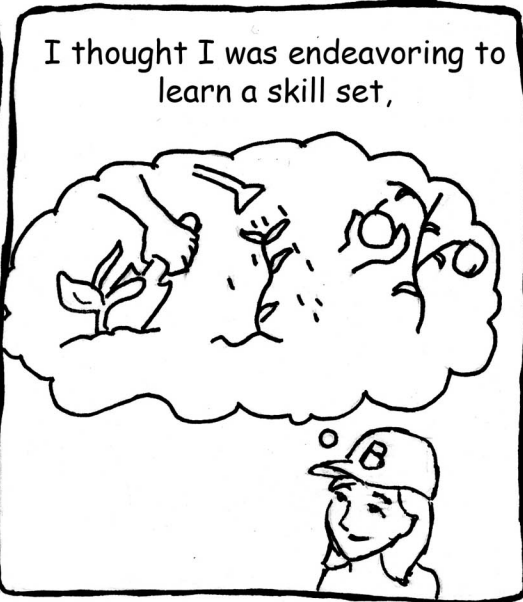


Illustrated  
Homegardens  
for living light in the Tropics

by Lauren Mawe

agroforestry.net April 2012

# HI I'm Lauren



Let me show you  
what I've learned!

In Hawaii about 85% of food is imported, much of it is processed and not healthy with only 15% being grown locally.

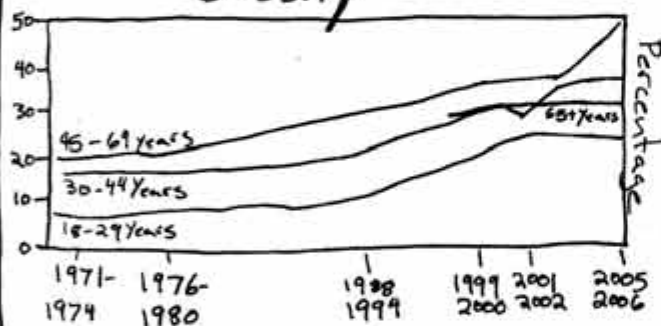


A study in 2007 found that residents of Hawaii spend 21% of food expenditures on fast food.



Obesity has dramatically increased around the country,

### Obesity



but most notably in Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations.



Diet-related problems such as heart disease, type II diabetes, and obesity are more acute than in the general population.



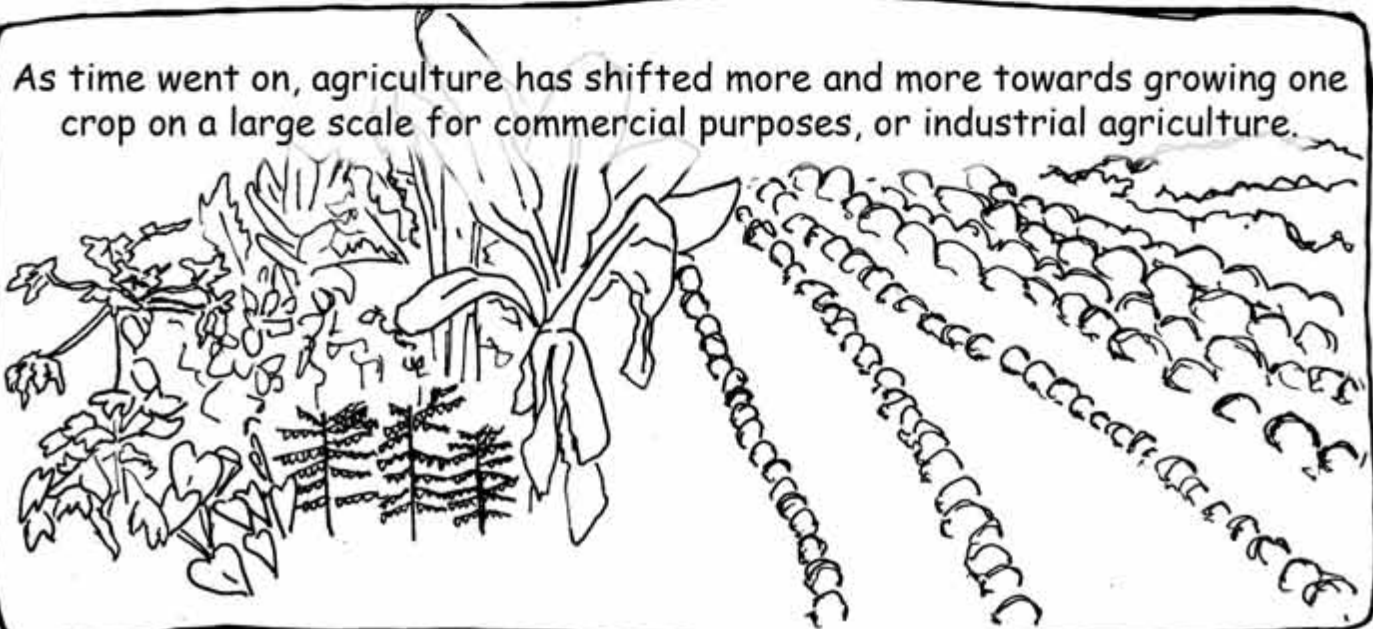
Throughout the tropics, agroforestry has always been a fundamental form of agriculture.



