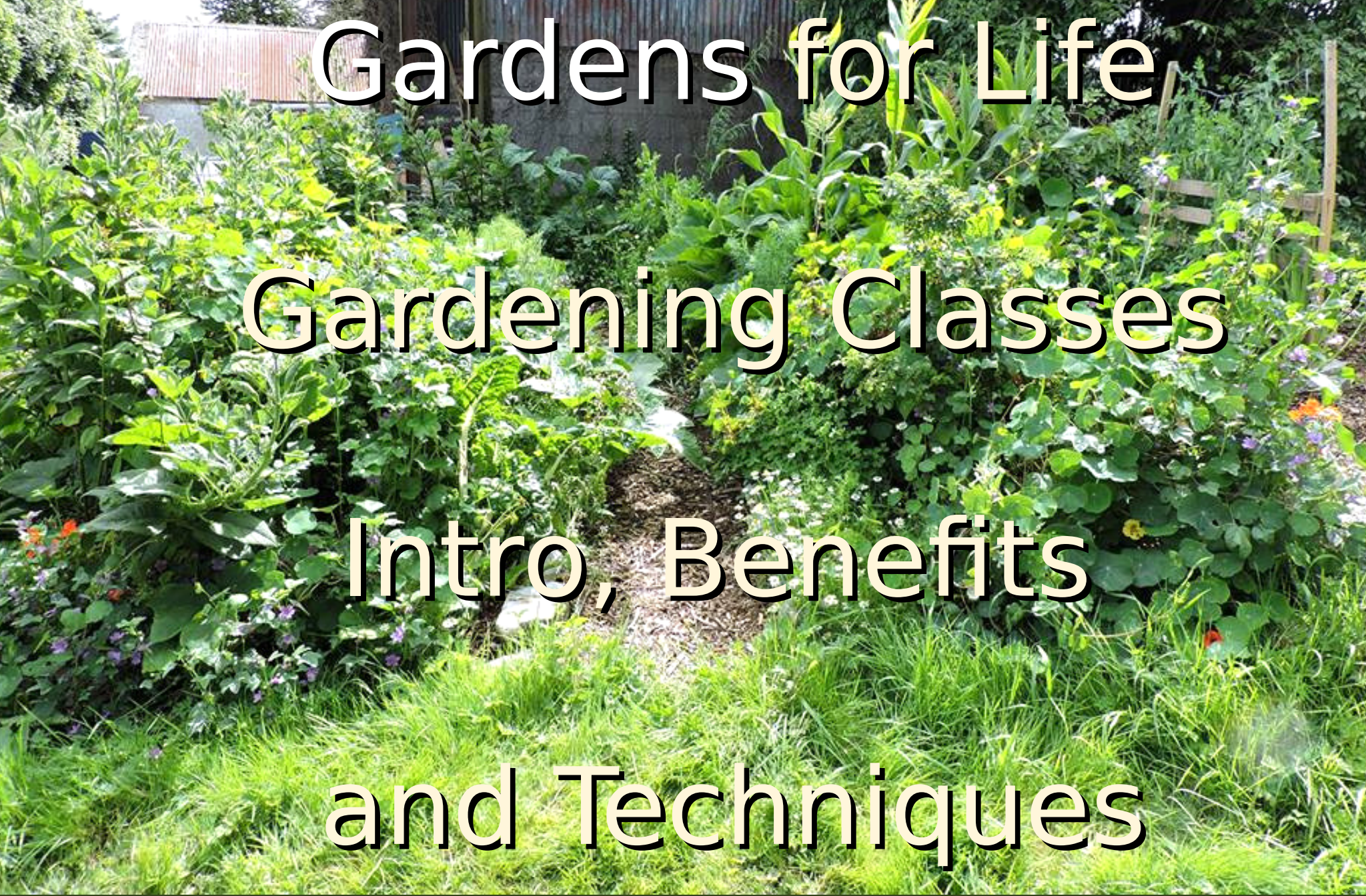




Gardens for Life

Gardening Classes

Intro, Benefits

and Techniques

WORK WITH NATURE

About us

Our names are Martin and Bianca and we are based in Roscommon, Ireland. From an early age I have spent a lot of time in the garden, still now I have vivid childhood memories of harvesting and eating raspberries, apples and walnuts – each year anticipating the seasons treasures. Having been an IT professional for over 15 years and Bianca coming from an architectural and artistic background, we have never lost our passion for good food and for transitioning from a consumer to a producer lifestyle. We kept gardening on the side and ambitiously increasing our knowledge on plants and methods over the years. We have always appreciated eating from the culinary delights of the garden not only for the flavor, but also for the health benefits.

