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## 1. Permaculture Design Certification Course

**August 9th-22nd Homer, Alaska**

**sponsored by the Anchorage Permaculture Guild**

with co-instructors Rick Valley and Lisa DePiano

Have you ever wanted to learn how to design your garden, greenhouse, or home working *with* natural systems not against it? Permaculture is a holistic design process, using ecology as a basis for designing integrated systems with an embued ethic of caring for the earth, caring for people and sharing the surplus. This course lays the foundation for understanding and using natural principles to design abundant, sustainable systems that provide for basic human needs of healthy food, housing, energy, and meaningful work and relationships while also contributing to the regeneration of the earth. This is a full 72-hour certification course and will cover all aspects of Permaculture. This exciting course will include hands-on activities and field trips to working sustainable farms so you can experience theory in action. Additional evening workshops are planned to further your knowledge and experience during this two week course. This course will be held at the beautiful 160 acre AGEYA Wilderness School in Homer and includes all meals and either a camping or shared yurt accommodation.

For more information go to <http://akpermaculture.wordpress.com/>. **Registration is now open!** Early registration rates available until May 31st. Limited space available. See schedule at [http://www.balancealaska.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=103:spring-permaculture-workshop-series-2010&catid=48:anchorage&Itemid=81](http://www.balancealaska.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=103:spring-permaculture-workshop-series-2010&catid=48:anchorage&Itemid=81)



## 2. How to Build Powerhouse Soil Fertility

With Bob & Christine Greig of Alaska Sea-Ag

Learn which crop-nourishing substances to put in your garden this spring.

Where: at their warehouse in Palmer

When: Fri May 14 at 7-9pm (repeat class)

Tuition: \$18 to learn from the masters Register on line at [www.goodearthgardenschool.com](http://www.goodearthgardenschool.com) or let me know you're coming. Directions, products, and prices on website too.

### 3. Cocoa mulch warning

Cocoa Mulch, which is sold by Home Depot, Foreman's Garden Supply and other Garden supply stores contains a lethal ingredient called 'Theobromine'. It is lethal to dogs and cats. It smells like chocolate and it really attracts dogs. They will ingest this stuff and die. Several deaths already occurred in the last 2-3 weeks (early May, 2010)

Although the mulch had NO warnings printed on the label, upon further investigation on the company's web site, this product is HIGHLY toxic to dogs and cats.

Cocoa Mulch is manufactured by Hershey's, and they claim that "It is true that studies have shown that 50% of the dogs that eat Cocoa Mulch can suffer physical harm to a variety of degrees (depending on each individual dog). However, 98% of all dogs won't eat it."

\*Snopes site gives the following information: <http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/cocoamulch.asp>

Theobromine is in all chocolate, especially dark or baker's chocolate which is toxic to dogs. Cocoa bean shells contain potentially toxic quantities of theobromine, a xanthine compound similar in effects to caffeine and theophylline. A dog that ingested a lethal quantity of garden mulch made from cacao bean shells developed severe convulsions and died 17 hours later. Analysis of the stomach contents and the ingested cacao bean shells revealed the presence of lethal amounts of theobromine.



(I pass this along for safe decision-making; I have not researched the validity.)