



## ✧ PRINCIPLE 8: WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH ✧

**Goal: Integrate all the principles  
into your garden to create balance**

**GB** is a unified farming method, with *all eight principles* playing an important role in creating a thriving mini-ecosystem that sustains itself and its farmers. The closer you can come to a closed system, the more sustainable your farming methods will be.

If, instead of using all the principles on your farm, some principles are used and others are discarded, your soil may eventually be in worse condition than when you began. For example, deep soil cultivation partnered with intensive planting but *without* the benefits of compost may strip the soil of fertility and structure. Similarly, adding more than a sustainably produced amount of compost or extra biological fertilizer may improve crop yields for a few years, but lead to soil imbalances that could cause future insect and disease issues and a less-healthy soil. Not growing enough compost material on your own farm may be depleting your soil for lack of the compost needed to hold minerals in your soil. Buying materials to build compost may deplete someone else's land.

The benefits of patient and consistent work necessary to create the healthy soil and the crop diversity inherent in the GB method will be evident over time. Though crops may struggle during the first years in challenging soil, or insect pests may be an initial problem, careful attention to all eight principles will transform the farm into a vigorous ecosystem that grows healthy, high-yielding crops and can keep insect pests in balance.

GB requires farmers to act with thought and foresight, recognizing that the farm itself is part of a greater ecosystem that should be thriving. Keeping half of your land in the wild, if possible, nurtures the plant, insect, and animal diversity that surround the farm and provides a buffer that allows it to exist and thrive. In urban settings, perhaps an area for native flowers, shrubs, and trees can be a welcome space for visitors that also helps support a larger ecosystem.

This final principle is the essential top of the stool so that, when all other principles are considered, you can sit and rest with the satisfaction that the stool is well formed, strong and beautiful!

### ***Ultimate GB Farmer's Challenge:***

*When considering any one aspect of the garden, always remember that all things are connected and that only a healthy soil will produce healthy crops. Only a healthy system can sustain a healthy soil. Challenge yourself and your neighbors to become aware of and to nurture the WHOLE ecosystem!*

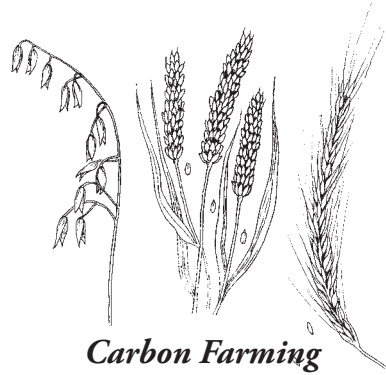
GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming is an exciting recognition that farmers are important people who care for other people and for the land. Be creative as you remember each of the goals and work toward creating a thriving mini-ecosystem on your farm. Ask yourself if your actions uphold the goal and move you toward sustainability. Be patient; knowledge and skill are things that are built by practice, dedication, and time—just like soil. Ultimately, start small, do the best with what you have, and learn from everything you do. As you master this, you hold a beautiful seed. As a farmer, this seed of knowledge will be in your hands to nurture and to share!



A WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH:



*Calorie Farming*



*Carbon Farming*



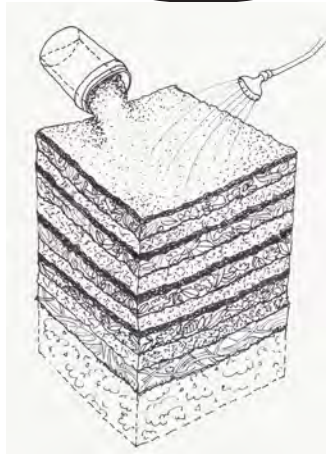
*Open-Pollinated Seed*



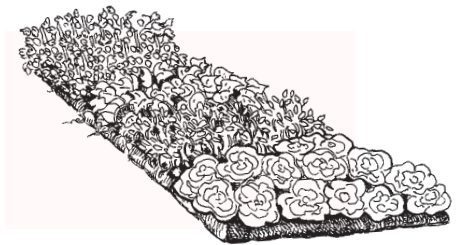
*Companion Planting*



*Deep Soil Preparation*



*Composting*



*Intensive Planting*