Our aim is to help encourage people to get started with their own gardens and making it as easy as possible by providing information, workshops, courses and plants. We want to create context to connect the garden with everyday lives by showing how to grow food, prepare it and adding longevity through homesteading, health and well being.



About us

Birdland Cottage



Benefits of having a garden

Why?

How?

What?

Photo by Emiel Molenaar



Why?

- Fresh in season food - real flavor and nutritional (minerals and vitamins)



- Medicine - Traditional household remedies (powerful and without side effects)

Why?



- Well being - fitness, improved quality of life and a nice place to be



- Save money - Local (less pressure on global transport system and storage facilities)

Why?

Ecological

- Turn a negative environmental footprint into a positive one
- Wildlife and insect habitat and less fossil fuels used



How?

Gardening techniques

Conventional techniques

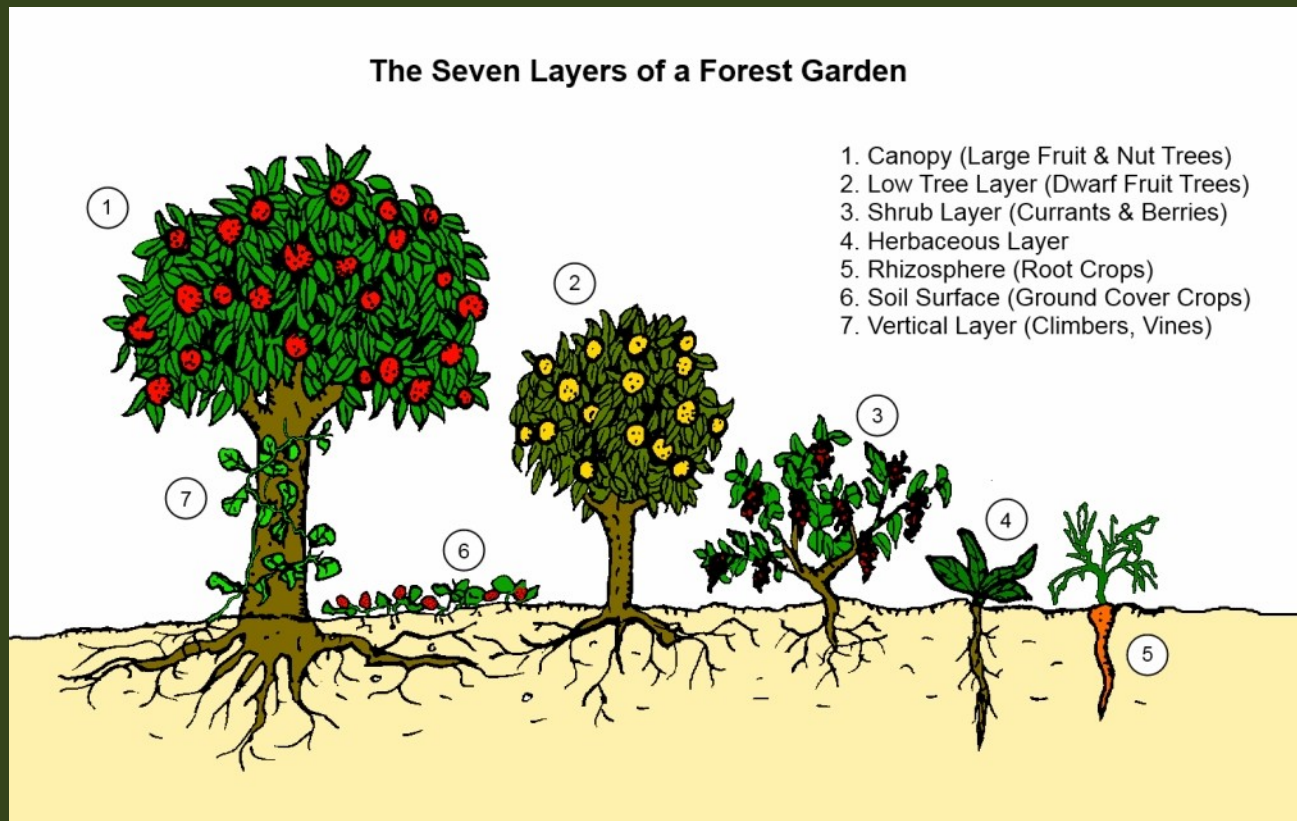
Digging, Weeding and Naked soil (huge inputs and minimal returns)



How?

