

Seeking harmony in nature

What does Mesa Harmony Garden mean?

Well, it's a food forest, it's being created by volunteers from the community, it aims to supply the Foodbank, and it's being designed using Permaculture principles.

Permaculture is an approach to designing systems that are inherently self-sustaining, systems that mimic nature. A food forest is a system for producing edible crops using the least amount of energy – whether that energy is in the form of water, fossil fuels or hard work. Once the garden reaches maturity, most of the hard work is done by the interactions between all the elements in the design.

Because permaculture is a *design* philosophy, its practitioners use design terminology. Any designer would recognize the idea of meeting a given purpose by arranging particular elements according to a set of principles. The elements in a food forest include such things as plants, soil, animals, water features and so on. A permaculture designer organizes these elements in accordance with principles which help to emulate the success of nature in creating abundant growth. One important principle is that every element should perform many functions. For example, a tree can provide shade, act as a wind-break, create mulch with its leaves, and provide food and fuel.

Mesa Harmony Garden is an element in the design of our community. It performs many functions. As well as providing food for those in need, it is also an educational resource for all the volunteers who work there, for the City College students who also volunteer and take classes at the garden, and it helps to build community by bringing people together around a common purpose. It's a great example of how to make the most of the natural resources that surround us.

The Center for Sustainability at Santa Barbara City College has been very supportive of this project, and we'd like to thank them for hosting a successful fundraiser on October 10th with a talk by the renowned food-forest expert Dave Jacke, who also visited the garden and gave us the benefit of his years of experience.

**Next volunteer work day:
Saturday, November 5th, 9am – 12:30.
Corner of Meigs Road and Dolores Drive.**

Visit our website for more information about the garden, and to join our email list
www.mesaharmonygarden.org

Please support our work by volunteering, or by sending donations to:
Mesa Harmony Garden, c/o Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109.