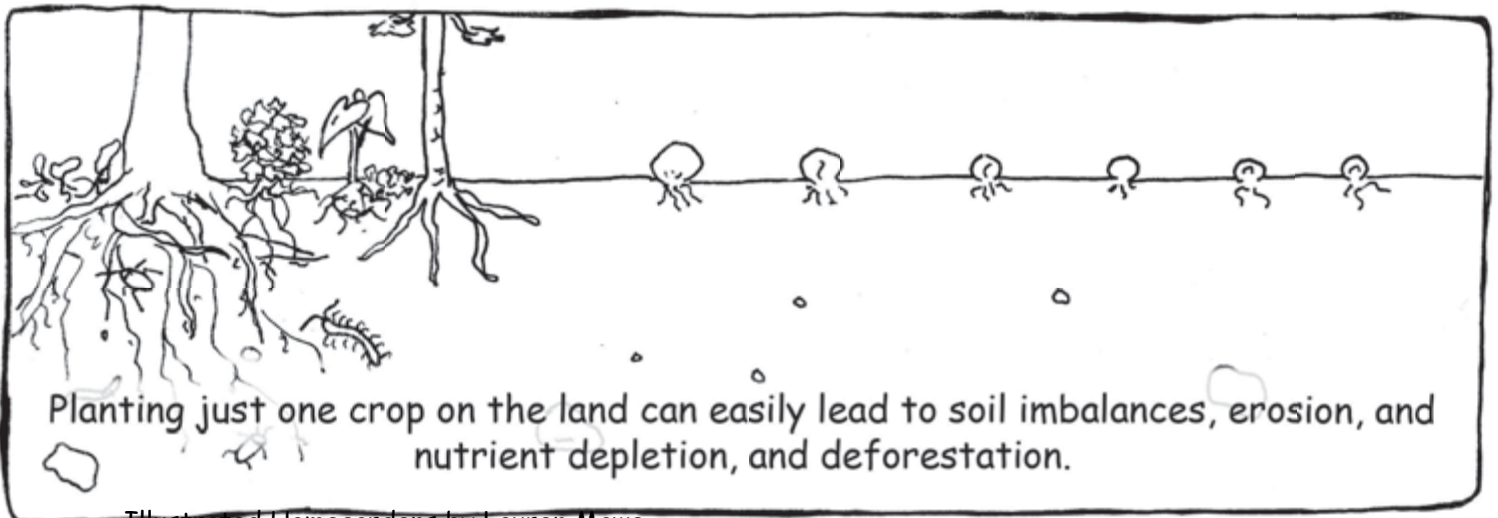
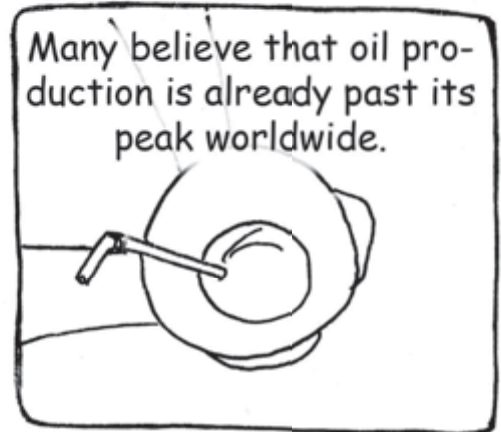
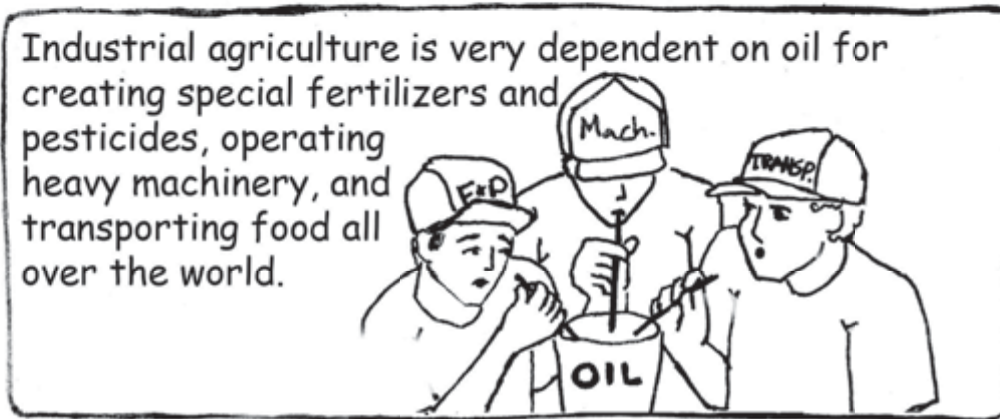
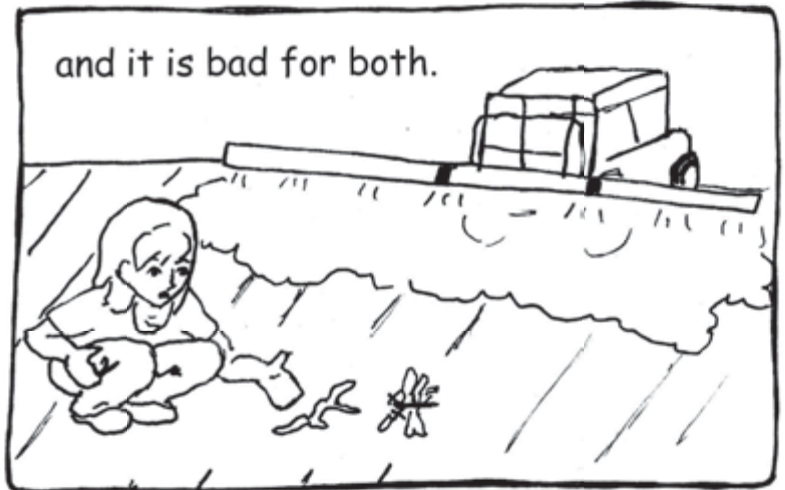
In an agroforestry system, lots of different food crops and trees were grown mixed together, often with animals pasturing in the same area.



