

# Permaculture Network In Malawi

Issue # 53: Culture

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## In This Issue

Permaculture Network News & Committee	2
Scientists attempt rescue of African Crops	3-4
R-R-R-R: Culture	5
Always something to Eat with Permaculture	6
Social Capital	7-8
Culture of Sweeping	8-9
Dependency and Interdependence	10
Resource Centre	11
Membership Info	12

## It's Our Culture!

Culture or “chikhalidwe” plays a large role in day-to-day life in every country in the world. It helps to determine what languages we will speak, what we will wear, how we dance, how we sing, what we eat, and even how we behave. Each country has its own unique culture.


Recently, many people in Malawi have begun to turn towards a more “Western” culture of speaking, dressing, and eating. Not all of this is necessarily bad. We have much to learn from other culture’s successes, but we can also learn from other culture’s mistakes and avoid repeating them. The unfortunate thing is when we begin to adopt other people’s culture at the expense of our own.

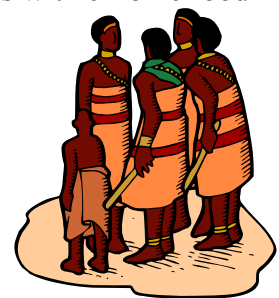
Many of the problems that we are experiencing in Malawi these days can be, at least in part, attributed to a loss of culture and traditional knowledge. Things like the “hungry season”, maize dependency, and malnutrition are all relatively recent events in Malawi’s history. People have become ashamed of traditional food

plants and refuse to eat them or serve them to guests even at the expense of their own health, and sometimes even at the expense of their own lives.

Permaculture is a system of sustainable living based on the observation of natural systems. It builds on a great deal of knowledge from our ancestors and applies it to modern life. Many people that we talk to about Permaculture say that they don’t want to go back to living like their grandparents. But if we think about the life span of our grandparents reaching up to the 80’s, 90’s and even into the hundreds, we need to consider which generation had a better quality and quantity of life...our current lifespan in Malawi is a meagre 37.5, our hospitals are full, and we find ourselves with chronic food security problems.

We have a lot to learn from our ancestors. If you ask older people what they used to eat in Malawi, the answer is almost always “nsima”. But when you ask them what that nsima was made from you get many different answers such as millet, sorghum, yams, green bananas, and other traditional staples. Almost all the foods that we are currently eating in Malawi: maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, tomatoes, Chinese cabbage, rape, mustard, etc were all introduced to this country as foreign crops. Today, even though there are almost 600 local foods that we could be choosing to grow and eat, we are still relying on a small handful of foreign, difficult-to-grow, high-input crops to meet all of our food needs. Instead of celebrating the fact that we have so many resources to keep us healthy, we are ignoring them and have become ashamed of the very part of our culture that allowed our ancestors to survive for thousands of years.

Permaculture is about observing, learning, and sharing. We can take the best of any culture and apply it to our own lives if we choose to do so. In this issue of the Permaculture Newsletter we will look at some of Malawi’s cultural practices that both are both helping and hurting the quality of life that Permaculture principles try to create. 




## Permaculture Network News

Welcome to the **new members** that have joined us this year! We currently have about 100 paid and sponsored members within Malawi, equally distributed through the 3 regions. An additional 800 people around the world receive the newsletter electronically.

The **Committee** for the Permaculture Network is currently a 'temporary' one that is drafting a constitution and creating systems which will be presented to you for input. As your committee, we will work hard this year to market Permaculture within Malawi. You have a role in this work as well! We feel that there are several ways to let people know about Permaculture and the Network such as:

- Creating a more user-friendly newsletter. Articles in **Chichewa** and **letters from YOU** are two ways to increase interest. Tifuna kuwerenga kalata ya nchito yanu, kapena maganizo yanu, kapena zinthu zotero! (We want to read letters of your work, or your ideas, or other things!).
- **Meeting together** as a network. These can be formal meetings or just getting together to visit each other, bringing along non-members to benefit from the discussions and field visits. Wouldn't it be great to meet within your regional or district or even all together as a national network? You have a big role in this – communicate with other members in the network, get together and find ways you can benefit from each other and share knowledge with others in your community, region, or country!



