

# EDEN SUMMER SCHOOL 2009

Date: September 2009  
 Location: The Eden Project, Cornwall, UK  
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 Partners: The Eden Project  
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 Project type: UK workshop

## PROBLEM ADDRESSED

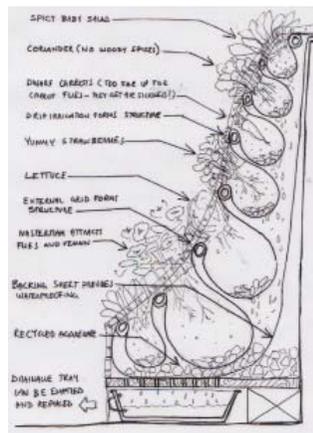


Food production and consumption in the modern world has become dependent on fossil fuels, following the increase in monoculture agriculture reliant on heavy machinery, artificial chemical fertilisers (pesticides and herbicides), the consumption of processed foods and the distance from farm to fork - food miles. This creates a disconnection between the producer and the end consumer, which in turn has a negative economic and social impact.

As well as reducing food security, these practices are having a devastating effect on ecology and are contributing to climate change. The bulldozing of rain forests (major carbon sinks) for industrial agriculture is an example of this. These problems have raised the idea of increasing local food production, where communities have greater control over their food; the method of production, who grows it and where it comes from. Land for food production is limited in urban areas, thus, the challenge for the summer school this year, was to design food production systems, that can be integrated into the built environment in urban areas.

## GOAL ACHIEVED

The participants were encouraged by the multiple benefits of growing food locally and how it is an important tool for reconnecting people with the natural world. The participants designed green elements and the final designs that were produced were very exciting covering internal and external walls, roofs, columns and garden fences. All designs focused on integrating soil development, fertility, and water retention to provide resilience for the plants, (especially during dry conditions). The groups agreed to a system which is not reliant on imported nutrients.



## METHODOLOGY OF WORK



The Summer School consisted of a talk series, a hands-on workshop and presentations from the participants. It commenced with lectures from Carolyn Steel, author of "Hungry City", who talked about food production and consumption throughout history. She focused specifically on the relationship of food with human settlements, highlighting its cultural significance and how this impacts directly on the planet. Adriana Allen then presented international and national case studies where local food production has had a positive effect on people's lives, providing some very interesting statistics on the environmental benefits, such as the amount of carbon emissions saved. This was followed by a talk from Nadia Hillman who has set up GROFUN, a local food-growing scheme in Bristol, bringing all the ideas to a very practical level. The day ended with lectures that covered the technical background of existing case studies and a practical gardening workshop to introduce conditions required for a plant to grow. Lastly, a participation training was held, groups were formed and the design brief developed, selecting a specific client in order to gear the design project. The last three days were spent designing and building a system for local food production to be integrated into the built environment. On the final day, all the groups presented their work.

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

The food production system as monitored at the Building Plot at the Eden Project over the following year to see if the reclaimed materials and the plants withstood the test of time. ASF-UK hopes to focus more of its future work on these issues of food and the built environment.