

Today Garden: A Gift Ecology and Urban Permaculture Project.

Pauleen Maria Younger, Shogufa Popal, Yuriya Nakagawa, Itsuki Kakitani, Naohiko Azuma

2015



Group 2: Tokuron 3

Abstract:

Our project consisted of applying permaculture and gift ecology in a practical setting. Before determining our project we did a case study in Kunitachi City. At this location we learned how gift ecology, a tool of permaculture, can be used to build a community in a sustainable way. Based on our case study and research, we developed a project on Yayoi campus at the University of Tokyo incorporating these themes. In this paper we will discuss what we learned about permaculture and gift ecology. We will go into depth how it can be applied in a practical manner and how we arrived at our project: Today Garden: A Gift Ecology and Urban Permaculture Project. The theme that we applied is: Cultivating relationships through gardening activities and gatherings.

I. Introduction:

Our project comprises of the concepts permaculture and gift ecology. The two are related to one another. Permaculture is a set of decision-making tools, based on natural systems, for arriving at regenerative solutions to design challenges of all kinds”. [Hemenway, 2015] This concept traditionally has been applied to gardens however it can be utilized in many different ways. We can create an environment that is self-sustaining with minimal inputs by using the framework that permaculture provides. Gift ecology is originally derived from gift economy. It is, “a mode of exchange where valuables are not traded or sold, but rather given without an explicit agreement for immediate or future rewards”. [Cheal, 1988] By using the word “ecology” instead of “economy”, the element of money is removed, and the focus is on the giving aspect. If we look at gift ecology through a permaculture lens, it is about cultivating and designing human/community interaction in a permaculture way, connecting people with the simple joy of giving and receiving. Gift ecology is a permaculture tool that helps bring people together to create a stronger community.

While the concept of permaculture was clear to our group, we wanted to get a deeper understanding of gift ecology. In order to do so we conducted a case study of a project titled “Alumonde.” Alumonde is a project in Kunitachi City run by Hiroki Yoshizawa. [Yoshizawa] He was inspired by the original location in Chiba. We visited Yoshizawa’s project on two separate occasions and will go into detail about we gained from these visits in the case study section of this report.

Our team consists of five members: Yuriya Nakagawa, Istuki Kakitani, Naohiko Azuma, Shogufa Popal and Pauleen Maria Younger. The professor at the head of our project is Kae Miyazawa. We also received additional advice on gardening and permaculture from Yukio Koike. Mr. Koike is a resident of Kunitachi City that we met through Hiroki Yoshizawa. He also hosts events in Kunitatchi City that focus on ecology and community building. [Kunitachi Sakuragumi]

After researching permaculture, gift ecology and conducting a case study, we were faced with designing a project of our own. In order to create a project we first defined some parameters:

Background:

- ❖ Apply the concepts of permaculture and gift ecology at the University of Tokyo, focusing on the garden area at the center of Building 3 in Agricultural department at Yayoi Campus.
- ❖ The place is surrounded by the building offers a setting that could provide students or other members of the community the opportunity to connect with nature. Currently there is no group managing the garden.

Goals:

1. Create a place for students and/or professors to gather
2. Maintain the garden as a place for communication and exchanging things/ideas
3. Host events to give participants the opportunity to interact face-to-face and connect with one another

Concepts:

- ❖ Permaculture: Redesigning the garden applying permaculture concepts
- ❖ Gift ecology: Creating an environment that fosters giving and exchanging between participants

Method:

- ❖ Create a Facebook page to promote the project & ask for help
 - The Facebook page can be a community space to share their needs and propose ideas for events or projects in the garden
- ❖ Plan how we can design Todai Garden
 - Get input from outside sources
 - Prepare a draft map to design
- ❖ Plan event(s) & promote them to attract others

The purpose of our project was to create a free space that all students and staff members could use. By first establishing a space, this area could provide the physical grounds for people to come together. The project that we executed and will discuss in this paper is:

Todai Garden: A Gift Ecology and Urban Permaculture Project

(Cultivating relationships through gardening activities and gatherings)

II. Background:

“Gift ecology”:

“Gift” is an important philosophical and theological concept for human beings [Severson, 2011] “Gift ecology” is an “ecology” based on gifts. [Denton, 2012] In this case, we use “ecology” as a newly coined word instead of “economy”. “Economy” reduces value into a few focused dimensions, but “ecology” implies a more intricate interplay of relationships that generate immeasurable value. [Mehta] We can create a sustainable future with “gift ecology.” [Denton, Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World, 2012] In a prior study, prosocial spending increases happiness. [Lara B. Aknin, 2011] We can derive that people become happy if they apply gift ecology in their lives. In the Japanese local community, self-production and a network promoting sharing and substantially contribute to humans wellbeing by enriching food species diversity and social relation. [Chiho KAMIYAMA, 2014] Therefore “gift ecology” is an important permaculture tool for enriching human society.

How to apply “Gift ecology”:

There are two points we must focus on in order to apply Gift ecology”. First, “We think about a “gift” which we can give others” and second, “We are released from earning money.” [Soya Kai’s interview]

What these points mean is that the expectation of immediate gratification must be removed and simply focus on the joy that we get from giving as opposed to receiving. [Lara B. Aknin, 2011]

In order to get a deeper understanding of gift ecology there are tours one can learn about gift ecology via the Tokyo Urban Permaculture website. [Tokyo Urban Permaculture]

Another great project this applies gift ecology is Alumonde. [Yoshizawa] We will go into detail about this project in our case study section.

