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# Permaculture, as a famous sustainable alternatives of conventional farming - good practice from Hungary

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22<sup>nd</sup> Summer Academy, including the Final Conference of GOODFOOD Project on

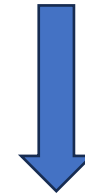
„Responsible Food Production and Consumption for a sustainable future”

Rafina, Greece, 16-20.06.2024

# Focus of the topic

- Extreme weather conditions (caused by climate change)
- Loss of biodiversity
- Degradation of soil, water and ecosystems
- Depopulation of rural areas
- Health problems related to nutrition
- Obstruction of access to quality and nutritious food, ...

**increasing challenges**  
for farmers living in the  
European countryside



**drastic changes become necessary in food production, distribution, and consumption**



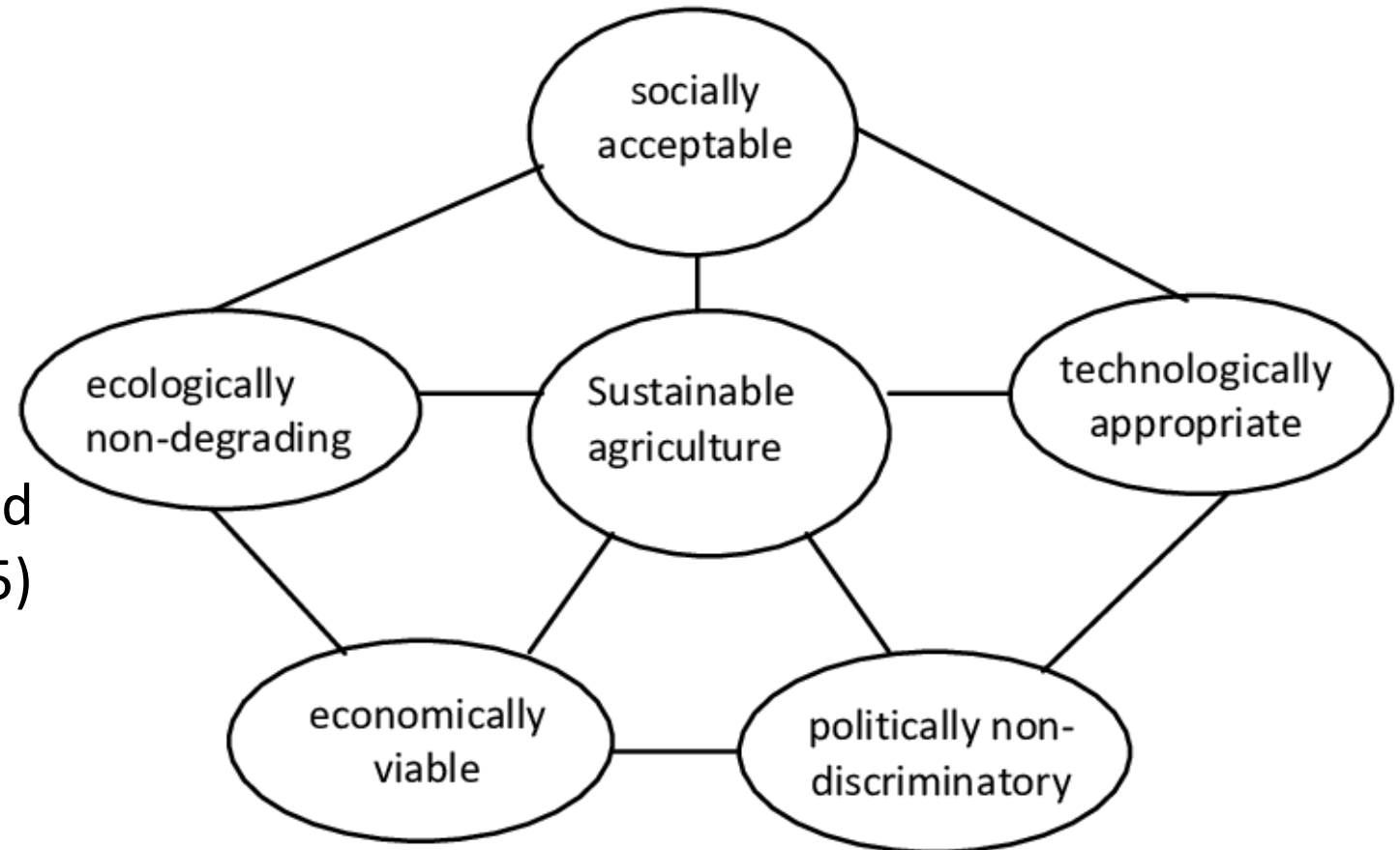
**numerous innovation for sustainable agriculture and rural development**

