

*Please scroll down for page one
of the Fall 2005 “Garden Companion”
(BfR’s newsletter)!*



The Garden Companion

Biointensive for Russia's newsletter

Vol. 9, No. 1

Fall 2005

A CULTURE/ECO-AG TOUR TO REMEMBER!

In June, seven of us: co-leaders Shoshana Billik and myself, and ecotourists Mark and Romola Georgia, David Buckley, Arline Kapphahn, and Jill Slocum, toured five regions of Western Russia. During the all-too-short 18-day tour, we visited beautiful historic and natural sites and met with BfR's partners who showed us bountiful gardens and orchards. We also dined in pleasant cafés and restaurants, attended operas, and were hosted to meals by our Russian friends.

The Moscow portion of the trip, coordinated again by Tatyana Petrova, included a number of noteworthy attractions such as the Kremlin and the Tretyakov Gallery. But the most delightful day began at Abramtsevo, an outlying estate where the best-known late 19th-century Russian realist painters lived and worked. Then we were driven to the renowned monastery city Sergiev Posad and on to Novo-Sin'kovo, where three of BfR's past workshops were held at the Educational Methods Center of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture. That evening Evgeny Shmelev, Foreign Methods Lab Director, and his wife Tatyana hosted us at a "picnic" in a tent behind their home. Before and after the meal, we were shown the gardens of the teachers at the local agricultural college and the Shmelevs' own garden where Biointensive experiments are being conducted.



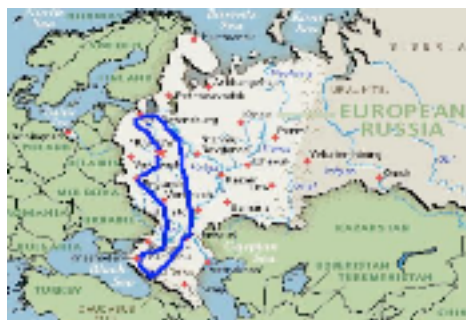
Following our arrival in Bryansk, NGO Viola's co-directors Ludmila Zhirina and Igor Prokofiev organized visits to nearby sights, including Ovstug, the estate of the poet-diplomat Fyodor Tiutchev. That same day, Jill Slocum and I visited gardens in Novozybkov and the village of Mglin in the radiation zone *continued on page 6*

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Those of you familiar with Ecology Action who also take an interest in our work will enjoy seeing Irina Kim's picture on the cover of Bountiful Gardens' 2006 catalogue. Enjoy! Also, we've just heard from Vladimir Loginov that he has received his visa and will be spending some months here this winter, so do contact us for a meeting or program.



We're happy to offer an account of our Culture/Eco-Ag Tour of Western Russia on this page; see left. A more complete travelogue has been posted on our website, and photos will be uploaded soon.

The people-to-people aspects: sharing picnics, school and garden tours, and sightseeing with BfR's Russian friends were among the highlights of a wonderful tour. We visited capitals, provincial towns, and villages, and viewed the countryside from trains, vans, and cars, as well as on foot. It's impossible to say which part was best — we enjoyed it all!

In August, several of us presented a digital slide show at Common Ground, the nonprofit garden supply and educational center in Palo Alto *continued on page 8*

VIOLA UNDERTAKES MONITORING EXPEDITION .

In late September, NGO "Viola" President Ludmila Zhirina sent us four budgets for a scientific monitoring expedition, a GROW BIOINTENSIVE conference, a book, and a workshop, for the coming months and next year. David Buckley (a 2005 ecotourist) and I decided to fundraise for the expedition, which you're invited to help support.

For background on and preliminary results of the expedition, please see letters starting on page 5 that arrived from Ludmila and Igor in Russian and were translated for us by Connie Vilhauer in West Virginia. We may work with Ludmila to get support for the other projects, since they have a longer time frame.

