Please scroll down for page one
of the Fall 2009 "Garden Companion"
(BfR's newsletter)!

Gallery of photos that didn't make it into this newsletter:
Left, the university's certificate of appreciation for Irina 's work presenting her GROW BIOINTENSIVE workshop in Nukus in October 2008. Middle, Carol Vesecky and Kathy Nolan with solar-cooked Essene bread made by Kathy for the the Ojai Valley Locavores from GB wheat grown by Carol. Right, an environmental display prepared by the NGO VIOLA in Bryansk.

The Garden Companion

Biointensive for Russia's newsletter

Vol. 12 **Fall 2009**

WHY "BIOINTENSIVE"? WHY"RUSSIA"?

When we mention the word "Biointensive," we're referring to GROW BIOINTENSIVE℠ Sustainable Mini-Farming (GB). This approach to small-scale growing has been researched and promoted by John Jeavons and others at Ecology Action, beginning in the mid-1970s in Palo Alto and since 1982 in Willits, in northern California. GB in turn is based on the Biodynamic/French Intensive method developed by English horticulturist Alan Chadwick, then practiced at the Agroecology Program he founded at the University of California, Santa Cruz in the late 1960s.

Ecology Action's GB method has eight components. The best-known (but moderately laborious) is Double-Digging, which must be done when laying out and establishing the garden, and subsequently as needed. The others are: Composting, Intensive Planting, Companion Planting, Carbon Farming, Calorie Farming, Use of Open-Pollinated Seeds, and A Whole Gardening Method. These are fully described in *How To Grow More Vegetables* and *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden*; these books are available by mail order from www.bountifulgardens.org .

As tested extensively in Ecology Action's test mini-farm at the Stanford Research Park (1973-1980) and in Willits (1982-present), this approach can result in: a 200-500 percent increase in caloric production per unit of area, a major increase in soil fertility while productivity increases and resource use decreases, a 50 percent (or more) reduction in the amount of purchased organic fertilizer, a 99 percent reduction in the amount of energy and a 67-88 percent reduction in the amount of water required per unit of production, and a 100 percent (or more) increase in income per unit of area. Ecology Action views people living in harmony with the natural world as key to a sustainable way of life. The double-digging is labor-consuming at first, especially in compacted and clayey soils. But subsequently, GB requires no more effort

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

BfR's mission* could be "Peace through international efforts to grow food more sustainably and share culture." Accordingly, we held a delightful event in mid-November at Mulberry Haven, an "Afternoon of Eurasian Music and Cuisine." We shared Irina's Korean-Russian-Uzbek dishes with the community — cuisine ***is*** culture, after all, isn't it? — and heard captivating Near East music by a local ensemble, BYZANTIUM. Daniel Eshoo, Raymond Power, Montino Burbon del Monte, and Rod Martinez (left to right in photo) performed captivating music on saz, harmonium, and drums, which we greatly enjoyed in the afternoon sun. Just $100 was raised over expenses, but this first mini-fundraiser in the Ojai Valley raised hopes that with more advance publicity, we'll be able to host larger groups of people willing to share their bounty with BfR.

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**See box on page 7 for current BfR mission wording*

BfR CURRENTLY FUNDRAISING FOR RUSSIAN TRANSLATIONS

Since last November, we have raised approximately $2000 through our newsletter, email appeals, a workshop and mini-fundraiser, and some fruit sales. These funds supported the NGO VIOLA's compost experiment described on page 5 with $1200, and the *Future Fertility* translation by Michael Chusid ($550 to go).

Due to the recession, our hopes for raising funds in the near term via a grant for a workshop for Chernobyl radiation zone teachers to be taught by the NGO Viola are currently diminished. We submitted two proposals last November and in March 2009 for $5000 to support this workshop (to the Charlottesville Community Foundation and the Rudolf Steiner Foundation), but learned, via BfR's advisory board member Erin Wood and directly, that they were both declined.

