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Perelandra

Cooperating Co-Creatively with Nature

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As you change how you approach your garden, you will also change how you approach your life.

The community of Findhorn caused a sensation during the 1970's. Located near the Arctic Circle in Scotland this bleak and barren place was transformed into a veritable garden of Eden, producing remarkably large vegetables and spectacular out-of season blossoms, by people who regularly "communicated with angels and fairies." As Findhorn grew and prospered, the transformation of soil shifted in importance to the transformation of souls, and the world has never been quite the same since.

The successes of Findhorn remain for all to see proof positive that the impossible is still possible, that "special magic" is still alive and well. Yet, Findhorn is remote for most, a faraway place of faraway visions, reminiscent of a time when integrity mattered and the real "bottom-line" was service and caring.

What made Findhorn special, the heart of it, was its practical, everyday focus on how to create a healthy environment and a healthy life in balance and in harmony. It was "nuts and bolts" stuff, and it worked! But the "instructions," the informational guidance that made the difference, came from what was claimed to be the dominions of God through the kingdoms of nature. It was a staggering claim -- one that remains intact after years of challenge and criticism.

People forget, though, that the founders of the Findhorn Community were not the first to establish a co-creative partnership with invisible worlds. The great botanist George Washington Carver also claimed to have spoken with plant intelligences all his life, gaining from them the information he later used to develop practical ways to utilize the lowly peanut. And there are others, many others. In fact regardless of culture or country, legends abound describing fairies and angels guiding and uplifting humanity. Far from an isolated event, the true magic of Findhorn is the opportunity it represents to cooperate directly with the intelligence of nature

The next step in the evolution of that opportunity is happening at Perelandra. Where Findhorn became solid and stationary, a fixed-base operation one would visit, Perelandra is representative of a process one can use

no matter where one lives. And that process developed from another very special garden.

Located some sixty miles southwest of Washington, D.C., near the tiny hamlet of Jeffersonton, Virginia, Perelandra's 45 acres of meadow, woods, streams and garden have become a well-established "Center for Nature Research," an open-air laboratory dedicated to the discovery of nature's laws, and the principles and dynamics underlying the co-creative relationship between humanity and nature. As a research center, it is open to the public only once a year, and occasionally for classes and workshops.

The driving force behind what is happening at Perelandra is Machaelle Small Wright. In an article written for The Virginia Biological Farmer, she was characterized as a woman who talked with fairies and angels, materialized manure out of thin air, persuaded moles to do her bidding, had no insect problems of any kind in her garden, and, in general, seemed to be associated with amazing and impossible things. With the help of the spiritual beings she claims to work with, Wright has authored a simple "how-to" entitled "Perelandra Garden Workbook - A Complete Guide to Gardening with Nature Intelligences." More of a manual, it illustrates how anyone can do what she did—and more. Although an introduction to Perelandra is an introduction to its founder, the real "Perelandra" is the role model it offers, not of a place to visit but of a method to use. With manual in hand, one will find that the prospect of cooperating co-creatively with nature is now as practical and accessible as one's own front door.

The manual is a culmination of over 13 years spent in meticulous record keeping, covering every nuance of growth and change in the nature kingdoms Wright claims to work with, a bulk of facts now catalogued into two computers. During her first three years on the property, she regularly put in 12-hour days, seven days a week. But now, after the garden is planted in the spring (which is usually by June first), she spends only two or three hours per week attending to whatever might be needed until season's end. This frees her to devote time to communicating with nature intelligences, conducting experiments, and testing and carrying out ongoing projects

Upon meeting her, one finds a woman with both feet firmly planted on the ground, a no-nonsense lady who is a far cry from most "spiritual" types. In her late thirties, Wright's skin and lanky frame are sure signs of a person who spends considerable time outdoors and is no stranger to hard work. Her enthusiasm is infectious and her speech as earthy as the soil she tills. She sees herself as a research technician and information translator, not a psychic channeling messages from "beyond." Metaphysical and occult terms bother her so she avoids both, preferring instead to find other ways to demystify what she is doing.

