



Eco Newsletter, Nov 2023, Issue 9

## **Re-generation**

### **Editorial**

Regenerating all that we love...



Source: [Unsplash](#)

Just as a lizard under attack has the ability to shed and regrow its tail, are we able to let go of destructive practices and restore the web of life which human activity has exploited and knocked out of balance?

The subject of regeneration may not be at the forefront of everyone's minds, but once our basic needs have been met, it is a subject that resurfaces with persistence, in every area of

our lives, from the food we eat, the economy we are part of, to our spiritual and moral lives. It may be the greatest teacher of our age.

According to the World Meteorological Organisation, September 2023 was the warmest on record globally and as politicians fail to implement sufficient changes at the scale and speed that's required, feeling alarmed, horrified, or depressed is a sign that you are awake... and that you care.

In this issue we hear about small scale projects having a big impact, ones that provide a beacon of hope and often give us ideas and inspiration which can apply to our own life. Here we can read about how a retreat centre in the Blue Mountains Australia is caring for the surrounding bush by removing non-native plants which, because they have no natural predators in the local ecosystem can become dominant and cause an ecological imbalance. This is no short term quick fix and has been a long term commitment over the last 20 years and reflects what it means to truly be a steward, a caretaker of the land.

We hear about an enterprising young woman and her team engaging a rural community in regenerating their overgrazed and barren grassland in Bharapar, Gujarat, India. Creating trenches, borders and percolation pits in moon shaped structures must have been a huge effort for the villagers but reshaping their land helped conserve three million litres of water which would otherwise have run off during the first rains. Replacing non-native invasive species of shrubs with a wide range of native trees, grasses, legumes and seeds has transformed a barren wasteland into a lush and biodiverse habitat humming with life. This story is a testament to the power of education, vision and initiative.

We hear about the Ecosystem Restoration Cooperative, a global movement which has Peace Camps on several continents where people from all walks of life are finding hope and meaningful work in transforming degraded land into healthy and productive ecosystems using permaculture principles and a cooperative structure, where every member is equal... "This is a people to people effort built on trust and not on transactions". Reading about this initiative I was struck by the ability of people from very diverse religious, ethnic and educational backgrounds to come together with a shared purpose, and how powerful that purpose is in its ability to bring unity. Working in a hot desert cannot be easy but the combination of renewable energy sources and a daily rhythm which works with nature and not against it, is a wisdom which many of us city dwellers can easily lose. Permaculture principles too, work with nature not against it and can apply to city settings as well as rural ones.

If this all sounds like too much hard work, we can also hear about the benefits of 'non-intervention'... as reported by The Guardian. Research into the regeneration of tropical rainforests appears to show that it's more successful where human beings don't interfere. 'Secondary succession' is a phenomenon whereby old forest flora and fauna help a new generation of forest to regrow. The loss of tropical rainforest to livestock farming and palm oil production is a sickening symptom of our times and one which is so unnecessary. Planting millions of trees can sometimes be seen as a quick fix for damage done, however planted saplings have a much lower success rate than self seeded saplings where an existing seed bank still remains in the soil. Twenty years is a short time in the life of a tree and the value of protecting our existing trees, the guardians of our earth systems, cannot be overstated.

A guided meditation by Aneta Loj on healing the earth from drought and desertification will feed your mind in an experiential way.

And finally - a book recommendation on the subject: 'Regenesiis - feeding the world without devouring the planet' by George Monbiot. Here you will find a breathtaking vision of a new future for food and for humanity, one in which the tiniest life forms could help us make peace with the planet, restore its living systems and replace the age of extinction with an age of regenesiis.

I hope you will enjoy this issue as much as I did and take inspiration from the many resources to regenerate your own life.

Georgina Valentine



A long term meditator with the Brahma Kumaris who has a lifelong interest in nature and the arts.

