

# Waste Wisdoms

Second edition

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**Welcome! In this issue we look at *Regenerating Nature*. We meet a local urban farmer and introduce some local green projects. Learn how to grow a food scrap garden plus your monthly free giveaway and more!**

## REGENERATE NATURE

This is the third principle of the Circular Economy model. To regenerate nature our practices must allow nature to rebuild soils, increase biodiversity, and return biological materials to the earth. Currently, most of nature's (biological) materials are lost after use and the land used to grow them is depleted of nutrients. For example, in the city, fallen leaves are removed from where they have fallen removing a natural source of food for soil life. Soil is critical in regenerating nature as it's the basis for all growth. When soils are depleted and infertile, nothing grows, and nature can't do its role.

A good place to start regeneration is our food system. Currently, the Agrifood industry is responsible for almost a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions globally. Most food production is a significant driver of climate destruction and biodiversity loss. It relies upon ever-increasing quantities of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, and fossil fuels, a source of pollution and damage to ecosystems and human health. In addition, over tilling and growing monocultures is degrading and eroding precious topsoil. It's predicted earth's soil has only 60 more harvests left. A better model for our food system is required.

Producing food regeneratively focuses on improving soil health.

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"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.  
The next best time is now." Ancient Chinese Proverb

Building healthy soils absorbs carbon, restoring the natural carbon cycle. Healthy soils are better able to hold water, reducing the impact of droughts and risk of flooding. By 2050 80% of all food consumption will be in cities so it's also critical to source food locally. This reduces excess packaging, shortens distribution supply chains, and reduces our carbon footprint.

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The Ellen McArthur Foundation 2019 Report "Cities and Circular Economy for Food" details three ambitions for a healthy food system. Briefly:

**Source food grown regeneratively and locally** - organic principles, crop rotations, variations, permaculture and increased urban farming all facilitate regenerative practices

**Make the most of food** - design food waste out of the system and restore biological food waste back to the soil

**Design and market healthier food products** - by avoiding certain additives, food by-products can be safely returned to the soil

### Grow a Food Scrap Garden

**Celery.** Cut off celery bunch bottom, place in a shallow dish of water.

**Spring onion/onions/garlic/leeks.** Take small section of the bulb or stem base with its roots. Place in a shallow dish of water.

**Carrots/parsnips/beetroot/radishes.** Place tops in a shallow dish of water.

**Mint/basil/coriander.** Place 10cm length of stem in water.

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**ONCE ROOTS DEVELOP, PLANT OUT.**

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Replace lawn with a garden full of fruit and vegetables, herbs and flowers or grow in pots on balconies to improve soil, add biodiversity and absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.



## MEET A LOCAL - ALICIA, URBAN FARMER

### What inspired you to join the forest care team/farm collective as an urban farmer?

I joined to actively support social and ecological equity in our community. I wanted to do something to help safeguard the future for the kids and planet. Initially I was inspired by the dream of forests growing and connecting across the city. In the city we live in an environment that is increasingly so far removed from forests and the natural world, yet the health and wellbeing of humans and the natural world is interconnected and dependent. So when Jacqui generously shared her knowledge and amazing vision to build a food forest inner city on a neglected space I was sold – count me in. From there it has snowballed to active regeneration, relocalizing and decarbonising food, supporting food security, equity, biodiversity and uniting community. What comes out of this and inspires me is the collaboration and relationships that form, - not just with people but with plants, animals, place.

### What do you do as an urban farmer?

As urban farmers Jacqui and I work with 5 sites in Kensington; the Venny, Westbourne Community Gardens, MacCracken St Neighbourhood House, Kensington Community Food Forest and recently new beginnings at Kensington Community High School. We draw on permaculture methods of working with land and nature and sharing for community benefit.

Nothing goes to waste, it's a circular and closed loop approach. We harvest, raise and plant seeds collected from the sites, spread leaf litter, cuttings, and compost from the local compost hubs, harvest produce for monthly local fresh food market and local food bank initiatives. My role is hands-on, collaborative and always fun being with everyone in the team, across the sites and in the community.



## SUPPORT LOCAL PROJECTS

**Support local regenerative projects, join a group or become a community gardens Care Team member:**

**Eastwood Street Community Garden** near Younghusband Wool Stores has a Care Team caring for 10 food-producing trees, flowers, herbs and small lawn for residents enjoyment.

**Friends of Newell's Paddock** - established 2014, holds planting, weeding and clean up days.

**Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek** has community days to protect/enhance the creek and its environs.

**Kensington Community Fresh Food Market** first Saturday of the month, Skinny Park 10am -12pm to share/distribute/sell abundant locally grown food.

**Kensington Community Food Forest** - established 2017. Care Team cares for 27 food producing trees and 90 understory plants.

**Kensington Seed Savers** - collects/shares, swaps/stores heirloom, heritage, local organic seeds from the Venny/Kensington Food Forest and other local community gardens from plants grown with organic, heritage seedlings using open pollination. Seeds from resident gardeners also welcome. Collect/drop seeds to Seed Savers libraries at Eastwood St. community garden or Kensington Neighbourhood House.

**Kensington Stationeers** hold regular working bees beautifying the gardens around Kensington station.

**Urban Farm Collective** work across five local sites using organic/permaculture principles to provide nutritious food supporting social equality and food security.



Free locally generated organic vegie/herb seeds. Come to Unison's office for a free packet of Seed Saver seeds to grow in your outdoor or balcony garden. Stocks are limited, availability on a first in first served basis.

Contact us at the Unison Housing office:

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