We have also been talking with Sally Kiester about other strategies for assisting Viola, e.g. taking an expert on fundraising with us next year to Russia to train our FSU partners in local fundraising. Feel free to write to Carol for background information on Chernobyl and its aftermath, including (1) a URL for a recent *continued on page 4*

CAROL TALKS TO TASC GROUP IN OCTOBER

As a result of meeting environmental activist Tian Harter at Peter Drekmeier's successful Palo Alto City Council campaign kickoff party, I was invited to speak to the Technology and Society Committee at the Golden Wok in Mountain View. The talk was so well received that we decided to publish excerpts of it here:

The cost of oil is rising, and with it our food production and delivery costs. What will you do when buying your current diet at the supermarket becomes prohibitively expensive? Do you think you'll be able to "grow your own" in your back yard to feed your family?

How many of you have vegetable plots or fruit trees and grow and gather some of your food? [Well over half of those present raised their hands.] Have you ever tried to estimate how much of your diet you grow? [No one did.]

Here I'm including material from a talk given by Debbie Mytels, Associate Director at Acterra: Action for a Sustainable Earth, a Palo Alto non-profit that works to create solutions to environmental problems. She's been involved with local environmental groups for a long time and is also an organic gardener.

Consider for a moment the mental image you may hold of what sociologist Paul Ray in his book *The Cultural Creatives* calls a "traditional" family, and how they feed themselves. Imagine a farmhouse in 1900. Much of the food eaten is produced there: chickens, dairy cows, garden vegetables, and fruit. Wheat or corn is grown there and possibly milled into flour at a nearby mill.

Food is cooked from scratch, from fresh ingredients daily for a large family. This food is wholesome, fresh, nutritious, containing no chemical preservatives. It's high in calories which is okay because people performed much physical labor. There is less variety, and only seasonal food except when canned. Family and co-workers join together for group meals.

[Breaking away from Debbie's talk] Here I'm adding another scenario of a traditional family: Now, let us try to imagine the ways in which the family of Aisalkyn Alimbaeva, a high school student here in Palo Alto for a year from Kyrgyzstan on the Future Leaders EXchange pro-



Tajik villager in Nuratau, Uzbekistan proudly displays his Biointensive tomatoes

gram, puts food on their table. Her father is a teacher; her mother helps out at a government boarding school. There are six children. There is a vegetable garden, cultivated by the mother with the help of family, from

which they get some of their tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, and cabbage.

They also keep two or three cows, which they milk to supply their large family with milk, sour cream and butter. They grow apples and walnuts, and buy raspberries from their Uzbek neighbors who – being from an agrarian culture – grow far more in their gardens, including strawberries, onions, and rice and wheat in their fields. Kyrgyz people are herders, but most grow more of their food than does Aisalkyn's family. Grown by the family or not, the food is produced locally, and meals are taken together.

Back to Debbie's (Paul Ray's) scenario: Now imagine today's typical "modern" family: Harried parent leaves work and heads to Safeway or Costco and buys heavily packaged individual servings of food. Food is highly processed, full of chemical additives and possibly pesticide residues. Parent puts it in the microwave, possibly incorporating molecules of plastic packaging into the food. Parent eats alone, then goes off to exercise class. Children or spouse come home, take frozen food from freezer, zap in microwave, and eat alone in front of the TV/video game.

Certainly there is more *labor* involved in the Traditional food system, but consider how much *isolation* is inherent in the Modern approach. Paul Ray, Debbie, and I are not suggesting that we return to a traditional lifestyle — rather that we could create a new blend of traditional values with the wise use of science-based knowledge. We could become what Ray calls "Cultural Creatives" and change our lives by returning to the values of Health • Connection to Earth • Connection with each other .

Debbie Mytels (with Susan Stansbury) founded the Valley of Heart's Delight (VHD) project at the Foundation for Global Community several years ago. At Acterra, she is now encouraging environmental activism in the "Be the Change" leadership training project. Along with helping schools to start garden-based learning programs, VHD holds conferences to promote backyard gardening, runs a community garden in Palo Alto, and holds events honoring organic farmers and food.

John Jeavons would add "sustainable soil fertility" to the above values. John has developed and promoted the GROW BIOINTENSIVESM (GB) method of gardening and mini-farming over the years in an effort to solve the problem of soil sustainability. During his well-known 3-day workshops he asks us the question, "What would you do if, 6 years from now, you had to grow all your food?" Then he proposes the GB method and shows how a complete diet can be grown in 4000 sq. ft., sustainably.

