Steve Burns practices permaculture on Chestnut Farm, his 8 acre property in Victoria, Australia. This is a cool temperate zone with annual rainfall of 690 mm. He is currently convenor of the Ballarat Permaculture Guild (170 financial members, 830 FaceBook). Steve has degrees in Education and Psychology and has been involved in the training sector for the last 20 years. He has taught in permaculture design courses, introductory workshops and specific skills workshops. He is particularly interested in heritage fruit trees, espalier, potager gardens, alternative building and community building strategies.

Please contact Steve on [steveburns888@gmail.com](mailto:steveburns888@gmail.com) to discuss how your group might run one of these presentations (which can also be a fundraiser for your group).

Presentation Options

1A **Permaculture Design Principles Masterclass** (6 hrs minimum)

This is a full day event where participants are introduced to each of David Holmgren’s 12 permaculture design principles and also taught how to observe the principles in simultaneous application to particular contexts. The class includes lecture, group & individual work. Comparison will be made between different sets of permaculture principles that have been developed by different teachers, and the Holmgren principles. This day is suitable for both beginners and those experienced in permaculture. Steve has facilitated parts of the Advanced Permaculture Principles four day workshop with David Holmgren and David has endorsed this masterclass.

2A **Potager garden tour** (2 – 3 hrs)

In 2011, Steve visited a series of gardens in France, to pursue his interest in potager gardens and espaliered plants (particularly fruit trees). This presentation takes participants on a visual tour of three gardens where different aspects of historical and contemporary French traditions are demonstrated. Potager gardens typically use a formal design for their overall structure, with internal plantings that mix vegetables, flowers, herbs, berries and fruit trees. Espalier is the technique of pruning trees to predetermined shapes, often two dimensional, so that they can take advantage of growing against walls or in the middle of garden beds. The gardens we will ‘tour’ are Val Joanis (Provence), Le Priory D’Orsan (central France) and Potager de Roi (Versailles), so they cover a range of climate and soil conditions. You will learn how to integrate espalier and potager gardens within permaculture designs; and particularly how they suit urban and small-site applications.

2B **Growing a local community group** (2-3 hrs)

Steve was the driving force behind the Ballarat Permaculture Guild (BPG) which began in 2008. BPG now has 170 financial members plus over 800 in their FaceBook group. They run Permaculture Design Courses, Introductions to Permaculture, monthly practical skill workshops, permablitzes (single day working bees where 20-50 people establish permaculture gardens at private homes) and have numerous social events, including pot luck dinners, produce swaps and “Permies at the Pub” (once a month social drinks at a local bar). Other activities include bulk-buying tools, food and supplies (e.g. apple root stock for annual grafting days). The group had one government grant in 2011, but has otherwise grown entirely on volunteer input. Steve will honestly discuss the ups & downs that have shaped the group over the last five years, include the social media strategy that has been critical to the success of the group – despite the fact that some members refuse to be on FaceBook! This presentation is designed to be highly interactive and is suited to people wanting to start or expand a local permaculture group. You will get inspiration, plus practical ideas to implement in your group, and tips on how to avoid certain problems.

3A **The** **Beauty Dilemma – can a permaculture be beautiful?** (2 hrs - 1 hr + discussion)

In some circles, permaculture is thought to be a variation of organic gardening that uses lots of perennial plants, avoids straight rows and lets lots of things go to seed. Permaculture gardens end up looking like jungles (which is polite code for saying it’s a tangled mess!). Permaculturalists are seen as environmental economic-rationalists who are preoccupied with food production and don’t care how their garden looks. In contrast, most people care a great deal about how their garden looks: in fact, they think that is far more important than whether or not it is productive. Hence we arrive at the bizarre phenomenon of people calling a big square of raked gravel with a yucca plant and a water feature a ‘garden’! Permies can inadvertently get themselves into fights with clients because they ignore the aesthetic concerns of their clients. Beauty does matter! As service providers, we need to listen to our customers – but how do we do that while also challenging cultural norms and assumptions? Steve suggests that there is a simple solution to the ‘beauty dilemma’ and he will share it with you during this workshop. The presentation is usually followed by a lively debate! ☺