



Course Details

What you'll learn:

Companion planting and bird and insect retention

The benefits of biodiversity are explored in this creative and fun day, where you will gain a deeper understanding of different plant families and how they interact. The rich resources provided will give you the ability to quickly plan either a garden or a shelterbelt to attract native birds and insects. We will play with crop rotations to demonstrate how simple it is to plan a combined garden, but also look at the science that supports growing multiple species for plant and soil health. This is a busy day with a lot of information so be prepared to do some pre-reading and video watching so we can hit the ground running.

Pests & diseases

When plants are sick or being attacked it can be devastating for a grower. During these two days, we cover how to be a super sleuth to identify the cause of the problem, evaluate what actions should be taken and a range of organic pest and disease management strategies are provided. You will be introduced to the theory of the economic threshold to take action which can save you both time and money. During these sessions we will be on the hunt for bugs to view under the USB microscopes. Kazel brings her expertise from being a Crop Monitor to the class, with strategies for both commercial and home garden situations.

Propagation

This is a "hands in the dirt" course, with a theory session followed by putting it into practice. There will be a lot of plant material after each class to share, take home and start growing.

We find this course is best delivered over four sessions, one each season. In Winter, we do the "hardwood" cuttings: grape, plum, fig, hydrangea, blueberry, currant and the like. In Spring, we'll look at seed raising: seed saving, seed raising mix, germination, and appropriate containers. Summer, is the best time to collect and root "soft" cuttings (sage, salvias, scented geraniums) and some "semi-hardwood" cuttings (lavender, rosemary, Chilean guava). Once we get to Autumn, we are dividing of plants like rhubarb, comfrey, mint, thyme and berry canes, with more "semi-hardwood cuttings."

Tree propagation will also be covered. You'll learn about grafting theory and get practical experience using a grafting tool; rootstock production of apple and quince; how to grow rootstocks by mound layering; and how peaches and plums can be grown from seeds.

Pruning - winter

Winter is the key pruning time for deciduous fruit trees, but specifically for apples and pears. Kazel teaches the French Central Leader pruning method, which has been proven to give the best yields while also being the quickest and easiest method to learn and practice.

This course starts with understanding the theory of correct cuts and orchard hygiene, tool care and selection, understanding the fundamentals of what to cut and why, including methods of tying down branches to maximise fruit production. We cover the collection of bud wood for grafting, and using the grafting tool to graft onto rootstocks or to make trees with different fruit on each branch. Then it's out to the young apple orchard to practice our techniques on real trees.

Pruning - summer

Summer pruning follows hot on the heels of the summer fruit season, and is typically the best time to prune plums and peaches which are susceptible to winter diseases. We will review the techniques and theories covered in winter and you will have an opportunity to see the orchard in full flush, taste some of the heritage apples you pruned earlier in the year, and practice your pruning. We will also look at how to prune evergreen fruit trees including citrus, feijoa and avocado.

Understanding soils

Soil components and dynamics can seem complex, however soil is a critical element to understand if you want to grow nutritious food, successful plants, vibrant trees and healthy livestock. If you also want to cut down on buying and hauling soil amendments, spending hours weeding, hoeing, and digging, this comprehensive course will make all the difference in helping you get your soils into a healthy, sustainable cycle.

Soil "beginners" are welcome as well as those of you who would like a "soil" refresher to fill in any gaps in your knowledge.

This is an excellent opportunity to learn about your specific soil by bringing along samples from your property. If you have a soil test you can bring that along too. By the end of this course you'll know what all those chemical abbreviations and numbers actually mean and what you might do about them!

Topics covered will include:

- Why soil texture matters, and how to identify soil types easily.
- Reading the soil profile.
- Learning what weeds can tell you about the soil.