As time went on, agriculture has shifted more and more towards growing one crop on a large scale for commercial purposes, or industrial agriculture.







One answer to many of these concerns is to reincorporate principles of agroforestry.



On a large scale this might include alley cropping



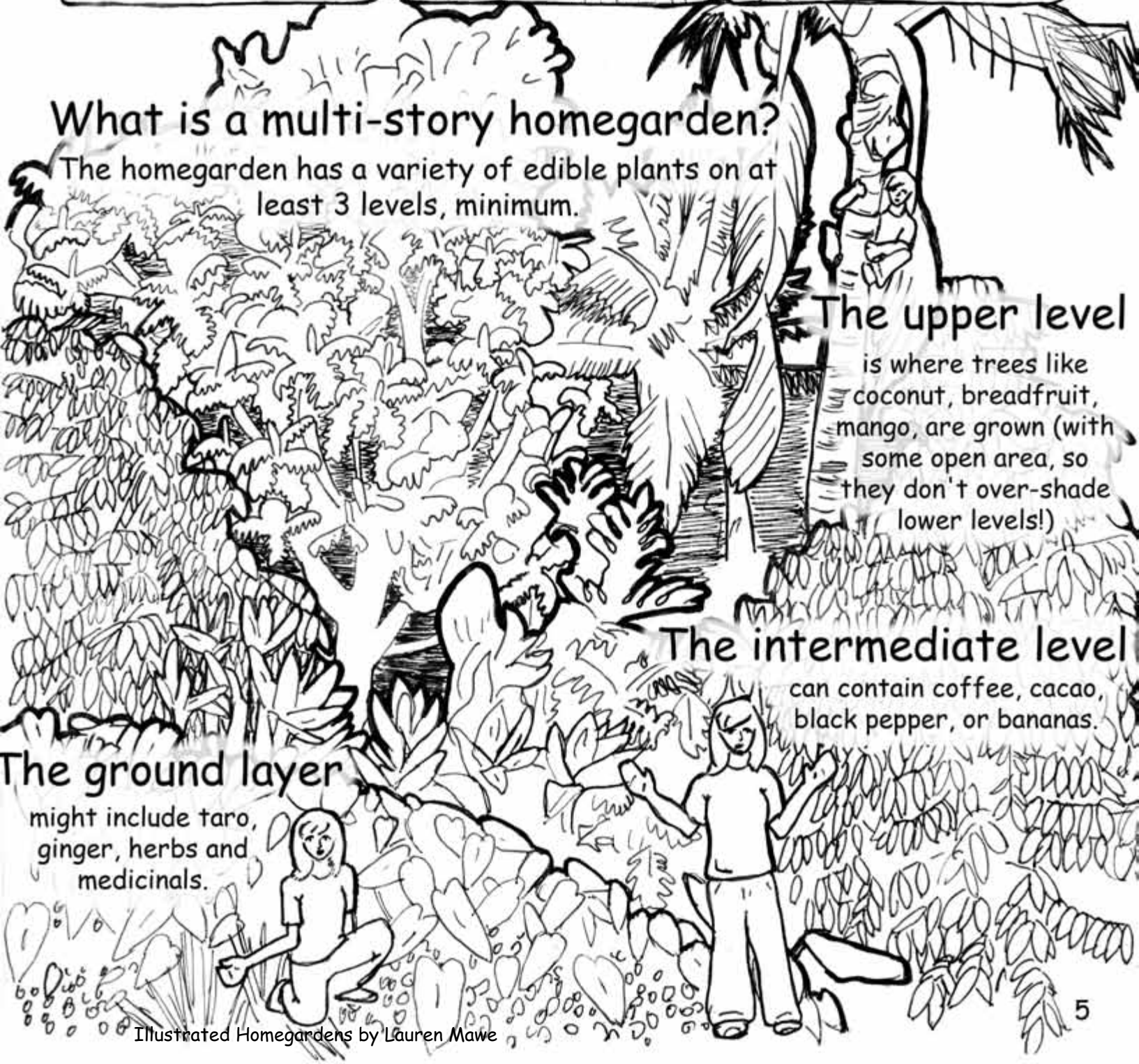
or wind-breaks.

