



Syntropic Agroforestry

Workshop information booklet

(English Version)

Orientation:

*To design and live in syntropy is to create abundance for future generations;
a wholesome and fulfilling cultural Purpose.*

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Overview

Syntropy - The process of increasing coherence in the system.

Syntropic Agroforestry - Syntropic Agroforestry is the "missing link" between the practice and principles of Conservation, Reforestation and food production. It is an ecologically-embodied form of food forestry developed by Ernst Götsch and other agro-foresters in Brazil through the systemisation of indigenous Amazonian forest stewardship. It is Science based, evidence based, research based and operates at the forefront of formulating new concepts for large scale economically viable Syntropic Agroforest farms.

Life as Syntropy

– the Spirit of Life is Syntropy or ‘Syntropic’. Another word for this is abundance. It operates on unconditional love and cooperation and serves one singular purpose in every form of its expression - Like the wind, like the caterpillar, humans can influence the speed by which the forest dynamics are flowing. To do this effectively and beneficially (in syntropy) to the greater ecological community, it takes insight and awareness of all the functions of all elements within the system (micro and macro).

Through the submersion into syntropic embodiment, we allow ourself to see that we are part of an intelligent system, not above it, or outside of it, but of it, belonging intimately to it, and that living in Syntropy with it brings forth our own human natural role and function again as the unique species of mammals that we are, within it.

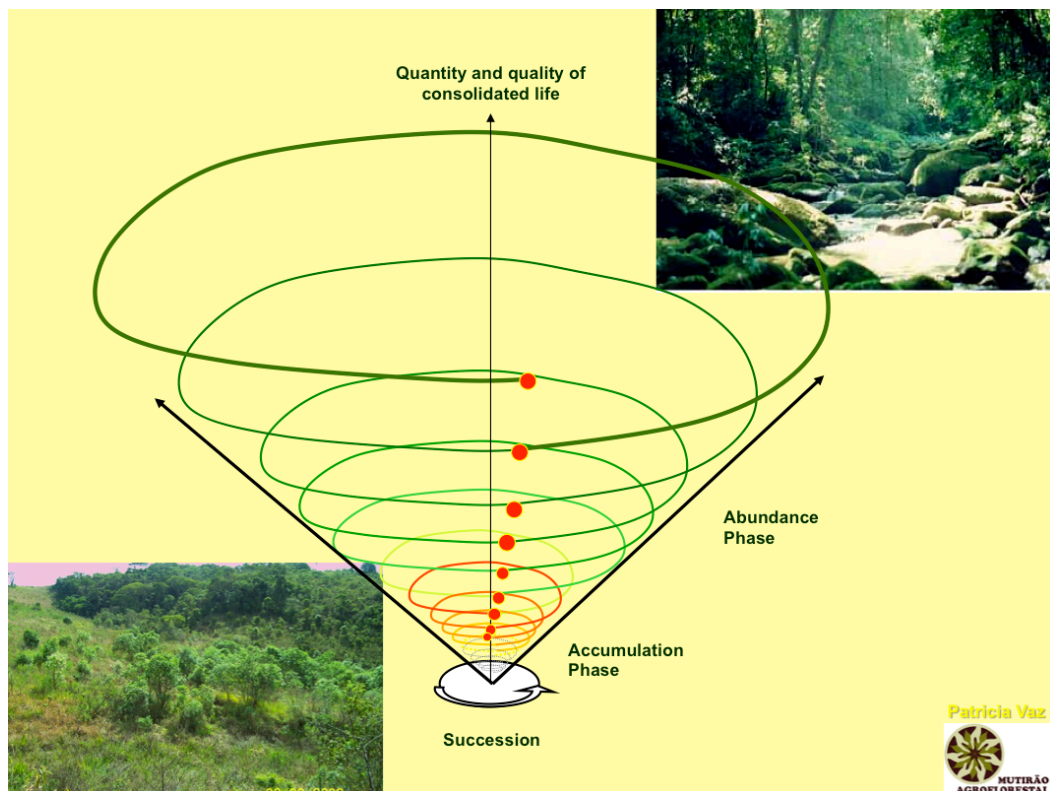


Spirit of Abundance

The spirit of living things is abundance. For this to be possible the idea of unconditional love and cooperation requires to be practiced. From that place, effortlessly, Life accumulates more quantity and quality of consolidated life (biodiversity). In this way the function of an organism cannot be known without understanding its spirit. The spirit of living things is abundance.