"Six hundred million books tell you how to enlightenment but none tells you what to do after you get it," she says. To her, the secrets of spirituality and success are laziness and guts: the laziness not to get in your own way and the guts to act when it is appropriate. "I don't have any special gifts. All I have is guts. If I am to offer what I have learned to others, I need to know what I am talking about. I accept that responsibility --to do what I do well."

The star attraction of her work is the garden, a focal point in her study of what she believes to be the vibrational reality behind form. Called an "energy garden," she claims it is the result of a co-creative process between herself, nature spirits (called fairies by some), and devas (a Sanskrit word meaning "shining one," a divine being or angel). Speaking matter-of-factly, she defines devas as "overlighting intelligences still consciously connected with God and part of the Original Pattern." She further defines them as the "architects" throughout creation who hold together in perfection all energies necessary to produce whatever will develop into form. She explains that although each one is a specialist, guiding the development of any particular species, each is also capable of revealing "The Greater Whole." Accordingly then, the "Deva of Carrots" is the same architect for any carrot planted anywhere in the world. Contact with this deva, no matter from what location or in which language or by what person, always reaches the same deva.

"During the early days with the garden, I would go into meditation each day and open my connection with the devic level. A deva would come into my awareness and identify itself. I was then given instructions. I was told what type of seed to buy. What fertilizer to use. How far apart to plant the seeds. When to thin the plants and how much space to leave between them. As a deva came into my awareness, I noticed that each had its own vibration. After awhile, I could recognize which deva was entering my awareness. This led me to develop the ability to call specific devas by 'aiming' my awareness for the deva's own vibratory pattern. It was as if I was faced with a gigantic telephone bank and I had to learn how to make all the different connections. Once learned, I was able to 'make calls in' as well as receive calls."

Wright makes a definitive distinction between devas and nature spirits, although both, she feels, are "energy bodies of pure light." She says nature spirits are "more dense in vibration" because they appear in a closer proximity to Earth. "They are the workers responsible for tending to the well-being of plants, animals, and minerals. They maintain the necessary blend between form and life energies contained within that form." She continues, "If I were to desire a change in the color of a carrot, I would seek that change on the devic level, for that is part of the pattern of the carrot. But if I wish to prepare the soil and tend to the carrot perfectly, I would seek out the nature spirits for help because they work directly with existing form." Wright says that she experiences nature spirits sometimes as balls of energy, which move alongside her as she walks.

After our first trip to Perelandra, my husband and I drove around the countryside checking out other gardens, fields, trees, and whatever plant growth we could find. This was the summer of 1985, a time when that part of Virginia had been officially declared a drought disaster, a condition that continued into 1986 as well. We noticed mostly stunted, straggly growth in predominantly clay soil, packed and hard. There were a few bright flowers next to some homes, but no one had much of a garden and crops looked sparse.

Wright does use a heavy straw mulch to hold in moisture, and it is true that my "labor of love" can often result in "miracles," but dedication and hard work do not adequately explain the following facts about the Perelandra Garden: nearly perfect roses and vegetables grown without using any kind of chemical or organic repellent, no pest or animal problems of any kind at any time, minimal cash outlay and upkeep, no added moisture in a drought area, and an unusual energy "vibration" which permeates the area. The energy is similar to what I've felt visiting the Sequoia National Forest and the Four Corners Area, a feeling I would describe as an "accelerated uplift."

In contrast to the surrounding countryside, Perelandra sod is rich, moist, loose, and supports abundant, healthy life. Several neighbors commented on the Perelandra garden, noting that it always looked great regardless of season and seemed to always produce good food. None believe the fairy-deva stuff, but no one could explain why that garden stood out from all others. "It's not normal," said one. "Weird," said another. "Oh, she's just a good gardener," joked one woman. When I began quizzing some people who attended one of her workshops held on the property, most comments were an enthusiastic, such as: "I tried what she recommended and it worked." "I read her first book and thought, if she can do it, so can I —so I did." "I live in a large apartment complex and cannot garden, but I do use some of her methods to help improve my life." Comments less than enthusiastic were: "I'm really confused on how all this might help me." "None of this makes sense to me." and, "I just came here to get back to nature."