The GB method is labor-consuming at first, but far less so after the first few years. It's well described in Ecology Action's books, classes, and workshops, and at the website www.growbiointensive.org . There are eight components, the most distinctively Biointensive (and labor-consuming) of which is the double-digging that should be done when laying out and establishing the garden. The others are: Composting, Intensive Planting, Companion Planting, Carbon Farming, *continued on page 8*

Our Russian Partners Write

ORGANIC FARMING IN RUSSIA

by Igor Prokofiev and Ludmila Zhirina, NGO Viola
translated by Stephanie Ward

A wise man once said: “You are what you eat!” If you could survey the quality and content of modern food products, you would be shocked to learn about the traces of additives in our bodies and the causes of our illnesses. Today, close to 500 artificial additives are officially permitted in the manufacture of food products in Russia. Forty percent of Russian produce and almost 90 percent of foreign foods contain genetically modified components.

This being the case, a real need arises for healthy food for our citizens. Other countries similarly suffer colossal damage caused by these problems. As an example, unhealthy foodstuffs cause Germany nearly 14 billion euros a year in health costs, according to a German government report. An argument has been made that this challenge could spark a modern environmental makeover of the food processing in these countries.

The solution to the many problems engendered by the lack of healthy food can be found in organic farming, which simultaneously will encourage intensive development and increased public awareness among those who have difficulty finding healthy food. The 'whole-foods' sector of the world economy is a 35 billion dollar-per-year industry (IUCN), and it continues to grow. The leaders in the development of organic farming are Austria, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Finland, and Germany. Currently, Russia is not a major player in this process. But at the government level at least, there is interest in stimulating the development of organic agriculture in Russia.

Russia's Ministry of Agriculture is studying the profitability of the long-term development of organic food processing; in fact, export of organic produce to Western Europe appears to be one of its priorities. Even now, much exportable organic produce is being grown, such as cereals and edible oil products. Our wild plants may be most promising for exports. However, serious problems exist with regard to the labeling and certification of organic produce.

During the last decade, the phrase “environmentally friendly product” has been used widely in the Russian market. Unfortunately, it discredits itself in that it is used without the underpinning controls of 'environmentally friendly' manufacture and certification. This results in the proliferation of products falsely labeled as environmentally friendly, which answer this description neither qualitatively nor quantitatively.

Another widespread myth is that because of the economic crisis in Russian agriculture, by default it is already manufacturing organic products due to the very fact that much less fertilizer and fewer poisonous chemicals are used.. This can definitely be seen in a

comparison of Russia with Germany, where eight tons of fertilizer are used on one hectare of land, while in Russia, this figure is 1.5 tons. Interestingly, 15 million tons of fertilizer produced in Russia are exported to Western Europe every year.

However, a series of tests has shown that Russian agriculture is not by any means *de facto* organic. Moreover, due to the complex nature of its farming methods and environmentally unfriendly transportation and agricultural waste recycling technologies, it is not possible for Russian agriculture to be converted suddenly to organic methods. A considerable amount of adulteration still exists within the system.

According to another myth, the agricultural produce being sold by “grandmothers” in street markets is environmentally friendly. The reality is quite the opposite. A number of experiments and tests it have shown that significant amounts of nitrates, pesticides and other harmful substances can be found in these products.

Organic agriculture is not being developed due to the poverty of the majority of farmers and mini-farmers in Russia. On the contrary, it requires initial outlays and specific knowledge. Unfortunately, in Russia, the majority of farmers and kitchen gardeners are self-taught, and make unsystematic, inconsistent use of various methods of agriculture.

However, organic farming in Russia is definitely in the process of development. Today it is moving in three directions: on the governmental level, via the web of civil society and activity groups, and via large-scale agriculture oriented toward the wholefoods market of Western Europe. Below we have noted each direction distinctly.

