"...and the solid earth above where the above cut it in the grasp of viscidness"

1. To loosen, to lend it ease and animation upon starch in order to the reaping of crops.
2. To tend its presence and render it fertile.
3. A practice to break up ignorance with a cultivative conscience.
4. To promote growth or to improve any to its promotion.
5. To improve and develop by education or training.
6. To promote the growth of, should occasion or the advancement or development of...

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To cultivate is to act. A mark or a trace must be made whether cultivating potatoes, aluminum alloys, works of art or political office. Marks are made with tools or implements. Is the provision of a tool enough to inspire an act? Tools have inherent directives, the manner in which they are used and a medium for use. Tools alone do not make marks, they must have something to impress upon.

Nature is a complex system which constantly operates at many different scales and phases of the life cycle. The garden is man’s attempt to control these natural workings in his favor by manipulating these cycles with his interjections at still other scales. A city is not unlike a garden; a manipulation by man to his own end. The density of both the garden and the city demand the interaction of all of its inhabitants. As a metaphor, can the working relationships within the garden inform potential working relationships within the city? In other words, what could an urban garden be?

To cultivate is to act, in order that something may arise or grow. All actions must have both a means and a medium; a tool or device as well as a context or environment. How can an object or tool inspire the urbanite to cultivate a new environment?

The product should support a sustainable urban ecology, based in a cyclic model of growth toward balance. The product should encourage the city to import less raw material and export less waste. The design should use the natural life cycle as a reference.

The design should address sustainability (social, economic, and environmental issues) for product production as well as resource use.

The product should directly address both physical and mental human health.
The mass market is presently flooded with products claiming to be environmentally friendly or green. It is often difficult to look past the marketing strategy to establish a value system by which to judge these products and their implications.

Certain products, such as water and air filters, address the “need” for our sanitized environment. However, the means by which they reach their end leaves a trail of concentrated pollutant sources, often more volatile than the original trace toxins. Nature has a model by which such filtration occurs naturally, with reeds and plants, which are our natural counterpoint in environmental impact.

Other products encourage excellent practices, utilizing holistic concepts, but suffer in the marketplace from poor execution in terms of form; these products are suited for their functions, not always the people intended to utilize them. Many of these products would probably be more broadly accepted and used if consideration was given to the consumer. The vermiculture system, grey water toilet and the composting toilet all suffer in the marketplace due to their clumsy form and the visual appearance of a lack of “sanitation.”

A beautiful example of a product that is simple and yet operates on several levels are “seed cards.” These cards are beautiful to send and invite the recipient to plant them, as they are made of recycled paper pulp with virile seeds embedded in the fibers. They are beautiful with potential.
Disfigurement is fascinating as a point of departure for learning. It offers the figure of the abnormal in the ground of the normal. Under scrutiny, the normal workings are deconstructed, revealing the nature of the normal through the study of the abnormal. In neurology, for example, the injured brain provides a rich sample by which to understand the workings of the uninjured brain. In addition, man’s capacity to supercede disfigurement astounds me. Mechanical appendages designed and made to order are a technological means of “equipping” the disfigured with apparatus.

In the natural world, there is a cycle of life: birth, growth, reproduction, decay, death. Nature’s objective, or desire, is reproduction. “Errors” in this cycle, lead to the advance or decline of the cycle. In the man made world, this cycle is manipulated according to individual and often disconnected desires. The severity of such repeated manipulations often manifests itself in mutation or disfigurement.

Two specific cases of human causal disfigurement, the building industry and agribusiness, are of concern. The city operates under its own desires; it is humanity empowered with technology as a means to stretch and pull at the natural order. The garden, or agriculture, is another, albeit covert, means of man manipulating this cycle. Both of these are regarded as “necessary evils” by our society.

The objective is to address the necessity of both (agribusiness and building construction) while limiting the evil of each by creating a situation for the return of that which is taken.
A graywater use system which filters water from sink use through a soilbed into a holding tank for use when flushing the toilet. This concept is an aesthetic alternate to exposed pipes visually linking the sink and toilet, which “feels” unsanitary.

A graywater use system which filters water from sink use through the root structures of plants such as reeds to sanitize the water for storage or use in growing food or flowers. Acrylic tubes could be suspended or mounted horizontally with aggregate to add texture. Tubes would be manipulated to support or capture plants.

The shower, a naturally wet environment, is prone to bacteria and molds. Using certain plant combinations, it may be possible to create a clean yet living interior environment, eliminating the need to use toxic cleaners to “sanitize.”
A vertical garden which uses stacking modular planters to construct a living tapestry. The tapestry can be easily reconfigured by the user. Issues of weight and water delivery need to be further studied as well as soil settlement and aeration.

An overhead trellis system for indoor plant growth and light filtration. The system can be used in a home or office setting for air filtration and noise absorption. The system uses artificial or natural light sources. This system is for climbing vines.

The aperture garden is conceived as a device to aid the urbanite in seeing in new ways. The garden is a table with a frame attached to it. This frame can be used with or without panels that insert into it; the panels could have grids, blackouts or other manipulations to frame a view of the plant.
The kitchen garden is a concept trying to integrate a cyclic system into food preparation. The garden grows in a window solarium, for fresh leafy greens, herbs and flowers. The sink rinse water is gathered in a greywater recycling system so the garden is self-watering. Wastes are vermicomposted in a drawer bin system under the sink. The compost tea fertilizes the garden; the compost itself is used as a soil replenisher.

Vermiculture tower for use in apartments to compost organic waste material. Also, could act as a planter, to grow herbs or flowers to avoid potential odors. The modules could be given away as gifts to friends, to establish a community. The indoor unit would potentially help urban dwellers see their personal impact on the environment.

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Studies by Darwin from 1865 are the first documents of the movements and habits of climbing plant. Vines are classified as a behavioral group. They have hollow stems which facilitate the movement of water. Vines grow in length as a reaction to the threats of animals (to move fruit out of a predator’s reach) and also to ease access to pollination. Many vines grow upward in a spiral motion known as circumnutation. This motion occurs both clockwise and counterclockwise according to varietal.

An overhead canopy system supports vine growth which filters artificial light and indoor air. The system uses both suspended and wall mounted planters.
The indoor canopy system developed to use movable trellis structures to allow a change in the indoor environment for season, maintenance or aesthetics. This work was abandoned to pursue a more sustainable concept.