

# The Edible Landscape Oasis

## Permaculture in Practice

### Tour Guide: Eric Toensmeier

Friday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 2013

10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

Holyoke, MA

\$20.00 ELA Member or \$25 Non-Member



Imagine growing vegetables that require the same amount of care as perennial flowers and shrubs, need no annual tilling or planting, yet thrive and produce abundant and nutritious crops throughout the season - Eric Toensmeier has made it happen!

Eric lives in Holyoke, Massachusetts where the climate is cold, often wet, and seldom enjoys three days of sunshine in a row. It is not an ideal growing climate by any standards. Yet, on a single evening stroll through his small backyard, Eric can collect a full meal for his household. Using permaculture and polyculture techniques, Eric has transformed what was once a construction dirt lot into a veritable farmers market of organically grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

Like any well-designed polyculture, Eric Toensmeier and Jonathan Bates have packed a lot of productivity into their one-tenth of an acre urban farm. After a few years as colleague plantsmen, Eric and Jonathan set out to create a multi-storied, forest garden on this winter-challenged, urban lot. More than eight-years, and a lot of hard work later, Eric invites us to tour his urban oasis to witness the successful food production and to learn how it was achieved by overcoming the challenges of a tiny urban lot, the shade of mature Norway Maples, nutrient-deficient soil, heavy compaction, clay, lead, and urban prejudice against chickens.

Eric has a rich background in permaculture, having authored *Perennial Vegetables* and co-authored the two-volume set *Edible Forest Gardens*. Throughout this tour Eric will describe such permaculture features as thoughtful planning (nearly a year's worth went into this project before planting was started), careful soil management, well-researched plant selection and placement, informed resource use/reuse, and ongoing evaluation and readjustments as needed. And for a reality check, Eric will also share stories of the setbacks and design failures along the way.

**Registrations are limited - Use This Link to Register Online Now.**  
For more information: [ela.info@comcast.net](mailto:ela.info@comcast.net) or (617) 436-5838

Eric Toensmeier has studied and practiced permaculture since 1990. He has spent much of his adult life exploring edible and useful plants of the world and their use in perennial agro-ecosystems. He is the author of *Perennial Vegetables* and co-author of *Edible Forest Gardens* with Dave Jacke. For several years, Eric ran an urban farm project for Nuestras Raíces in Holyoke Massachusetts, providing access to land for Latino and refugee farmers and serving as a cultural agri-tourism destination. Eric's urban homestead is a model of how to apply permaculture to a small space with poor soils. Eric has taught permaculture and food forestry in Spanish in Mexico and Guatemala. His writings, videos and more can be viewed at [www.perennialssolutions.org](http://www.perennialssolutions.org).



CEUs are being sought for this presentation.