

## Hannigan, Georgiana

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**From:** Cherwell Collective [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** 10 October 2025 12:14  
**To:** Botley West Solar Farm  
**Subject:** materials about the benefits of gardening and food forests  
**Attachments:** Garden 15 Impact story.pdf; How to Design a Permaculture Orchard.pdf  
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You don't often get email from [REDACTED]

Hello

Thank you for the opportunity to briefly explain what a food forest is, how it works, and how it increases community benefit not only to the users but also to the wider system.

I have attached a case study of the impact of our work specifically targeting users of food banks and empowering them to grow their own food.

I have also attached a how to about food forests and orchards just to help with understanding of the process.

All the best

[REDACTED]  
**Managing Director and Founder | Cherwell Collective**



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impact  
story

## Journey

██████████ and their young family appreciated the support they received from the Larder when they lived in Bicester and the kids had fun taking part in activity days. Moving to Banbury, they have become regular volunteers at the community garden there and now enjoy growing their own fresh veg at home.

## Learning about growing your own

Through their involvement with Harvest at Home in Banbury, ██████████ have enjoyed learning about growing fruit and vegetables and now have a thriving veg patch at home. "Tomatoes are coming through really big. Beans are coming through now."

They enjoy being part of the community garden there, working together with other volunteers and getting their kids involved in gardening and enjoying nature.

**"Our kids are taking a real interest, looking at the veg and saying, 'is it ready yet?'"**



As a young family living in Bicester, ██████████ were experiencing challenges with the cost of living.

**They found the fresh food and veg they received from the Larder a big support when they were starting out. "We got food from the Larder, quite a few meals a week."**

## Unpacking the impact

### Supporting the family

The Larder helped ██████████ with food, hampers and making life more affordable.

### Getting the kids involved

The kids enjoyed participating in kids activities there. "We went to the Pumpkin carving. We went along to the activities with Oxford United."

### Help starting over

When they moved to Banbury the connection with Cherwell Collective continued and they appreciate the support they get from the Coordinator with surplus food and more generally with advice as they started life in a new town. "If we need advice with something, if one of the kids is poorly, she's there. She's helped me with my college course. We can't thank her enough."





"I'm thinking more about things. I saw a massive spider come in the house. I took it in my hand and put it in the wood chip outside."



"Reducing our waste. Reusing the cardboard (in the compost), because our recycling is always overflowing."



"Getting more kids groups involved in the community garden, like the cubs."

## Their Story



Since moving to Banbury, [REDACTED] have continued the connection with Cherwell Collective through Harvest at Home. "Sam has really helped us out, she's brought us food back from the Larder. She brought us oranges and strawberries."

They'd always thought about having their own vegetable patch, but needed a little bit of help to get started. "We thought about growing our own in the past but hadn't done anything about it, then we met Sam and she's explained things."

The community garden in Banbury has helped get them engaged and given them the skills and support they need. "Sam's been really helpful, giving us a few plants from the greenhouse." They've developed an understanding of why it's important to grow your own produce from information provided. "She explained things and said it's a lot healthier to grow stuff yourselves."

[REDACTED] have become confident about gardening in a sustainable way, using surplus wood chips from the community garden to mulch and installing a water butt to collect excess rainfall. Josh talks knowledgeably about composting, having taken part in a workshop. "I turned it over and it's black, it's really good stuff. Knowing what kind of cardboard you can put in (is important), because printed card isn't any good."

The community garden has got their kids involved and they enjoy learning, playing and eating fresh produce there. [REDACTED] appreciate being part of a community and working on the plot with other local people. "We go over and do a little bit and all have a laugh. There's no pressure here."

They are always on the look out for things they can pick up to be used in the community garden and enjoy helping develop the space for themselves and others. "It's growing your own vegetables and improving the environment around you."

***"We've noticed that the stuff we grow tastes a lot fresher than the stuff you buy in the shops and we're really pleased that we're growing things ourselves. It's cheaper as well."***



# ***How to Design a Permaculture Orchard***



  
PERMACULTURE APPRENTICE  




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## The origins of the permaculture orchard

Before I returned to Europe, I spent time on [Melliodora](#) with [REDACTED] You know, one of the guys who [invented permaculture](#).

His farm was an eye opener for me, they haven't been in a supermarket for five years - at least 85% of what they eat comes from the property itself, and a lot of their nutritional intake was coming from their permaculture orchard.

Although only on an acre or so, there were nonetheless 120 fruit and nut trees in this European-style mixed orchard...

The orchards yield two tons of produce which, in combination with the house gardens, provides for their predominately vegetarian diet and creates a seasonal surplus – mostly consumed in residential courses or traded with the local community.

With this short guide, I want you to bring a step closer to designing your own permaculture orchard by learning from [David's example](#). You'll be able to produce all the fruit and nuts you'll ever need and we'll tackle the first important step in the design process - the layout.



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## Designing a Permaculture Orchard

Inspired by David's example, I knew that I wanted a permaculture orchard on my farm, but...

...I had no idea how to start designing it, or how I would lay out the trees. I knew I didn't want them to be in straight rows...

So, when I asked David about the layout of his orchard, he said that trees are planted in rows following approximate contours.

Here is the image of the orchard layout...



You see, if you were to follow the real contours of your land with each of your rows, soon you will realize that their width would start to vary, and, depending on your terrain, sometimes significantly...

With a permaculture orchard, we're not trying to design a food forest with swales like Geoff Lawton would, rather we need a uniform width between the tree rows...

Ok, but how would you actually do this and create a layout for an orchard on your terrain?

Actually, that's easier than you think - here's how I've achieved it...

What you need to do is first find your reference line, an original row that all other rows will be referenced against...

On my property, I've done this by taking a contour mid-way up my slope as my reference line. Following this, I knew that all other rows would be an exact copy of this one...





Subsequently, once I'd decided on the width of my rows (in my case five meters), I copy-pasted that line across the land, upslope and downslope and... that's how you create a layout for your orchard - it's that easy!



Now you just stake/mark that layout on the ground, and you're ready to start putting trees in the ground, today, in a month, next season...

You'll probably need a lot of trees, so I recommend that you learn how to grow them by yourself and save some serious money. I wrote an extensive guide on [how to start a permaculture nursery](#); you can check it out here.

I know there is more to designing a permaculture orchard than what I described in this short guide, but I hope that I gave you a good idea on where to start.

Finally, let me know your results at [REDACTED]

