

Learn how to create sustainable, productive, and beautiful human environments using natural ecosystems as models. Permaculture is an evolving and expanding design system for ecological living, integrating plants, animals, buildings, people, and communities. Through experiential, participatory and classroom learning, you explore relationships between personal,



social, and ecological sustainability in the rich context of life at the Sirius Community — a full-featured ecovillage in scenic Western Massachusetts. Putting permaculture into action, students build experience working in neighborhoods, farms, homesteads, orchards and more. Using this knowledge and experience, you complete and present a one-week, hands-on design practicum directly benefiting the greater Sirius community.



Students work with real world clients to design and present sustainable systems and solutions.

Program Highlights

- ☀ Become a Certified Permaculture Apprentice
☀ Visit urban farms, Community-Supported Agricultural (CSA) projects, Eco-homesteads and micro organic food cottage industries
☀ Learn about green and natural building techniques, appropriate technology, sustainable organic agriculture and their viability in different settings
☀ Engage with award-winning permaculturalists and authors of Edible Forest Gardens, Eric Toensmeier and Dave Jacke

Academic Credit and Program Dates

Earn 4 transferable credits through the University of Massachusetts Amherst

Course: Permaculture at Sirius (Natural Resources Conservation 398B)



Summer-3 weeks.(see Website for dates)

Living Routes is an independent, non-profit educational organization whose academic programs are accredited by UMassAmherst.

Sirius Community

Sirius is an Intentional Community of 25 adults and children, based on respect for the individual, cooperation with nature, and spiritual growth. The ecovillage practices sustainable techniques including organic tilth and co-creative gardens, passive and active solar architecture, composting toilets, rain and wastewater cycling, off-grid energy, water catchment, greenhouse bioshelter and season extending techniques. As an educational center, Sirius offers a wide array of workshops, internships, and short courses on sustainable living and design.



Application Deadline

(rolling admissions, contact us for late availability)

March 15

Costs (subject to change)

Tuition* see Website

UMassAmherst credit included

Room & Board ** varies

* Some need-based scholarships are available

** Shared room, camping, and commuter options, range from approximately \$330 to \$1030

Faculty

Jono Neiger, M.A., Landscape Design, Conway School of Landscape Design, MA; B.S., Forest Biology, SUNY Syracuse, NY Conservation biologist, permaculture teacher and ecological designer, Neiger's portfolio includes riparian restoration with the California Nature Conservancy, wetland restoration projects with Native Wet Prairie Seed Collection, and land steward at the Lost Valley Educational Center. John has conducted research in vegetable cropping systems, plant nutrition, seed emergence, and seedling vigor of new sweet corn genotypes, and pepper flowering and fruit set.

Kay Cafasso, B.S., Environmental Geosciences Boston College; Natural Building and Solar Home Design Certification, Solar International; Permaculture Design Certification, Naropa University. Cafasso is a natural builder, a certified permaculture design course instructor, and a designer of ecological landscapes. She holds certificates in Solar Home Design and Natural Building Construction and has many years of experience specializing in earth plasters and natural finishes for straw bale and other natural buildings. After documenting ecological design applications in homes and landscapes in arid, temperate and tropical climates worldwide, Cafasso founded Sowing Solutions, offering education and ecological design and consultation services for homeowners and land stewards.

Mark Krawczyk, B.S., Environmental Studies, University of Vermont, Diploma of Applied Permaculture - British Permaculture Association. Krawczyk is a permaculture designer, traditional woodworker, natural builder and community organizer who resides in Burlington, VT. He directs Keyline Vermont, RivenWoodCrafts, and Burlington Permaculture and is an active member of Seven Generations Natural Builders, and EcoSystems Design Inc. His teaching credits include Edible Forest Gardening, Coppice Forestry the Re-vitalization of Urban Landscapes, Lawn to Garden Conversions, Farm Scale Agroforestry, and Keyline Design and Soil Building.

Course Topics

Reading and Designing the Landscape

Design principles and skills; land assessment for optimal, multi-functional use; patterns and cycles of nature; seat-of-the-pants engineering and site mapping skills; design drawing and presentation skills

Water in Permaculture Design

Water catchment and storage; keyline management; ditches, swales, dams, and ponds; aquaculture in streams, ponds, and tanks; grey and black water treatment and use

Building Healthy Living Soil

Reading a soil profile; self-renewing fertility design; dynamic accumulators and nitrogen-fixers; sheet mulching & composting; green manures, living mulches, and intercropping

The Cultivated Ecosystem

Low-maintenance ecological garden and orchard design; ecological pest management; small livestock; rotational poultry and animal forage systems; agroforestry systems and forest gardens

Ecological Shelter

Integrated, energy efficient design; alternative and least toxic building materials; appropriate technologies

Community Strategies

Regional economics; urban-suburban restoration; village and community design