The Government Level

On 10th May 2005, President Putin signed an agreement with the EU on “Road Maps.” This agreement includes the creation of four “Common Spaces” for the EU and Russia. Article 6 envisages collaboration toward the adoption of more environmentally friendly industries. The agreement should provide a real stimulus toward cooperation with European countries to develop organic agriculture in Russia. Efforts are now being made in Russia to establish environmental certification, which will provide for monitoring at all levels: from seed production to the end product. The system of certification is similar in principle to the European system. Simultaneously cultivating the rule of “technical regulation of environmental agricultural practice, land usage and labeling.” Unfortunately, this process involved the strong lobbying interests of large-scale multinational companies and Russian agro-manufacturers, who use a huge amount of genetically modified organisms and fertilizers. They are trying with full force to assuage this ruling.

continued on page 4

continued from page 3

The Farm Level

According to many economists, the cost of organic produce in Russia is lower than in Western Europe. For that reason, many large-scale farms are looking in the direction of the European wholefoods market, and working toward European standard certification for all their products. In Russia, 8,000 hectares have been officially certified organic. This figure is expected to increase from year to year.

The Level of Civil Society and Gardener Associations

A substantial portion of the cultivation of agricultural products in Russia manufacturing is performed not by farmers, but by holders of small plots of land. These include dacha gardens, kitchen gardens alongside homes, and plots at former collective farms. As a rule, they are not educated in farming methods, and make use of fragmentary knowledge. However it is this produce, consumed by the majority of the Russian population, that inspires so much concern with regard to the lack of healthy foodstuffs. Many civil society organizations and associations of dacha gardeners have realised the necessity of using environmental methods of cultivation. In this vein, since 1995 the civil society initiative "Viola" has actively been conducting a program

to disseminate Biointensive growing methods in Russia. These activities are performed with financial and informational support of the US-based project Biointensive for Russia. In ten years of activity, more than a thousand people have been taught these methods, which not only yield healthy foodstuffs, but also enrich and improve the fertility of the soil.

The problem of decreased fertility of Russian soils is becoming ever more serious. Only organic farming can offer the solution, to increase the quantity of microflora and nutritional elements in the soil by natural methods, without the use of chemical fertilizers.

In today's Russia the seed of another trend in the development of organic cultivation is sprouting — the birth of a market for organic products. Thus far, unfortunately, only one store selling organic produce has emerged. It is situated in Moscow on Gruzinskaya Street and is known as the "Red Pumpkin." All products on sale have certification to show that it is free of biological additives and is certified organic. The drawbacks of this store are the high prices and absence of Russian produce. But we hope that it is the first step leading to the growth of a widespread existence of such stores across Russia.

Viola's Monitoring Expedition, continued from page 1

UN report, along with comments from Ludmila Zhirina and Cathie Sullivan, an anti-nuclear activist in Santa Fe with whom Carol has networked, and a short statement from the Nuclear Information and Resource service on the UN report; and (2) a report from a BBC-related website that seems less biased, with Cathie's comments..

EXPEDITION TO TEST FALL HARVEST FOR RADIOACTIVITY IN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA IN 2005

According to Ludmila's September letter, Viola had established good contacts with government, scientific, and agricultural people in the radiologically contaminated areas of Ukraine and Belarus. Conferences will be held in April 2006 during the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, where Viola plans to present evidence that produce grown in these areas is still dangerously contaminated — test results showing that GROW BIOINTENSIVE techniques (specifically, double-digging) reduce the radionuclides quantitatively.

Ludmila Zhirina and Igor Prokofiev proposed a ten-day expedition with one or two others to the three affected countries, including Russia, to test the 2005 fall harvest using a mobile laboratory they could rent.

They needed the funding immediately, so June 2005 Ecotourist David Buckley and I decided to try to raise \$1000 of the following budget in the near term to cover items 1-3 in the Expedition budget below. In the end, we sent a total of \$1500, including \$600 raised from the ecotourists, and \$900 appropriated from funds earmarked for the Russian translation of *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden* and for Irina Kim's training tours. Due to her UNDP-funded work,

Irina could not undertake a tour this fall, and the publication project has been delayed for a variety of reasons, so we felt justified in this decision.

