

L.E.T.S. Lebanon



IN THIS ISSUE:

► FEATURE STORY:

1st PERMACULTURE MEETING [Page 1](#)

► LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS:

- LET'S PLANT SOME HOPE 2ND ACTION [Page 2](#)
- BEEKEEPING WORKSHOP IN SAIDOUN [Page 3](#)
- DISCOVERING NATURAL BUILDING [Page 3](#)

► GREEN RESOURCES [Page 2](#)

► LET'S FOCUS: PERMACULTURE

- PERMACULTURE - AN INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE AWAKENING [Page 4](#)
- UPCOMING EVENTS [Page 4](#)

Share your news for L.E.T.S. Lebanon, add a friend to the mailing list, or ask a question, email alexis.baghdadi@gmail.com

FEATURE STORY

1st PERMACULTURE MEETING

Over two weekends, on August 23 and September 7, 2013, the growing permaculture community in Lebanon held its first **group meetings** at Wolfgang Altenburg and Estela Navarrete de Altenburg's home in Jhlaisse/Jbail—Kesrouan.

It was the first time the entire community got together socially since the group first met in July. A few new faces were also present, attracted by the positive energy and curious to know more about the concept of permaculture. It was also a good chance to discover a new region and its people, and compare experiences. Our group of beekeepers, farmers, woodworkers and others were happy to find kindred spirits in this little village. Wolfgang and Estela initiated the discussion, and talked about their philosophy concerning sustainable living and respect for Nature. Current and future L.E.T.S. (Local Energy Trading System) activities were discussed, including directions for the L.E.T.S. Lebanon newsletter and the advantages of holding general meetings on a monthly basis, perhaps on the first Saturday. Later, the group enjoyed checking in on the progress of Wolfgang and Estela's compost heap. Some adopted a few earthworms to kick start their own compost.

In addition to being a permaculturist, Wolfgang is a passionate woodworker and trainer at the **Dual System Meister/Small and Medium Enterprises (DSME)** project for Technical Schools in Lebanon. The main attraction at his place was definitely the **food dryer** he built in his yard. This eco-friendly device is easy to build and efficient. Powered by a photovoltaic cell and fan, it allows drying fruits and vegetables in one day, hassle-free. Roger Alwan, a new friend from Zgharta and the proud owner of his own solar dryer, built with Wolfgang, praised the device. Wolfgang offered to build a solar panel with anyone interested, and discover with them how to operate it and which seasonal natural products can be conserved over the year.

For more on solar driers, contact Wolfgang (info@permawolf.de) or Roger (alwanroger@gmail.com)



[► back to contents](#)



L.E.T.S. Lebanon

LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

LET'S PLANT SOME HOPE 2ND ACTION: "ADOPT A PLANT"

We are continuing our efforts to plant hope and encourage others to develop a green thumb. On **Sunday, September 1, 2013**, we gave away **60 plants** to their grateful new owners. A few days earlier, we had come across a small plant nursery in the Bekaa valley and found a number of plants in little pots waiting sadly in rows. We bought 60 different ones including **basil, ornamental cabbage, polka dotted plants, hairy succulents, shrubs and flowers** – all of them perfectly adapted to our climate, especially life in the city.

Two days later, we put the plants up for **free adoption** at **Sassine Square in Ashrafieh**. In the beginning, passersby were shy to approach us, but they soon grew confident after seeing the first few lucky new owners take home their plant. Residents from the buildings around the square came down to meet us, and clients from nearby cafés also stopped by on their way out. All were happily surprised by our initiative. Quite a few older residents gladly took home a new addition to their garden or balcony. Some were experts who shared their passion and experience with us. Others became first-time plant owners and got a few tips to get started.