# What does sustainable agriculture and rural development mean?

## Agriculture and rural development are sustainable when they are

- socially acceptable,
- ecologically non-degrading,
- economically viable,
- politically non-discriminatory,
- technologically appropriate,
- and based on a holistic scientific and system approach. (Rajbhandari, 2015)

*Dimensions of sustainable agriculture*



Source: Rajbhandari, B.P. 2015.

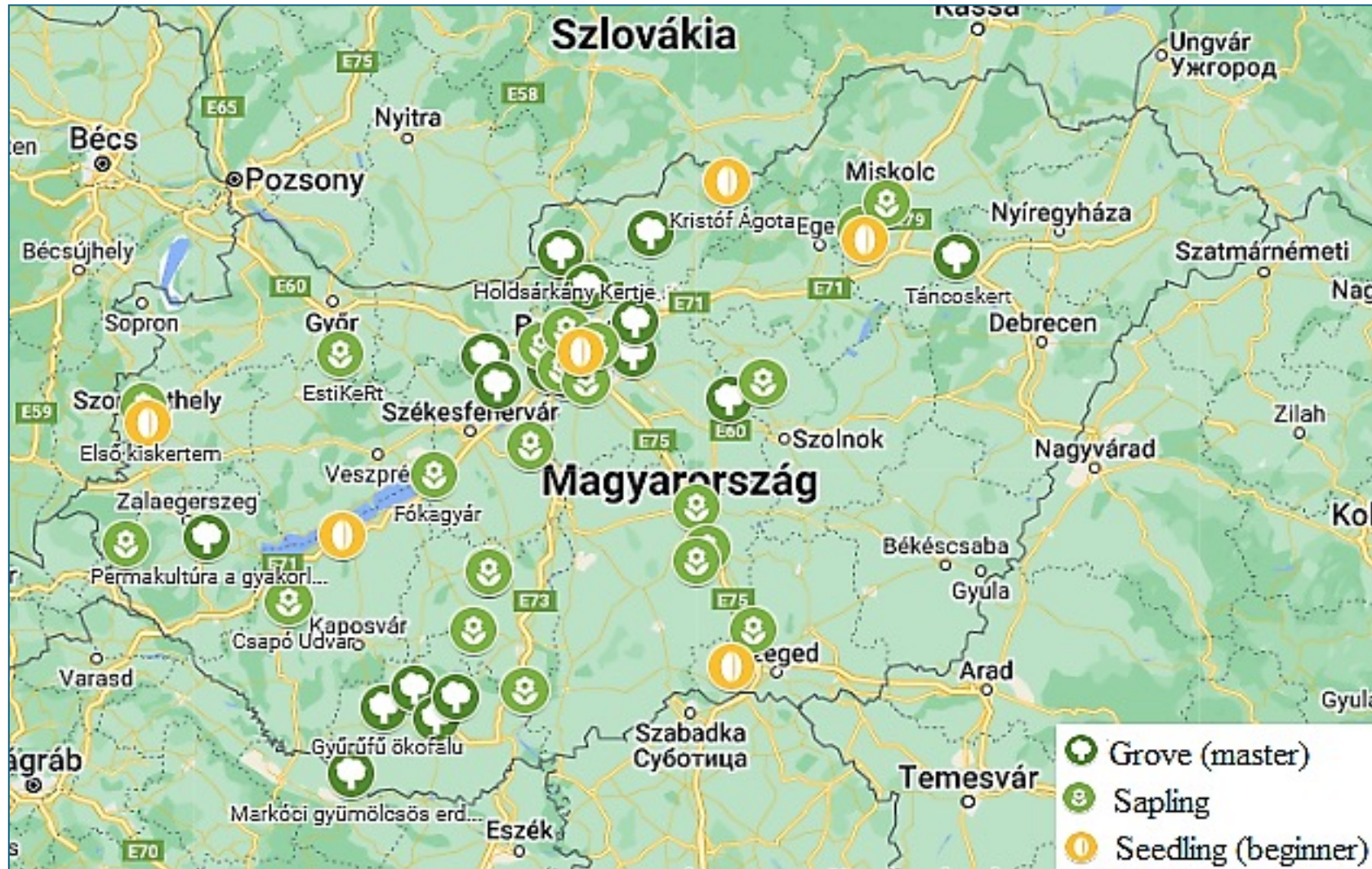
## Permaculture: one of the most famous sustainable alternatives of conventional farming