On the individual level, this means multi-story homegardens.



## What is a multi-story homegarden?

The homegarden has a variety of edible plants on at least 3 levels, minimum.



### The upper level

is where trees like coconut, breadfruit, mango, are grown (with some open area, so they don't over-shade lower levels!)

### The intermediate level

can contain coffee, cacao, black pepper, or bananas.

### The ground layer

might include taro, ginger, herbs and medicinals.



Initially, I wasn't used to the idea of growing trees in a garden, or foregoing tidy rows.



But, as Bill Mollison (1990) said,

*"Order is found in things working beneficially together. It is not the forced condition of neatness..."*



The secret to agroforestry is to utilize the natural relationships between different plants.

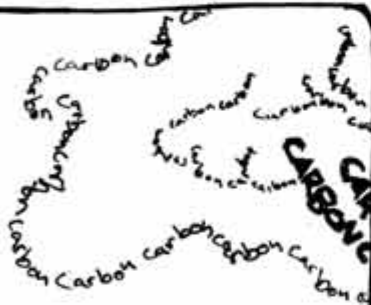


Trees can be grown for fruit,



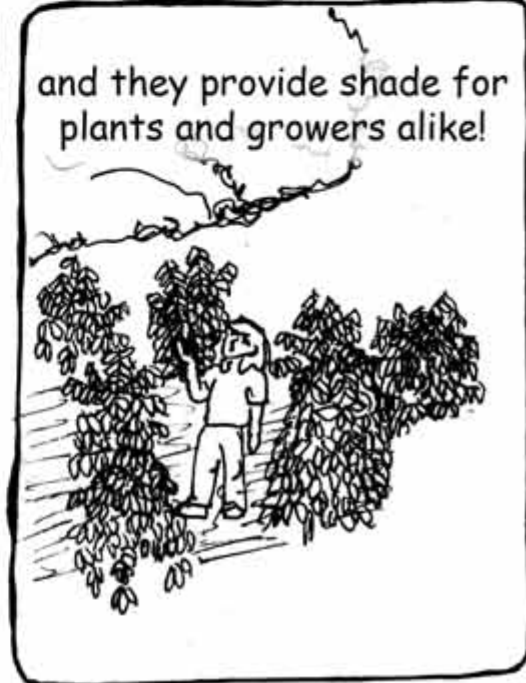
and leaves and branches make great mulch for plants in the lower levels.

Trees are important carbon holders



They provide a habitat for many insects, birds, and other animals,

and they provide shade for plants and growers alike!



# What are the benefits of homegardening for me?

## Personally...

gardening relieves stress,

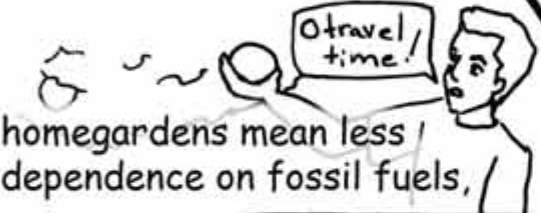


leads to better eating habits



## Environmentally..

better buying habits,



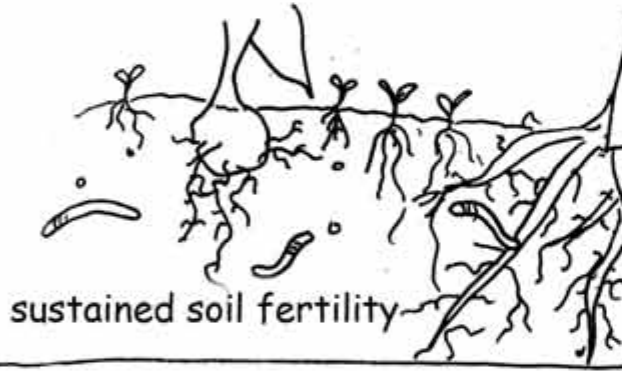
homegardens mean less dependence on fossil fuels,



and helped me develop a sense of self reliance.



