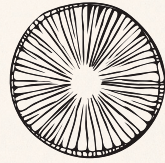


INTRODUCTION



Dear co-gardeners!

With these practice-based research method cards we invite you to explore the garden and attune to nature. They present six methods that inspire connection with nature, encourage consciously doing less in art and design, and contribute to post-growth thinking, increase ecological awareness and the appreciation of interspecies co-creation. Developed as part of a practice-based action research study in 2023–2024, the methods are based on the art and design practices of the authors and shaped through dialogue and collaboration with various other partners.

Thank you!

These methods aim to inspire artists, designers and gardeners, but also to be applied in other fields, gardens and forests.

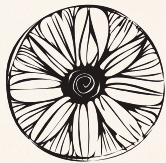
Imagine the next ten years of your life as a journey.¹

Who or what do you care about?

Which things and resources are you willing to forgo?

What would be different?

What would be better?



artun.ee/en/gardeners-dialogue/



¹ Based on "Exercise for less" in the book: Fletcher, Kate & Tham, Mathilda 2019. *Earth Logic Fashion Action Research Plan*. London: JJ Charitable Trust, pp. 1–65. <https://katefletcher.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Earth-Logic-plan-FINAL.pdf> (accessed 20.12.2024).

As artists and designers, we too are affected by the multifaceted crises. Because the environmental crisis is connected with aesthetics and culture, just as it is with the natural and social sciences, we need to critically reappraise our own current practices. Instead of growth-oriented activities, we wish to see new layers of meaning emerge in the everyday, the local, and the inclusive. Despite our doubt about whether to act or make at all, we nevertheless want to, but modestly and thinking about the future.

We are living in an ecological crisis, whose dangers, affects and challenges have been described by many international organisations.² The environmental crisis is deepening, yet production and consumption and its impact on nature continues to grow. Many of our patterns of thinking and behaving are remnants of the industrial age. Survival, however, depends not just on skill to expand but humility, so in addition to caretaking, we need to collaborate and empathise with other life experiences. If we lack an emotional connection with nature and non-human species, then it is difficult for us to care for them and pass on that care.³

Practice-based methods help transform resource-hungry activities into more dialogical, nourishing relationships with nature and the environment. They support cultural and social continuity and foster development toward regeneration. Through these methods, we explore which art and design approaches strengthen our connection with nature, aiming for responsible⁴ creative process.

The methods are inspired by the image of a garden. As amateur gardeners, we see the garden both literally, as a place for growing food and as a multi-species environment, and also metaphorically, as a design project, an exhibition or research project. By tending to the garden, we are also tending to our own survival on this planet. These methods help initiate dialogue and encourage a future-oriented mindset that acts locally, thoughtfully and collaboratively. We planted the garden with confusion in the hope of harvesting new insight.

² For example according to the IPBES report approximately a million species are at risk of extinction and a tenth of habitats are degraded. UN IPBES media release: *Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented'; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'*. 2019. <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment> (accessed 23.04.2023) and the UN Environment Programme is calling on governments to scale up climate adaptation efforts in order to avoid irreversible damage to the planet. UNEP 2024. *The Adaptation Gap Report 2024: Come hell and high water*. <https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2024> (accessed 27.12.2024).

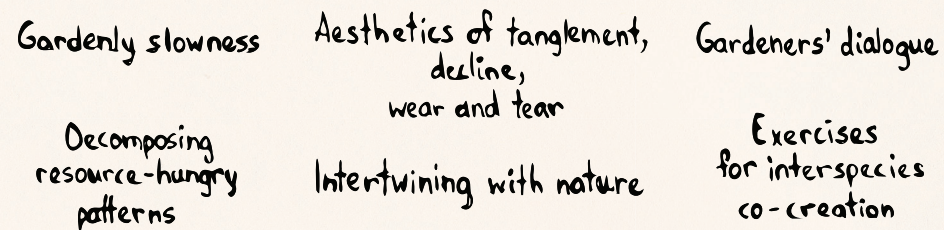
³ For many indigenous peoples gratitude to nature is central. See for example Kimmerer, Robin Wall 2013. *Braiding Sweetgrass. Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Penguin Books.

⁴ Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press.

How to use the method cards?

These practice-based methods are intended as inspiration for carrying out and interpreting creative practice. However, the method cards may also offer ideas and exercises for connecting with nature in other practices.

The collection contains six methods:



These practice-based methods do not follow a linear order but can be thought of as a web, a weaving, a tangle, a network or rhizome and can also be used individually.

Each card comprises an introduction, theoretical background, exercises and practical examples. The method cards are available in both digital and printable versions. We invite you to take part in the dialogue and become entangled with nature!



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The method cards were developed as part of the project “Artists and designers as researchers, re-thinkers and partners with nature in the context of degrowth”. The methods are grounded in the authors’ own creative practices. One of these, “Interspecies social sculpture” has explored the garden and forest as an interspecies environment for connection and co-creation, and another, “Designer, the resilient gardener”, has focused on hands-on practices like mending and darning, and initiating processes inspired by nature. The methods grew out of dialogue between the authors, as well as other gardeners.

Jane Remm is an artist, art educator, and practice-based researcher exploring, through her art practice, how to act locally with resilience and meaningfully in collaboration with humans and non-humans. She is interested in understanding and interpreting the life experiences of other species, and the ways that art can help us realise ourselves as part of nature.

Marta Kononov is a designer, practice-based researcher, craftivist and educator who focuses on mending and regenerative textile design. In her practice she is inspired by nature’s ability to recuperate, and she aims to promote emotional durability by working with already existing artefacts.

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