Permaculture:

Permaculture means “permanent culture” and it is “a set of decision–making tools, based on natural systems. [Hemenway, 2015] Permaculture is “not a set of techniques, but it is a program of ethical, ecologically and socially sound design approaches.” [Hemenway, 2015]

There are three ethics of permaculture set out by Bill Mollison. The three ethics are “Care for the earth”, “Care for people”, and “Return of surplus time, money, and material toward those ends.” [Introduction to Permaculture, 1997] **【Fig. a】**

“The design for specific sites, clients and cultures can create useful relationships and time-saving connections among all parts.” [Hemenway, 2015] In the process of permaculture, we should give feedback, learn from mistakes and solve the problem. [Hemenway, 2015]

How to apply “Permaculture Garden”

“The first step in building a Permaculture garden is to figure out what a Permaculture garden is to you. This might sound strange, but the fact is that there is no one way to build any type of garden, and you’ll have to have some idea of what you want to create.” [Deep Green Permaculture]

Also, one must look at a “whole systems design” that “looks at parts and assemblies of parts in relation to each other, not separately”. [Hemenway, 2015] This means that it is important to assess the whole situation. After defining a mission and goal a strategy must be developed to achieve these. In order to develop a strategy one must first “diagnose the challenges” that may hinder achieving the goals and mission. The next step is to “create a guiding policy”. This is the “overall approach to resolving the challenges that we have diagnosed.” [Hemenway, 2015] “Much of the effort in good design is spent observing and brainstorming to make sure we’re capturing as many ideas and options as possible”. [Hemenway, 2015] The last step is developing “coherent actions”. These are the patterned steps that we take in order to enact the strategy. [Hemenway, 2015]

There are many groups who put permaculture into practice, for example “Azumino Permaculture School” [Azumino Permaculture School] and “Permaculture Garden Setagaya.” [Makubito] 【Fig. b & Fig. c】

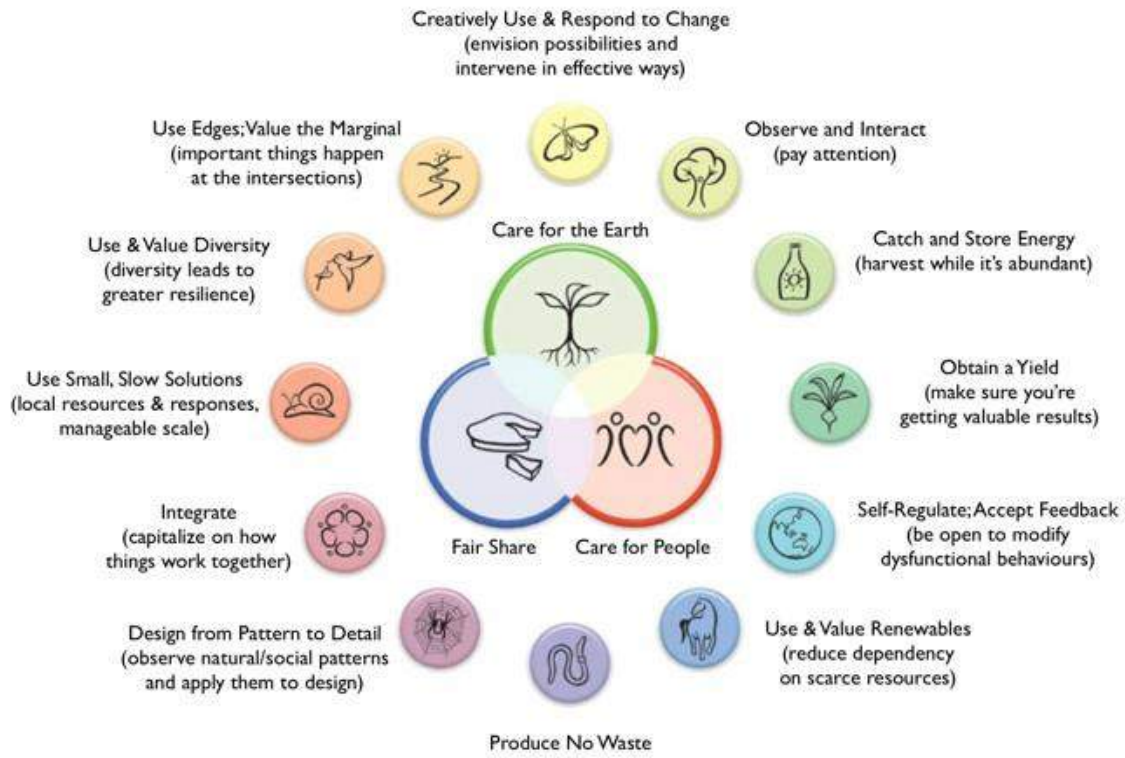


Fig. a: Three ethics of permaculture (From Permaculture Research Institute Website)

