

# THE MVULA TRUST

## 3 Day Course in Water Harvesting & Food Production

January 2009

PREPARED FOR

**THE MVULA TRUST**

COMPILED BY



**PO Box 2035  
GALLO MANOR  
GAUTENG 2052**

**TEL: +27 11 803 9750  
FAX: +27 11 803 9604  
[INFO@TREES.ORG.ZA](mailto:INFO@TREES.ORG.ZA)  
[WWW.TREES.CO.ZA](http://WWW.TREES.CO.ZA)**

**FTFA is a Section 21, not for profit, civil society organisation registered with the  
Department of Welfare and the new Public Benefits Department.**

**Established 1990.**

**REG NO 1991/00106108 PBO NO 18/11/13/4520**

## THE MVULA TRUST

### 3 DAY COURSE IN WATER HARVESTING & FOOD PRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

The three day Water Harvesting course was arranged by Food & Trees for Africa (FTFA) at the request of Ms Geraldine Hochman of The Mvula Trust.

The course was conducted from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 at the Newlands Mashu Permaculture Learning Centre (NMPLC) in Durban, KwaZulu Natal, and was facilitated by permaculturist, Ewald Viljoen.

Participants were drawn from a pool of The Mvula Trust field workers from all over the country. Their knowledge regarding water harvesting was felt to be sufficient and they stressed that crop production i.e. suitable ways to utilize water to assist domestic users; were to be made the primary focus of the workshop.

#### **The 3 Day Course**

The participants were active in all sessions and it was very interesting to explore difficulties that they were experiencing in the field.

Site visits were conducted to local Kwa Mashu township gardens and growers. Some of the gardens visited were not fully functional mainly due to illness and/or the passing of the gardener. Small rainwater harvesting tanks that feed small plots were visited and much discussion was had regarding the selection of beneficiaries and the sustainability of this type of programme.

#### **Course programme and content**

##### **Day 1**

- Introductions, expectations and learning outcomes.
- Intro to Organic Agriculture and Permaculture Design Principles.
- Soil management strategies, soil analysis and basic soil preparation.
- Soil feeding, composts, mulching and microbial activity.

##### **Day 2**

- Visit to nearby sites with examples of water harvesting techniques, coupled to small scale plant production systems.

- Organic nutrients, soil conditioning plants and preparation methods such as sheet mulching, double digging, trench beds and green and liquid manure.
- The use of trenches, swales, ponds and dams
- Water types and their uses
- Intensive small scale production systems

### Day 3

- Working with plants and trees
- Methods of propagation; seed, seedling, cuttings budding, grafting and aerial layering
- Making plants work in an organic agricultural system
- Pest and disease management.
- Crop rotation, inter-cropping, companion planting, guilds and planting guides.
- Summary and evaluation.

### Evaluation feedback

Respondents had the following comments:

- Great course sorry it was so short
- Thank you for all the information and practical skills that were imparted during this course
- The food was good
- The field trip was most informative as both good and bad examples were seen and discussed
- More specific training focused on particular climatic conditions/environments should be held
- The center has a nice garden that is full of food, medicines, flowers and trees where the theory could be seen in practice
- The food was good

### Facilitator's comments

A very pleasant and well informed group of field workers made for a dynamic and participatory learning experience.

The shifting of the course focus was easily achieved and the participants were very vocal and focused on finding solutions for everyday gardening challenges. The content covered offered them many practical solutions as well as real live examples of many of the basic permaculture design principles evident in the NMPLC facility.

I recommend that the group be further supported to receive follow-up courses and workshops with emphasis on Permaculture design skills, effective micro-organism usage, nursery skills and management

### **Conclusion**

We would like to thank The Mvula Trust for the opportunity to conduct the course and hope that it was a valuable experience for the participants. We hope to collaborate with The Mvula Trust on other workshops, courses or projects in the future.