- Monitoring the health of the soil.
- Using [S-Map](#) to identify NZ mapped soil types to be able to research different soils without a sample or test.
- How to take a soil test sample, understanding Soil Test results and how to interpret and take appropriate actions.
- [The Soil Food Web](#) – what is it, how to support it and enhance plant health and production.
- pH scale. Testing, interpretation and subsequent actions.
- The solution soil can offer to climate change – storing carbon in the soil.
- Humus, the essential ingredient.
- Importance of covered soil, minimising digging and soil disturbance.
- Soil amendments: compost, vermicast, compost teas, ocean products.

Laptops will be useful for the S-Map session, but not essential for each student.

Weed management

How you deal with weeds in your garden situation can be the difference between the success and failure of a crop. In this engaging session, we redefine what a weed is, and look for potential to harness the power of their wild growth to improve our soils. This course covers and evaluates a raft of organic weed control techniques including innovative technologies and ideas for suppressing weed growth - aiming to provide a range of practical and real solutions. Sources for weed identification are provided and a system to evaluate the potential of a weed to harm your crop.

Crop management

During this unit we bring it all together for a holistic overview of managing production on the land. Combining our deeper understanding of soils, pests and diseases, and propagation with the needs of our specific crop this is the part where students can really start to feel like confident gardeners and demonstrate how they would deal effectively with different scenarios. This unit allows students to consider a specific crop, in combination with their land situation and make a specific plan for propagation, growing, harvesting and caring for the crop through all of its stages of growth.

Saturday dates:

2019

22 Jun Propagation of Winter Hardwoods
27 Jul Understanding Soils 1
10 Aug Winter Fruit Tree Pruning
24 Aug Understanding Soils 2
14 Sept Propagation of Spring Seeds
19 Oct Understanding Soils 3
9 Nov Propagation - Summer Softwoods
30 Nov Weed Management

2020

8 Feb Pests & Diseases 1
29 Feb Summer Fruit Tree Pruning
7 Mar Companion Planting, plants for bird and insect retention
28 Mar Propagation -Autumn Semi-Hardwood
2 May Pests & Diseases 2
23 May Crop Management

Tuesday dates:

2019

18 Jun Propagation of Winter Hardwoods
30 Jul Understanding Soils 1
6 Aug Winter Fruit Tree Pruning
27 Aug Understanding Soils 2
17 Sept Propagation of Spring Seeds
22 Oct Understanding Soils 3
12 Nov Propagation - Summer Softwoods
3 Dec Weed Management

2020

11 Feb Pests & Diseases 1
3 Mar Summer Fruit Tree Pruning
10 Mar Companion Planting, plants for bird and insect retention
31 Mar Propagation-Autumn Semi-Hardwood
28 Apr Pests & Diseases 2
26 May Crop Management

Tuition: We prefer small classes, between 10 and 14 participants, to maximise your hands-on learning experience. Tuition will include all workbooks, plant materials, and planting mixes. We will have a few payment options:

- Pay in full, direct banking, discounted tuition of \$950 (\$68 per workshop)
- Pay with credit card via Paypal: \$1000
- Pay monthly: \$350 deposit and 14 payments of \$50, \$1050 total
- Internship: participant pays half tuition of \$525 and gives two hours of time per workshop, totalling 28 hours over the year. Contact Catherine at email below.

Time Commitment: In addition to the 84 classroom hours, there will be a homework requirement with supporting videos to watch and a crop research project that will help you to develop a production plan for a crop of your choice. Depending on your enthusiasm, that could take 10-30 hours.

Location:

Most workshops will be held at 375 Whakamarmama road, first building on the right. Some workshops may be held at another location, e.g. pruning.

Communication:

Two weeks before each workshop, you'll receive an email with what to bring, what we'll be covering.

Registration:

Go to our web page to register: www.plentypermaculture.co.nz

Here is the precise link: <http://www.plentypermaculture.co.nz/gardening-essentials/registration/>

Contact us:

PLENTY PERMACULTURE Catherine & Neville Dunton-McLeod

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