We have received 1,395 US dollars this year to be used for **Permaculture Network Projects**. The committee approved a proposal for 200 US dollars from Mangochi Orphan Education and Training (MOET) to hold a 5-day introduction to Permaculture training with some of the committees that MOET has been working with on re-forestation activities. Do you need funding to carry out Permaculture activities within your community? Write us and tell us about your ideas! 

## Contacts for the Permaculture Network Committee

**Interested in joining the committee?** We need Coordinators for Central & Southern regions. We are also interested in having someone help with, or take over, the production of the newsletter. A strong committee will have some new people on it every year for new ideas – so if you are interested, contact us!

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## With Time Running Out, Scientists Attempt Rescue of African Vegetable Crops

[http://www.futureharvest.org/earth/leafy\\_feature.shtml](http://www.futureharvest.org/earth/leafy_feature.shtml), 13 November 2001

Researchers call it "African spinach," a kind of shorthand for hundreds of green leafy vegetables that are a mainstay of traditional African diets. Eaten largely in rural areas, African spinach provides millions of African consumers with the vitamins, nutrients, and minerals needed to maintain health and fight off deadly infections. Included are crops with names such as *Garden Rocket*, *Cats Whiskers*, and *Garden Huckleberry*.



Botanically, African spinach encompasses dozens of nightshade and legume species, and scores of cucumbers, pumpkins, and melons. Many are grown for their leaves as well as for their fruits. Scientists fear that many of these important vegetables are fast disappearing, however, leaving behind just a fraction of the most popular varieties and a growing dependence on foreign vegetables that are less nutritious and more dependent on pesticides and fertilizer.

### Symbols of Strength

"There are lots of reasons to be concerned about Africa's green leafy vegetables", says Patrick Maundu, a Kenyan ethnobotanist who studies the relationship between plants and people.

"Traditional vegetable crops are not only part of our rituals, they are used to fend off malaria, help nursing mothers build up their milk supply, and assist rural communities to survive long periods of drought," he says. Maundu knows from personal experience how important African vegetables can be. "At the age of six, I was sent out with the boys in my village to take care of livestock. It was up to us to find food and so we quickly learned to identify edible plants."

Maundu remembers that the older boys taught the younger ones which plants tasted best, which ones could be used to treat injuries and illnesses, and which ones to avoid. "That's where I got my early training as an ethnobotanist," he says.

It was the women of the village, however, who were the real experts, he says. His grandmother, now 101, began teaching him about African leafy greens at an early age. "I remember her telling me is that after the famine of 1928-29, people were so desperate for food that they would eat just about anything. To find out if a plant was edible they would see if baboons would eat it. If they did, then the women of the village would try it, and then kids." "The men," he says with a smile, "were always last."

"I didn't realize it at the time, but it was really the women of the village who made sure that these crops survived. Women are responsible for the family food supply and they're the ones who value traditional leafy vegetables the most."

### Race Against the Clock

Today, Maundu is a member of a team of Future Harvest scientists trying to conserve Africa's traditional vegetable crops. Working with national scientists in Cameroon, Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Zambia, he and his colleagues are helping to ensure that Africa does not lose its traditional vegetable crops, a process that is now occurring at an alarming rate.

Maundu estimates that there are more than 45,000 species of plants in Sub-Saharan Africa, of which about 1,000 can be eaten as green leafy vegetables. "Many of these are unknown to us and many more are falling into disuse or are simply being lost. For example, few scientists have ever heard of *Cats Whiskers (luni)*, a crop that is well known to village women, he says. By tradition, pregnant women

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grow *Cats Whiskers* to help regain blood lost in childbirth. It is also used to treat an AIDS-like disease called *Chira*, which is believed to be a curse put on those who are unfaithful to their spouses. Maundu speculates that *Cats Whiskers* may help to boost the performance of the body's immune system.

There are also many unusual types of *Amaranthus* (*bonongwe*), which warrant attention, he says. One variety produces up to 40 tons per hectare (16 tons per acre), an extraordinary amount for a green leafy vegetable. *Amaranthus*, a western health food store favorite, is grown mainly for its leaves, but also produces small nutritious seeds.

### Neglect Cited

Agricultural research and development organizations have neglected African vegetables for a variety of reasons and have been slow to conserve them, adds Geoffrey Hawtin, director general of the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (IPGRI), one of the 16 Future Harvest Centers. "There are literally hundreds of species to deal with and many of these crops are found only in remote locations. Moreover, most of them don't fit the conventions that scientists are accustomed to dealing with in traditional conservation programs," he says.