BUDGET: Expedition to Test Radioactivity in Harvest

Rent of mobile radiation lab to measure radionuclides in vegetables	\$ 200
Soil analyses in local laboratories	300
Rent of automobile, gasoliine	600
Accommodations & meals for expedition members (3-4 persons, 10 days, \$20)	600
Telephone, camera batteries	250
Office supplies	200
Publication of materials obtained during the expedition	500
BI literature to give out at the seminars .	_____ books
TOTAL	\$ 2650
	(\$1500 was sent -cbv)

FIRST REPORT ON THE EXPEDITION

Dear Carol,

We'd like to thank all of you for responding so quickly to our request to carry out our expedition in the radiation zone ... with personal contributions. We realize that you were sending us not only money, but also pieces of your hearts, and your love. This energy helped us to work in very difficult circumstances during the expedition. We'll always remember it. A huge thank you! Here's our report on the expedition:

We traveled for three weeks, instead of the two we had planned. We were welcomed warmly by the people in each little village, and every family *continued on p. 5*

IRINA KIM REPORTS ON UNDP FOREST PROJECT

by Irina Kim

My United Nations Development Programme-funded project "Joint Forestry and Forest Preservation" is part of the larger-scale UNDP-supported endeavor "Creation of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve."

I have been given the title of National Expert on Joint Project Coordination. Our project is to develop models for the joint public-private management of the Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve's forest resources.

Joint forestry is defined as a process whereby forest users preserve and develop federal forest resources in partnership with the federal government. It is often practiced in villages, both to improve the country's forest resources and to increase the standard of living of those who depend on them. The goal of the project is the comprehensive facilitation of ecologically sustainable use of forests and other natural resources of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve.

Since I joined this project in May of 2004, I've involved seven villages in the project territory. I conducted a number of informational seminars in each village, which not only



informed the villagers about the project, but also involved them in conducting it in the best possible way. As part of the process, we consulted with the local people, community organizations, and forest developers. I developed good working relationships with all who could be involved, and this is the key to success.

Here are some outcomes:

- In mountain areas, 40 orchard (fruit and nut tree) zones were created.
- In desert areas 60 hectares were planted in saksaul and other desert plants.
- The rate of tree survival is 100%.
- We founded the Council for Joint Forest Management and developed its manifesto.
- We facilitated a new agreement

plan for joint forest management that is being put into practice in Uzbekistan and other republics of Central Asia.

- In cooperation with local residents and forest developers, we designed one-year and five-year management plans for sustainable forestry.

For more info see www.nature.uz/about/index.php -cbv

cont'd from p. 4 wanted to invite us to their home. In a few remote villages we had difficulties with transportation, and it was often cold and rainy.

Participants were Ludmila Zhirina, Igor Prokofiev, Oleg Zavarzin, Natalya Karyagina, student volunteers, and Dima Nikitsov (a young teacher and our driver). We stayed overnight in homes (small villages), in hotels (regional centers), and even a few nights in tents.

We couldn't take uncontaminated food with us, since we had no car. We ate food purchased from local residents in markets and in stores (food from the local food processing plants). We traveled via varying means of transport: train, bus, minibus, motorcycle, and on foot.

Our original plans and proposals were curtailed a little. We visited radioactively contaminated regions in Russia and in Ukraine, but due to a budget reduction we were unable to conduct studies in Belarus.

We worked in 20 inhabited localities. We took radiological measurements of the 2005 harvest (fruits and vegetables) from farmers and private growers, and brought some of it to Bryansk for analysis at regional laboratories.

We performed soil analyses on fields and vegetable gardens, indicating at what depth a particular concentration of radionuclides is present. We are now processing soil samples in laboratories and assembling maps of locations showing the different levels of contamination.



We conducted a study of background radiation in the forest, where the local residents store mushrooms, medicinal herbs, hay for the animals, and wood for burning and construction. We also monitored the health of children and teenagers using health records from local schools, which we are now analyzing.

We held two radiation awareness events, six discussion meetings, and Biointensive seminars to introduce the method to the local residents and inform them of its use and advantages in the radiation zone. We met with representatives of the local administration, doctors, and teachers in seven regions.

We brought back more than 150 samples of vegetables, mushrooms, soil, seeds, ashes, compost, timber, and drinking water to obtain a more accurate measurement of the radionuclide and heavy metal levels in each zone. We're analyzing a portion of the specimens ourselves at chemical, soil, and ecological

laboratories, and we've submitted some of them to governmental and specialized scientific labs.