Supporting translations now seems more doable. We are in the process of editing Michael Chusid's translation of *Test Your Soil With Plants* by John Beeby, Michael is inputting to the computer

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GROW BIOINTENSIVE (GB) GARDEN TOUR BRINGS LOCAVORE FILMMAKERS TO MULBERRY HAVEN

BfR offered tours of the GB gardens and fruit trees at Mulberry Haven on Sunday, August 16, attended by St. Andrew's church members, Ojai Valley Locavores, and others. Quarter-Mile Productions, the movie crew that is documenting the Locavores' year-long experience of eating only foods produced within a 100-mile radius, attended and filmed the tours. Carol briefly introduced the group to BfR history and the eight components of GROW BIOINTENSIVE (see www.growbiointensive.org/grow. main.html); then we presented our environmental and agricultural basis for being so passionate about promoting the method in Eurasia. Two groups were then formed, one for a tour of the Mulberry Haven fruit trees by resident orchardist Kody Ryan, the other of the vegetable garden during which compost-making, sowing of seeds in flats and transplanting into beds, and double-digging were briefly demonstrated. We're really looking forward to seeing that Locavore film!. ♦

Message from the Director *(continued from page 1)*

For those among you who are curious about Mulberry Haven's success thus far as an orchard, I have heartening news. Our Oscar mulberry harvest roughly doubled this year over last year's, such that the gross on our fruit sales was sufficient to cover our property tax! The outlook for 2010 may be even better, assuming we have a good harvest of the summer-fruiting Black Persian mulberries which seemed to dry up on the tree (and not for lack of watering!) this past summer.

We also sold varying quantities of Sunshine grapefruit, carob pods, blood oranges, pomelos, Bearss limes, Meyer lemons, pomegranates (see Oleg Zavarzin harvesting our large red variety in 2007 to left), and persimmons. We harvested avocados, apples, jujubes, and plums for our own use. Our olives, peaches, and dates had an "off" year – we are especially hoping for abundance in 2010 on the olives, since Ojai Valley landscaper Kathy Nolan is planning to help us harvest and cure them!

Do plan for a visit any time of year -- but from mid-May through August, you should be able to pick mulberries. If we don't have a room free, there are great camping spots, and we can also recommend local accommodations that are not overpriced. Feel free to write me to explore possibilities!

Carol Vesecky <cvesecky@igc.org>

CHURCH VEGGIE GARDEN ESTABLISHED IN OJAI

by Deb Cornils & Carol Vesecky

Inspired by a recently established community garden at Holy Nativity Episcopal Church in Westchester (western Los Angeles), the Earth Stewards committee at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church started a 1000-sq.-ft. vegetable garden in early summer on a derelict strip of land. Its mission is to provide fresh produce for needy folks in the Ojai area, and eventually to have gardeners in need of food growing some of their own there.

Franna McClelland and other volunteers got the ball rolling by clearing the project with the church hierarchy and the City of Ojai. Then a group of about 6 regulars set to work two mornings a week, removing large rocks from the subsoil, building wooden frames, and inserting hardware cloth vertically along the sides of the beds.

We offered a brief introduction to GROW BIOINTENSIVE and ensured the beds were properly double-dug, raked smooth. They were fertilized and conditioned with aged steer manure obtained from a local ranch, and peat and perlite donated by the Grow Food Party Crew (GFPC) of the Ojai Valley Green Coalition's Food & Ag Committee.. Then, finally, tomato, lettuce, chard, kale, and herb seedlings from Mulberry Haven and some from the GFPC were transplanted and a watering rota was set up.

Summer garden co-chair Deb Cornils in her recent stewardship sermon hailed our efforts with a reference to a little-known Old Testament prophet:"... Haggai (BCE 500s) calls us to mindfulness of our abundance. One symbol of that abundance can be found on our own church campus in the form of the community-sponsored garden. Each week a bowl overflowing with produce from this garden is placed on the altar to be blessed and then passed on to Help of Ojai..

"Early last summer, a small group of volunteers created this miracle. They met on a forgotten strip of land and, armed with shovels, pickaxes, and trenchers, transformed it into eleven beds producing tomatoes, zucchini, lettuce, chard, peppers, and herbs. This bounty is blessed, then taken by other volunteers to the Community Assistance Program to help feed the hungry in this valley.

"Today parishioners and townspeople alike can drive by and see tall amaranth accentuated by the bright orange of calendula flowers. The miracle continues to unfold...." ♦

Our Eurasian Partners Write

REPORT ON IRINA KIM'S 2008 BISHKEK WORKSHOP

At the Arabaev Kyrgyz State University in Bishkek in October 2008, I conducted a 5-day workshop on Sustainable Organic Biointensive Mini-Farming. This university is among the oldest and most prestigious educational institutions in Kyrgyzstan. It is housed in six modern buildings located in the city center, and has more than 1000 professors and lecturers, including about 300 PhDs, and over 15,000 students and graduate students.

