

Welcome to Syntropy!

By Anaëlle Théry

[French extracts Translation, original title : "Bienvenue en Syntropie !"](#)

“Back cover”

This first book on syntropic agroforestry in a temperate climate is based on an understanding of the fundamental principles of the abundance of living organisms and on the results of field research carried out by a pioneer of syntropy in France.

It offers a weaving of science, philosophy and history, as well as experimentation, observation, and revelation of possibilities.

All of which seasoned with musketeer mice, fables, and turtle plantings!

A hopeful response to global warming!

The author

Anaëlle Théry: nursery gardener, educator, and author.

University-educated in Anthropology and History, children's author, nursery gardener, and field experimenter, she was trained in France in 2018 by Ernst Götsch in syntropic agroforestry, after years of practice, learning, and gardening. She is passionate about education, resilient adaptation to climate change, and finding a just and beneficial place for humans in living systems.

What is syntropy?

Syntropy comes from the Greek *syntropia*, which means moving from the simple to the complex. Initiated by Ernst Götsch more than 40 years ago in Brazil, syntropic agroforestry has been practised in temperate climates for some years now.

It's the succession in time and space of production and of biomass; an agriculture of process: the more you plant, the richer the soil, and the less you water.

First and foremost, it's a paradigm shift, which is reflected in practices on the ground. There are no ready-made recipes, but a deep understanding that *"we are not the intelligent ones, we are part of an intelligent system"*. (Ernst Götsch)

It's about rediscovering the right and beneficial place for life.

It's magical and exhilarating!

Experiments

Since 2018, the Joala nursery has become a research center for adapting the principles of syntropy to temperate climates, with more than 24 test areas in growth.

The objectives of the experiments are divided between vegetable gardens, market gardening, growing berries and fruit trees, and producing wood, with a perspective of achieving self-sufficiency in biomass and creating microclimates on the plots, resistance to heat extremes, exponential soil improvement and a drastic reduction in water requirements.

Co-published by Joala Syntropie, a center for experimentation and training in syntropy since 2018 in the Dordogne (www.joala.fr), Terre vivante, publisher of practical ecology books and of the magazine "4 saisons", which also offers practical courses in its ecological gardens in Isère (www.terrevivante.org).

Page 4 CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 .. 11 WHERE IT'S GREEN

I am photosynthesis!

- Fable: the leaf and the Genie

Colonisation system

Accumulation system

Abundance system

CHAPTER 2 .. 15 FIRST STEPS, FIRST PRINCIPLES

Life comes from movement .. 16

- Impermanence
- Interdependence
- Compound organisms
- Cycles and respiration
- Fable: What the Oak Said

Disturbance .. 17

- A gust of wind, a helping hand
- How does it work?
- Disturbance for better growth

Levers of abundance: animal mass .. 19

- The reign of the giants
- A free and wild country

Levers of abundance: trophic cascades.. 21

- Keystones
- The 'whale' case
- Man, the predator

CHAPTER 3 .. 23 A VISIT TO THE GARDEN

The museum of mistakes .. 24

- It's not enough
- The soil expresses what it needs

In the field .. 25

- Selective weeding
- Little nests
- The rhizosphere
- The Cat's Leap
- The Cat's Leap recipe for sunflowers in the syntropic vegetable garden
- Taking stock
- Back to principles

Living edges .. 27

- The essentials
- Plants for edges

The Mini Syntropic Forest .. 28

- Setting up and monitoring
- Self-sufficiency and biomass
- Field notes

About turtles .. 31

CHAPTER 4 .. 33 WHAT IF THE EARTH WAS FERTILE?

The world's floor.. 34

- What ecologists say
- Everyday deserts
- What if the Earth...

CHAPTER 5 .. 37

THE SPACE MUSKETEER

Always more green .. 38

- The three musketeers
- Space and light
- Ground occupation
- Planting a movie

CHAPTER 6 .. 43

INTERACTIONS AND BALANCE

Motivations, roles and impact .. 44

- Tools, functions...
- ... and internal pleasure
- Ant-like steps
- The sense of effort

From hecatomb to understanding - Holistic Management .. 45

- Change of direction
- Group movements
- The real issue...

