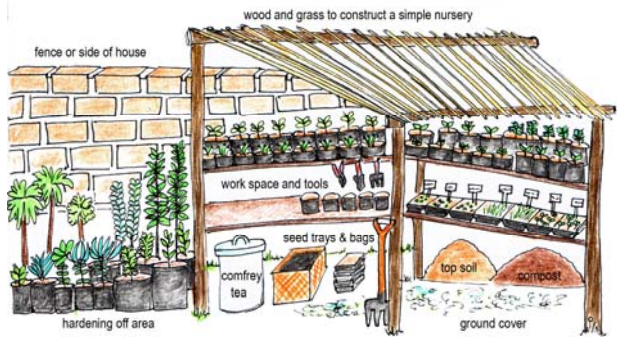
Orientation

Watch the way the sun moves through your homestead. The sun rises in the East and sets in the West. Moss and lichen only grows on the south side of tree bark – facing away from the sun. This helps you work out where due North is, which helps to plan your homestead.



You can plan to place those plants that need full sun in the best spot, as well as placing young seedlings in the shade before they are planted out. Some plants need to be placed under semi-shade.

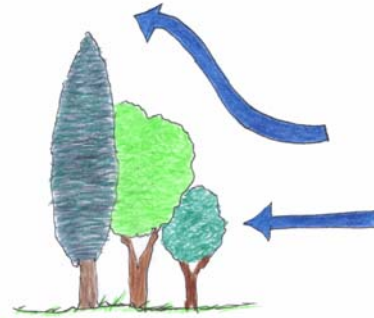
Nursery



A **nursery** will do well placed along a warm north-facing boundary wall, or next to the house. You can make a small **nursery** area out of poles and grass. You can grow many kinds of fruiting trees that will give long-term nutrition.

A good **nursery** is a well organized work-space, with clean tools, compost and soil. Grow ground covers to keep from slipping around inside the **nursery**. Have a space for storing containers and bags. All seed trays should be marked with the date and variety planted. Remember to water seedlings often so they grow well. A hardening-off area is needed to help plants get ready for outside conditions.

Wind



Wind can damage your plants, and your property.

Erect a wind-sock or piece of material on a pole to form a simple flag. Watch & record where the hot/dry **winds** come from in summer, and where the chilled **winds** come from in winter. This is a very important part of your planning process.

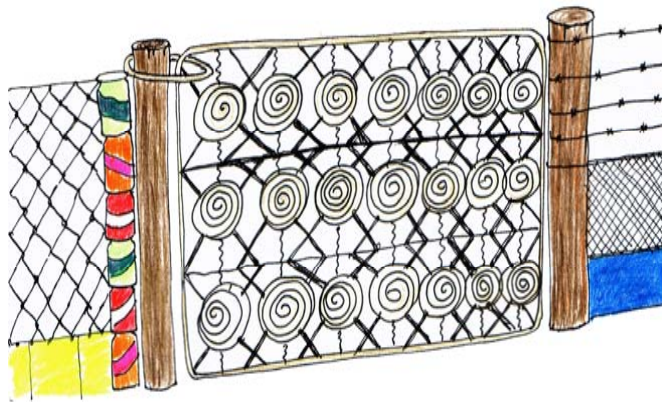
Trees and shrubs can provide protection from harsh winter **winds**, and a cooling updraft in summer.

Depending on the size of your plot, trees and shrubs planted in ZONE 3 can provide both shade from the **sun** and protection from **wind**.

Securing your plot - fencing

Fencing can be made from recycled wood or metal found lying around. To create a hard boundary **fence** the materials must be securely tied together.

Next to your hard **fence**, plant 'live **fencing**' that will add to your garden and meet your needs. Low-lying thick and impassable trees and shrubs will keep out foraging animals. Plants are the best form of natural **fence** against fire, wind, sun and unwelcome visitors.



Live fencing ideas:



Acacia karoo or *nigrescens* have medicinal properties and are nitrogen fixers, so add vital ingredients to your soil. Their flowers attract birds & bees for garden fertility, and have long thorns that act as a **fence**.

Aloe ferox – This medicinal plant soothes digestion & skin, is impassable, and provides wonderful flowering spikes to add variety to your garden.



Dovyalis Caffra Kei apple (Umkolo) is a drought resistant tree, producing flowers (to encourage birds and bees) & has long thorns, if kept pruned. Its fruit is used for jam.

Top Tips:

Find natural, multi-use solutions: those which serve two or more purposes, & save you money.

Talk to other gardeners in your area about the local conditions, and how they manage?

- Plan & experiment. Don't be disheartened.
- It takes time. Plan, observe & share.