- **Permaculture:** The terms 'permanent culture' and 'permanent agriculture' were defined by **Bill Mollison**, an Australian forester, teacher, hunter, and naturalist, in 1959 with one of his students, **David Holmgren**.
- *“Permaculture (permanent agriculture) is the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive ecosystems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of landscape and people providing their food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way. Without permanent agriculture, there is no possibility of a stable social order.”* (Mollison 1988)
- **Ethical principles of permaculture:** 1.) protection of the Earth, 2.) caring for people, 3.) fair share of goods

## History of permaculture in Hungary – milestones

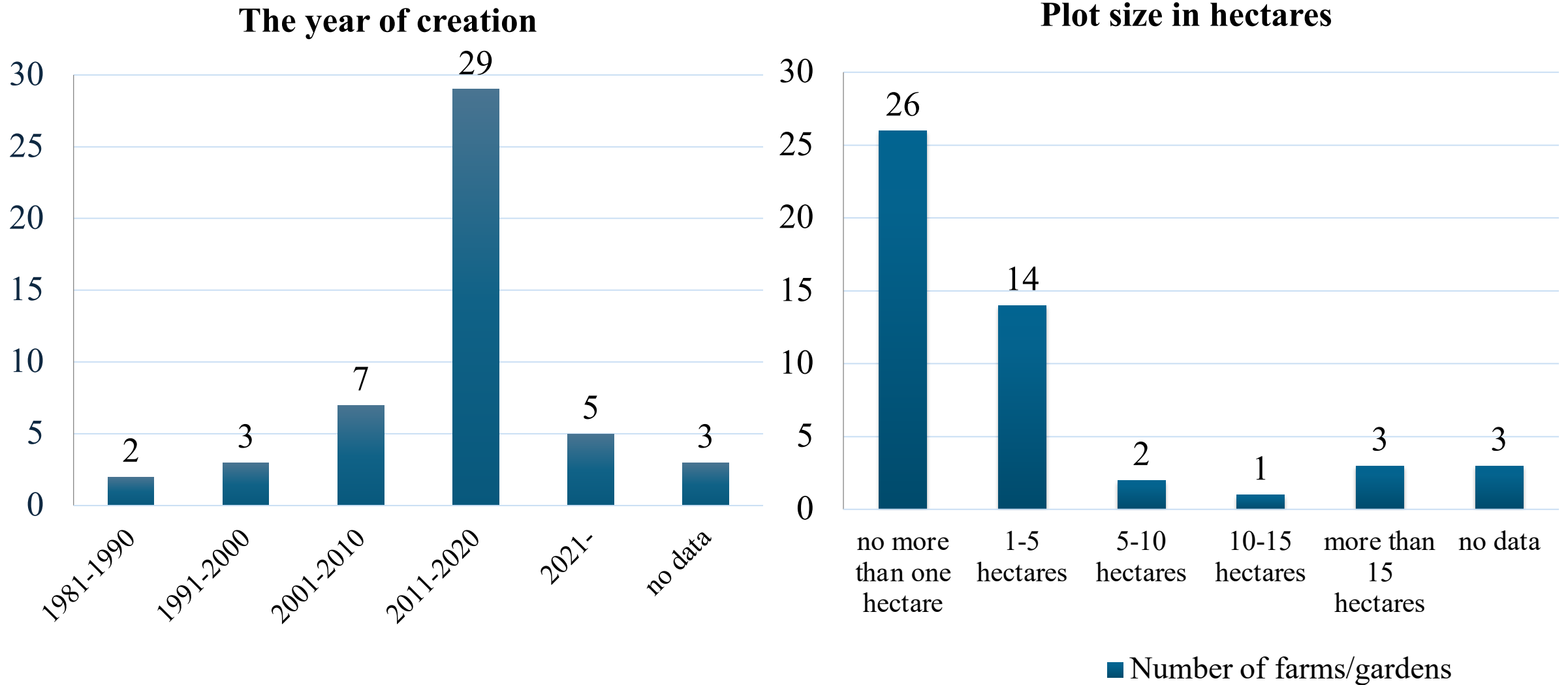
- In Hungary, the first trials of permaculture started **in the 1990s** after a Permaculture Design Course in 1992. At this time, the first Hungarian ecovillage „**Gyűrűfű**” was created by a group of young Hungarian ecologists (Domingos 2018).
- **2006**: A grassroots initiative started to promote permaculture in Hungary by enthusiastic practitioners.
- **2016**: an official civil organization, **the Hungarian Permaculture Association** (MAPER), has been established to introduce permaculture to even more people, organize permaculture education and build relationships with permaculture organizations from other countries.
- **In the last few years**, permaculture design and the professional community surrounding it have developed enormously in Hungary. Every year, more and more training courses, clubs, groups and professional organisations are being set up.
- **Today**, in Hungary, there is an extremely wide variety of initiatives related to alternative, sustainable, environmentally friendly agriculture, and food production, but these activities are fragmented and disjointed (Balogh et al. 2020).