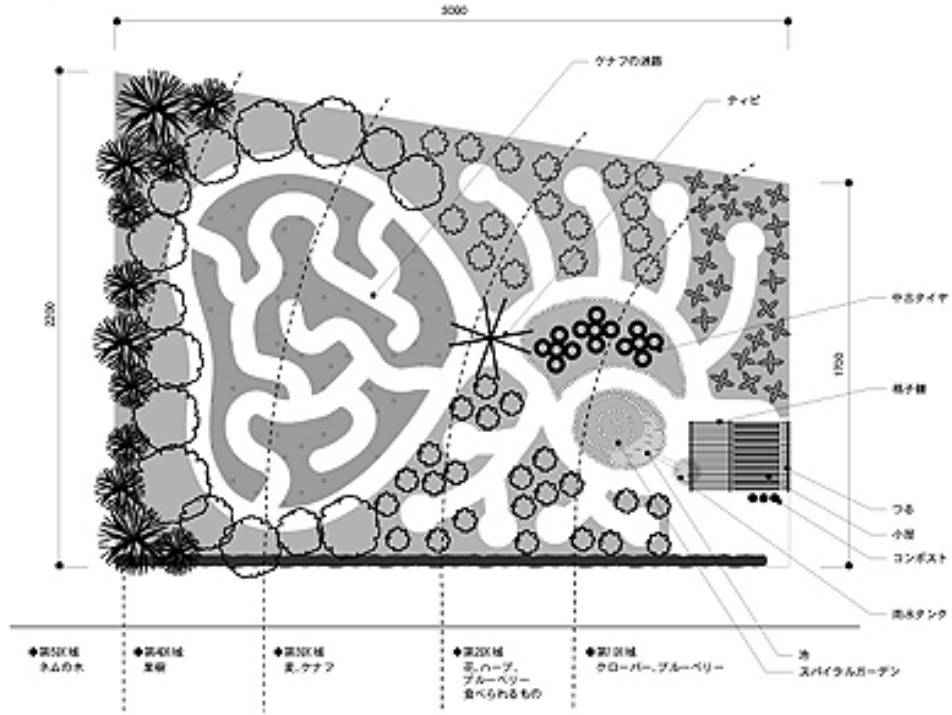


Fig. b: The garden map of “Azumino Permaculture School”

(From [Azumino Permaculture School])



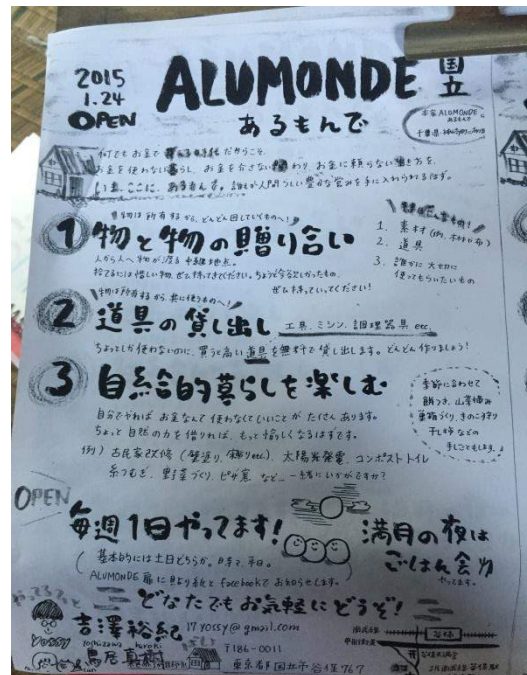
Fig. c: Image of Permaculture Garden Setagaya (From [Makubito])

III. Case study

To practically understand the concept of permaculture and gift ecology, we as a group visited a place called “Alumonde”, where a former student of the University of Tokyo, Hiroki Yoshizawa, runs at Kunitachi-city. From our first and second visits to Alumonde, we could learn how the idea of permaculture and gift ecology can be applied to a place and people.

First visit

Our first contact with Yoshizawa from Alumonde was on 28th of September 2015, and at this visit we received a brief explanation and experience of Alumonde (see pic.1). Alumonde in Kunitachi-city was established January 2015 with the support of the staff from the original Alumonde in Chiba prefecture as well as crowdfunding. Its theme is “a place of gift culture without money” so the important thing is that people enjoy their lives with “something that naturally exists” and this is where the word “Arumonde” comes from. Yoshizawa told us they modified the word to “Alumonde” because they wanted it sound more



Pic.1 Alumonde flier

cool like Italian. At first, the concept of “Alumonde” was a bit hard to understand for us since it is completely different from where we usually place ourselves, money and economy. Here at Alumonde, Yoshizawa and others try to share the idea of giving and taking. The interesting point is that when one



Pic.2 Chopstik-making activity at Alumonde

takes there is not the expectation to give and vice versa. You do not have to give when you take if you do not have anything to give. To realize such a concept, Alumonde offers the community: goods that others donate for free, a wide variety of edible plants, a composting toilet that utilizes the blessings of nature and most importantly the house itself. Yoshizawa shared with us the story of how he got the house for a very low price with the great help of his neighbors.

On the day of our first visit, we joined a chopstick-making activity using a single piece of bamboo that Yoshzawa got from others for free (see pic.2). First we needed to scorch the bamboo to remove its oil and then cut it into small pieces. After that, using a small knife, we shaped the pieces into chopsticks. Through this activity, we could feel the connection of people, getting and using bamboo which was once useless for others and turning it into a useful item. Also, we could feel the connection between us and nature.