Our goal is to organize all the data obtained, perform a mathematical analysis, then write up our conclusions. We also took a lot of photographs.

Love, Ludmila

Ludmila's letter was translated by Deborah Hoffman.

Do check back for Ludmila's final report! -cbv

continued from page 1 of the Bryansk oblast', where Viola's colleagues are conducting an experiment using Biointensive techniques to limit the uptake of radio-nuclides into the vegetables they grow. By chance, we were privileged to spend time with Svetlana Gorbacheva, an art teacher at the local teacher's college, and view impressive work by her students aged 12-15 which could rival art produced by far older students in the US.

We were received at their schools in Bryansk and in the village of Domashevo by school principals Oleg Zavarzin and Natalya Karyagina, who are active in Viola and had both attended our workshops at Novo-Sin'kovo. The ecocenters at both schools attractively presented the elements of GROW BIOINTENSIVE (GB), natural science exhibits, various seeds of wild plants, student art work depicting nature, etc. In Domashevo, being greeted with bread and salt in the traditional way by costumed students brought tears to our eyes, and we were equally delighted by the children's puppet show on the theme of vegetables.

Ludmila and Igor also organized our trip to Orel, a three-hour van ride to the east, where we gathered at a "round table" at the university that will host Viola teaching GB in future. (A seminar will be held in Shablykino this month.) The dean of natural sciences and a teacher of English and her students served as delightful guides for our walks around that beautiful city.

We journeyed south from Orel to Krasnodar by train. Vladimir ("Volodya") Loginov met us at the station before dawn in a Mitsubishi van that he had repaired with funds we sent him earlier in the spring. The group breakfasted at the home of his colleague Irina Sliunkova, and met with environmentalist Andrei Rudomakha and a local author, Galina Kondratova. From Krasnodar we carried on in Volodya's van via Maikop (capital of the Adygeya Autonomous Republic), where we briefly visited a mosque, to Kamennomostskii in the Caucasus mountains.

Before reaching our abode for two nights, we stopped at a private park with a limestone gorge and walked along its rushing stream to where a grizzly bear played with a log in a pond in its large enclosure. Ekaterina, Nikolai, and Genia made us comfortable at their new guest house in Kamennomostskii and fed us three delicious meals a day at a very modest price. A highlight of our entire tour was a day hike guided by local guide Tatyana and her little white dog Knopka. They led us via wildflower-strewn mountain meadows to a deep gorge, down the side of which we descended along a precipitous path to a waterfall (one of 14). Before our descent Arline, an experienced birdwatcher, spotted a pair of eagles and we found ourselves mesmerized watching them wheeling this way and that in the updrafts and downdrafts near their nest on the opposite ridge. We snapped photos and picnicked near the waterfall in perfect weather with few bugs.

Volodya conducted excursions from the guesthouse in his van out into the local territory, including one to a small museum where we bought color nature prints from the photographer. Another took us to a megalithic dolmen, a sound chamber which reputedly transmitted sound in prehistoric times to another dolmen some distance away. In the evening, Volodya baked potatoes in a fire pit for us and others including his friend Anatoly, an amateur archaeologist who showed us his collection of ancient objects from stone and bronze speartips to decorated 19th-century shell casings.

In his van, Volodya transported us on to his home town of Kurganinsk. That evening we enjoyed a festive meal hosted by his older friend Antonina Mikhailovna and her local circle of culture buffs, and visited the fine garden of longtime members Tamara and Nikolai.

We took an overnight train "platzkart" – sleeping on berths in an open carriage – to Sochi, where we had only the morning to spend. We enjoyed a luxurious breakfast with complimentary wine at an elegant Armenian cafe, then toured harbor area and the beautifully landscaped parks. The highlight was the Arboretum, graced by 1500 species of subtropical trees from all parts of the world, sculptured paths, fountains, and even peacocks.