CHAPTER 7 .. 47

WATER IS PLANTED

H2O .. 48

- In the womb
- It's raining

Water is planted .. 49

- All quiet on the Western front
- Dream forest
- Sky rivers
- There's no such thing as drought
- Planting organic material

CHAPTER 8 .. 51

IN THE SYNTROPIC VEGETABLE GARDEN

Learning .. 52

Context .. 52

The first year of a garden .. 53

Outlook .. 57

Vegetable successions .. 58

Introduction to annual plant design .. 58

Questions .. 63

Page 5

CHAPTER 9 .. 65

THE MULTIPLICATION OF ALLIED PLANTS

Grow and multiply .. 66

Sowing a lot

- corn
- Sunflowers

A bit of math .. 67

Safety .. 68

- About the sowing period

Cuttings .. 69

- Preparing a cutting
- The cutting cycle
- Root cuttings

Bare root planting .. 71

- Plant memory

Rootstocks and scions .. 72

Small fruits .. 73

CHAPTER 10 .. 73

A META SUPER ORGANISM

All and parts .. 74

- Trends
- Ever bigger
- Aggregates
- The law of the jungle doesn't exist
- The lion's share

Pests... maybe not .. 75

- Recycling
- Forced simplification
- Regaining balance
- Fable: The Woman and the Thistle

Undesirables - The new Pangea .. 77

- Short time, long time
- Migration without borders
- Historical humour
- Without positive interactions, life is destruction
- Ingenuity
- The excesses of utter control

CHAPTER 11 .. 81

BUILDING A SCREENPLAY, PLANTING A MOVIE

The musketeer Time, take two .. 82

- Fractals
- Waves

Creating a screenplay, planting a movie, take three .. 84

- Next level

Preparing the stratification table .. 85

Eucalyptus .. 86

- Main production; white mulberry and blackcurrant
- Preparing the eucalyptus table

Observations .. 88

Layout plan .. 89

CHAPTER 12 .. 91

DISTURBANCE PRUNING

Practice, always practice .. 92

- Why is water important for disturbance?
- Woody basitonous plants
- Troughing
- The multi-trunk tree
- About branches
- Disturbance on non-woody plants

Tools .. 97

- Body
- Metal

Calendar .. 98

Syntropic yoga .. 99

CHAPTER 13 .. 101

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

A world of data .. 102

And the verbe was god .. 102

- Daily life
- From the individual to multiplicity
- Involution

Where suffering is concerned .. 104

- Perception
- Perspectives
- Presence

Ethics, it itches .. 104

- One day, one man...
- ...Homo sapiens
- I'm from this country...
- Errare humanum est

Darwin, the unknown .. 106

The other mirror .. 106

CHAPTER 14 .. 107

A TURTLE STORY

The example of ancestral agroforestry systems .. 108

- Two in one

The turtle family, or the succession of plots .. 108

- Evolution of a turtle over the years

Turtles

- Imagine
- Structuring the turtle (The turtle heart; Play, and play some more; Assemble; Go deep)
- Preparing the soil (Black, soft; Mushrooms)
- Structuring
- The shell edges or outer living edges (Shell edges facing south, west or southwest and north, east and northeast)
- Completing
- Learning

CHAPTER 15 .. 123

PERENNIAL PLANTING

Fundamentals .. 124

- Reminder
- General orientation of turtles
- What species should be planted?
- How far apart should fruit trees be planted?

Examples of screenplays and possibilities .. 126

- Error 404
- Zebra turtle
- Bee turtle
- Vine turtle, shade turtle
- Production of firewood, fodder wood, or RCW
- The paulownia
- Syntropic nursery
- The paulownia
- Rectify a planting (Working in an old orchard; Complexifying young plantings; Little nests; Remedy living edges)
- Et cetera

CHAPTER 16 .. 141

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Contents

Complexity .. 142

Simplicity .. 144

Contemplation .. 145

Action .. 147

- Fable: The Lion and the Leek ‘

The Gardens of Victory or the Perspective of the Salad .. 149

APPENDICES .. 150

A final word .. 150

Preparatory sheet for planting projects .. 150

Timetable for setting up a planting .. 152

The day we sow .. 153

Preparing for planting in community and tips and tricks .. 153

Tables of allied plants, living edges, and perennial plants .. 155

Bibliography .. 156