Second visit

Our second visit to Alumonde was on the 23rd of October 2015. On this day, we discussed the aim of Alumonde with questions we prepared beforehand as well as our group project in the University of Tokyo. It was great to have not only Yoshizawa, but also other knowledgeable people at this visit (see pic.3).



Pic.3 Discussion time at Alumonde

From this visit, we could deepen our understanding of Alumonde and their thoughts: just try before thinking or designing too much and fix it as time goes by. Our concern towards our own project had been lessened by Yoshizawa's advice of trial-and-error.



Pic.4 Pond at Yamamori café

After the discussion, together we went to a neighboring café that provides an open community space called Yamamori café. Here again, the focus was on gift ecology and permaculture concepts by holding events and providing a natural atmosphere. To contribute to the event, we helped transport a hand-made large movable baking oven from Alumonde as what we could offer them. The area where the event was held had a beautiful garden where everything seemed to coexist in a natural setting (see pic. 4). At this event we met Yukio Koike (see pic. 5). He was kind enough to lend us some advice about our project and even joined both of our events. There were no special activities at the event but delicious, seasonal food was shared. Throughout the activity of the day, we could really feel the atmosphere of community where people help each other and have fun together (see pic.6).



Pic.5 Mr. Koike



Pic.6 Activity at the café we joined

IV. **Goals and objectives**

Gift ecology and urban permaculture project (Todai Garden):
(Cultivating relationships through gardening activities and gatherings)

In order to plan out our project, we defined goals and objectives (short and long term) to achieve those goals. A goal is an “overarching principle that guides decision making” and objectives are “specific, measurable steps that can be taken to meet the goal.” [Practicum]

Goals:

The scheme is meant to encourage the students to participate in gardening activities at a student base community level in Todai, where they can gather and gain more besides doing gardening activities.

The goals are to create a space that includes provisions for the followings:

- **A gathering and meeting place:**
 - To create an eco-friendly atmosphere and convivial space for students to mix with a group from different fields and countries and to communicate, share and exchange ideas, things, food and skills.
 - To bridge the gap between different departments especially Hongo and Yayoi campus students.
 - To create a sense of community member in students.
- **A growing place:**
 - To create a small space where vegetables, herbs and other plants can be planted.
 - To provide a small composting area for decaying weeds and cafeteria’s organic waste.
- **A learning/sharing place:**
 - To share and enhance gardening knowledge and skills with students and visitors through participating in activities.
- **A beautiful and healthy place:**
 - To provide a quiet and attractive area with appropriate seating and environment that is in harmony with nature.
 - To provide a space for social interaction, eating and creating a sense of well being.

In order to achieve these we have set long and short term objectives.

Short term objectives:

- Create Facebook page and community page by the end of October 2015
- Host first event in mid November
- Reach at least 100 likes on Facebook page by December
- Host second event in December
- Start planting in December
- Set up compost by Spring 2016

Long term objectives:

- Plant edible plants in Areas H, G and F
- Remedy mosquito problem by summer 2016
- Host monthly events
- Expand from student and professors at Todai to local community in Bukyo
- Continue to increase social presence by at least 5 new likes on Facebook per month

We will continue to review and assess our progress each month through monthly meetings and communication via social media such as our Facebook page and group page. In order to reach our goals, the most important factor is to create an open and friendly communication channel between participants. Our hope is that by creating a beautiful and healthy garden through community activities, all of Todai and visitors to Todai feel welcome to relax, utilize and connect in the space that Todai Garden has to offer.

V. Materials and Methods

Our visit to “Alumonde” and our interview of Yoshizawa gave us some inclinations of understanding the concept of gift ecology, which should be organized in a way that encourages people to gather, and enables people to communicate with each other. After our visit we discussed and decided to what to do in our project. Taking our resources into the consideration, the best solution for realizing a gift ecology project was to use an unused place in the University of Tokyo and to create a community to gather people. We chose the courtyard in the 3rd building of the agricultural department as the place for our project; we named this area “Todai Garden”. Our group was given free reign over the garden with the only restriction being the use of an open fire.

Materials

For cleaning event

- Gloves
- Weed cutters
- Gardening shears
- Shovels
- Brooms

Incentives for gathering people

- Snacks (corn soup, Oshiruko, cookies, etc.)
- BBQ(potluck)

Garden extension

- Lamps (existing)
- Illumination light (we got via Facebook)
- Plants (herbs)

Tool to gather people

- Facebook (event page and group page)

Methods

Events

A brief overview of the two events we held will be given in this section and we will go into further detail in the next section. The first event focused on cleaning the garden. Our team and some volunteers cleaned the garden in order to make Todai Garden a more suitable gathering place. After that we held an exchange meeting to create friendships by having some snacks together. In the second event, we held some activities in the garden such as planting and setting up Christmas lights (illumination). After these activities we enjoyed barbecuing together. For every event, we used Facebook to invite and inform participants.

Utilization of Facebook





We use Facebook as a marketing tool in order to advertise Todai Garden because it has a high outgoing and scaling power. We have used Facebook not only to transmit event information, but also to obtain something which can develop garden. In fact, an example of this is the donation of Christmas lights (illumination) from a student at another department who saw our Facebook post requesting lights. Also, we created a group page in order to link people who love gardening. The aim of making a group page is to accelerate the activity in Todai Garden (share things on their own, exchange information, hold some events) by linking people with each other.

