



A journey of
personal, social and
ecological change



Nature's Apprentice and CERES present:

Nature-Based Leadership Training

Summer 2025 Course Guide

Are you someone who longs to connect deeply with nature and community, and learn real skills of resilience and belonging to place? Do you want to understand more about your unique gifts and how you can be of service to others and the world at this time of great change?

This immersive, nature-based leadership program is the first of its kind in Australia. Building from many years' experience delivering community learning that is grounded in the natural world, CERES and Nature's Apprentice have come together to offer a program that creates the kind of earth-based leadership and resilience we and our communities will need in the coming decades.

Instead of the usual format, for 2025 we are offering two half-length (complete) training programs: One starting in February (summer program) and the other starting in October (spring program).

If you've felt called to connect more deeply with your passions, to nature, and be supported by a like-minded community then this course is for you. It offers transformational learning through engaging the whole person: the head, the heart and the hands.



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*Going through the course has completely shifted my perspective on and experience of the world. I feel more present and more connected to the Earth than I can ever remember. - **Claudia, 2021 participant***

*The program helped me ground values and vision into practice and clarify the work I wish to do while I'm here on this planet. Claire and Sieta's guidance strengthened my leadership skills, while their own facilitation styles shifted my views on what leadership can be, through an ecological, community-based, and non-hierarchical lens. This last year was a kaleidoscopic practice in feeling, perception, nuance, story, poetry, difference, grief, ecstasy, and joy... with each other and with this wild earth. - **Kara, 2021 participant***

*I learned that my wild indigenous self has been here within me all along. Waiting for acceptance, and an invitation to return. - **Mike, 2022 participant***

Overview

This course recognises and builds on contributions from ecology, indigenous wisdom, environmental studies, eco-psychology, spiritual traditions, and place-based education, synthesizing and applying them to our local context.

Nature-based leadership draws on these and other disciplines to nurture leadership in all aspects of society, with the aim that people in all relationships—with themselves, others and the Earth itself—contribute to a healthy, peaceful and regenerative present and future.

The course is suited to those new to these fields (entry level welcome!), as well as those wanting to deepen their experience, knowledge and applicability of these areas in the world.

Program Design

The course takes a hybrid approach to curriculum, including nature-based experiential activities in the outdoors, classroom discussions, online readings and commentary.

Beginning with a nature immersion retreat outside Melbourne, the program covers six core modules that seek to explore both the philosophy and practice of nature-based leadership.

Each module will turn to a different facet of Nature Based Leadership, and our experiential face-to-face time will have a consistent thread of core routines of nature connection and earth skills throughout the program.

- 1. Tending the Wild**
- 2. Deep Nature Connection**
- 3. Village Building**
- 4. The Wider Story**
- 5. Leadership, Authenticity and Purpose**
- 6. Spirituality & Sacred Activism**

Each module will involve a set of recommended texts and readings, experiential processes and exploration of a broader context that embeds it into work for the world. The modules will be woven together into the retreat, and studied in more detail during the workshops, webinars and through the online learning platform.

Time commitment & schedule

In 2025 we are offering shorter options for the training program. This is a 3-month program starting February 2025. The year-long program will resume in 2026.

The program is centred around a nature-immersion retreat. This immersion is supported by 8 in-person day gatherings, 3 online evening webinars, a personal mentoring session, and peer-to-peer support. Readings and resources for each module are provided through an interactive online learning platform.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
Fri 14/2 - Tue 18/2		Retreat	TBC
26/2	6pm - 8pm	Webinar 1: Tending the Wild + Deep Nature Connection	Online
28/2	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 1	Melbourne
7/3	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 2	Melbourne
12/3	6pm - 8pm	Webinar 2: Village Building + Leadership, Authenticity, Purpose	Online
14/3	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 3	Melbourne
21/3	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 4	Melbourne
28/3	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 5	Melbourne
2/4	6pm - 8pm	Webinar 3 : Wider Stories + Spirituality, Sacred Activism	Online
4/4	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 6	Melbourne
11/4	9:30am - 4pm	Friday Workshop 7	Excursion
25/4	9:30am - 4pm	Celebration Day	Melbourne
		Optional extra	
12/12 - 17/12		<i>Vision Fast with Nature's Apprentice*</i>	

Outcomes

This course will take participants on a journey towards a more resilient and interconnected sense of self – rooted in the ecological, biological, sensory, emotional and rational dimensions. We call this learning through the ‘head, heart and hands.’

For the head:

- Understanding new possibilities for **systems change** on the personal, social and planetary levels
- Knowledge of contemporary **eco-psychology** philosophy and practice
- Understanding of the **stories and narratives** of our times

For the heart:

- A greater **sense of place and belonging**
- Greater clarity of personal **gifts and purpose**
- A greater depth of **spiritual practice**

For the hands:

- **Practical skills** of wildcrafting and rewilding
 - Skills in **community-building** technologies, including the completion of a community project of your choice
 - **Facilitation, mentoring and leadership** skills
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Teachers and Facilitators

This program is designed and facilitated by Claire Skye, Sieta Beckwith and Daniel Skye with support from guest presenters and mentors.



