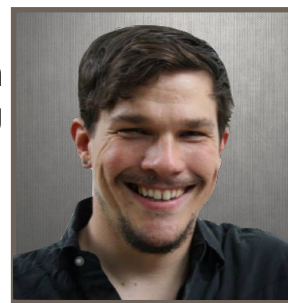


Rafter Sass Ferguson
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Presentations and Workshops

Here are a few examples of talks and classes I offer. Get in touch if you are interested in hosting a talk, workshop, or keynote. All topics are available as brief presentations or evening workshops, and many are available in weekend or longer formats.

Transformation from the Grassroots

Liberation Ecology

What would sustainability look like, if it refused to sustain systemic inequality? What could liberation look like, in a society headed for ecological collapse? In this experiential workshop, participants answer these questions for their own work, through design activities, systems mapping exercises, presentations, and facilitated discussion.

Designing Transformation

How do we understand the relationship between our work as individuals, and large-scale change? It's a question that each of us eventually confront - but we're given very little preparation or support in answering it. This participatory workshop guides participants through a series of prompts and activities to help us think strategically, and systematically, and take away simple conceptual tools and practices to help them connect their own passions with the tides of global change.

Research Frontiers and Transition Strategies

For the past five years I've been conducting multidisciplinary research on the permaculture movement. In 2014, I published the first research on permaculture to appear in a major peer-reviewed journal, "Permaculture for Agroecology: Design, Practice, Movement, and Worldview," in *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*.

Grassroots Participation in Transition to Sustainability

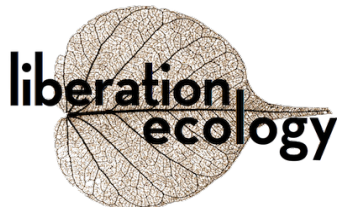
I conducted an international survey to investigate who is participating in permaculture, and how. This study is helping us understand different patterns of participation in permaculture, and how they are shaped by gender, race, and class. No such assessment of permaculture has ever been carried out before.

Permaculture on Diversified Farms

In 2013 I drove 18,000 miles around the US to visit 48 permaculture farms. At these farms I gathered data on the farm economy and mapped the farm landscape, in order to better understand how livelihood diversity and land use drive labor efficiency on diversified farms. This study is the first ever systematic assessment of permaculture farms.

People's Science

In the world of sustainability, it often seems like we have to choose between believing in scientific institutions who are only accountable to their funders, or throw in with gonzo New Age beliefs and tinfoil-hat conspiracy theories. It's like choosing between a ship without a compass and a ship without a rudder. People's Science is a third approach: when we foster a culture of critical thinking and experimentation, and appropriate the resources of scientific research and integrate them into our movement for the liberation of people and planet.



Permaculture Design

Introduction to Permaculture

Permaculture works to create sustainable, labor-saving ways of meeting all our needs for food, shelter, and infrastructure. Permaculture is a powerful toolbox for individuals and communities to take charge of their livelihoods and their ecological impact. Covers history, ethics, principles, and practices of permaculture.

Mycoscaping: Mushrooms in the Edible Landscape

Even if you're an avid gardener - if you are only gardening plants, you're missing out! There is a whole other kingdom to explore - and eat. In this workshop, we'll explore the basics - and not-so-basics - of mushroom cultivation, and get some hands-on experience. We'll learn how to look at mushroom crops through a holistic, permaculture lens, and find the niche in the landscape where they can perform useful ecological functions, even as they produce food and medicine for us. We'll review common and less-common mushroom crops, and different cultivation techniques.

Urban Permaculture

The permaculture approach to design is just as applicable to urban areas - if not more so. The very qualities that make cities so destructive when managed unwisely, create a wealth of opportunities for abundant, regenerative, vibrant landscapes. We'll make a case for the potential and possibility of reinventing the urban ecosystem, and explore the bottom-up strategies that will get us there.

Here are some responses from workshop attendees

"Liberation Ecology opened my eyes to profound realizations and to connections I had never made before. As a novice, I found it completely accessible and absorbing."

Chen Tamir, curator

"His presentation is accessible in a way that attracts and grabs hold of your attention, and remains provocatively on your mind long after the workshop session has ended..."

Jen Carson, farmer

"I continue to be amazed by the outcomes of our short Liberation Ecology workshop with Rafter. We identified some underlying issues of ecological design concerning social and economic justice, came together to create succinct design criteria to address these issues, and educated each other about existing projects that are already working to resolve them."

- Ethan Roland, Applesseed Permaculture

"I can honestly say that Liberation Ecology is the most exciting thing I've [encountered] since stumbling across permaculture; [Rafter] articulate[s] a way of examining a very diffuse nest of problems and issues that I think would resonate with people in a lot of different movements. It gives us a set of ideas and a vocabulary to start with; it's a form of conceptual empowerment."

- David Travis, Sustainable Land Stewardship Alliance