Flying via Pulkovo Airways from Sochi to St. Petersburg, we were met at the airport by old friends Albina, Volodya, and Vitya Kohegina and Natasha Krestiankina and her husband Igor Rufov. We visited the Hermitage, the Russian Museum, Peterhof, Palace Square, the canals, Nevsky Prospect, the Church on the Spilt Blood, the Mariinsky Theater (for a performance of Tchaikovsky's "Iolanta") and other sights, all looking as beautiful as ever. We received valuable help registering our visas from the staff and enjoyed chatting with them and Vladimir Shestakov at the CCI office. Our last evening was spent in Taitsy enjoying the dacha of Natasha Krestiankina and her family, where the poet-novelist Boris Pasternak summered in 1921.

The group returned to California on Aeroflot via Moscow, while I remained in Russia for a week in order to visit the Avrorins in Moscow. I enjoyed a walk in the park with Larissa and catching up on her work with CAF-Russia, and an overnight trip with Sasha and grandson Sanya to Chukavino, near Staritsa in the Tver' oblast'. (The organization Sasha directs is doing renovations there.) I also worked with Sasha planning the publication of *Ekologicheskii ogorod*, the Russian translation of *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden* by Jeavons and Cox.

It was marvellous to be able to visit with so many old friends in Russia. I hope to repeat the trip in future years, possibly with Tamara Kowalski co-leading in 2006. In 2007, Shoshana and I may lead a tour to Central Asia. Do write if you'd consider joining us! Carol <cvesecky@igc.org>



Biointensive for Russia holds mini-fundraisers locally on sustainable growing and living topics, including two this past year on solar cooking taught by Julie Lovins and Mark Georgia. We plan to hold one or two in 2006 on Permaculture. If you're not already on our email or post-card announcement lists and are not too far away, be sure to write us to sign up!

OUR SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN GENEROUS! 5-YEAR CUMULATIVE TALLY FOR DECEMBER 2001 TO DECEMBER 2005: Workshop and

Book Funders: Abby Youngblood • Andrew & Jane Crowley • John & Cynthia Vesecky • St. Mark's Episcopal Church • Sandra & Stuart Harris • Shoshana Billik **Supporters:** Barbara Brown • Bruce & Bonnie Benedict • Cindie White

• David Buckley • David Vick • Deborah Rose • Joyce & Jim Harris • Lois Benedict • Peter Norby • Sally & Ed Kiester • Sergei Smirnov, Jr.

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How You Can Help!

Contribute financially to help sponsor:

- the Expedition described in this newsletter
- a workshop tour by **Igor Prokofiev** and **Ludmila Zhirina** of Viola to Smolensk (\$700) or to a town or city visited during their recent fall harvest monitoring expedition in Ukraine
- workshop tours by **Irina Kim** or **Bakhtiyar Jollibekov** in Central Asia: \$500-\$2000 per tour (call Carol to discuss)
- maintenance and further development of the Russian-language **Web site**, www.biointensive.newmail.ru by Igor Prokofiev and others in Bryansk — \$500 for one year
- printing and paper to publish *Ekologicheskii Ogorod* (Russian translation of *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden*) — \$4000 will pay for 5000 copies, smaller amounts for a smaller edition, or could go into a fund

Network with foundations and major donors to help us find funding:

- for a seminar for GB practitioners in Russia proposed by Viola (write to Carol for preliminary \$4450 budget)
- to support the translation and publication in another language — e.g. Tajik, Uzbek, Ukrainian, or Belarusian, of **How to Grow More Vegetables....** or **The Sustainable Vegetable Garden** — \$5,000
- to support a translation of Ecology Action's **Test Your Soil With Plants** by John Beeby — \$3,000

Volunteer your time:

- office organization, filing, writing/editing/translating, or other office help in Carol's home office or in yours
- hosting, organizing, and/or publicizing events
- co-developing a future Eco-Ag tour to the region of your interest: the Russian Far East? Siberia? Western Russia? Central Asia? Help research tourist attractions: nature, celebrations, concerts, museums and galleries, local sights, travel costs

Here's my tax-deductible contribution to Ecology Action for a membership in Biointensive for Russia:

\$1000 Workshop Sponsor* \$250 Supporter* \$100 Contributor* \$50 Donor \$20 Member Other

