Milkwood

ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENING

STUDENT COMMUNITY · 8 WEEK Online Course · LIVE SESSIONS · GUIDED COURSE

Course Outline

YOUR TEACHERS

Hannah Moloney

Presents your lessons. Founder of Good Life Permaculture, a presenter on ABC's *Gardening Australia* and author of *Good Life Growing*, who has taught permaculture alongside Kirsten and Nick since 2012.

Kirsten Bradley

Co-founded Milkwood with Nick in 2007. Grower, pickler and author of *Milkwood: Real Skills for Down-to-Earth Living*, *The Permaculture Living Handbook* and *Easy Peasy: Gardening for Kids*.

Nick Ritar

Co-founded Milkwood in 2007 with Kirsten. Grower, beekeeper and co-author of *Milkwood: Real Skills*, who has led more than 2,000 face-to-face students through the permaculture design process.

WHEN AND HOW CAN I ACCESS THIS COURSE?

- A new module arrives each week for eight weeks. Once a module has arrived, it's yours for life.
- The extra modules are optional - skills that are awesome but not crucial when you're starting out, so dip in now or leave them for later.
- Most lessons are short videos, with guides to download and a few written lessons. Got a question? Ask it under any lesson - we're here to help.

DO I NEED A BACKYARD?

It helps to have around 10 square metres to grow in, at your place or somewhere else, or to be planning a patch about that size. Plenty of students start in an apartment, with a community garden or allotment in mind.

And there's nothing to buy before you begin. We'll help you work out what your garden actually needs, so you can source it when the time's right.

HOW IT RUNS

Eight weeks, a new module each week, with 5.5 hours of video in the core lessons and 1.5 hours more in six optional extra modules. Around 1-2 hours a week, self-paced, with lifetime access.

ALONG THE WAY

Video lessons, step-by-step guides and downloads, a Veggie Garden Planner you'll fill in as you go, Live Class Calls, a private student community, and a certificate when you finish.

+ More about the course: courses.milkwood.net/vegetablegardening

START HERE

Getting started

Meet your teachers, get your bearings, and say hello in the Veggie Gardening Community before we start designing.

3 LESSONS 29 MIN OF VIDEO 2 DOWNLOADS

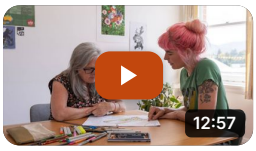
Welcome & meet your teacher

Meet Nick and Kirsten from Milkwood and your course presenter, Hannah Moloney, and come and say hello in the Veggie Gardening Community.

About this course & permaculture

What 'organic' and 'permaculture' really mean for a veggie patch, the ethics and principles behind them, and what's coming up week by week.

Introduction to permaculture - from Milkwood's Permaculture Living book



How this course works

A tour of the course platform, how the weeks unfold, how much time and money to set aside, and the Veggie Garden Planner you'll use all the way through.

Veggie Garden Planner

WEEK 1

Designing your garden

Every good veggie patch starts with design. So this week you'll get to know your people and your place, and sketch out where everything will go.

4 LESSONS · 34 MIN OF VIDEO · 5 DOWNLOADS

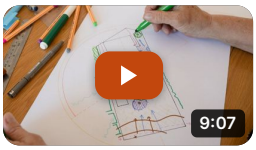
We start with design

The stages of garden design, the art of observation, and how to use permaculture zones to decide where your veggie patch belongs.

- Veggie Garden Planner

People - who is this garden for?

Who'll use this garden, now and in ten years? Answer the planning questions, weigh up your time, budget and mobility, and write your Goal Statement.



Place - what does the landscape tell you?

Make a Base Map of your place, map what you notice by theme - water, access, trees, microclimate and more - then pull it all together into a Summary Map.

- How to make a simple Base Map
- How to make a Summary Map
- The Permaculture Design Style Guide

Initial concept design - what will go where?

Turn your people and place notes into a Bubble Diagram, your first concept design, and work out where your veggie beds should sit (even on a tricky site).

- How to make a Bubble Diagram

+ EXTRA MODULE

Drawing a detailed garden design

For keen designers! Awesome skills, and totally fine to leave for later.

1 LESSON · 12 MIN OF VIDEO · 6 DOWNLOADS

Drawing a detailed garden design

Choose a scale, make a To-Scale Base Map and turn your Bubble Diagram into a detailed design, so you know what fits and how much material you'll need.

- Choose a scale (metric)
- Choose a scale (US)
- How to make a To-Scale Base Map
- How to turn your To-Scale Base Map into a Detailed Garden Design
- Trilateration
- The Permaculture Design Style Guide

WEEK 2

Knowing your soil & establishing your garden

Healthy soil is where every good harvest begins. Get to know yours, then choose and build the garden beds that suit your place.

7 LESSONS · 48 MIN OF VIDEO · 9 DOWNLOADS

What is soil?

Soil structure, biology and chemistry, the main soil types and horizons, and the pH most veggies like best.