The weather was warm, even in October. The deciduous trees in their festive red and gold autumn garb and the evergreen conifers were stunning. The gentle, warm, beautiful Bishkek autumn raised my spirits and inspired me to work hard at a time that was difficult for me. But let's not talk about our sadness, rather about what is good and wonderful! The Bishkek people were also kind, hospitable, and attentive, which encouraged me all the more.

This was my first meeting with the Dean of Biology and Chemistry, A. Choriev, who received me warmly and made me feel as though we were already longtime friends. I explained to him the workshop plan: goals, tasks, and expected results. He offered his hand and said in Kyrgyz, "Let's get started!" He is a wonderful teacher and human being.

Thus, the five days of the workshop – two of theory and three of practice – flew by quickly and productively. The practical work was done in a small student plot near the university building. The 32 participants, who all took a lively interest, included biology, chemistry, and forestry teachers and students. The most active students organized a GROW BIOINTENSIVE club, which is meeting independently to this day and sending me their questions and observations. The students especially enjoyed building two compost piles with the kitchen waste they each had brought. They joked, "In the past we never had kitchen waste, since we are poor students and try to eat up everything. Now, due to making compost, we will be half-starved, since our SOIL also wants to dine on delicious, healthy food!"

Naturally, the final, fifth day was the most enjoyable and memorable one. Each participant, dressed up for the occasion, received his or her certificate while music played. A certificate is not just a piece of paper where affirming words are printed — in fact it represents one's work, interests, desires, passion, soul, and love!

I also received a "certificate" in the form of a formal letter of thanks: "*Grateful thanks to Irina from the Biology and Chemistry community at Arabaev Kyrgyz State University, for conducting a seminar in sustainable mini-farming from Oct. 6-10, 2008. We wish you continued creative success!"*

NEWS OF NGO VIOLA EXPERIMENTS IN 2009

The NGO VIOLA (our partner organization in Bryansk, Russia) again this year organized a serious experiment for their collaborators in the radiation zone, comparing varying levels of compost and their influence in lowering the radiation levels in produce. They also offered guidance to their member Natalya Koryagina, principal of the school at the village of Domashovo, who with her students conducted an experiment comparing yields produced in double-dug beds with compost vs. chemical fertilizer inputs. Read on for Igor Prokofiev's introduction and see his reports on pp. 4 and 6.

-cbv

VILLAGE SCHOOL COMPOST EXPERIMENT GOES TO MOSCOW

Igor Prokofiev writes: I would like to tell about Natalya's successes in practicing GB in her school garden. For some years, Natalya and her pupils have been using GB to grow vegetables, and have been conducting an experiment whose focus was improvement of the properties of sandy soil by means of GB. *(See report on page 4. -cbv)* They obtained good results, so this year Natalya and her pupils presented them at a competition of school research projects in their district, and they won a prize. Oleg [Zavarzin], Ludmila [Zhirina], and I helped Natalya and her students with their experimental work and in preparing for the competition. After winning the district prize, their research project was entered in the regional competition, and they became winners for the Bryansk *oblast'* as well....

We returned today from Moscow. Natalya, Oleg and I participated in the national competition of school-based ecological research projects. This time, perhaps due to insufficient financial support from the Bryansk *oblast'* administration, she did not win a prize. She also could not buy tickets for the students and rent a car to transport the vegetables. Oleg and I were already in Moscow on business, so we remained in Moscow to support Natalya.

In any case, Natalya's work attracted much interest from the other participants, and she received incentive medals and the participant diploma. The competition was held at the State Children's Biological Center. As Natalya's project was considered so interesting, the organizers of the competition

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DOMASHOVO SCHOOL TAKES EXPERIMENT FROM BRYANSK OBLAST' TO MOSCOW

Natalya's school is located in the village of Domashovo in the Bryansk *oblast'*. Unfortunately, sod-podzol sandy soils prevail in the area. Previously, these soils were not used for growing vegetables. But the school decided to create a garden to give their students the opportunity to conduct agricultural experiments.

Their early efforts were unsuccessful, because the sandy soils quickly lost moisture, and nutrients were washed away by the rains. Plants in such soils starve and cannot yield a good harvest; they often die.

