

Patterns

There are many familiar patterns within nature that can be found repeated both in the animate and inanimate world. Tree rings, the mushroom shape of the canopy in leaf, water flow, waves, wind. We also have familiar behaviours, repetitions of historical events, emotional and physiological patterns. Some are inexplicable others are obvious and predictable, they are important in our designs and wherever possible should be incorporated.

Pattern shapes:

Waves: water, sand

Streamlines: foam strips in water

Cloud forms: tree canopies

Spirals: air circulation

Lobes: fungi

Branches: trees, streams

Scatters: algae

Nets: honey combs

Boundaries

Difference

Friction/reaction

Accumulation

Unique niches

Resources

Edge effect 'It is recognised by ecologists that the interface between two ecosystems represents a third, more complex, system which combines both. At interfaces, species from both systems can exist, and in many cases the boundary also supports its own species' Bill Mollison

Tasks:

Observation

Look at natural phenomena such as water, trees, rocks, and plants, find the patterns within them and match those in common. Relate these patterns to other natural material and events.

Increasing yield

Mark a meter square on the ground then place sticks in straight lines 10cm apart. Make a wavy line from some wire and repeat in another square. What are the yields?

Make a herb spiral

Construct a 2m diameter by 1m high earth mound in a spiral starting at ground level then rising up to the centre. Mark the spiral out with stones. Have a small water catchment pond at the start of the spiral then plant up with herbs depending on their preference for light, shade, moisture and height of growth.