



A photograph of a lush green forest garden. In the center, there is a small wooden gazebo with a striped roof. The garden is filled with various plants, including large leafy greens and smaller flowers. In the background, a modern glass skyscraper is visible against a clear sky.

Real-Life Forest Gardens

IPCUK Conference 2015

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Story so far: Theory

- Robert Hart: Vision
- Jacke/Toensmeier: Literature review & integration
- Martin Crawford: Proof of concept
- Specialist works: Weiseman et al, Mudge & Gabriel ...

Story so far: Practice

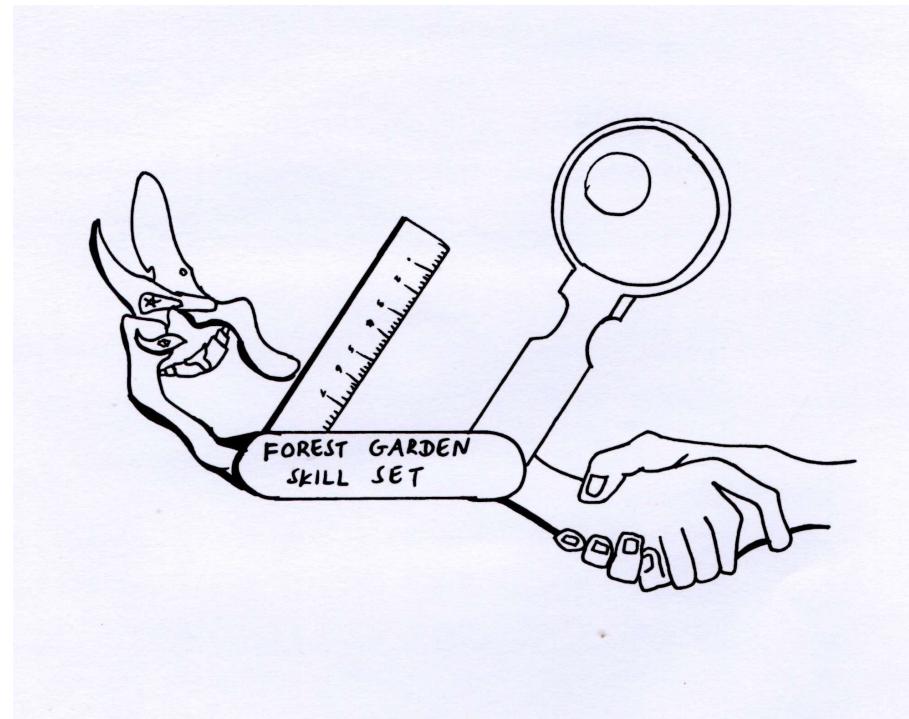
- Baseline survey: 130 sites
- Case studies: 40 sites
- UK, US, Europe
 - document research, interviews, site visits
- Functions, design, establishment, maintenance
- Patterns - success and challenges

Early indications

Knowledge-intensive production with high yield potential

Yields can be physical, social, ecological and economic

4-5 key skill sets



Yield potential

Graham Bell, Coldstream Scotland

Home garden, 1ton/750sqm = 13.3 t/ha

→ Yield potential

Triple skill set

Ecology

Design

Horticulture

Social potential

Yield types

Learning

Nature connection

Connecting with people

Food

4th Skill set – people skills

social interaction

project management

Knowledge exchange &
succession

Ecological potential

“Biodiversity hotspots”

Soil building & carbon
capture

Commercial potential



1.5 ha site, 1/3 of site forest garden & perennial polycultures

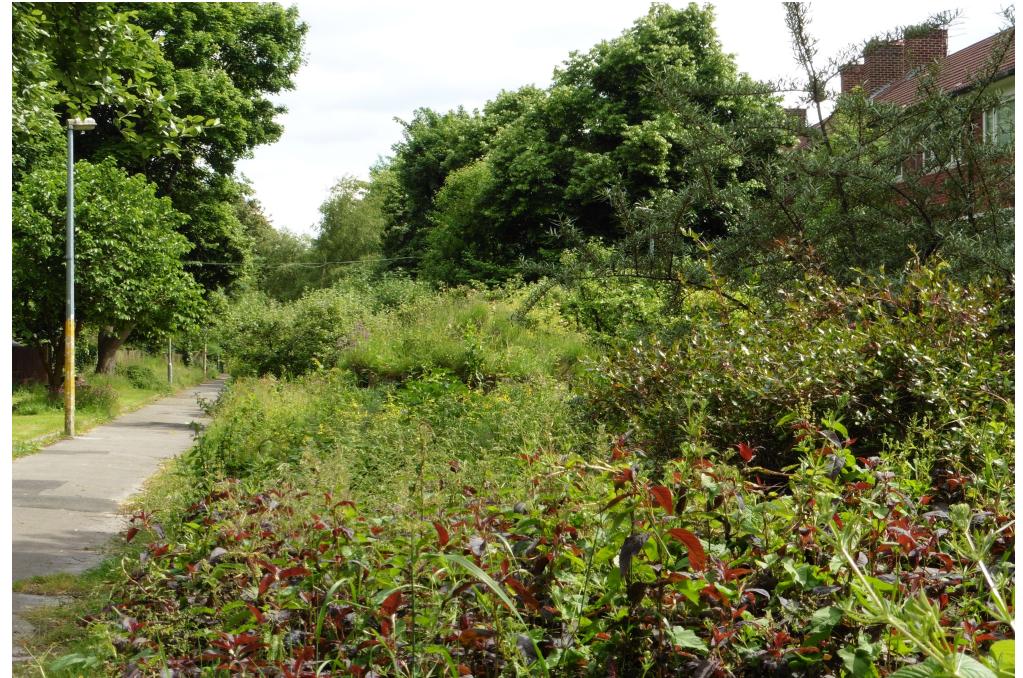
£20K/year

Forest garden supports veg production

5th skill set: marketing

Challenges

System
health



Legibility

Succession



Summary

Very few forest gardeners start out with all required skills

Forest gardens are a learning opportunity for developing multiple skill sets

Summary

Success depends on

- the ability to develop and maintain necessary skills
- Continuity of management
- Security of tenure