VI. Budget

Each group was given a budget of 50,000 yen. Before purchasing or spending any money, we assessed our current situation. The first thing that we looked at was the resources in the garden that we had available to us. We had several pots, shovels, brooms and a few other gardening tools.



We had several tools but we purchased a few additional items for the first event. We decided to purchase some gloves and a few small hand held tools. The total amount we spent was 4,582 yen. (See list below)

	<p>作業用すべり止め軍手(手袋) 1ダース BG-60N Tools & Hardware 販売 : Amazon.com Int'l Sales, Inc.</p> <p>¥ 1,000</p>
	<p>モンブラン 草取り一番百発百中 215MM - 3点 Tools & Hardware 販売 : Amazon.com Int'l Sales, Inc.</p> <p>¥ 453</p>
	<p>GARDEN FRIENDS アルミ柄刃込鉄 軽量型 小 - 2点 Tools & Hardware 販売 : Amazon.com Int'l Sales, Inc.</p> <p>¥ 1,182</p>
	<p>GardenHOME ガーデニング (庭造り手工具) セット【人間工学 (エルゴノミクス) に基づき設計されたハンドスコップ - 2点 Tools & Hardware 販売 : ハイカラ堂</p> <p>¥ 1,947</p>

(Tools purchased)

Some participants also donated food in addition to the snacks we purchased. For the second event we were able to borrow an electric grill free of charge from the IPADS room.



For the second event we purchased herbs and some fertilizer.



For snacks in total we spent:

2,301

477

+ 780

3,588 yen

For fertilizer and plants:

1140 for soil

284 for stone

458 for fertilizer

580 fertilizer

840 fertilizer

360 for plants

+ (1.08% tax)

3954 yen

(tools)+(snacks)+(fertilizer/plants)

4,582+3,588+3,954=12,124 yen

In total we spent 12,124 yen. We were able to save money due to the generous donations of others. Therefore we were able to spend far less than the allotted 50,000 yen.



VII. Result

A. First Event

Our first event was held on November 16, 2015. Due to the weather conditions we had to reschedule from the initial date of November 14, 2015. Before hosting the first event, at our fourth group meeting on October 16th we revised our idea and set forth the concept for Todai Garden. There were several things that we had to set in place before hosting the actual event. The main goal that we set for the first event was to gather a group of people to help clean the garden. We were hoping to connect with as many participants as possible to get feedback about future plans for the garden.

Fourth group meeting – revised initial idea	16/10/2015
Mapped out garden area & photographed area	21/10/2015
Alumonde 2 nd Visit and Interview	23/10/2015
Created a Facebook page and completed mapping out the area with visuals	30/10/2015
Fifth group meeting - Discussion about the first cleaning event of Todai Garden	6/11/2015
Posted the event on the Facebook page and checked available the tools in the garden	9/11/2015
Sixth group meeting about the first Todai Garden Event and listed the activities, required tools and snacks to be purchased	11/11/2015
7th group meeting – Reexamined the area, purchased the items and got the approval to use the garden	13/11/2015
First Todai Garden cleaning event that was cancelled due to weather conditions	14/11/2015
First Todai Garden cleaning event successfully held	16/11/2015

The area that we decided to do our project is located in Yayoi Campus at the University of Tokyo in the center of Building 3 of the Agriculture Department.

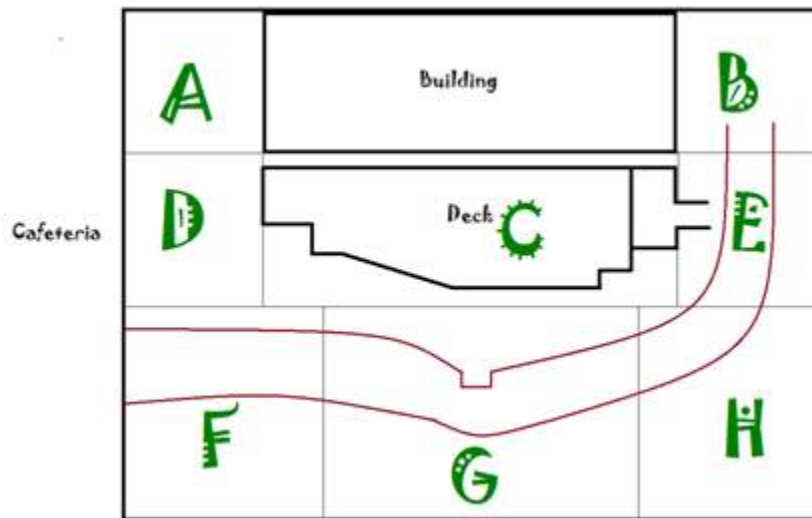


Figure 1: Diagram of garden area divided into sections

After defining the project we first mapped out the area, drew a diagram, divided the garden into eight sections (A-H) and photographed the areas beforehand in order to have a visual comparison for after hosting events.



Areas correspond with Figure 1

After defining the areas and creating a map, we assessed the garden and decided to focus on Areas C, G, and H. We chose Area C because it contains the deck, which is the main area utilized for gathering. The use of this space is important for community building. Area G also contains a sitting area and has water access. Area H receives the most sunlight and has the most potential for growing edible food. It is also along side Area G, so there is easy access to water.

Before the participants arrived, we set up the snacks in Area C.



We then started the event by gathering everyone together and introducing one another. In total throughout the event, approximately 20 participants joined.



