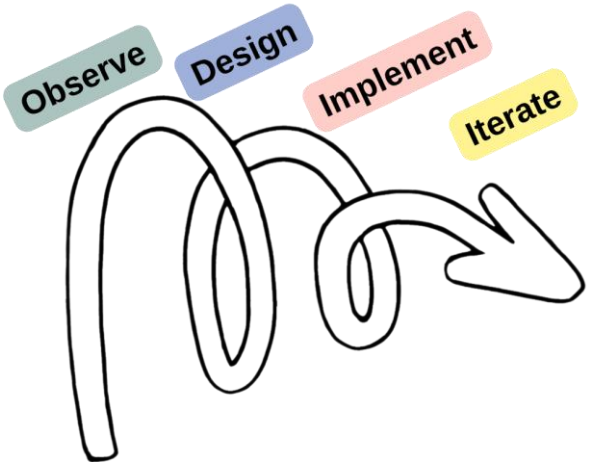
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

The ODII Design Spiral

ODII is a simple four-step permaculture design process you can use to design *anything* in your business, garden, home and life. It helps you make better decisions and more rigorous action plans.



Created by Koren Helbig, ODII is modelled on the Action Learning Cycle, the way all humans naturally learn through experience. It mirrors the spiral, a key pattern in nature that circulates energy, gradually improves and builds on success, while staying anchored to a foundational core.

Because it's an ever-evolving cycle, ODII helps you grow and learn progressively, in a self-directed and nature-informed way.

Step	What's involved
Observe	Set your vision, then slow down and pay attention to what is.
Design	Create a clear plan for how you'll make changes.
Implement	Take action.
Iterate	Pause, reflect and learn from your experience.

This guide offers reflection questions and permaculture tools to help you get the most out of each ODII step. This process can take as little as 10 minutes for a quick decision, such as what to post on social media or what veggies to pick and eat for dinner. Or it can roll out over months or even years for bigger projects and decisions, such as launching a website or rebuilding your entire garden.

Step 1: Observe

Goal: Set your vision, then slow down and pay attention to what is

Core question: What's actually going on here?

Before doing anything, pause. Consider your end goal. Then look within yourself and at your business, garden, life or whatever project you're focusing on, and take stock of what's currently happening. Gather information that can help you see the situation more clearly — both the physical, tangible, analytical stuff and the more internal, intangible, mental or gut-feel signals. Momentarily suspend the need to solve or do, and just get curious.

Ask yourself:

- What is my end goal or broad vision? What am I trying to achieve?
- What needs come up when I think about this goal or vision, including my own and those of stakeholders and the more-than-human world? How are these needs currently being met?
- What patterns can I see? Zoom out to the bigger picture, zoom in to the details.
- What's working well right now, and what's struggling, stagnant or not reaching target?
- What do the facts, stats, key performance indicators and other hard data tell me?
- What are my hopes and desires for this? What am I worried about or don't want to happen?
- Is this feeling good or yuck? Am I happy and energised or bored and flat?
- What little whispers are coming through? How does my body feel when I think about this?

Permaculture tools to consider:

- The 3 permaculture ethics
- The 12 permaculture principles
- Nested systems
- Reading the landscape
- Nine Ways of Observing
- Rose, Thorn, Bud
- Eight Forms of Capital
- Six Thinking Hats
- Circles of Influence
- Patterns in nature
- Feedback loops

> "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves."
>
> — Rilke

Step 2: Design

Goal: Create a clear plan for how you'll make changes.

Core question: What do I want, and what's the simplest way to get there?

Based on what you've observed, sketch out a plan before moving into action. This is deep thinking time: working out what to focus on, in what order and how. A rough plan or map gives you guidelines to follow so you're less likely to get lost down rabbit holes. It might also involve action in a place not yet visible to the public or other people, such as a first draft, which is easier to change than something that's already live.

Ask yourself:

- What are my options for reaching my goal or vision? Which feels most realistic and aligned?
- What's the simplest path forward that meets the most important needs?
- How could I 'stack functions' to better meet needs or get more uses out of each element?
- How could I maximise beneficial relationships between people or things?
- What do I need to do first, then next? What could wait until later?
- Who does what, and by when?
- What tools, systems or structures do I need to make this happen?
- How will I track progress so I can see how things are going?
- Does this plan align with my ethics and values, and my earlier observations?

Permaculture tools to consider:

- Vision, Mission, Aims (VMA)
- Holistic Decision Making
- Scale of Permanence / Now, Next, Later / Natural succession
- Functional Analysis / Stacking functions
- Time and Energy Budgeting
- Zones
- Sector Analysis
- Limiting Factors
- Appropriate Technology
- Action Plan
- The 3 permaculture ethics
- The 12 permaculture principles

> "Design moves us from desire, idea, ambition, intention and imagination to reality and action."
>
> — Looby Macnamara

Step 3: Implement

Goal: Take action.

Core question: How can I sustainably get this done?

Finally, it's time to act. Take incremental steps toward your goal or vision. Make or do the thing, put it out into the world. Let others see your thoughts, ideas, words, creations, products, services; whatever you've been dreaming up. Maintain momentum and see things through to completion, while staying open to feedback and necessary course corrections as you go.

Ask yourself:

- How can I take action in a way that's realistic for my current capacity?
- How can I make progress visible to help maintain momentum?
- Do I need to bring in any help, support or allies?
- Are core needs being met as I go, including my own and those of stakeholders and the more-than-human world?
- What early feedback am I getting, and are any small tweaks needed?
- Am I remaining aligned with my original goal or vision and my ethics and values?

Permaculture tools to consider:

- Hierarchy of Intervention
- Small and slow solutions
- Patterns in nature
- Appropriate technology
- Action Plan
- Monitoring Plan
- Feedback Loops
- Spirals of Erosion
- The 3 permaculture ethics
- The 12 permaculture principles

> "There is no learning without action… there is no action without learning."
>
> — Professor Reginald Revans

Step 4: Iterate

Goal: Pause, reflect and learn from your experience.

Core question: What happened and how could I improve for next time?

Pick a good moment to evaluate your actions. It might be time-based (monthly, quarterly), project-based (when something wraps up), market-based (sales or client needs are shifting) or even feelings-based ("I'm no longer enjoying this and want to know why"). Noticing any effects helps you avoid repeated mistakes and build on success, while realigning to your vision and progressively improving with ever-deepening wisdom, awareness and knowledge.

Ask yourself:

- Did my actions align with my vision and plan, and are they having the intended effect?
- What worked really well versus what didn't and may need tending, pruning or composting?
- What did I not end up doing, and why?
- Did this work feel sustainable or draining?
- What feedback did I receive from stakeholders, stats and data, and my own internal world?
- What did I learn, and what would I do differently next time?
- Where did I stray from my ethics and values, and how could I avoid this in future?
- What learnings will I take into the Observe stage, as I turn the spiral anew?

Permaculture tools to consider:

- Plus, Minus, Interesting
- Roses, Thorns and Buds
- I Like, I Wish, I Wonder
- Spirals of Erosion
- Zones
- Input-Output Analysis
- Stacking functions
- Nested systems
- Patterns to details
- Action Plan
- Monitoring Plan
- The 3 permaculture ethics
- The 12 permaculture principles

> "We are not going in circles, we are going upwards. The path is a spiral; we have already climbed many steps."
>
> — Hermann Hesse