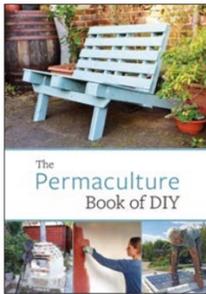


the reality is and hope of what some solutions could look like. I particularly enjoyed his beginner's guide to fallacies in the appendix. Titled 'How to Cheat in an Argument (Or, even better, how to catch yourself doing it)' this idiosyncratic list of flaws in logic to look for, or check yourself with, is characteristic of his humility and wide scholarship. A brilliant book that is to be read, considered and re-read for its richness of ideas and novel approach to solutions.

*Phil Moore is one half of @permapeople*

### THE PERMACULTURE BOOK OF DIY

John Adams and friends  
Permanent Publications, 2016  
240 x 170mm, 176 pages  
£12.95



This is a radical book – not because the ideas within it are going to change the world, but because it contains funky little DIY projects that could make a lot of people think 'hey, I've always wanted one of those, but was put off by the cost – but actually, I could do it myself'.

That might not have sounded too radical a generation or two ago, but in the UK, fewer and fewer people realise that they can actually do things for themselves. The vast majority of 21st century jobs in developed countries, from project management, finance, IT, shelf-stacking and burger flipping, require no real practical skills at all.

This is a very dangerous scenario. I don't want to get too gloomy here, but if civilisation starts to fall over (and there are a hundred reasons why it might – ecological degradation being the main one), a population without practical skills – notably providing food, shelter and energy – will find things very tough. OK, I am getting

carried away – civilisation might stumble rather than fall over, and making a bench from pallets wouldn't get you very far, but obtaining the essentials of life may become that bit harder in a future with 10 billion people, a degraded ecosystem, massive soil loss and increased toxicity.

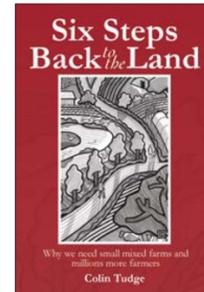
Right now, however, DIY skills can help us provide for ourselves, and possibly start small businesses to provide for others in our communities. Local resilience is necessary to reduce the distance goods are transported, and to reduce reliance on the giant corporations that damage our democracy and environment. But enough of that, did I mention that these projects are fun too?

Another Brucie bonus is that all the projects can be completed using recycled materials (including the cider press, although you're going to need very new apples to make the cider). Pallets have a starring role – they shake off their Cinderella character, often unwanted after a delivery – to take centre stage as benches, solar dryers, raised beds, or cider presses. You're going to look at pallets very differently after this, possibly along the lines of, 'how am I going to get that in my car?'. My favourite project was something I'd never seen before – a way of firing pottery without a kiln, using rolled up newspaper! It did say that pottery fired like this might need treating with beeswax to make it waterproof, but what a fantastic idea and great to do with kids.

The book is user-friendly and encouraging in a way that even the least handy amongst us could end up building something that they didn't think they were capable of. Just imagine the satisfaction of building your own garden furniture / hot tub / rocket stove / natural paints / natural swimming pool / shave horse / wind turbine (from a bicycle wheel) / container garden / pizza oven / solar food dryer / geodesic greenhouse and more, all from recycled materials, and maybe from that stuff that's filling up your shed because 'it might come in handy one day'. Well, that day might be here.

*Dave Darby is the founder of Lowimpact.org and a director of the Ecological Land Co-op*

**SIX STEPS BACK TO THE LAND**  
Why We Need Small Mixed Farms  
and Millions More Farmers  
Colin Tudge  
Green Books, 2016  
234mm x 156mm, 224 pages  
£17.99



The latest book from science writer and 'Real Farming' advocate, Colin Tudge, is a positive call to arms to anyone interested in working land in ways that seek not to harm it. The focus is on agriculture, specifically agroecology, an approach that takes a whole-system view of the farm, smallholding or garden as an ecosystem to collaborate with for the benefit of all. It is important to realise that people form part of the ecosystem, are wholly reliant upon it, and must therefore not wreck it, as mainstream farming – with its reliance on fossil fuels, heavy machinery and ever more technology – is wont to do.

Tudge calls his approach towards a more sensible way of farming 'Enlightened Agriculture', and the steps it entails are outlined here. In clear terms Tudge explains the considerable shortcomings of conventional (non-organic) agriculture, dispels the notion that we need GM to feed a growing population, and proposes appropriate uses of technology as an antidote to today's tech-heavy farming accessible only to the wealthy with land as far as the eye can see. Enlightened Agriculture is organic by default. It takes nature as its model, with fertile soil as the cornerstone, hence when covering farming livestock humanely, regenerative agriculture/ holistic management's idea of mob grazing is highlighted for its effect of reducing atmospheric carbon while invigorating soil. For the enlightened, no-till is key and keeping soil covered