

Episode 2 - Thriving with Nature



FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

With your host

Hayley Weatherburn

Welcome to Episode 2: Why Regenerative and Not Just Sustainable?

This is the Thriving With Nature podcast. My name is Hayley Weatherburn and I'm excited to talk more about how we can thrive with nature. I'd be interested to know how you went in the last episode on Thrive or Die. Did you have those moments and those decisions that allowed you to move towards thriving rather than dying? I'd love to hear from you.

So, this week, I want to talk to you about regenerative methods versus sustainability.

Now, I always use this example and I did not come up with this example. I can't remember, it was a quote or a meme or something. But it was, it gives a very good example of the sort of sustainability and regenerate regenerative, regeneration? With, if someone asks you, "Oh, how's your marriage going?" And they said, "Oh, it's sustainable." Would you feel overly positive that their relationship was doing really well? Or if you said, "our relationship is thriving, so regenerating, it's constantly getting better and better." Then you would go, "wow, that marriage is amazing. Tell me more."

Sustainability is definitely, to me, it's the baseline that things need to be sustainable but where we need to aim for in my belief, in my opinion, is to go, is to align with nature which is naturally regenerative. It naturally thrives.

I was talking about onions are growing. If you just grabbed an onion that's been in your cupboard for a month, it's probably already started growing. You can go put it in the ground and it'll start growing. Nature is naturally regenerative. One avocado seed, if you look after it and nurture it can turn into many, an infinite amount of avocado seeds. If you nurture it and allow it to grow and do what it needs to do. It has a possibility to thrive.

And so, I definitely don't want to negate sustainability. I think sustainability is very important. I think we need to look at, especially when it comes to waste, I believe we need to move towards whether it's we can 100% recycle something or if it actually can grow; it can actually regenerate; it can actually thrive.

There's a coffee cup and I can't remember where our soar it. But inside the paper coffee cup, there were seeds. So that if the coffee cup got thrown on the ground and it eventually the rain mashed it and it ended up going in the grass, it would actually grow almost like an apple falling off a tree. It would eventually grow.

I believe that sustainability is important and regenerative, I'll find out the word, but thriving is where we need to aim. They say aim for the stars. What is it? Aim for the moon and reach for the stars and aim for the moon? I can't remember. But yeah, I believe we need to aim for regenerative methods waste.

So, if you're a company that is creating a product to take that responsibility and go, how can I turn this product so that it becomes regenerative across its lifetime or at the very least sustainable. So that, say for example, after 20 years of using a certain TV, there is a way that we can send that TV back to a certain place or give it to a certain company and it will recycle 100% everything that's used in there. So that there is no actual waste, like permanent waste is what I'm talking about, waste that will not biodegrade after 200, 300, 700, 1,000 years. Because we need to move away from ever creating products that do that anymore and only create products that are either sustainable at the very least, 100% recyclable or regenerative.

So, yeah. I want to talk about regenerative agriculture which is a passion of mine. I actually came across this. I was doing a Permaculture Design course in Bali last, maybe it's two years ago now. And, a part of that course, we did what was called a Syntropic Agroforestry Workshop.

Syntropic Agroforestry, this will be the first time I'm talking about it but it won't be the last. Syntropic Agroforestry is a form of regenerative agriculture where Ernst Gooch, and I'm probably saying that incorrect. He is, I believe he's a Swiss guy that lives in Brazil and he has created these principles to follow. He took something like 500 acres. I'm probably getting that not exactly correct but about 500 acres of like it was land that had been sort of written off as not great, degraded land. And he's turned it into one of the most thriving forests that actually produced one of the top cacao in the world. And so, Syntropic Agroforestry, I ended up, after seeing that, I absolutely loved the concept because it mimics how forests are constantly building their soil.

You can go to it and in the middle of the Amazon into rainforest and you can just look, there's, if it can be a meter of this delicious loamy topsoil that is so luscious, so bio-diverse, so many micro organisms and nutrients. That's why in a rainforest, the seed can fall and grow so quickly because of this regenerative action that nature naturally does. It covers its soil. It has certain layers of photosynthesis that happen. And I'll go more into Syntropic Agroforestry later.

I've seen Syntropic Agroforestry, regenerative agriculture. They are the same principle where let's mimic nature and build the soil so that we're not just growing a crop and then

having to add certain nutrients because the soil is depleted and then adding. There's lots of adding, adding, adding, adding, which is not very practical. Whereas, if we create a regenerative agriculture where you're actually growing many different crops because where in nature does not mono-crop. It always has even in a little square, the sedimentary soil, it's got many different plants growing, many different nutrients, many different bugs in the one area.

So, this is also a pest control. If you go mono-cropping, they have to do with pest because the pest are communicators. Again, another topic I'd love to talk to you more about later is the fact that pests are messengers, they're not pests. They're just telling you what's missing.

And so the regenerative agriculture, where I can see us on moving is learning to grow regenerative-ly. And if we can as consumers start to buy food from, yes, organic. I believe in organic. And I, and again, I think this is also positive. I think every step towards moving towards aligning with nature is very, very important. And the organic farms, there's probably organic farms out there that also do regenerative methods.

I, as I said, we're on this journey together. I'm learning and I'm sure I'll get lots of information as I start to talk about these things more. I want us as consumers to start purchasing food that is more local, that is coming from farms that are aligning themselves with nature.

There are farmers out there that they can do successional. It's also known as successional agriculture, regenerative agriculture because it's aligning with that natural abundance growth rate of nature. And so, the soil is covered.

You may be growing many different crops in one particular area. You'll be growing biomass, biomasses certain trees, maybe like a banana plan that you actually end up using purely to chop down and cover the soil. Like it does in a rainforest, constantly covering the soil with different biomass which slowly builds it. And so, as you're not messing with the soil as much.