### "That's beginning to change, however," Hawtin says.

Since 1996, researchers from five countries — working with Maundu and other Future Harvest scientists — have been busy collecting and analyzing African Spinach varieties in a program that emphasizes not only conservation, but also how traditional vegetables are used and marketed. "The goal," Hawtin notes, "is literally to prevent Africa's leafy greens from disappearing."

The work is arduous and involves quantifying the nutritional and economic contributions of African vegetables and convincing government officials that they are worth saving.


It also involves producing improved varieties through what scientists call "participatory plant breeding," a process in which scientists and farmers produce traditional plant types that significantly outperform the varieties they normally grow.

"It's a complicated process," Hawtin says, "but conventional means for conserving crops, such as storing them in genebanks, don't apply in the case of African leafy greens. There are simply too many of them to deal with and the countries involved have neither the facilities nor the funds to do the work. "The only way to save them is to make sure they're grown and available commercially," he says.

Additionally, Hawtin recognizes the importance of "bringing women into the equation and making sure that their needs are not only recognized, but acted upon. For centuries women have been the ones who've played the lead role in conserving Africa's leafy vegetables."

"In the future, it is likely that they'll also be the ones who will help them to survive," Hawtin says.

Funding for the African leafy greens initiative has been provided under a grant from the Government of the Netherlands, Directorate General for International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The International Plant Genetic Resources Institute ([www.ipgri.org](http://www.ipgri.org)) is dedicated to advancing the conservation and use of genetic diversity for the well being of present and future generations. Founded in 1974, it is the world's largest international institute dedicated solely to the conservation and use of plant genetic resources. IPGRI concentrates on supporting the work on plant genetic resources conducted by national research and development systems in developing countries. It also has a special responsibility for bananas and plantains.

Future Harvest ([www.futureharvest.org](http://www.futureharvest.org)) is a global, nonprofit organization that builds awareness and support for food and environmental research for a world with less poverty, a healthier human family, well-nourished children, and a better environment. Future Harvest is an initiative of 16 food and environmental research centers that receive funding from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research ([www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org)). 

## Reduce – Reuse – Repair – Recycle...Culture

**Reduce** things that have no meaning for life. There are some cultural practices which we have learned to be dangerous to the sustainability of our future. One example is ‘fisi’, the practice of one person sleeping with all the initiated girls to get them ready for marriage. Historically, this practice may have had cultural importance, but now it has been linked to the spread of HIV and is no longer helping to strengthen our society. Such practices need to be reassessed to see if they are helping us or hurting us. There are several cultural practices such as these, including wife inheritance, sexual cleansing, and unsafe circumcision rituals. Let’s try to *reduce* these things that are harmful and strengthen those that are helpful.

**Reuse:** If you go to any market you often see piles and piles of organic matter just sitting there. Things like cabbage leaves, onion tops, banana stalks, sweeping piles, and much more. Culturally, we have adopted the practice of burning this organic matter to help ‘clean’ the market and make it ‘hygienic’. If we think about using our resources to their fullest potential, as Permaculture teaches us, then we can see that all of this organic matter could help to feed our soils and make our plants grow healthy and strong. We could *reuse* all of these resources by making compost piles or applying it to our field and eventually make our markets and lives even more hygienic by reducing the smoke in the air, increasing the nutrition by eating all the extra foods, and by healing the soil so that it eliminates runoff during the rains and absorbs and cleans our water thereby giving us access to clean drinking water throughout the entire year.



**Repair:** One problem we often see throughout Malawi is broken down boreholes. Each borehole is supposed to have a borehole committee that is responsible for collecting fees from the community to buy parts to use in the event of the borehole breaking. Unfortunately, it is difficult in Malawian culture to ensure that everybody will contribute their share of the fees, and there is also a lot of jealousy and mistrust of the people who are collecting the money (sometimes for good reason when the money goes missing). One idea that came from one of the workshops that we held is to plant a guild at the end of the borehole to take advantage of the runoff water. These foods can be sold at the market to generate funds for all future repairs, eliminating the need to collect money from community members.