Wright told of elderly neighbors who have been gardening in the area for over 60 years and how, even using chemical insecticides, they still lose between 25 and 30 percent of their cabbages each year to cabbage worm. At Perelandra, I saw only a few leaves discarded because they were too tough. No heads were lost, and I never saw any insect holes in any cabbages. Only natural fertilizer is used, and the specific amount for each plant is prepared and administered in accordance with "instructions." Although I did not witness nor hear of anyone contacting nature spirits or devas during the several times I have been on the property, I have

to admit something very different is happening at Perelandra.

The most obvious difference is the unique shape of the garden — 18 concentric circles, which gives the appearance of a spiral, and a smaller, regularly-shaped circle nearby. The circles are arranged within a neatly mowed square of grass surrounded by a meadow and woods. Machaelle's cabin fronts the larger section of the garden, with tool shed to one side. Between both buildings is an entry gate and a roped-off area of undisturbed brush marked "The Elemental Annex," home for what Wright believes are the nature spirits she works with. Various havens for creatures and critters dot the entire property. Down a wooded path, past several log piles and a dog run, is the main house where Clarence Wright, Machaelle's partner, lives, and beyond the house is the small, octagonally-shaped office with a tall, peaked roof, resembling a sculptured version of a Native American (which, in fact it actually replaced several years before).

Through Machaelle's forming of her own company, Perelandra, Ltd., books and products have now emerged from the operation. "Behaving as if the God in All Life Mattered" (an introduction to Machaelle and the concept of an energy garden) and "Perelandra Garden Workbook" (co-authored by the nature spirits and devas she claims to work with) are both available, as well as a soil balancing kit, instructional cassette tapes, and a complete line of rose and garden "essences" (energized and refined substances taken by mouth in measured drops for use with balancing and harmonizing levels of life energy).

The history of Perelandra is really the history of Machaelle and Clarence. During a special Catholic mass in 1971 Machaelle joined in partnership with Clarence Wright, a former Paulist priest turned electronics specialist. According to Clarence, a partnership, unlike a traditional marriage, is where two independent people can interrelate and support each other while retaining separate identities. "You do not create a third entity, but support each other's growth and learning." Although their partnership has been frustrating at times, Clarence points to their rings as a symbol of the uniquely evolving relationship they share. Obviously proud of Machaelle, Clarence is unhesitating in his approval of their lifestyle and where they live, which means a 90-minute commute each day from his job in Washington, D.C. "I learn a lot being here. Machaelle and Perelandra have been like teachers to me in terms of opening up to my inner self and the cosmos. I'm hanging on for the ride and it's real exciting." Clarence does most of the cooking on the property (his specialty is vegetable spaghetti) and seems to enjoy being an all-around handyman and engineer of sorts, as well as the Perelandra photographer. He helps Machaelle some but says she does 90 percent of all garden work.

When they first moved to the property, they found the damage done by improper logging more substantial than previously thought. Healing the land necessitated that they also heal themselves. Creating harmony and balance became an internal as well as external task. Since their personal struggles were so akin to the story of Perelandra, by C. S. Lewis, they chose the book's name for their land. Lewis's "Perelandra" meant Venus, planet of perfection, and he used the conflict between two earthlings, one representing good, the other evil, to illustrate how the balance between the two is the real source of true perfection, the harmony of the whole. This story inspired both Machaelle and Clarence, and gave them courage.

