

THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE

From the Founder

The Vision Behind The Edible Forest Estate

Publication Purpose

This publication provides a personal introduction from the Founder of The Edible Forest Estate.

It explains the experiences, principles and long-term vision that led to the creation of the Estate and should be read alongside the Founding Charter (TEFE-CH-001), Constitution (TEFE-CO-001) and Landowner Information Pack (TEFE-IN-001).

Whilst remaining publications explain *how* the Estate operates, this publication explains *why* it exists.

1. Welcome

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to learn about The Edible Forest Estate.

Every organisation has a beginning.

Some begin as businesses.

Some begin as investments.

Others begin because somebody sees a problem and decides that, rather than waiting for somebody else to solve it, they will dedicate themselves to creating a solution.

The Edible Forest Estate began in exactly that way.

This publication is not intended to persuade you to join us, nor to convince you that our way is the only way.

Instead, it explains why this Estate exists, the experiences that shaped its development and the principles that continue to guide every decision we make.

Whether you become a landowner, a supporter or simply someone interested in our work, I hope these pages help you understand the vision behind everything we are building.

2. Looking at the World

Over many years I have watched the world change.

Life has become increasingly difficult for many ordinary families.

The cost of housing, food and agricultural land has continued to rise whilst opportunities to own productive land have become increasingly limited.

At the same time, I have watched people become increasingly dependent upon systems over which they have little control.

For much of history it was perfectly normal for families to keep several months of food stored within the home.

People understood seasonal shortages.

They understood harvest failures.

They understood the importance of being prepared.

Today many households would struggle to find more than a few days' worth of food in their cupboards.

We have become more connected than ever before, yet often less resilient.

I believe every family should have the opportunity to produce at least some of its own food.

Not because I expect society to fail.

But because knowledge, preparation and self-sufficiency have always been the foundations of resilient communities.

The ability to grow food is one of the most valuable skills any generation can possess.

3. A Simple Game That Changed My Life

In 2007 I moved to France.

At the time I made a decision that seemed almost insignificant.

I created a simple game for myself.

Every single day I had to do something I had never done before.

It did not matter whether it was something large or something small.

The only rule was that it had to be new.

That decision led to experiences I could never have planned.

One week it might be visiting somewhere unfamiliar.

Another week it might simply be speaking to somebody I would normally have walked past.

On one occasion it even resulted in a close Greek friend and I attending a German opera.

We enjoyed it so much that we returned a second time.

Without that simple game, neither of us would ever have considered going.

Looking back, I realised that growth often begins when we deliberately step outside our routines.

4. Discovering Long-Term Happiness

During my first days in France I visited Place Stanislas in Nancy.

One evening an extraordinary light show was projected across the historic buildings surrounding the square.

As the performance came to an end, one final message appeared.

"True happiness comes from helping others."

I remembered those words.

Some time later, whilst continuing my "something new every day" challenge, I noticed several young homeless people sitting outside a supermarket.

I decided that my new experience for the day would be to buy lunch for whoever happened to be there.

I purchased three baguettes and three drinks and simply handed them over.

It was an ordinary act.

It cost very little.

Yet it changed my understanding of happiness completely.

Until that moment I had been chasing what I now call **short-term happiness**.

Buying something new.

Owning something impressive.

Achieving another personal goal.

Each brought enjoyment for a short period before the feeling faded and was replaced by the search for the next thing.

Helping another person was entirely different.

The feeling remained.

It brought something I had never experienced before.

I describe it as **long-term happiness**.

That experience reshaped the direction of my life.

From that point onwards I wanted my future to be centred upon creating things that genuinely benefited other people rather than simply accumulating possessions for myself.

5. A Different Measure of Success

Many people measure success by what they own.

I do not.

If I wanted to own expensive cars or luxury possessions, I could pursue those things.

But I learned many years ago that material possessions rarely provide lasting fulfilment.

Creating opportunities for other people does.

When discussing one of our earlier projects I once said:

"If I want to buy a Ferrari, I'll buy a Ferrari. If I want to spend company profits on the community, I'll spend it on the community."

That statement was not about cars.

It was about responsibility.

Money is a tool.

Like any tool, its value depends entirely upon how it is used.

For me, the greatest return on investment is seeing something continue to improve people's lives long after I am no longer involved.

6. The First Question

Long before The Edible Forest Estate existed, a simple question occurred to me.

Why do we plant forests that produce no food?

If trees can produce fruit, nuts and edible crops for generations, why are food-producing forests not commonplace?

That single question became the beginning of a journey that has now lasted many years.

7. The Journey

Ideas alone achieve very little.

They must be tested.

They must fail.

They must improve.

The first public attempt was the **Eat for Free Project** in 2010.

It attracted considerable public interest but failed to solve one fundamental problem.

Land still had to be purchased.

In 2019 The Edible Forest Community Interest Company came remarkably close to acquiring approximately 250 acres of restored former mining land.

