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The Need For An Environmental Ethic—II

Paul Evans

The intuitions that we gain from gardening may illustrate this. In my own gardening experience, and this is true for many, working with plants hold a deep significance that transcends their usefulness as food, objects of curiosity or appeal to the senses. Gardening, in many forms, is a way of experiencing the integral or intrinsic values of plants and working them into our lives.

There are few areas of wilderness where human activity has little influence. There are cracks and punctures in "cultivation" which allow wild nature to be expressed; threading through, beneath and beyond the woven heritage of the community of land is the self-determination of landscapes and ecosystems. There is a constant colonization of wild nature to extend cultivation throughout the biosphere (and beyond) land is the tension between human earthownership and the self determination of the biosphere.

Because of this community of land we have responsibilities to plants in

habitats which we have caused to exist—old parks and gardens, meadows, canals, coppiced woodland, orchards, churchyards heather moorland and so on—and to dwell in peace with wildness and to "free" the selfdetermination of landscapes and ecosystems.

I feel that this is not unlike the duties and obligations we have to future generations of people. Our actions, our policies, our technological innovations actually influence who will exist and what sorts of person they will exist and what sorts of person they will be. This gives us a certain responsibility to them as actual people. The same can be said of our conservation strategies and land use policies. If we build ourselves into a community of land (a community of cultivation and wildness), we have responsibilities to that community like those we have for each other and future people in the lived world.

—Resurgence