We designated Area B as a place to deposit all the debris. We divided everyone into three groups. The first group focused on clearing the deck of leaves and removing weeds surrounding the deck.



(Area C: Space containing the deck. Clearing of the leaves)

The second group focused on Area G and the third was tasked with Area H. We cleared any excess growth and gathered the debris to start a compost. After cleaning for approximately an hour and half, we took a break to enjoy some snacks together. Our group member, Itsuki Kakitani, prepared oshiruko (red bean soup with mochi). It also gave participants a chance to talk and connect with one another.



This gave our group members a great opportunity to receive valuable feedback from the participants. All of the participants really enjoyed having the opportunity to physically work in the garden. Many voiced that they would like to join an event that involved cooking, such as barbequing. Other members also voiced that they would like to plant some edible plants.

Mr. Koike was a great asset at the first event. We expressed to him some concern about there being far too many mosquitoes in the summer time. In order to remedy this problem, he advised us to clear around the deck in Area C and to dig a drain along the side to help remove

excess moisture underneath the deck area. This should hopefully help reduce the mosquito problem and improve the overall air circulation within the garden.



(We dug out a small ditch along the side to improve the flow of water. We added leaves and sticks in the ditch to stabilize it. This will help to drain the excess water).

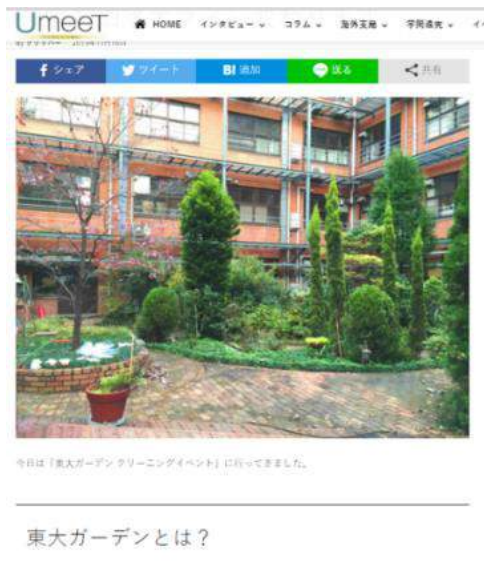
Area G: Before & After



Area H: Before & After



The first event was very successful thanks to the hard work contributed by all participants. We managed to clear areas around the deck and create a drainage system to reduce the amount of excess moisture. We also cleared an area in Area H that could be utilized in the future for planting. The feedback that we received about activities was invaluable. We were able to connect with many new people and increased awareness of the garden on social media. Today-tutmeet.com wrote an article featuring our garden and event.



B. Event II

After completing the first event and receiving feedback from participants, we set forth the next part of our agenda.

8th group meeting about writing the report	27/11/2015
Discussed and set date for 2nd Event on December 7th	11/28/2015
Created information pamphlet	1/12/2015
Rescheduled 2nd Event for Dec. 9 due to rain forecast	4/12/2015
Purchased herbs	6/12/2015
Second Event	9/12/2015

Our group member Yuriya created an information pamphlet that is available via Todai Garden's Facebook page, giving an overview about Todai Garden. There is a brief description about the concept, purpose, events, members, and how to contact our group.





Many participants voiced that a BBQ would be a great activity for community building so we decided to hold a BBQ potluck. We initially scheduled it for December 7th but rescheduled for December 9th because of forecasted rainy weather. On December 6th, two members of our group, Pauleen Maria and Naohiko, went to the local garden center to purchase plants and fertilizer. Prior to going to the garden center, Naohiko researched about appropriate plants to plant during winter time. After researching and consulting with the garden center staff, we purchased six herbs: common sage, thyme, mint, rosemary, lavender and coriander.



(common sage, thyme, mint, rosemary, lavender and coriander)

Since it is winter time and Christmas lights (or known as ‘illumination’ in Japan) are very popular, we thought it would also be nice to set up lights in the garden. For the second event we set out three main objectives: having a BBQ potluck, planting herbs, and setting up lights.

Safety regulations do not allow for any open fires in the garden, but we were able to find an electric grill in the IPADS room. We also procured a free donation of lights for the garden via a post on our Facebook page. A fellow student from a different department was kind enough to make a donation for our event.

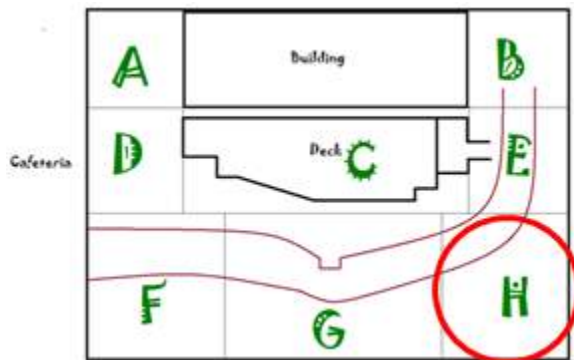


(70 meters of donated lights)

We first set up for the BBQ and prepared a table for people to gather at. Participants brought food and drinks for everyone to share.



We barbecued from around 13:00-14:30. Then we set to work preparing to plant in Area H.



We had already cleared the weeds in the previous event. Before planting, we checked the quality of soil by examining for the presence of earthworms. Mr. Koike assisted us and suggested that we dig a water-drainage to further improve the water flow of the area.