To learn more about **Plant Some Hope**, check:

https://www.facebook.com/plantsomehope?notif_t=fbpage_fan_invite

Shared by Ghinwa Daher and Mirella Salameh



GREEN RESOURCES

LEBANON MOUNTAIN TRAIL MAGAZINE



The Lebanon Mountain Trail Association aims to protect the natural and cultural heritage of a hiking trail from north to south and promote eco-tourism. Download for free or read it online.

<http://www.lebanontrail.org/category/jhtm?cid=136>

HARTZ IV MOEBEL WEBSITE



The website of Vietnamese born wood artist Le Van Bo, activist for the "Build more, buy less" movement. Interact with the artist, browse his creations and ask for free blueprints to start building on your own.

<http://hartzivmoebel.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/buildmorebuyless>

BEYOND MAGAZINE



A Lebanese artistic publication that focuses on the environment, nature related issues, and green lifestyle. Download for free or read it online.

<http://www.beyond-magazine.com/>

► [back to contents](#)



L.E.T.S. Lebanon

LET'S SHARE OUR NEWS

BEEKEEPING WORKSHOP IN SAIDOUN

The **Saidoun Agriculture Cooperative** held an introductory workshop on **beekeeping** on **September 22, 2013**. Beekeeper **Bassam Khawand** and his wife **Sylvana Khawand** hosted half a dozen young enthusiasts for a full day of theoretical and practical training.

Rita Khawand was the coordinator for the event. Participants included *Alexis Baghdadi, Robin Eymeri, Cybil Fares, Elie Hage, and Kholoud Nasser*.

Bassam gave everyone the full rundown on operations inside the beehive, providing a unique insight into the incredibly complex world of bees. A look inside the beehive and its different components was the high point of the day for everyone involved. Putting on the suits felt like stepping on a different planet and "thinking bee".

Of course, the honey-tasting session was the cherry on the cake. It made leaving at the end of the day a bittersweet experience.

Kholoud Nasser's testimony:

"I experienced a completely different world, a world where I flew up high, a heavenly world filled with flowers and honey as food that was so yummy! Here, queens are made - long live the queen! But when the monarch can no longer serve her people, she is kicked out and another is bred for that purpose. It is a world where females rule and live like worker nuns dedicated to the good of the community—though they cannot live with males! It is an inspiring world where everyone sticks together in times of hardship like one team and keeps going until their last breath, this is the world of the bees!"

Shared by Rita Khawand



[▶ back to contents](#)

DISCOVERING NATURAL BUILDING

This summer, I spent 6 weeks in Vermont, taking a course about Natural Building at the Yestermorrow school. The school was founded by constructors, designers and architects, who wanted to teach people how to design and build sustainably. We studied different aspects of natural building, different techniques, and applied them through practical, hands-on workshops. Natural building tries to design and construct a house with materials that are (as much as possible) non-toxic, and relatively easy to harvest from the immediate surroundings – like our ancestors did. It's also about building a house that interacts well with its environment, through its materials, through its performance with the elements (rain, snow, wind, etc.) and its compatibility with its inhabitants. A house in Dubai cannot, and should not look like a house in Scotland. Every aspect of natural homes brings a new benefit: An earthen floor feels great when walking on it barefoot; lime-plastered walls have a beautiful reflective property that isn't found in synthetic paints; thick adobe walls can keep houses warm in the winter and cool in the summer; etc. Another main thing to keep in mind is the environmental footprint of the materials used. For example, a ton of cement extracted from the earth generates a ton of CO₂ into the atmosphere – not the ideal eco-friendly material. Building with natural materials isn't dangerous and doesn't require much expertise. But it is often work-intensive, which makes it a great opportunity to build our houses with friends and families, and even start building relationships and communities through engaging in this activity. I think this is a right step towards a more sustainable world.

I want to see natural houses sprouting all over the planet, especially in Lebanon. An example of recent natural buildings in Lebanon is the Taanayel Ecolodge, built and run by the Lebanese NGO Arcenciel.