Claire Skye (Dunn)

Claire Skye is a writer, speaker, mother, barefoot explorer, rewilding facilitator and founder of Nature's Apprentice. Claire is passionate about human rewilding and believes that a reclaiming of our ecological selves and belonging is key to regenerating wildness on the planet.

For the last 15 years, Claire has been facilitating individuals to dive deeply into the mysteries of nature and psyche through the pathways of deep nature connection, ancestral earth skills, deep ecology, ecopsychology, soulcentric nature-based practice, village building, dance, ceremony and contemporary wilderness rites-of-passage.

Claire is the author of memoirs *My Year Without Matches*, which tells the story of her year living wild, and *Rewilding the Urban Soul* which explores how we might embody wild consciousness within a modern city context. Claire lives beside the Birrarung on the outskirts of Melbourne where she lovingly tends her partner Daniel, her three children, her garden and her own wild heart.



Sieta Beckwith

Sieta is the Narrative Director at CERES in Melbourne. Her role is to connect the many stories of CERES across regenerative farming programs, environmental education, social enterprises and community participation, into an impactful, unified narrative. Together, these stories aim to change the systems that no longer serve our world, and help people fall in love with the earth again.

Sieta has worked for 15 years in strategic communications roles, assisting purpose-led organisations to discover, share and live their deeper values. Through her work, Sieta aims to respond to the

question, "What are we longing for?" and contribute to building a new story of humanity that is regenerative and hopeful. She finds joy in bringing together small groups of humans from all ages and backgrounds to explore heart-centred practice, and to learn how to live well together through times of great change.

Sieta was born on Noongar country but has made her home on Wurundjeri land and loves to rock climb, dance, weave baskets and have conversations with trees.



Daniel Skye

Dan is a carpenter and father of three living in Warrandyte. Dan's introduction to earth based ceremony was at age 16, and since then ceremony, sweat lodge and Vision Quest has been a powerfully consistent thread and guiding principle in his life, both as participant and more recently as a trained Vision Quest guide.

Since he was a child, Dan has nurtured a deep love and curiosity for the wild world. Conversations with the "wild other" are part of his everyday vernacular, and tracking a way of life.

Dan is currently apprenticing to the arts of storytelling, song, deep authentic relating, wandering, and the mythic in wild landscapes. You will often find him tending his garden, catching stories from friends, baking bread, running the trails of his mountain home, and spending sweet time with his children, and partner Claire.

Other facilitators and mentors:

[Maya Ward](#)

[Yin Paradies](#)

[Taj Scicluna](#)


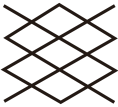
[Meg Ulman & Patrick Jones \(Artist as Family\)](#)

[Beth Hill](#)

Curriculum

The curriculum is structured around six modules that will guide participants toward a deeper connection with self, community, and the natural world.

Each topic could be explored and studied deeply in its own right, and we will offer insights from some of the leading thinkers and pioneers in each area, grounded in our own experiences as facilitators. Participants may wish to further explore some areas after the program, and we expect each person will bring knowledge and experience to share of their own.

 <p>Tending the Wild</p>	<p><i>What does “wildness” mean as an inner and outer experience? How do we access it when living in urban or suburban areas?</i></p> <p>The wilds of both our inner and outer landscapes have been paved over and domesticated by western culture. Our relationship with the wild is a source of aliveness, vitality and inspiration. In this component we will learn earth-skills and practices to court and cultivate the wild back into ourselves and our lives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earth-living skills and wildcrafting: shelter, water, fire, fibre, basketry• Edible and medicinal food plants• Indigenous perspectives and earth intimacy• Rewilding philosophy and practice• Caretaking and stewardship• Cultivating a ‘wild mind’ <p>Pioneers: Tom Brown Jr, Robin Wall Kimmerer, Arthur Haines, Derrick Jenson, Gary Snyder.</p>
 <p>Deep Nature Connection</p>	<p><i>How do we cultivate a deeper sense of belonging, right where we are? How do we start to develop an ecological literacy of place?</i></p> <p>Our natural inheritance is to feel a deep sense of belonging. Learning and applying the core routines of deep nature connection will build strong ropes of connection between us and the places where we live. By connecting deeply to nature around us, we also start to awaken our ‘naturalness’ - our unique genius.</p> <p>The purpose of this module is to explore how nature-based practice can be a support for embodying our belonging as members of the wider Earth community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn and practice the core routines of intimacy with the natural world• Expand sensory awareness• Reading the landscape: holistic tracking, pattern recognition and nature observation• Nature journaling and cultivating ecological literacy of place• Exploring bird language• Developing daily sit spot practices• The Art of Wandering <p>Pioneers: Jon Young, Richard Louv, Julia Butterfly Hill, Josh Lane, David Abram, Mark Coleman</p>



Village Building

How do we cultivate community resilience for the changes ahead? How do we form strong anchoring relationships that create a foundation of connections for our lives?