Getting to know YOUR soil

Take a soil sample and run simple jar, ribbon and pH tests at home. And if your soil turns out to be a problem, there's a solution for that too.

- Soil sampling & testing
- Soil Solutions
- Soil texture: the manipulation test

In-ground beds

In-ground or raised? How to decide, then three ways to make an in-ground bed: weed and plant, sheet mulch and double dig.

- 'Weed & Plant' garden beds
- 'Sheet Mulch' garden beds
- 'Double Dig' garden beds

Raised beds

The pros and cons of raised beds, which materials are safe to use (and which to avoid), what to fill them with, and keeping them productive.

- Raised garden beds

No-dig gardening

No-dig, or lasagne gardening - less work and more veggies, and it suits just about any site, from rocky ground to soil that won't grow a thing.

- No-dig garden beds

Plan your garden bed layout

Back to your Bubble Diagram to plan your beds - sizes, paths, tools and materials - so you're ready to start building.

Written lesson

- How to plan your Bed Layout

Guest - Pema on wicking beds

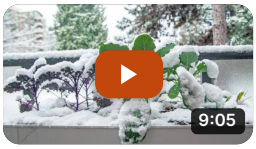
No topsoil, not much sun and seriously rocky ground... Pema shows how she built wicking beds that thrive anyway, and how they work.

WEEK 3

Planning: what to grow when & where

Now for the fun bit - deciding what to grow, and when and where to plant it, so there's always something coming on.

5 LESSONS · 42 MIN OF VIDEO · 4 DOWNLOADS



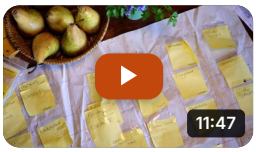
Working with your seasons & climate zone

How your climate zone, microclimates and seasons shape what you plant and when, plus a few hacks to stretch your growing season.

RHS hardiness ratings

Annuals vs perennials

Annual, biennial or perennial? How each plant's life cycle shapes where it goes, how long it stays in, and how much one patch can give you.



Crop planning

Start your Crop List, group crops by plant family, get to grips with crop rotation, and draw up a Crop Plan for your first two seasons.

Crop rotation · How to plan your planting · Vegetable Plant Families poster

Other planting considerations

Succession planting to stagger your harvests, and companion planting - what the science says, and which veggies do well together.

Guest - Gardening in transition with Farhat, SabarGul & Hajare

A visit to a community garden where new families from refugee backgrounds connect with their new home through food - what they grow, and how they cook it.

WEEK 4

Planting your veggie garden

Seeds or seedlings? This week it's time to get planting, and to stay on top of the weeds as your garden grows.

5 LESSONS · 46 MIN OF VIDEO · 1 DOWNLOAD

Sourcing seeds vs seedlings

Which veggies to plant as seedlings and which to sow direct, where to source them, how to pick healthy ones, and F1 hybrid versus open-pollinated seed.

Planting seedlings

Harden off your seedlings, plant them at the right spacing, thin them out, decide whether to mulch, and protect them from pests.

Planting your veggie garden

Planting direct-sow seeds

Sowing big seeds and small, overplanting as insurance, a nifty way to grow carrots, and planting potatoes, yams and garlic.

Weed management

Weeds are just plants out of place, and they can tell you a lot about your soil. Manage them organically before, during and after each crop.

Guest - Grant on caring for plants as they grow

Grant's hugely abundant garden is built to be accessible. He shares how he stretches his seasons, grows tomatoes and pumpkins, and interplants to make the most of his space.

EXTRA MODULE

Raising seedlings

Why buy seedlings when you can raise your own?

1 LESSON · 11 MIN OF VIDEO · 2 DOWNLOADS

Raising seedlings

Make your own seed raising mix, sow at the right depth, give seedlings the light and water they need, pot them up, and fix the most common problems.

How to raise your own seedlings

Growing great tomato seedlings - from the Milkwood book

WEEK 5

Infrastructure for growing veggies

With your veggies in the ground, it's time for a little infrastructure - water first, then supports, and ways to handle the heat and the cold.

5 LESSONS · 36 MIN OF VIDEO · 2 DOWNLOADS

Watering your veggies

How much water your veggies need, when to water, how to tell if they're thirsty, and options from hand watering and ollas to irrigation systems.

Passive water management

Structures that support your plants

Supports for tomatoes, beans, peas and heavy climbers, growing up to double your space, and structures that shelter crops from heat, frost and pests.

Support structures

Hot season solutions

A written guide to long, hot, dry spells - mulching, shading, and building beds and soils that hold on to water.

Written lesson

Cold climate solutions

A written guide to growing in the cold - starting early indoors and in cold frames, choosing plants that mature sooner, and cloches, greenhouses and hoop houses.

Written lesson

Guest - Tanya on infrastructure and planning for abundance

Tanya trades with other households and pays her rent with her labour. Her garden shows how sharing, scrounging and community add up to abundance.

WEEK 6

Feeding your soil

Feed your soil and your veggies will thank you! Brews, compost, worms and green manures, to pick and choose from.