**Recycle:** Culturally, there are a lot of things that we waste. Many of the things we buy from the market are full of seeds that could be used either to increase our nutrition or to plant more foods, but we often throw these things away. Pumpkin seeds are often thrown out into the burning pile and destroyed, but a small bag of roasted pumpkin seeds in Lilongwe now sells for over 600 kwacha. People are buying these seeds for eating, often imported from South Africa, while others complain that Malawi has no resources. Papayas are another resource that usually gets wasted. Each papaya can have upwards of 100 seeds inside them that can be planted and often harvested within a single season. These fruits could help to improve our nutrition and provide important vitamins such as vitamin A, of which there is a deficiency in the country. Let’s try to recycle our resources as many times as possible to improve health, increase incomes, and strengthen our culture! 🌍



## Always Something to Eat with Permaculture!

Choose from the 6 Food Groups Every Day

**Kalongonda (macuna bean)**—The kalongonda bean is extremely dangerous if prepared wrong. In order to eat it the beans need to be boiled and the water thrown out 3-4 times during the cooking process. Culturally, there is a story the Ngoni coming into Malawi and killing a tribe of Chewa people. After the battle, the Ngoni saw that there were beans cooking on the fire. They proceeded to eat them and died due to improper cooking procedures. For that reason, the kalongonda is now more popular in the South and Central than it is in the North of the country.



**Mpungabwe (Local Basil)**—Mpungabwe is a vegetable that is used like a spice. If you go to People's or Shoprite, you will see jars of spices labelled "Sweet Basil". Mpungabwe is in the same family as Basil, and can be used to add flavour to meats, soups, and other foods. Culturally, mpungabwe is used as medicine for colds, chest problems, bad dreams, seizures, and to keep away snakes and mosquitoes. Unfortunately, many people don't know that you can eat it as well. It's a wonderful spice and could even be harvested and sold as an income generating activity with a just a bit of creative marketing.



**Mlambe (Baobab)**—Culturally, the baobab is sometimes referred to as the "devil tree" and there is a story that says that one day the devil got himself entangled in the branches of the baobab and punished it by reversing the tree. Now, the branches are roots and the roots are branches.



The baobab is an extremely useful tree. The fruits are one of the highest natural sources of vitamin C (which helps boost the immune system and protect from diseases). The leaves, seeds, and roots are also edible. The bark can even be made into clothing that people used to wear in Malawi.

**Mawere (Millet)**—Culturally, millet is one of Malawi's traditional staple food crops. If you ask elderly people in Malawi what their "nsima" was made from, one of the answers is often millet. Millet can be processed into flour just like maize, and the flour can be cooked just like maize. It can also be used in cakes, breads, and biscuits. Millet is often sprouted and cooked as "thobwa" (a type of porridge), or left to ferment and it turned into a local beer. Millet is high in calcium, phosphorous, and iron, and has a higher nutrient value than that of rice or maize. It also tends to be fairly drought resistant and grows very well in nutrient-poor soils without the need for expensive fertilizers. 🌍



## Social Capital *by Hope Thornton*

One of the principles central to Permaculture is working together. Those who truly practice Permaculture share knowledge, seeds, and labour where needed. When we work together to improve the environment and manage our community resources, we are working to improve the global community. Culture plays an important role in a person’s willingness to participate in community resource management, to work with others and to share knowledge and resources for the common good.



For those readers who are practicing Permaculture, you know that one does not need financial capital (money) in order to eat well, live well, and improve the environment. Nature has provided all that we need for free! *Financial capital* is money, *human capital* is the knowledge we have in our heads and our physical well-being, and *social capital* is the trust, rules, norms, and connections we have in our villages, neighbourhoods and communities.

We need high amounts of social capital in order to manage natural resources and to share our knowledge, labour and seeds. When our cultures are blessed with high levels of social capital, we feel obligation to our neighbours and friends to help them by sharing seeds and labour and to protecting the water supply and all of our natural resources. In return, we trust that our neighbours and friends will share seeds, tools and labour with us as well as to protect our water supply and natural resources. When we begin to distrust our friends and neighbours, harbour jealousy or when we don’t share our knowledge, seeds or labour, we are draining one of our most important resources- our very own social capital.