*May receive the 2nd Russian or 6th English edition of

How to Grow More Vegetables (Check box)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph/fax: _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: BfR, 831 Marshall Drive **Be sure to write your check to "Ecology Action" for tax deductibility!**
Palo Alto, CA 94303-3614

Upcoming Events:

Saturday morning classes at Common Ground: see www.commongroundinpaloalto.org

Mini-fundraiser series on Permaculture in 2006: be sure to be signed up for BJR's email or postcard list(s) for announcements; get in touch with Carol to help organize

Culture/Eco-Ag Tour to Russia in Summer or Fall 2006: get in touch to indicate your interest and/or willingness to help research or promote, or (possibly) participate

Culture/Eco-Ag Tour to Central Asia in Summer 2007 or later: get in touch to indicate your interest and/or willingness to help research or promote, or (possibly) participate

continued from page 1 run by Ecology Action. We will be happy to do so again for your group on request, with one or more of us providing narration. That show ran for 1 1/2 hours, but yours could be tailored to a length appropriate for your group. You'll see that we connected with many old friends, along with the new — we are sending thanks to 25 of them! With five ecotourists paying all their costs and Shoshana and I providing a portion, we were able to donate \$1000 to the NGO Viola for their experiments in the radiation zone and fall GB workshops at Orel University, and send \$500 (along with \$200 from other donations) to Irina Kim for her summer trainings in remote villages.

With Tamara Kowalski, we're starting to plan a similar tour in 2006, so do stay posted! With more ecotourists, not only will more Americans get to know Russian culture, dacha gardens, and our work, we'll also be able to provide the wherewithal for more trainings and publications to an expanding circle of gardeners. We received an inquiry from Azerbaijan recently, and we haven't forgotten the Russian Far East and other parts of Eurasia we haven't reached.

We're currently working toward uploading photos to our website, along with a translation of an article sent by Igor Prokofiev on organic farming in Russia. For now, we're

offering a brief account of our ecotour (see page 1, left column). Feel free to write back for details!

TASC Talk, continued from page 2 Calorie Farming, Open-Pollinated seeds, and A Whole Gardening Method These are fully described in *How to Grow More Vegetables* and *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden* which is available by mail order from www.bountifulgardens.org, and you can also learn more in the classes that Common Ground Garden Supply and Education Center offers almost every Saturday morning and at Ecology Action's sites — see www.growbiointensive.org and www.commongroundinpaloalto.org

People in the countries I've visited are much more adept at growing a good portion of their food than are we Americans. How many of us can lay claim to growing all of our potatoes, vegetables, and fruits on our suburban lots? In Russia it is roughly estimated that 70% of the population has access to dacha plots similar in size to our suburban houselots. According to a paper from the Univ. of Missouri at www.cinram.umn.edu/afta2005/pdf/Sharashkin.PDF, small-scale gardeners and mini-farmers actually grow over 40% of Russia's agricultural output. By contrast, suburban Americans may grow tomatoes, green beans, carrots, and sweet corn in our backyards, but it's rare to find gardeners growing their own onions, garlic, and potatoes. However, our numbers *are* growing, inspired by concerns about pesticide-laden produce from the stores and encouraged by such organizations as the Valley of Heart's Delight and similar across the country.

To hear the entire talk, feel free to get in touch — I'm willing to travel!

-Carol 650 856-9751 <cvesecky@igc.org>

To get in touch quickly, contact:

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650 856-9751 • cvesecky@igc.org

For info, visit: <http://biointensiveforrussia.igc.org>
or (in Russian) <http://www.biointensive.newmail.ru>

Biointensive for Russia is a non-profit project fiscally supported by Ecology Action, a California 501(c)(3) organization. Founded in 1993 with assistance from the LO*OP Center to help promote GROW BIOINTENSIVE[®] mini-farming in the former Soviet Union, its goals include a two-way sharing of information on environmentally sound lifestyles. Carol Vesecky is Director; our Web/IT team includes Berta Pires and Tamara Kowalski. The mailing of this issue of the *Garden Companion* was made possible by member contributions. It was edited by Carol & Stephen Vesecky and Joanna Weichert; Stephanie Ward and Deborah Hoffman provided translation assistance. Please visit our Web site for more info.

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