Gardening techniques Natural Systems

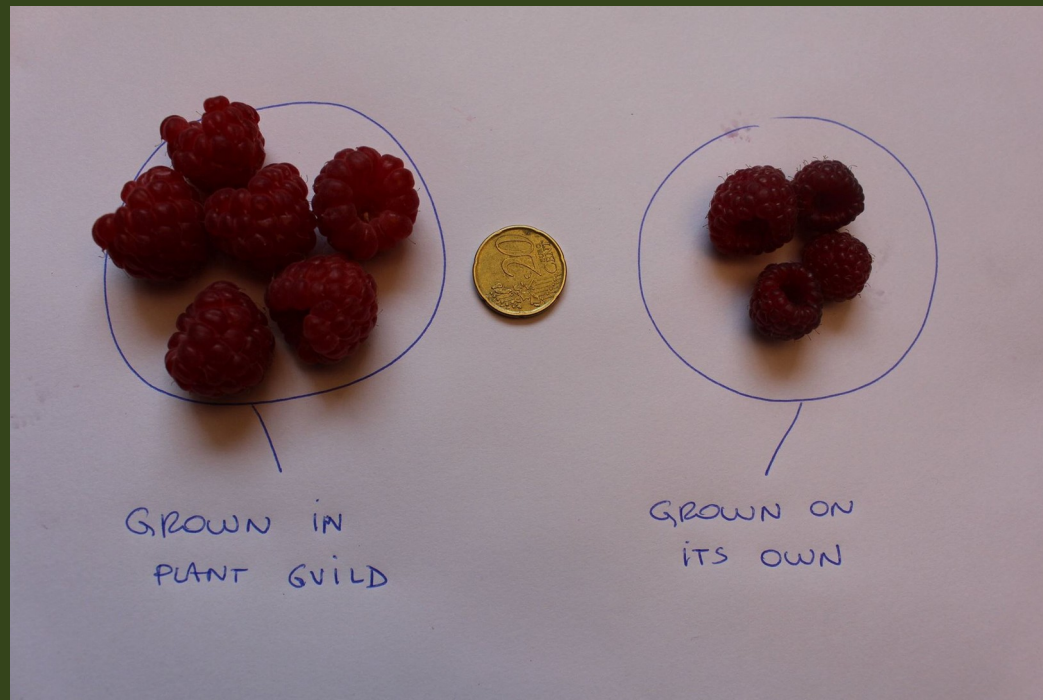
- The forest floor is the best example
- Take up available space (no weeds)



How?

Gardening techniques Polyculture

- Growing a variety of plants in close proximity
- Plants benefits in many ways
 - Roots excrete excess nutrients into soil
(other plants / fungi / microbes can use these)
 - Protection



How?

Gardening techniques

Natural Systems

- Nature does not plough
- Mulching and fertilizing from above protecting and feeding soil life



How?

Gardening techniques Natural Systems

- Seeds simply fall on the ground
- No artificial or chemical inputs
- Animals and insects perform many functions



How?

Gardening techniques

Natural Systems

Lasagne Gardening (Horseshoe, long and top garden pictures)

- Mimicking nature's ways for minimal maintenance and increase productivity
- No digging keeps soil structure intact
- Layering cardboard to smother and decompose grasses and weeds
- Next piling on a layer of compost (growing medium for immediate planting)
- Finally mulching with a layer of wood chips or straw (stops new weed seeds from germinating, habitat for soil life and insects, insulation from cold in winter, protection from sun's UV rays and stops water from evaporating)

Before



Laying cardboard



added 4-10 inches of mushroom compost



Added 4-6 inches of branch mulch / wood chips



potatoes and winter squash doing well after 3 weeks



Pumpkin harvest



- Plants to explore the senses are great for children
- Smell - Taste - Touch - Visual - Auditable



Front Garden - Sensory Garden Beginning



<http://gardensforlife.ie/front-garden/>

Front Garden - Sensory Garden Progress



<http://gardensforlife.ie/front-garden/>

Front Garden - Sensory Garden Nearly Finished





Thank you and happy gardening!

For more: <http://gardensforlife.ie>