One of the main roles of culture is to connect, yet the dominant culture is one of disconnection. A village-builder learns to see and support the big picture of what's happening in their community. They can recognise needs, gifts, strengths and possibilities for greater peace, responsibility and connection in their people.

- Immerse in an empowering regenerative culture
- Learn the technologies of village building and how to embed them into your region, project or organisation.
- Explore song, storytelling, earth-art and creative expression
- Experience and understand the role of grief in community connection
- Explore community resilience in the context of deep adaptation such as neo-peasantry and community sufficiency

Pioneers: Jon Young, Starhawk, Francis Weller, Tokopa Turner, Glen Ochre



Leadership, Authenticity and Purpose

What are the qualities of a leader and what does nature tell us about the kind of leadership the world needs at this time? How do we become the leadership that is required?

Leadership, in essence, can be seen as the courage and humility to follow our deepest authenticity. This module explores how to “be the change we want to see in the world” and move forward with our visions:

- Develop mentoring and group facilitation skills and experience
- Learn about patterns of power, privilege and oppression
- Systems thinking: from separation to interrelationship
- Explore your ‘ecological niche’: your unique purpose and appropriate delivery systems
- ‘Inner Tracking’ of personal obstacles and opportunities

Pioneers: Charles Eisenstein, Carol Sanford, Bill Plotkin, Margaret Wheatley, Bayo Akomolafe



Wider Stories: Old and New

How does telling stories change anything? How do stories shape our lives, and what do the great myths have to say about the times we find ourselves in?

The old story of separation is fast being replaced by a new story of connection and interrelationship. Pioneering thinkers and conceptual pathways offer a different way of locating ourselves and our work in the world: a shift from ego-centric to ecocentric:

- Narratives to re-imagine the world such as eco-psychology, deep ecology, sacred economics, ecological identity, systems theory, complexity theory and spiritual ecology.
- Embed yourself in the new story of interrelationship.
- Explore ancient myths for modern times
- Learn ecocentric approaches to human development and identity.
- Gain an understanding into the philosophical and historical underpinnings of disconnection and separation from nature.

Pioneers: Joanna Macy, Charles Eisenstein, John Seed, Thomas Berry, Tyson Yunkaporta, Martin Shaw, Bill Plotkin, Josh Schrei, Sophie Strand.



Spirituality & Sacred Activism

What is the relationship between our spiritual practices and our world work? How do we weave back together the threads of ecology, culture and spirituality?

For much of our story as a people, the wider sensuous world was seen as an opening to something larger than ourselves. In this module, we will learn about different spiritual traditions and how they intersect with nature-based practices, and explore how to reconnect the spiritual with the material in our lives and work.

- Explore sacred activism, spiritual ecology and compassionate action
- Deepen your own personal spiritual practice
- Expand ecological consciousness
- Deepen a practice of earth-based spirituality
- Expand the possibilities for authentic action in the world
- Explore the different spheres of activism
- Learn how to develop work that is ecological and relational

Pioneers: Joanna Macy, John Seed, Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee, David Abram, Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, Andrew Harvey, Chogyam Trungpa

Who this program is for

People from all backgrounds and experiences who wish to live from their purpose, and be of service to their community and the Earth at this time of great change. Entry-level people are welcome.

Anyone who feels called to deepen their experience of connection and belonging to self, earth and community; who wants to enquire with a group of others into the largest questions of our times; who feels passionate about creative pathways of change and holds a desire to serve the world from a place that is empowered, ecocentric and community-oriented.

*I'm not sure what spells you cast to make this course happen, but it was magic. So grateful for the deep thought and lifelong apprenticeship that underscores everything you've offered to us. - **Catie, 2022 participant***

*Overall, the most profound take away is the spark of aliveness in my soul and a sense of deep nature connection and community. I just want to express my deepest gratitude to you all for this program. It is unlike anything I have ever come across and it feels like such an exquisite weaving of wonderful teachings and practices to support true cultural change. - **Kim, 2022 participant***

*I learnt the exact method to enable me to listen to my soul. - **Caesar, 2022 participant***

Fees

Tuition includes in-person workshops, online seminars, camping and catering on retreat, program supplies and mentoring.

Corporate rate / pay it forward

\$4,250

Standard

\$3,250

Early Bird (before 9th December)

\$2,950

A 10% deposit is required to secure your place. Payment plans are available on request. A limited number of partial scholarships are available.

How to apply

1. [Submit an application form](#). Enrolments will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Successful applicants will be notified by 30th January 2025 at the latest.
 2. Once you are accepted onto the program, you will be invited to complete your enrollment and pay a 10% deposit to secure your place.
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*Go deeper with a vision fast

If you'd like to explore your learnings on this program through a supported solo immersion in nature, there is an optional extra retreat at the end of the year, exclusive to Nature-Based Leadership participants from both summer and spring programs.

Run by program partner Nature's Apprentice, more information will be provided closer to the date.

Save the dates: 12th - 17th December 2025