One example of a common Malawian practice that is the act of destroying gardens and cutting down trees so that no one may benefit from the work of the previous owner. This act of jealousy is time consuming, harmful to the environment, and ensures that the next person who lives in the home will have to work extra hard to get a garden going instead of building upon the work of the previous tenant. This negative cycle of jealousy, selfishness and environmental degradation plaguing Malawian culture could be ended if people could simply leave their trees and gardens for the next tenant. If everyone left their gardens, then the next owners would build upon it and would then not feel that they should destroy it when it comes time to move because they had been given the garden in the first place. It is Malawian culture to share food with all who need it- why then is the practice to destroy the gardens and trees that produce foods?

**It is Malawian culture to share food with all who need it.**

**Why then is the practice to destroy the gardens and trees that produce foods?**

There are many different kinds of communities, each having its own culture. Each village has its own community with its own culture and the same is true for a work place, a family, or a group of friends. In order for more farmers to begin sustainable practices, such as Permaculture, it is important that farmers trust that they will find support from their communities- whether it be from their neighbours, co-workers, or friends.

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Whenever someone begins to do something that is “different” they will feel insecure. If we, the Permaculture Network, are truly committed to wisely managing our natural resources and to restoring our environment we must act as a supportive, cohesive community. While we are not a community that is geographically close to one another, we are a community that is connected via newsletter and the network itself which was created by our shared interests in food and nutrition security, improving the environment, gaining knowledge (human capital), increasing our financial capital (money) and other various reasons.

***Social capital***  
is the trust, rules,  
norms, and  
connections we  
have in our  
communities

Let our community be a culture of collective action and willingness to work together. We must share our knowledge, our labour and our seeds for the good of the whole. Let us improve our own social capital, as well as begin to improve the social and human capital of our neighbours and communities in which we live by adhering to the Permaculture ethical and design principles. Let us throw away those parts of our cultures that hinder us from achieving our goals such as distrust, selfishness, and jealousy and when we do so we will move in a positive direction. 🌍

## The Culture of Sweeping *by Kristof Nordin*

Sometimes we need to ask ourselves why we do the things that we do.

If you ask people in Malawi why they sweep you will usually hear: “To keep the place clean.”, or “For hygiene”, but you seldom hear anybody say, “It’s our culture.” Sweeping, however, is very cultural. The early tribes in Malawi, especially those of the Ngoni, would often clear a small area in the front of their houses which they would mud and keep swept clean for honored guests to sit on. This cultural practice is still seen today with people bringing chairs out to the khonde or front yard for visitors. What has changed is that what was once only a small cleared area has now turned into people’s entire yards that are being over-swept day after day. We have lost the cultural aspect to sweeping and now do it thoughtlessly, and in the process are creating many problems for ourselves.



### **So what does over-sweeping do that is so bad?**

First of all it removes precious organic matter from the soil. This organic matter is food for the soil that gives nutrients that plants need to grow. So, along with organic matter, we are also removing important nutrients when we sweep.

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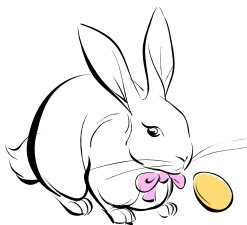
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- It exposes the soil to the harsh effects of the sun. The sun bakes our clay soils until they are hard and compacted like a brick or like tarmack.
- It kills the beneficial microorganisms living in the soil and help to make it healthy.
- It also prevents rain water from sinking into our soil and filling up our wells. Instead, the water runs off quickly causing erosion, gullying, and even flooding.
- There was a study conducted by the government that concluded that the number one cause of damage to government housing is over-sweeping. It exposes the foundations of the house leading to the breaking of walls and other structures.
- We also have to look at who does the majority of the sweeping. Who gets up at four in the morning to sweep these massive amounts of land clear of all life? The women do. The same women who then have to go get water, find firewood, heat bath water, prepare food, get the kids off to school, clean the house, prepare the fields, etc. If anybody could stand to reduce the energy that they are spending on daily activities it is the women. Especially when these activities are actually reducing our quality of life.