# Permaculture farms, households and services in Hungary, registered by Hungarian Permaculture Association (N=49)



Source: Hungarian Permaculture Association, 2024

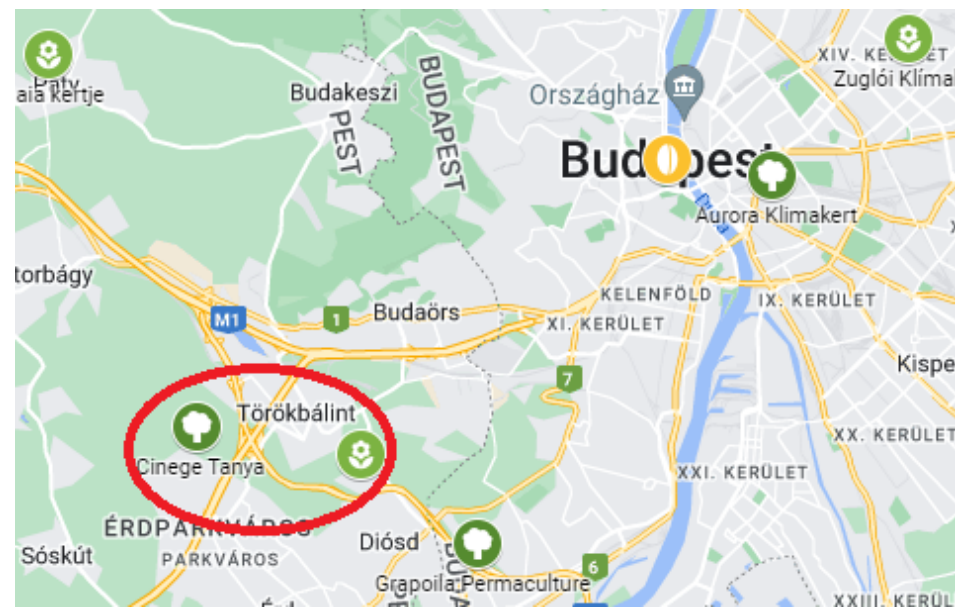
# The year of creation and plot size of permaculture farms, households and services on the Hungarian Permaculture Association's map (N=49)



Source: Edited by Author based on Hungarian Permaculture Association's map database, 2024

# Permaculture farm: „Cinege tanya” „Tit farm”

- Located in the agglomeration of Budapest
- Created: in 2013
- Plot size: 70 hectares
- They deal with extensive organic animal husbandry.
- The goal is to sell locally produced and processed products to local customers as much as possible.
- An important activity is gardening with a permaculture approach, within the framework of community farming.
- Kindergarten and school groups, and other people who want to learn are welcome at the farm.





# Conclusion

The challenges caused by climate change raise many questions about conventional agriculture. Access to clean, chemical-free food has become increasingly important, not only for people living in rural areas but also in urban spaces.

The various sustainable forms of agriculture (including permaculture) offer a good opportunity to meet these needs and even play a community-building role (e.g. community gardens with permaculture approach).

Permaculture is particularly noteworthy because its principles can be applied anywhere from small gardens to large farms.

An important question is whether this type of agriculture can spread more widely in the future and what factors can influence its spatial spread.

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# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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Rafina, Greece, 16-20.06.2024



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