
(Eight)finity lessons on learning of growing food

The story of a business woman who could combine work and growing food - Vira Rodionova

by Iryna Kazakova, 2021



Before

Vira is a 100% city resident: she was born, studied, and worked in Kyiv. As we say, "a child of asphalt." The first acquaintance with traditional food growing Vira had in the 1990s, when the economic situation in the country was difficult, shops were empty, but you had to eat something and children had to be fed. At that time, it was forced and exhausting.

Later, the focus was on the career. 7 days a week – a leadership position, subordinates, full, but rich in stress, life. Among many sources of energy from which each person chooses their own, nature has been found to be the source of strength, health, inspiration, and joy for Vira.



Process

The plot was purchased, so 2 out of 7 weekdays were now spent outside the city. However, the harvest was not satisfying: the plants were weak, the trees withered. Instead of land – twenty centimeters of peat, then sand, in the spring there was water, and in the summer – a drought. What to do?

Vira began to observe what was growing around and what the neighbours were growing. Later she found literature about natural agriculture: Kurdyumov and Holzer. The next step was to plant trees that grow well in this area: apricots, plums, quinces, peaches, grapes and restore the soil with the help of the technology of Warm Rozum Beds.

When Vira bought a plot in the village, there was no fence around. Vira decided that it was very good because she could make a European-style plot with an open area of conifers and flowers in front of the house and a garden behind. But when the apples ripened in the garden and the cabbage grew on the plot, the local cows, leaving the pasture, came to the plot and ate the harvest of Vira and sometimes the harvest of neighbors. So very quickly Vira got acquainted with all the neighbors and owners of cows.

In order to effectively combine working the land and an office job, Vira was looking for technologies that allow her to spend less effort and time and get more results naturally. That's how the Permaculture Design Certification Course came into her life.

Now

Now on a 0.15 acres plot, Vera's family is provided with fresh greens, vegetables and fruits for the whole season. The remains are dried, canned, pickled for the winter. On holidays, Vera gives her friends sets of delicacies made from her fruits according to family recipes: adjika, tkemali, berries, jams, cucumbers in spring water, and more. This is how regular customers of the product appeared among friends and colleagues.

There are still pleasant surprises. When Vera first planted watermelons, they did not grow for a long time. The area was overgrown with weeds and Vera forgot about them. And in August, when the weeds dried up, 29 watermelons appeared, not too big but very tasty and sweet.

Permaculture also influenced office work: Vira and her team implemented many eco-initiatives: planting trees, cleaning garbage in city parks, collecting waste paper, landscaping the office, introducing vitamin days, and implementing the Green Office concept.

Now Vera spends 4 days on the site, and 3 days in the city. For her, permaculture is a recovery after intellectual work, and switching to physical exercises – mental & digital detox; the rest on the fresh air recharges energy and gives inspiration and new ideas; own food means health, youth and enjoyment of taste. The next step is to create a permaculture demonstration training center, teaching and disseminating practical skills.

Learn more: @vrodaria; @vira_rodionova

I.K. Comment

You don't have to live in a rural area to do permaculture. Many people are afraid of half-heartedness, but as the experience of Vira shows that by increasing efficiency in one area, it can be increased in another.