Although unsuccessful, it taught invaluable lessons.

Between 2022 and 2023 further acquisitions through HEAMES LTD and The Edible Forest B Limited demonstrated that the vision could become reality.

Each attempt strengthened the next.

Every setback became another lesson.

Looking back, I no longer view those projects as failures.

They were simply chapters in the development of something better.

8. Why Ownership Matters

One lesson became increasingly clear.

People wanted more than access to land.

They wanted ownership.

They wanted somewhere they could genuinely call their own.

Ownership gives people something that cannot easily be measured.

It gives independence.

It gives responsibility.

It gives confidence.

It gives families something tangible that can be cared for, improved and passed to future generations.

That understanding shaped the legal structure of The Edible Forest Estate.

It is why ownership remains one of its defining principles.

9. Why I Call It an Estate

Words matter.

I deliberately chose the word **Estate**.

To me, an Estate represents permanence.

It represents quality.

It represents stewardship.

It represents something intended to become more valuable with each passing generation.

Our ambition is not simply to grow food.

Our ambition is to produce exceptional soil.

Exceptional trees.

Exceptional plants.

Exceptional produce.

Exceptional landscapes.

Every generation should inherit an Estate that is better than the one received by the generation before it.

10. Preserving the Future

I believe one of the greatest responsibilities we have is preserving knowledge.

Historic fruit varieties.

Traditional seed varieties.

Practical growing skills.

Healthy soil.

These are not simply relics of the past.

They are part of our future.

As agriculture changes, it is important that future generations retain the knowledge and ability to save seed, cultivate diverse crops and produce food using methods that are sustainable and resilient.

The Edible Forest Estate exists not only to grow food but also to help preserve that knowledge.

11. Independence Through Food

Throughout history the ability to grow food has represented independence.

Families who could produce at least part of their own food were often better able to withstand difficult periods than those who depended entirely upon others.

I believe that remains true today.

Whether future challenges arise from economic uncertainty, environmental change, supply chain disruption or circumstances none of us can yet foresee, communities become stronger when they possess the knowledge, skills and opportunity to grow food for themselves.

The Edible Forest Estate is built upon that principle.

12. Why the HEAMES Family

People occasionally ask why the Estate remains under the stewardship of the HEAMES family.

The answer is simple.

Every long-lasting estate requires continuity.

Standards do not preserve themselves.

Principles do not defend themselves.

Someone must remain responsible for protecting the vision.

For me, stewardship has never been about power.

It has never been about status.

It has never been about personal wealth.

It is about responsibility.

I hope that future generations of my family will understand that responsibility and continue to protect the principles upon which this Estate has been founded.

13. The Vision

My ambition has never been to create a single successful Estate.

My vision is to establish a network of at least ten Edible Forest Estates, each exceeding one hundred acres, within the region.

Together these Estates would:

- Protect agricultural land;
- Provide flood protection;
- Preserve historic varieties;
- Encourage environmental stewardship;
- Provide opportunities for families to own productive land; and
- Demonstrate that agriculture, conservation and private ownership can work together.

One Estate can inspire.

Ten Estates can transform a region.

14. Lessons Learned

Many years of experience have taught me several important lessons.

A good idea alone is never enough.

It requires careful planning.

Persistence matters more than speed.

Success often arrives shortly after people are tempted to give up.

Not every plan should be announced before it is ready.

Some of the most important work is accomplished quietly.

In business, silence is often underrated.

Careful observation, patience and thoughtful action frequently achieve more than constant publicity.

These lessons have become part of the Estate's culture and continue to influence the way we operate.

15. Looking Forward

I hope that many decades from now children will walk beneath fruit trees planted by people they never knew.

I hope they will harvest varieties that might otherwise have disappeared.

I hope they will inherit healthier soil than we inherited ourselves.

Most of all, I hope they will recognise that somebody, many years earlier, cared enough to think beyond their own lifetime.

That is what stewardship means.

16. Closing Message

If you choose to become part of The Edible Forest Estate, I hope you do so not simply because you wish to own land

I hope you do so because you wish to become a steward of something larger than yourself

Every tree planted today may feed people who have not yet been born.

Every decision we make has the potential to improve the lives of future generations.

That is an extraordinary responsibility.

It is also an extraordinary privilege.

Thank you for taking the time to understand why this Estate exists

.

I hope that one day, together, we will look across a landscape of thriving Edible Forest Estates and know that we left the world in a better condition than we found it

The Founder

THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE LIMITED

END OF CONTROLLED PUBLICATION

TEFE-FF-001 | Version 1.0 | Founding Edition

Every generation inherits a choice: to leave the land unchanged, or to leave it better than they found it. The Edible Forest Estate has chosen the latter.

This Charter is the constitutional statement of purpose for
THE EDIBLE FOREST ESTATE LIMITED
and the foundation upon which the Official Publication Library is built.