(The red arrow indicates where the water-drainage was dug. It went all along the grass border)



After preparing the soil, we planted our herb garden in Area H.



Some participants also prepared pots for future events by adding fertilizer and leaves to the soil.

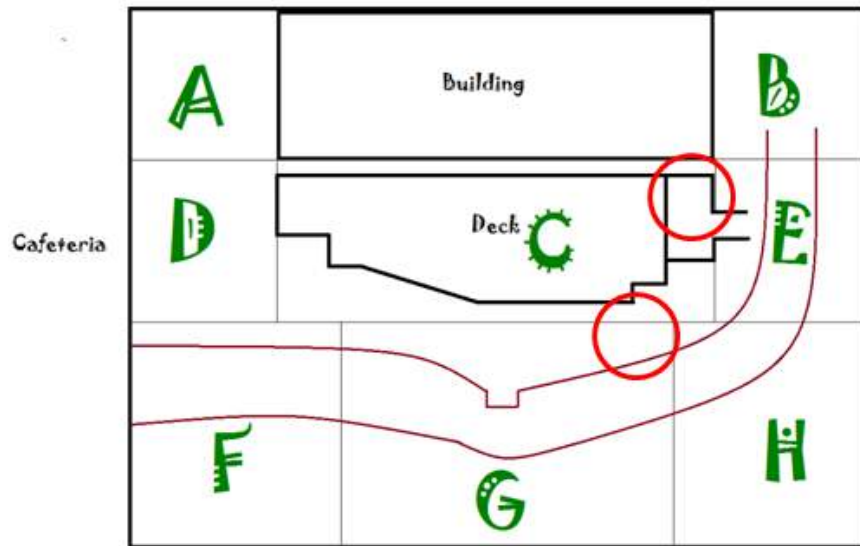


Before & After

We also did some maintenance to the rosemary bush located in Area H next to the herb garden that we planted. This was to help improve the health of the bush.



For the last part of the event we set up the Christmas lights in Area C on the deck and also on a tree located in Area G.



(Red circles indicate where we placed the lights)

Since there was still food left over from barbecuing in the afternoon, we barbecued some more in the evening and enjoyed the lights together.



We all enjoyed chatting with one another and the event extended until approximately 6 p.m. The turnout for the second event was approximately ten participants (about half of the first) but we were able to get passersby to take part in the event. New people learned about Todai Garden so we were able to spread Toda Garden's concept to some new participants. We also learned that the timing of the events is very important in order to get the optimal number of participants. This is a point that will be included in the discussion section.

VIII. Discussion

In the discussion we will address the questions: What does our result imply? What can be learned? What should we continue doing or improve?

For our project, we put into practice learning by doing. We planned out what we could, but based on the advice from Yoshizawa, we decided take a trial-and-error approach and did not plan too much beforehand but rather tried things out. We were not always 100% sure if the technique we applied was the most effective, but we knew that we could gain some insight and knowledge by trying. To implement our process we took an adaptive approach for planning our project. These resulted in some good points however there were some drawbacks.

Good points:

1. We could welcome any suggestion
2. Unexpected outcomes were interesting and motivated people to get involved

These points are in line with permaculture and gift ecology. We were able to create an environment that encourages group and community involvement.

Bad points:

3. Hard to achieve our goal in short term
4. Less responsibility for each action

These are points upon which we can improve. It was challenging to involve many people consistently. Perhaps with a bit more planning and consideration of the time/day that an event is held can help to remedy these points.

Part of the concepts of gift ecology and permaculture that we could meet were satisfying some needs and wants now and utilizing the resources that were around us, which is something that Yoshizawa shared with us at Alumonde. People donated food and time to the project. By utilizing one of our resources, Facebook, we were able to connect with a student who donated 70 meters of lights. By providing a space and activities that were attractive, we were able to motivate people into getting involved with Todai garden. People offered what they could (lights for the illumination, food, volunteers' time, volunteers' expertise with gardening, and writing blog articles). This encompasses the giving part of gift ecology. It also reflects the aspect of

permaculture where we must make use of the resources around us. People were also welcome to take any food or snacks freely during the events, and everyone is able to enjoy the garden's setting at anytime, free of charge. This embodies the taking/receiving part of gift ecology.

In order to make our events better, we look at the question: which points can we learn from and improve on? One point where we were able to learn is listening to people's suggestions. Responding to them is important to improve our project. We also learned that asking for help works. (ie. receiving lights for the illumination) We really could feel the warmth of our social network. In the past two months we have been able to get over 230+ likes on our Facebook page so we feel a strong interest and support from the local community. However, we could consider having more defined roles for participants. Right now we are taking an adaptive approach but the project may benefit from a strong opinion maker to lead the project. It is important to try to strike a balance. It's important to give people some roles in order to have some direction with the project but at the same time we want everyone to feel like they are a member who can equally contribute to a "togetherness" feeling at Todai Garden.

We are also faced with the question of: How can we make this project sustainable? This is a very important aspect of permaculture and gift ecology. We are trying to create a community that is self sustaining. In order to do so there are some aspects to consider:

Planning fun events

We want to make the place somewhere fun and creative for people to gather. By providing something useful or pleasant, this will encourage people to regularly visit. So far we have planted herbs, had a BBQ and decorated with lights (illumination).