We Can Do It!



sustained soil fertility

## Socially...

the fun of gardening can create lovers of healthy food,



and a reduced carbon footprint.

and conscientious consumer and citizens.



Surplus from the garden can be shared with family and neighbors.





How did I get started?



I was lucky enough to find an expert in agroforestry who was willing to teach me.



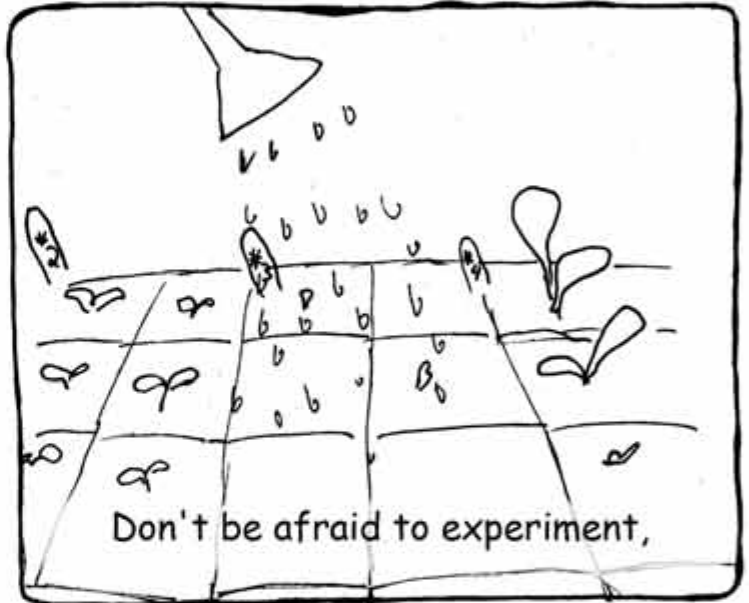
One of the best ways to learn about gardening is to talk to a gardener.



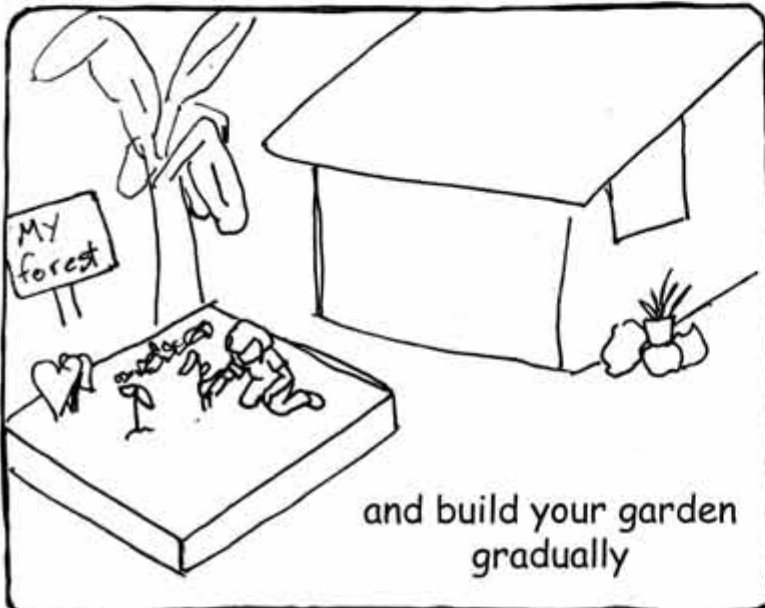
There are also a lot of great resources for gardening online,



including "Hawaii Island Homegrown: Start Up Guide".



Don't be afraid to experiment,



and build your garden gradually

and of course...



have fun!

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### **Acknowledgements:**

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