### So what are the alternatives?

Instead of sweeping massive areas of our land, why not try to reduce these areas by creating pathways, garden beds, and sitting areas near to the house. This way, we can still sweep small areas to keep the yard looking tidy, but all organic matter can be swept into these garden beds to feed the soil and help provide food for our families. We can plant fruit trees in these beds that will give food for years to come with very little work and can even take advantage of used water that we normally throw away onto the compacted over-swept soil. We can plant vines that will use the house to climb on providing even more food while at the same time helping to keep our houses cool in the summer heat. These vines can also provide shade for our sitting areas so that our guests can feel cool while they are eating the fruits of our trees. We can also plant all of the food groups in these nutrient-rich beds to ensure a healthy diet and access to foods throughout the year.



Next time you go out to sweep or see somebody sweeping, ask yourself “why?”. There is a story that illustrates this point well:

In America it is often the culture to cook a ham on Easter. One Easter, a lady was preparing the ham the way she had always done by cutting off one end ham before placing it in the pot. Her young daughter asked her why she cut off the end and the lady replied that she didn’t know, she had learned it from her mother. So they went and asked her mother why she always cut the end of the ham off before placing it in the pot. Her mother also responded that she didn’t know why, but that her mother had done the same thing. Well, the great-grandmother was still alive, so they all paid her a visit to see why she always cut the ends off of the Easter ham. She thought about it for awhile and then laughed, “I always cut the end off because my pot was never big enough to fit the whole ham in it!” So three generations repeated what they had learned without asking “why” and whether or not their actions had any importance to what they were trying to achieve. 🌍

## The Culture of Dependency and Interdependence

*by June Walker. The Author acknowledges the powerful messages of the theologian Matthew Fox in "One River, Many Wells".*

We all know people who have become so dependent that they:


- expect an allowance over and above their wages, or travel-related reimbursements;
- who attend workshops, not to gain knowledge to share, but to take allowances; and
- who then expect to be paid again to share that new knowledge.

**But it was not always so.** We used to be a nation of self-reliant communities; without a lot of money, but able to work together to gain political freedom, and to build our schools and our churches. People under the age of 40 did not experience this way of living because some 20 years ago as they were entering the world of work the donor agencies were entering Malawi with humanitarian aid to help with the million refugees coming in from Mozambique. Overnight, the rates of pay for drivers, for example, went up 400%. Allowances were paid above increased wages to get emergency work carried out quickly. So only the older people in Malawi know of our former character and way of life, of INTER-DEPENDENCE upon our fellow human beings and of every part of our environment for survival.

**So how do we reconnect?** ECO-SYSTEMS are sustainable communities of plants, micro-organisms and animals (including ourselves, folks!). When we learn to see how these natural communities operate, then we can recreate our own human sustainable communities. Think about these principles of eco-systems:

- 1.) **INTER-DEPENDENCE** – All members of any system are interconnected in a vast, intricate network of relationships – the WEB of LIFE. The success of the whole community depends on the success of its individual members while the success of each member depends on the success of the community as a whole.
- 2.) **NON-LINEAR (non-line) RELATIONSHIPS (meaning Cycles or Circles)** – The network depends on multiple feed-back loops such as integrated pest management.
- 3.) **RECYCLING** means the ecosystem as a whole remains without waste. Modern industrial systems are linear (a straight line) creating waste, pollution and erosion.
- 4.) **SOLAR ENERGY** – Ecosystems run on solar energy, so can we.
- 5.) **PARTNERSHIPS** – Life on earth over the past 2 billion years has developed by cooperation and partnerships.
- 6.) **FLEXIBILITY** – The Web of Life is a flexible, ever-fluctuating network adapting to changing circumstances (situations). Paradox and dialectic are key to maintaining any kind of community. There are tolerance limits, stabilities as well as changes, tradition as well as innovation.
- 7.) **BIO-DIVERSITY** – makes an ecosystem or a community resilient. Human communities can imitate this resilience through honoring diversity.

Mlendo ndi  
amene  
abwera ndi  
lumo  
lokhutwa

The communities of Africa practiced this culture of interdependence before outsiders came from East and West, as they valued clan, family, matrilineality, children and the ultimate goodness of the earth. Permaculture helps us to reconnect with the ecosystems of the earth on which we all live and with each other in the Web of Life. 