Considering timing and weather

One factor that we learned we must take into account is the weather. This was particularly challenging because we are at the mercy of the elements. If it rains, then it isn't possible to host an event. Also, hosting events during the weekdays works well for students, but if we want to involve the local community we should also consider hosting events on the weekends. We

received some messages from residents residing in Bunkyo who would have liked to join but couldn't due to work.

Lowering the communication cost

To get people involved to our project, the barrier to communicate should be lowered or even eliminated if possible. This is important for the community building aspect of gift ecology. In order to this we examined three different ways that we used to bring people together.

i. Meeting at Todai Garden

We feel that this method in particular was the most effective. It gave participants the opportunity to interact one-to-one. People were able to be involved in a hands on way.

ii. Commenting on Facebook page

This was an easy way to see who is interested in the project so it was an easy and effective way to promote our events and activities. It was also the best forum to share our events with the public. We were able to reach over 230+ likes in only two months, which is also indicator of the effectiveness of reaching many people via one platform.

iii. Commenting on the Facebook group

Ideally, this is a good way to get others involved because everyone can contribute equally. However we haven't had as much success with this group page yet. We believe that this is due to the difficulty of distinguishing between the Facebook page and the Facebook group page. It may be confusing for some when they see two different but related pages.

After completing two events, we evaluated the success and failures. The most important question to address is: Have we achieved a permaculture design that encourages gift ecology?

Some of the success we felt we achieved was involving different volunteers. Our process was flexible and we were able to welcome suggestions from others. Our planning was exciting and spontaneous so hopefully the attendees also felt that the outcome was exciting. We were able to experience some unexpected support such as the donation of lights and blog articles. There was also an exchange of knowledge from individuals who have knowledge about applying

permaculture and gift ecology in a practical way that promotes community building (especially from Mr. Koike). We were also able to take some steps towards creating a sustainable garden.

However, there is definitely room for improvement. While we received a lot of positive feedback:

Graduate student, male: I would like to cut some fruits there.

Graduate student, male: I would like to have lunch and a BBQ.

Undergraduate student, male: I enjoyed the event because there were many students from abroad. The event atmosphere was cozy.

Undergraduate student, male: I felt the place was very good because it is with some green and situated near cafeteria.

We also received some critiques:

Undergraduate student, male: Food was good. But I felt a little nervous because there were few people.

From this critique we can focus on improving this point. We are hoping to get more people involved from inside and outside of the university. In order to do this we could do more promotion. Also we would like to utilize each department's characteristics. This was one of our original aims but weren't able to achieve this. Hopefully by applying the long term objectives we can overcome these points.

In the future we are hoping to host more events throughout 2016. We have planted some herbs and would like to plant more edible plants. After the plants mature we could host a cooking event. It is also important for us to keep the communication channel open with participants to get new ideas and feedback. We will continue to think of how we can monetize the process after the support from Tokuron.

IX. Conclusion

Overall we consider our project a success but there is still much room for improvement. After doing a case study at Alumonde and researching about permaculture and gift ecology, we learned how to apply these concepts in a concrete way. We received advice and assistance from several people, especially Yoshizawa (from Alumonde) and Mr. Koike (whom we met through Yoshizawa). We set some goals, short and long term objectives to achieve. Although we haven't met all of our objectives, we were able to achieve some of the short term ones and hopefully have planted the seeds for achieving the long term objectives. Over the course of planning and hosting two events we learned what aspects worked and didn't work. The project turned into more than just a class assignment; it has evolved into a community effort that we hope will continue into the future.

Works Cited

Azumino Permaculture School. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ultraman.gr.jp/perma/>.

Cheal, D. J. (1988). *The Gift Economy*. New York: Routledge.

Chiho KAMIYAMA, N. N. (2014). 自家生産及びいただきものによる市場を介さない食料供給サービスの定量的評価：全国及び能登半島を対象とした比較研究. *PROCEEDINGS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SANITARY ENGINEERING RESEARCH* 70(6), II_361-II_369, .

Deep Green Permaculture. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://deepgreenpermaculture.com/diy-instructions/starting-your-permaculture-garden/>.

(2012). In P. Denton, *Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World*.

(2012). In P. Denton, *Gift Ecology: Reimagining a Sustainable World*.

Hemenway, T. (2015). *The Permaculture City*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.

Kunitachi Sakuragumi. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/kunitachisakuragumi/>.

Lara B. Aknin, E. W. (2011). Happiness Runs in a Circular Motion: Evidence for a Positive Feedback Loop between Prosocial Spending and Happiness. *Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011* .

Makubito. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.makubito.com/>.

Mehta, N. (n.d.). *Service space*. Retrieved from <http://www.servicespace.org/blog/view.php?id=14918>.

Practicum. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://practicum.usc.edu/docs/Tips_for_writing_Goals_and_Objectives.pdf.

(2011). Gift and Economy: Ethics, Hospitality and the Market. In E. R. Severson.

Slay, M. (1997). In R. M. Bill Mollison, *Introduction to Permaculture*.

Soya Kai's interview. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://greenz.jp/2015/07/16/giftecology/>.

Tokyo Urban Permaculture . (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://tokyourbanpermaculture.blogspot.jp/2015/05/tup.html>.

Yoshizawa, H. (n.d.). <https://www.facebook.com/alumonde.kunitachi/>.