During those early years Clarence worked nights, which left Machaelle home alone. She remembers how uncomfortable she felt at night, sensing a kind of energy or presence coming from the woods, a feeling she could not shake nor identify. "The nights of the full moon were the worst," she recalls. One day she started hearing "voices." After awhile she confided in Clarence and, instead of calling her crazy, he quoted a letter by Saint Paul to the early Christians in which Paul assured the people that the voices they heard were of God. Clarence suggested she start meditating, which she promptly did, although not following any particular method other than lying down, relaxing with eyes closed, and opening up to whatever felt right at the time. For some time after that, she continued to explore various realms of consciousness and the possibilities of other dimensions of reality. She had several teachers, but it was Clarence who again was a catalyst for her.

One day while shopping for books to read, he handed her two he thought she might enjoy: *The Magic of Findhorn* and *The Findhorn Garden*. These two books changed her life.

Wright says that she has learned many important lessons from nature spirits. She believes the "fear-of-stepping-on-an-elf-syndrome" can retard communications and progress once a person discovers the validity of nature intelligences. "These people," she laughs, "are afraid to try anything for fear of squashing an elf." She cringes when people start talking about nature spirits as sweet, cuddly little things. "That's not true. They do not respond to sentimental love. Their love is a love of action and purpose, and it is that kind of love they desire from us." To make her point, she tells of giving a workshop in a spiritual community and being asked to see what was wrong with a large bush. Apparently the bush had been recently transplanted and, as part of the transplanting process, community members gathered around it each night, joined hands, and "sent" the bush L-O-V-E. Instead of flourishing, it was dying. "I walked up to the bush, looked at the soil, checked the leaves, then turned around and said, 'Try watering it!' That's love in action."

I made it a point to ask her why anyone should bother going through the effort it takes to incorporate an entirely different approach to gardening or farming == especially in view of all the other proven, established, and successful methods?

"I'm very aware that this is a valid issue. I've raised the question myself. I'm especially prone to raising it when crouched over in the garden working on the third day to do something that takes regular gardeners less than an hour to do. I've been known to stand my weary bones upright, look toward the sky, and give serious thought to the state of my sanity. But each year as I watch my garden flourish under adverse conditions and the other gardens around me struggle, even die, under the same conditions, I find I raise the question less and less. The Perelandra garden thrives because of the approach I have been taught and the underlying consciousness and reality that motivate the approach."

"But," she adds, "everything that you know that has gone into establishing your sense of order, stability, and balance — in other words, logic, both in the garden and in your life away from it— will be constantly challenged if you use this method. For you see, this gardening is, in fact, a metaphor for the whole of life. As you change how you approach the garden, you will, in turn, change the very fabric of how you approach your life!" That challenge caught my attention.

The Perelandra garden changes to some degree each year. At first it consisted of normal, straight rows that formed a rectangle. Later, concentric circles were used in place of the traditional rows. Eventually, the smaller, regular-shaped circle was added for tomatoes only, as Wright was "told" tomatoes were incompatible with any other vegetable and should be alone.

Each year, after the winter solstice, she begins the process of planning the next year's garden. The information she claims to receive from devas is detailed and specific, including exact timing of when to plant what, and the ratio of each plant to the whole pattern of the garden. "I depend on the devas and nature spirits to inform me of my direction and the step-by-step process I need to take. Without that information, I would be guessing along with everyone else.

"None of it makes any sense until you see how it weaves in with weather patterns and insect hatchings for that year. Nature always strives for balance between such things as insects, weather, climate, soil, birds, hatchings, and so forth. The other traditions of gardening are not that reliable any more. Like everything else around us, these traditions must change, too. Many of our gardening techniques come from native peoples. Companion planting, for instance, is a native American technique. Because of the impact of today's ecology, the original companions in planting are no longer as effective. They need to be updated.