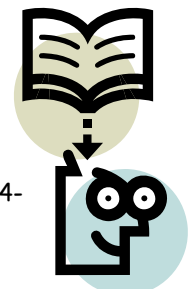
## Resources on Culture *by Stacia Nordin*

- ❖ **Useful Plants of Malawi** - by Jesse Williamson. It covers the cultural uses of plants in Malawi including foods, medicines, soaps, cloth, building, string, fuels and other unique uses. It has just been re-released in 2006 and is available in book stores at about 3,500 mk. Published by Mbadzi Book Trust, 2005.
- ❖ **Lost Crops of Africa** - This book was compiled and reviewed by many different people through the National Research Council of the National Academies (Advisors to the US on Science, Engineering, and Medicine). There are several volumes underway to cover a few of the important crops that are being 'lost' or forgotten in Africa. The book is very detailed and focused on advanced readers. I have one on my shelf for reference and find it helpful when I'm researching. It is available from: National Academies Press, 500 Fifth Street, N.W., Lockbox 285, Washington DC 20055; +1 202-334-3313. [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)
- ❖ **Traditional and Modern Cooking in Malawi** - This amazingly useful volume was compiled and printed in 1992 by the Chitukuko Cha Amayi m'Malawi (CCAM). Our very own June Walker was the chair of the committee. The book is easy to use and has simple symbols to identify recipes that are one-pot meals, weaning foods, school snacks, income generating, or medicine. It is a nice mixture of traditional Malawian culture from Chitipa to Nsanje and the other cultures that have immigrated to Malawi (such as Indian, British, Mexican and Aisian). I've not seen the book for sale for many years, but if enough of us raise our voices we may be able to get CCAM to print more. My copy came from the Central Bookshop in Blantyre in 1998. I've talked with June about how to get this book onto our shelves and will call Blantyre Print & Packaging to get a quote. Let me know if you want a copy.
- ❖ **Your Elders** - Even if your parents aren't around, or if you are not Malawian by birth, adopt someone else's Malawian parents so you can connect with Malawi's history and culture. 🌍

Foster a culture  
of reading and  
life-long learning  
in Malawi!

## Free Resource Rooms in Malawi *by Stacia Nordin*

- ✓ **Teacher Development Centres** - there is NO excuse for missing out on this one! Everyone has a TDC within walking distance of their home - there are about 10 of them in every district. Recently, one newspaper highlighted a young school leaver who created his own windmills based on his reading at a TDC. The resources are there, are you making the most of them?
- ✓ **National Library Service** LL: 01-773-700/362, BT: 01-821-760 / 820-204, MZ: 01-334-819. Small membership fee to borrow books and other resources. I believe there are branches in some district capitals. They also have programmes for rural and school libraries.
- ✓ **NICE (National Initiative for Civic Education)** LL: 01-759-275, BT: 01-843-896/503. MZ: 01-333-054. I'm not sure if you are allowed to remove books from NICE resource rooms, but in the ones I've visited there are several reading tables that are comfortable for reading and taking notes. I think there are resource rooms in every district capital.
- ✓ **UN Resource Centre** - Area 13, Lilongwe. Numerous development related documents, reports and technical information for use within the resource centre.
- ✓ **USIS (United States Information Service)** Old Mutual Bldg, City Centre, LL. 01-772-222. Use of books, magazines, newspapers and computers. They also have some district branches.
- ✓ **British Council** - City Centre, LL. 01-773-244/557. 01-774-467. Membership allows you to borrow books, movies and use the internet.
- ✓ **International and Non-governmental Organizations** There are SO many of these to tap into! Ask for reading material to keep or borrow and they will probably help - they are there for YOU! 🌍



 **Permaculture Network in Malawi**  
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*“See the world through the eyes of  
 Permaculture”*

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## Join the Permaculture Network in Malawi

- **The Permaculture Network in Malawi** began in 1994. The network strives to bring information to members through the newsletter and make connections between members in Malawi and around the world.
- **Membership Fees are 400 mk** for the calendar year. If you are able to pay more it allows us to sponsor people who can't afford the fees, to copy additional materials, and to take on more extensive projects.
- **Sponsorship:** If you can't afford the fees, or can only afford part of the fees, write us explaining why you are unable to pay, why you want the newsletter, and what you are doing with Permaculture – you need to write to us at least once a year to continue.
- **Payments:** Malawi Kwacha check or postal order **addressed to Stacia Nordin** or Malawian postal stamps. Include your name, address, all contact details, profession & specific Permaculture interests. Send payments & newsletter submissions to:

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