

Newsletter

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Local - Organic - Fresh

NEWS - Welcome to the first real newsletter of this our 20th year. Winter is here, such as it is. All your growers are planning the years planting. There is less to do for the crops for a few weeks now, mostly just harvesting winter greens. But as temperatures rise and days lengthen over the next month the first of the year's new salads and oriental greens will go in. We are building shelving in our new propagation poly tunnel at Keveral Farm. Because soon there will be a rush to sow, sow, sow.

So I thought that now would be a good time to snuggle up around a fire as the rain beats down outside and recall why this box scheme exists.

Keveral Community of Growers the Story. Part 1



Your box scheme was started in 1997 by a bunch of environmental activists living at Keveral Farm. We had all been studying Permaculture.

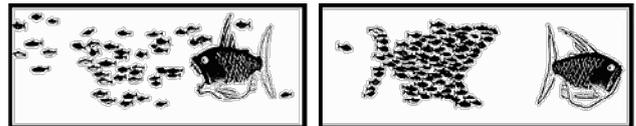
Permaculture is a design system for looking at our lives and our business activities (how we as humans support ourselves) that **uses principles drawn from natural systems** and **an ethical frame work** that can be summarised as: **Earth Care** working in ways that reduce harm to our ecosystem. **People Care** working in ways that allow everyone to participate and have their needs met, and **Fair Share** making sure there are enough resources to go around for all living things.

We had Organic land, though we were mostly not very experienced at growing. Keveral Farm is a Cooperative Housing project as well as a farm and at any time there are about a dozen families or individuals living here needing to support ourselves. So there was a pool of labour and people who wanted to learn about growing.

Our Aims: We wanted to **engage and interact** with our local community and **raise awareness** of various issues that impact on the environment. We cared about **good, nutritious food, produced with care about its impacts on the environment** and we

wanted to be able to supply it at prices people like ourselves would find **affordable**. We wanted to **support small local growers** and support and encourage people to be able to **live in a rural area** and at least **make part of their income from the land** and not have to commute to the nearest big town for work, at a time when increasing numbers of small farmers were going under and farmers were being told the future was bigger specialist farms and that small mixed farms had had their day.

Our model is one of cooperation and sharing that has seen the box scheme through some tough times and survived for 20 years.



We have no staff. We are a partnership of self employed growers and we all contribute a few hours each week to administer and deliver the boxes which in turn helps us to sell our produce and keep our prices down. As growers we can make our money by selling our produce to the box scheme.

Thus many hands make the work easier and mean everyone still has time to work, growing or whatever else they do (activists, carers, consultants) and we can help each other be flexible about time off to take on other tasks when its important.

Some of our grower members do something else alongside their farming, at least for part of the year. Many are not big enough growers for their businesses to stand alone, or are new entrants to the industry and learning but with your support they can make additional income from their growing and be able to have some crop failures, but learn and survive.

Other growers have grown successfully and gone on to develop new markets, employ people and become secondary suppliers, less hands on with the boxes. This mimics the **natural principal** that **many elements support key functions in ecosystems and build in redundancies that stop them failing**.