ECOTONE: In nature the edge between two ecosystems is called an ecotone. These areas usually contain a higher diversity of species than either ‘overlapping’ ecosystems. Gross photosynthetic production is also higher at such ‘interfaces’. By following this ‘pattern’ and increasing the edges within our system we can increase photosynthetic production and therefore yield.

HOLMGREN

H11. Use edges and value the marginal.
“Don’t think you are on the right track just because it is a well-beaten path.”
The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place. These are often the most valuable, diverse and productive elements in the system.

HERB SPIRAL

A spiral is a useful pattern as the amount of edge and growing space increases as the garden bed climbs higher. To construct dump a pile of soil on the ground 2 to 3 metres across, then using rocks construct your spiral. Plant deep rooted herbs on top (or a dwarf lemon tree) and shallow rooted lower; plant sun loving herbs on the sunny side and shade loving ones in the shade.

MANDALA GARDENS

Mandala gardens have a greater edge than rectangular beds. They are constructed by ‘joining’ keyhole beds together. Illustration: Mars. 2007, The Basics of Permaculture Design, p.132, fig.12.4

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