# Helping the Bush in the Blue Mountains, Australia



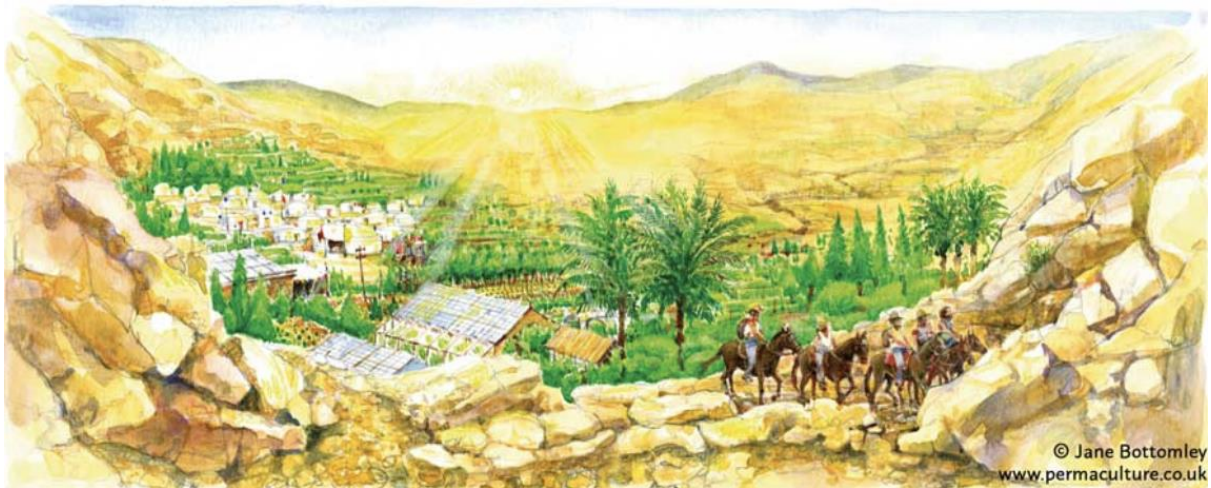
A Magpie enjoying life amongst the bush that our Landcare Group cares for

In Australia the Brahma Kumaris are fortunate to have four Retreat Centres all with varying amounts of beautiful natural bush and native animals. As custodians of these areas we do our best to care for them. This can mean leaving them alone but may also mean doing bush regeneration.

Our Retreat Centre in the Blue Mountains is on 136 acres of mostly natural bush, adjacent to The Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It is a special piece of land with natural swamps, springs, a creek and wallabies (small kangaroos), marsupial mice, possums, parrots and owls. Read [more](#)



# Earth Restoration Peace Camps



International filmmaker, John D. Liu explains how eco settlements (Ecosystem Restoration Camps) can train people to regenerate ecosystems, landscapes and communities anywhere in the world. The sun rises on a glorious new day in an Earth Cooperative Restoration Camp. Although this particular camp is in what most would call a desert, in the early morning there is dew on the grass and the birds emerge from the vegetation to forage and sing. The camp is in an area that has been described as abandoned since the failure of agriculture, industry and consumer economy here. Looking out over the vista, a group of people are practicing the salute to the sun, a yoga exercise that comes to us from antiquity. In a quiet yurt are Muslims at early prayer. There is a great sense of acceptance and tolerance in this place. Read [more](#)

# Tropical forests can partially regenerate in just 20 years without human interference



Study finds natural regrowth yields better results than human plantings and offers hope for climate recovery. An international group of researchers looking at a number of aspects of tropical forests has found that the potential for regrowth is substantial if they are left untouched by humans for about 20 years. For example, soil takes an average of 10 years to recover its previous status, plant community and animal biodiversity take 60 years, and overall biomass takes a total of 120, according to their calculations.” This is due in part to a multidimensional mechanism whereby old forest flora and fauna help a new generation of forest grow – a natural process known as “secondary succession”. Read [more](#)



# Regeneration of grasslands in Bharapar, India



RESTORED GRASSLANDS IN BHARAPAR, ABDASA TALUKA. PHOTO: PRASHANT KUMBHAR

Grasslands cover approximately twenty five percent of the Earth's land surface (approximately 3.4 billion hectares) and contain roughly twelve percent of the terrestrial carbon stocks. These ecosystems are mainly found in regions where there is a scarcity of water and not enough regular rainfall to support the growth of forests. There are different types of grasslands – ranging from open, vast grassland expanses to woody savannas (where small trees or other scrubs occur along with grasses). The perennial grasses that dominate grasslands are characterised by extensive fibrous root systems that often make up sixty to eighty percent of the biomass carbon in these ecosystems. This belowground biomass may extend several metres below the surface and contribute abundant carbon to soils, resulting in deep, fertile soils with high organic matter content. Grasslands and rangelands are more resilient carbon sinks than forests in the 21st century. [Read more](#)

# Meditation:



[Image by Josealbafotos](#)

This experiential meditation spoken by Aneta Loj for healing nature against desertification and drought.

Enjoy the meditation [here](#).