5 LESSONS · 55 MIN OF VIDEO · 2 DOWNLOADS

Soil fertility & liquid fertilisers

Why and how we feed soil, soil feeders versus soil builders, the nutrients plants need, and simple worm and seaweed teas to brew at home.

Feeding your soil

Cold composting

A low-effort way to turn kitchen scraps into garden gold - where to put it, what goes in (and what doesn't), when it's ready, and keeping vermin out.

Feeding your soil

Worm farms

Worm castings and 'veggie rocket fuel'! How worm farms work, a bucket worm tower, a bathtub worm farm, and harvesting your castings.

Green manures

Give tired soil a rest with a green manure - cool and warm season mixes, and how to plant them and finish them off before replanting.

Guest - Sulyn on building soil health and compost tea

Sulyn shows you her soil-building systems and her compost tea set-up, for a sweet-smelling brew that kick-starts the life in your soil.

+ EXTRA MODULE

Hot composting

Fast, weed-free compost that's buzzing with life, if you're up for a bit more work.

1 LESSON · 11 MIN OF VIDEO · 1 DOWNLOAD

Hot composting

How hot compost works, building and aerating a pile, what's going on as it heats up, and using, storing and troubleshooting your compost.

Hot composting

WEEK 7

Common pests & diseases for veggie growers

Pests and diseases are feedback from your garden. Build a resilient patch first, then deal with any unwanted visitors organically, step by step.

3 LESSONS · 29 MIN OF VIDEO · 4 DOWNLOADS

Building a resilient veggie garden

Why pests and diseases become a problem, how diversity and prevention build a resilient patch, and the step-by-step Integrated Pest Management approach.

- Common Pollinator and Beneficial Insects of Victoria
- Beneficial Insects: Predators, Parasitoids and Pollinators

Diseases, pests & wildlife

Spotting the conditions that let pests and diseases take hold, treating and protecting your crops, and keeping birds, rabbits, possums and deer out of your patch.

- Managing common pests, diseases & wildlife
- Beneficial insects guide

Guest - Viv on small space growing and disease management

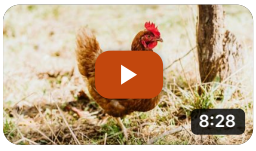
Viv and Des fit raised beds, a hothouse, berries, a small orchard and a native garden around their compact townhouse, and deal with pests and disease organically.

+ EXTRA MODULE

Chickens - your veggie garden's best friend

Chickens eat your pests, turn your compost and fertilise your garden. And there are eggs!

1 LESSON · 8 MIN OF VIDEO · 1 DOWNLOAD



Chickens - your veggie garden's best friend

Set up a deep litter system with the chickens doing the hard work, build a chicken tractor to suit your space, and process chicken poo before it goes on the garden.

- The Milkwood Chicken eBook

WEEK 8

Harvesting your veggies

Harvest time! Pick your veggies at their best, put your beds to rest at the end of the season, and plan where your growing goes next.

2 LESSONS · 11 MIN OF VIDEO · 1 DOWNLOAD

Harvesting your veggies

Harvesting tips for all sorts of veggies, what to do with your beds at the end of the season, and your certificate of completion.

How to put your veggie beds 'to sleep'

Where to from here

Ways to keep growing - crop swaps, seed libraries, community gardens and permablitzes - and to keep sharing your garden in the community.

Written lesson

+ EXTRA MODULE

Preserving your harvest

Another zucchini lurking in the patch? Turn a bumper harvest into something to enjoy all year.

2 LESSONS · 32 MIN OF VIDEO · 1 DOWNLOAD

Preserving your harvest

Kirsten shows you her favourite ways to preserve a bumper harvest, and the different techniques you can try.

Tomatoes in the kitchen - from the Milkwood book

Guest - Urban Nanna on growing in pots & preserving spring onions

Anna shows you around her rental veggie patch, grown in no-dig pots, and whips up a dried, fermented spring onion preserve.

+ EXTRA MODULE

Seed saving

Save seed from your favourite veggies for next season, and share the abundance around.

2 LESSONS · 27 MIN OF VIDEO · 1 DOWNLOAD

Seed saving

Kirsten shares how to save different kinds of seed, avoid cross-pollination, tell when seed is ready, and label and store it.

Tomato seed saving - from Permaculture Living

Guest - Heather & Kate on seed saving & community

Heather and Kate from the Cygnet Seed Library show you how a seed library works, and how shared seed builds a more resilient community.

Yours for life

Your eight weeks are just the start of many seasons of growing, and we're here for as long as you need us.

Lifetime access

Every lesson, video and guide stays yours for life, so you can come back for a refresher as each new season comes round.

Student community

The Veggie Gardening Community, full of fellow growers from all over the world, to share your harvests, ask questions and troubleshoot together.

Live Class Calls

Regular live calls where you can bring your veggie questions, with some very special gardening guests along the way.

And when you finish, you'll receive a certificate of completion.

Find out more and enrol: courses.milkwood.net/vegetablegardening