Shared by Sari Hawa



"The Folly" – Art studio built by previous Yestermorrow students. The building is made of cob (a mixture of clay, sand, water and straw) and wood. It also has a green roof covered with vegetation.

[▶ back to contents](#)



L.E.T.S. Lebanon

LET'S FOCUS

PERMACULTURE - AN INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE AWAKENING

Permaculture has more than one definition. Most often, it implies natural or organic agriculture, and protecting the environment. But Permaculture goes beyond just agriculture, it is an ecological awakening and a way of life. It is a new way to think of all aspects of our existence, at both the individual and community levels: Our habitat, food, health, energy, education, culture, economy, and relationship to natural ecosystems. The Permaculture model includes 3 core ethics: **Care for the Earth, care for people and fair share.**



It is basically a design system, an ecological "design your life" toolkit that's based on the observation of nature, its laws and how it functions; combined with ancestral native community ethics, while ensuring the latest eco-technologies are used.

The term Permaculture (permanent culture + agriculture) was created by Australian ecologist **Bill Mollison** and his student **David Holmgren**. Together, they gathered ancestral wisdoms on agriculture and community development, combined with current concepts and technologies. It came to mean providing solutions to our social, environmental, economic and cultural challenges.

Permaculture empowers anyone to envision a world beyond the current dominant societal norms. It directs efforts to achieve a truly self-sufficient and sustainable future.

Thousands of Permaculture initiatives, communities and start-up projects are happening around the world. A well-designed Permaculture initiative can be modeled and adapted to any context, from a rooftop garden in Mansourieh to an urban chicken coop in Paris, a water collection system for sub-Saharan communities, a socio-economic development initiative for a small village in the South, or a recycled art and furniture project in Beirut. It is a rich and diverse source of innovative eco-knowledge and solutions.

Permaculture is accessible to anyone - if you are interested in healthy eating, natural building, waste/water management, renewable energy, physical and spiritual well-being, etc.

There are endless simple habits you can adopt today to start discovering Permaculture.

- ▶ Grow your food: If you have a window, build your own window farm (www.windowfarms.org). It is possible to grow fresh organic food no matter the size of the space you have, whether it is a balcony or a garden.
- ▶ Buy local: encourage the small *man'oucheh* bakers or the traveling vegetable vendors (as opposed to chain bakeries and supermarkets). Encourage fair trade and traditional artisans (as opposed to brands and multinationals).
- ▶ Eat seasonal: strawberries and mangoes don't grow in winter!
- ▶ Reduce, reuse and recycle: our resources are limited, and our planet is the only one we have, let's stop consuming and wasting the way we are accustomed to. Most importantly, let's re-think the reasons why we buy things and how we buy them!!

Shared by Joey El-Khoury and Lisa Charbel - Permaculture Lebanon

▶ [back to contents](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

SOUK - عالسوق FARMER'S MARKET



Every Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Zico House
Spears Street, Hamra
Next to the René Moawad Garden (Sanayeh)

Tel: Zico House +961.1.750.442

<https://www.facebook.com/SoukaalsoukFarmersMarket>

JOUZOUR LOUBNAN - PUBLIC PLANTATION CAMPAIGN



Sunday October 6, 2013

Sunday October 27, 2013

Zaarour

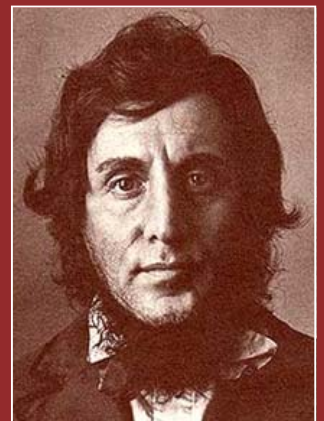
Email: joelle.saab@jouzourloubnan.org

Tel: +961.71.124.000

<https://www.facebook.com/Jouzour.Loubnan>

A THOUGHT TO SHARE ...

"Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders."



—Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)
Walden or Life in the Woods