The process of Syntropy on Earth

The sun has limitless energy. Through nature’s mechanisms such as photosynthesis, bare soil is colonised with life through a process of accumulation. After the early stages of accumulation have occurred (known also as ecological recovery), the processes of abundance take over, as the diverse fruits of abundant organic matter are yielded. Humans are powerful, co-evolved creatures in catalysing the speed of this spiral. This spiral is found in the microprocesses of elements and nutrients right through to intergenerational succession and stratification of ecosystems. This exponential growth can be viewed below in the intergenerational spiral of abundance image:



General Syntropic Principles

- Everything in Life performs a function with purpose, just question the function.
- A syntropic system is a single organism.
- Design forest systems analogous/similar to local forest systems.
- To Maximise production through the diversity of plant stratification and plant succession.
- Work within natural plant cycles and move towards more complex plantings.
- Work with what you have and maintain freedom from external sources.
- Work with the natural tendencies of land e.g. know its vegetative and hydrological history prior to degradation
- Energy accumulation is only possible through matter circulation.
- Every plant keeps its purpose in the line of succession, if its purpose is served it will eventually be removed from the system by some actor.
- Nitrogen and Carbon must be in synergistic cooperation. A forest's ability to balance nutrients builds with life, at the start it is delicate.
- Fire makes all minerals soluble so complex vegetation is the best place to store nutrient.
- The function of a plant in a system occurs when it is an adult.
- There is a phenomenal amount of cooperation in a forest that we don't understand and the forest does not work in competition.
- Agroforestry is moving, dynamic, ever-changing entity. How will the system look like in the coming years?

Following Nature's Ecological Principles: Bio-Diversity

Ernst Götsch the founder of Syntropic Agroforestry emphasizes in his teachings that *'the first criteria to guide our design and future actions in agroforestry systems must be that these activities need to favour the enhancement of life and the successional processes especially via photosynthesis'* (Götsch, 1997).

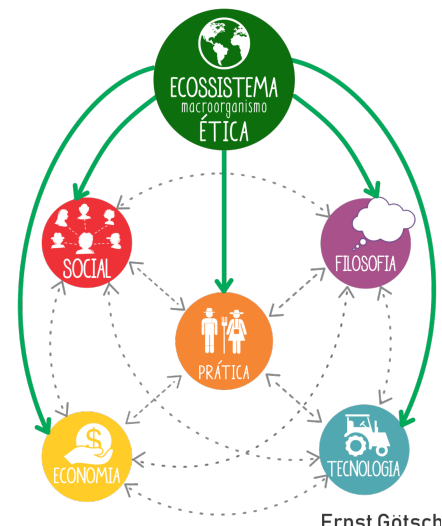
Opportune moment in time

Applying the syntropic agriculture method is relevant when Garden Action is wanted to be taken. The rationale for doing thriving communities are founded upon healthy ecosystems, particularly in remote regions where the way of life for indigenous peoples is linked inextricably to natural resources. Syntropy as an integrative, holistic method of ecosystems management has impacts beyond food production in the scope of its outputs, specifically connected to the regeneration of depleted soils and ensuring the longevity of agricultural plots.

Effective Ecological Guardianship

Syntropic Agroforestry has within its orientation that we put ECOLOGY (not economy) first in order to 'develop ourselves'. When following this model (which leads to abundance) it shapes our forms of technologies that we deploy and naturally enhances our social cultural dynamics to become a Syntropic (Thriving) orientation, as it overhauls our Baconian, Newtonian, dominion and hierarchy philosophies and makes them into the reality that does exist: *Man is an intricate part of a living web of Life with a tremendous response ability and intelligent capacity to favor Life or degrade it.*

Knowing that communities want to help protect nature it is best that they are equipped with experience based, easy to translate knowledge that empowers them to restore forest dynamics so to benefit in every natural way possible from such undertakings.



So "What is Syntropic Agroforestry":

In a Syntropic system, different trees (e.g. pioneer, medium strata, nitrogen-fixing, windbreak, biomass, timber, and climax trees) are planted with a subsistence of a 'market garden' (with ground covers, vegetables, tubers and annuals). This strategy, together with (specific strata and life cycle-related) pruning and mulching techniques, allows us to speed up the natural processes of ecological succession, producing quality food, fibres, timber and fuels. while also regenerating degraded lands.

According to Ernst Götsch (1995) the implementation of Syntropic forestry systems must be optimised following some steps so that a positive energetic balance can be guaranteed:

- First it is necessary to identify the adequate species, the species consortiums and the natural succession of these consortiums with a specific region, soil or similar climate;
- Second, it is also necessary to identify the most appropriate moment to begin each cycle. In other words, the time of implementation (or management of an already established plot) must be chosen so that each species find the best conditions to establish themselves and thrive;
- After gathering this information it is necessary to design and plan the implementation as to achieve the maximum possible biodiversity in the system. The design and planning of the system must also fulfill every strata and life-cycle niche to optimise vital process in the whole system (including soil life)
- Forth, pruning of selected plants is used to speed up the system's growth and natural succession.