You're pulling, maybe, a row of lettuce one week. Then, the next week is a row of kale. And then the next, maybe down the track you've got corn or you've got cucumber or, and you slowly grow up. And then you, maybe you've got fruit trees. And then ultimately after 20, 30 years, you've got wood that you can start. And so from that 20, 30 years of that soil building, you're now starting from an amazing platform of this soil that's been rebuilt.

I remember seeing in the, there's a quote somewhere, in the UN about how we've only got 60 years. It may not even be 60 years, 60 harvests of topsoil left in America. And that just scares me.

I know there's, we can tinker with hydroponics, which again, moving towards more eating whole foods, I'm all for it. I'm still not convinced that a hydroponic plant will have more nutrients than one that's growing from a bio-diverse rich loamy soil that has all the different microorganisms. I'm not convinced. I haven't looked into it deeply. And I'm, again, I invite people to share information because I want to learn more and more. So, I really believe in us moving towards a more regenerative decision-making, regenerative agriculture.

So again, in the last episode I talked about Thrive or Die. When you go to the shops, I want us to start asking the supermarkets, "how do you know if these apples have come from a regenerative farm?" And they may not know. And I want us to start asking that question so we can start to grow that.

Because what I also believe on the backend, the farmers that are sitting out there that are in drought, that have had fires, that have had the water depleted, their farms are just desolate. And I truly, truly believe that we can, if being introduced, there's four farmers. There is a farmer who I cannot remember his name right now but I will be talking about him in the future. It's about four farmers.

Actually, if you go to Thriving With Nature's website, I did a blog recently on this. It's a 10-minute documentary on these four farmers in Australia who are doing regenerative farming. And they're actually making more profit and their property is getting better and better and better.

And so, I want to talk about creating an environment where us, as consumers, are demanding our farmers be regenerative. So, not only will they start to have people looking to buy their product, their farms are going to thrive as well.

So, it's up to us as consumers. As we can see now and I don't really like to get too much into politics. But we can see now that if we're just sitting, waiting for our governments to make these changes and yes, there are slow movements. But just due to the nature of bureaucracy, it can take a long time. And time is something that we do not have. In the next 10 years, we need to be making a significant shift. We need to be making it right now. It's going to take us awhile to start moving.

You know, it took me six, seven years to move towards, probably three, four years to move towards being 100% plant-based. No, like plant-based. I wasn't eating meat but going from vegetarian to more close to vegan. So, it takes time in our lives to do this.

And so, again, I just invite us to start looking at where, what we're grabbing from the supermarkets. If you can go to a farmer's market, have a conversation with the farmer and ask what regenerative methods are they using. Have they heard of Syntropic Agroforestry or regenerative agriculture? And see which farmers are doing that. And if they know about it and there'll be many different farmers. But I believe the product.

I've been to a Syntropic Agroforestry farm in Australia called Gabalah Syntropic Farm in Northern New South Wales. And just looking at the lemons on the lemon tree, these looked amazing. I remember being, Oh gosh, I must have been, let me think this. I would have been about six, six years old, six or seven. I was living in a house and I remember the neighbours had these tomato plants next door. They were Italian or something. And as a kid, I'd go with the neighbor and we'd pick a big juicy tomato and body into it like an Apple. And it had so much flavor and aroma and it was just amazing. And I rarely find that when I grabbed tomatoes these days that you get if it hasn't been homegrown or grown through these regenerative methods, it doesn't have that smell.

And so, the more biodiverse, the more someone is building this soil, the more nutrients that are going to be coming and transferring into those fruits and vegetables. And then when you eat those, that the more health and healing you will have just from eating those products.

So again, coming back to thrive or diet, pick something that's going to help you thrive closer to thrive than die. And so regenerative agriculture, I believe is such a huge thing. And it can also help our farmers rebuild their crops, start to make a profit again.

And if I'm going to really step out there after the massive fires that we've had, not only does regenerative agriculture build the soil, sequester carbon, which helps reduce the climate, which helps us not have as many bushfires. But then, also because the soil is becoming more loamy, more abundant, and the agriculture is more forest-like: it has a stratification, many different layers, things growing close to the ground, things growing low, medium, high and emergence right up there like a canopy in the rainforest. When you're growing in a regenerative way like that, you're creating a more solid forest that's more green, more lush, and less likely to be burning. Yes. If the heat is that much, it can end up.

But if we create a society collective together, community of regenerative agriculture, then I believe that will be a huge step towards us shifting this planet around to be more thriving.

So, that is super exciting. That's what I wanted to share with you today. Look at sustainability. Look at regenerative. I say, let's reach for regenerative. Let's reach for thriving. If we end up sustaining, at least, that's better than going backwards, which is what we are doing at the moment, you know?

Yeah. So, that is what I wanted to talk about today. I also want to invite you to start looking at what you can do in your own backyard in regards to growing your own things. Maybe it's just starting with an herb garden, starting with a veggie garden. Maybe there's, if you've got a little bit more land, you can start to create Syntropic natives, more natives around.

In my YouTube channel, there's a video there when I'm interviewing Scott from Gabalah Syntropic Farm. And he shows and introduces these concepts a bit more so you can actually see it live on a farm. And you can also create some Syntropic Agroforestry in your own backyard and start to grow more natives using these amazing "donuts" syntropic methods. And you'll see that on the video on YouTube.

Anyway, thank you so much for listening. Go out there. Have more conversations with your farmers. Have more conversations with the supermarkets. Let's start inviting them to thrive. It's up to us, the average Joe, the average Susie, to start to make those decisions. Let's take this and take this direction, take this planet into thriving with nature. Thank you so much for listening.

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