Wright's ideas are surprising. She explains, "What I am finding that works best is a garden that constantly changes, that is free to breathe and grow on its own with out set rules. An organic garden will selectively repel some life, but an energy garden repels nothing and includes everything. It took me a long time to learn that. I made a sign saying, 'YOUR GARDEN IS INCLUSIVE,' and tacked it to my shed to read every day. Once animals and insects realize they don't have to fight for their lives, that they are free to live and grow, their aggression subsides and they regulate themselves! My few Japanese beetles, for instance, stick to the same flower and leave the others alone now that they are no longer threatened with extinction. A dead bug is a dead bug, whether it's killed organically or otherwise. I had to consider another solution. "

Because of this decision of hers, Perelandra has become a sanauary for life and healing. Ten percent of all produce raised is regularly tithed for animal and insect consumption, and sections of land are left unmoved or untouched for their benefit, as well.

It is Wright's belief that most of the gardens and farmlands around the world are now without nature spirits. For that reason, she feels that the amount of energy any present form contains is at its minimum. "What we end up with is basically empty form. Food without light. We are constantly eating unenergized food — and it has nothing to do with the fast food chains. It is our lack of understanding of what's happening within ourselves and outside us that has gotten us in trouble. Because of our ignorance, we have not only complicated our own process, we've managed to affect the process of everything around us as well."

I can't help but reflect how different climate and weather are now and how pollution is worldwide in its effects. Since everything evolves, I paid close attention to Wright as she explained how foolish she thinks it is to expect the same results from the same methods each and every time. "It's just not possible," she cautions. Addressing the subject in larger terms, she refers to a message she "received" from the "Over lighting Deva of Planet Earth":

"Allow me to give you another insight. The Aquarian impulses are already seated within the planet. Visualize, if you will, the planet as a container of these impulses: Energy held beneath the Earth's surface. This energy is seated within the very soul of the planet, seated within its heart. It is there to be released and integrated into all levels of life on the planet. Now, picture one small, co-creative garden on the planet's surface. See it as a window into the interior of the planet, into its soul. As the gardener works to align this garden to the new dynamics, watch the window open and the energy contained within the core of the planet gently gravitate to and release through the window. Feel the sense of relief and freedom within the Earth's core as the energy moves outward and up. And watch the actions and the form living on the Earth's surface suddenly shift to reflect the impact of the heart energy which has now surfaced.

"That which exists on the surface has begun to connect to and integrate with the heart and soul of the planet, which, in turn, is fully aligned with the heart and soul force of the universe. As with the experience the human receives when he consciously shifts his perceptions in such a way that the heart energy he holds deep within is suddenly released and allowed to surface, so, too, will Earth as each person opens the window through the framework of the co-creative garden to the heart and soul energy of the planet.

"It is not enough to move about the planet in a state of benevolent love for it. Human state alone will not create the passageways through which the heart energy of the planet is allowed to release. It must be accomplished through the state of the human mind, his consciousness, combined with parallel and appropriate action. Once released, this heart energy from the planet will permeate all living reality upon its surface and support the evolutionary process of the planet and its inhabitants in tandem movement with the universe into the Aquarian era.

"I fully understand that I am aligning deep planetary change and universal movement with the actions of one gardener tending one small garden. This is precisely what I mean to do. One need not wait for group

consensus in such matters. One need only move forward, sound the note for change, and follow that intonation with parallel action. Each gardener, in the role of the Knower, shall hold the seed to his heart and shall plant this seed in the earth. The fruit of this plant shall be the winged and shafted Sun above his head, and a new kingdom shall be grounded on Earth. This I can promise you. This is what awaits you. "

Perelandra is truly a role model, an example of what anyone can do anywhere. It is a method, not a place; an opportunity, not an event. What it teaches is invaluable even for people who do not garden.

When I left Perelandra after my last stay there, I pondered a challenge Wright offered: "You are the creator of your 'garden,' even if you live in an apartment. It's up to you to ask your own questions and act on your own answers. Don't be afraid to make a mistake. Take what gardening teaches and use it in all of life!"

For informational brochures and product lists see <http://www.perelandra-ltd.com/> or write:

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