Some key phrases of Ernst Götsch

"All intra and interspecific relations are based on unconditional love and cooperation" I bet you've doubted it and pictured those crazy images of wild nature, didn't you? Yes, but even the predator-prey relationship can be understood as a mechanism to optimize and balance the resources of an ecosystem.

"All species – the existing ones, those that have already occurred and those that will appear – are equipped to perform their tasks, driven by inner pleasure" Our opposing thumb is capable of much more than only typing fast on cellphones, believe me! Warning: don't understand internal pleasure as hedonism and use it as an excuse for a little bump here and there. There is pleasure in serving a greater good than your individual well-being, don't you think?

"The laws (of nature) are given, it isn't up to us to create or modify any of them. We need to act in a beneficial way for all participants, for all the affected ones, in order to be considered useful and welcomed beings in the system" Working with nature and not against nature is a not an imposition. It is simply our best option! Nature does not need us. We depend in it. Otherwise, what happens is exactly the situation described in the next key phrase.

"Acting in disharmony induces changes in the system which act precisely in the sense of making inconvenient the presence of the causer of this disharmony. The being is expelled, it loses the freedom of choice." Think about the effects of climatic changes driven by the interference of human activities. Indeed they are not at all inviting for the permanence of our species on the planet.

"I always seek to create agroecosystems as close as possible to the natural and original systems of the sites where I work, both in their form and in their function and dynamics" It is 4 billion years of evolution of life on the planet. It does not seem risky to trust this "technology." All processes, forms and strategies have been tested and improved for a long time!

"We are not the smart ones, we are part of a intelligent system. I am not the owner, nor the boss or manager. I am an endobiont of the macroorganism" Recalling biology classes, endobiont comes from the Greek "ENDO" which means "inside" and "BIOS" means "life". That is, "who lives within" in a mutual relationship, without causing harm. Imagine how much difference it would make if we understand and act like endobionts of nature.

"Exposed soil is an open wound" "Be generrrrrous, sir" says Ernest when it comes to covering the soil with organic matter. It's the organic matter that will guarantee the best conditions for the development of the soil's microflora and microfauna. These organisms are closely related to the availability of the necessary nutrients for plants and for structuring the soil.

"There is no such thing as plagues. They're agents who optimize life processes. The only plague I'm aware of in my garden is myself"

"The byproduct of producing food is wood and good soil" At the stage we're now, it isn't enough to only stop degrading, we must regenerate! In Syntropic Agriculture instead of consuming the soil's fertility you guarantee the constant growth of the soil's fertile layer by managing the garden.

"Water must be cultivated" The uncompacted soils, the presence of mycorrhizae and the stratified architecture of Syntropic systems promote a favorable environment for precipitation and replenishment of the groundwater. So, in fact, the correct management of soil and plants interacts directly in the freshwater cycle.

Phrases from Brazil

- Life builds on Life.
- The agroforest is the face of the farmer.
- How successful the farm is depends on how the farmer manages the system.
- God does not put any organic material under the ground.
- The best way to learn agroforestry is at the foot of the tree.
- To be a good agroforester you need to be a good cattle manager of the soil. E.g. Feed the microbes organic matter!
- Bare Soil is an Open Wound / Grass is God putting a scab on bare soil.
- Don't grow penguins in the rainforest.
- If a log touches the ground it attracts worms, if it is above ground it attracts termites.
- Right is to enhance life in the system. Wrong is not to enhance life. This is what Nature does.
- Mulch - too much is not enough.
- Replicate the forest floor to add life to the soil then replicate how plants grow in the forest.
- Don't step on the beds, the soil must be soft.
- String lines in vine rows need to be as high as the tallest farm worker.



Syntropy is the life bearing, life enhancing and life expanding underlying "formula" that nature operates from to sustain itself and all living life with it. Wow!

Syntropic knowledge is synergistic and transformative. #WeareSyntropy.

About Sovereign

Sovereign is an accomplished student of the Syntropic Agroforestry methodology and active promoter of Syntropic Ecology. He initiated the Syntropic Agroforestry Research Institute (SARI) and through the Wananga of Love is actively sharing about Living Life in Syntropy with all our relations.

Fb: <https://www.facebook.com/SovereignSharing> Blog: www.sovereignsharing.blog Email: Sovereign@pm.me