In 2006, experts in our VIOLA organization held a seminar for teachers and students on agricultural methods in sandy soils. The conventional way of getting of a good harvest from sandy soils is to add fertilizers to the soil. But we also described organic agriculture and GROW BIOINTENSIVE (GB) to the teachers and students.

Natalya, the teachers, and a group of students began to experiment in 2007 in the use of various agricultural techniques for sandy soils. In 2008 they decided to compare the traditional method of growing vegetables with GB.

Admittedly, not all components of GB were applied. But they did use its basic elements: double-digging, joint cultivation of crops, compost, close spacing, and companion planting. In preparing compost they used the tops of vegetable crops, the biomass of plants which grow near the school, and weeds. The compost recipe: 1/3 each by weight [*Ecology Action recommends 1/3 each by **volume**. -cbv*]: dry, green, and soil. The compost cured over 7-8 months.

Per the experimental plan, they created two sets of beds for seven different crops (see more in the table below). In the first variant, they used the traditional way of cultivating vegetables (single-digging, chemical fertilization). Natalya used the fertilizer known as AVA.

The fertilizer manufacturer recommended adding 10-15 grams of this fertilizer to one square meter of soil in the spring. The fertilizer's components were as follows: phosphorus – 25-30%, nitrogen – 25-30%, potassium – 19-20%, calcium – 12-14%, magnesium – 4-5%, silicon – 3-4%, boron – 1-1.5 %, manganese, copper, cobalt, iron, molybdenum – 0.1-0.2 %, and selenium – about 0.05 %.

In the second variant, Natalya used double-digging, compost, joint cultivation of crops, close spacing, and the principle of companion planting. But the basic focus was on compost. I recommended using more compost. When I was at the Ecology Action Teacher workshop, I asked John Jeavons how to improve sandy and clay soils. He answered in one word: "Compost." Therefore, I recommended to Natalya to use more compost. She added 0,7-0,8 five-gallon buckets (5gB) on 1 square meter of soil. When she used compost this year and in previous years, her harvests were successful. The results of this year's experiment are given in the table below.

Experimental Results (average quantities)

		Traditional			Grow Biointensive		
Crops	**Variety**	**Growing season (days)**	**Weight of vegetable (g)**	**Crop yield (kg /m2)**	**Growing season (days)**	**Weight of vegetable (g)**	**Cropyield (kg /m2)**
Cabbage	**Belorusskaya 455**	127	1755	5.3	117	3287	6.7
Carrots	**Nantes 4**	91	95	3.1	88	109	4.2
Beet	**Bordeaux 237**	79	298	4.4	77	379	6.3
Onions	**Pogarskiy**	83	36 (Corncobs)	1.1	79	47 (Corncobs)	1.6
Corn	**Cuba sugar**	70	217	0.9	70	269	1.16
Marrow squash	**Pharaon**	(45-62)	0.9	7.2	(39-57)	1.1	9.4
Bush pumpkins	**Belyi 13**	(58-72)	427	2.1	(52-68)	481	2.9

This success can be explained as follows:

1. Application of fertilizers in sandy soils is ineffective. They are washed down by rainwater to the soil's deeper layers where they cannot be accessed by the plants. Application of compost can solve this problem. Compost particles provide nutrients to plants gradually, during the growth period. Some of these particles remain in the soil and provide nutrients during the following year.
2. Closely spaced cultivation of plants on sandy soils promotes full coverage of the bed surface by plant matter. It considerably reduces evaporation of water from the soil.

Natalya actively uses compost to grow various flowers as well. She does not always plant intensively. But she has beautiful flowerbeds! *Dr. Igor Prokofyev*

Photos of the experiment and Natalya's flowerbeds can be seen at http://picasaweb.google.com/cvesecky/NatalyaSYunnaty2009#5393314051798804898 Or, write to me <cvesecky@igc.org> and I'll send you the URL! -Carol. ♦

THE NGO VIOLA'S RADIATION ZONE COMPOST EXPERIMENT

Duration of experiment: **May-October 2009.**

***Location*: home gardens:**

a) Novozybkov area, Marina Goldobova
b) Klintsov area, Elena Vyagintseva
c) Klimov area, Elena Filina

The people who participated in our experiment had been trained in GROW BIOINTENSIVE at our seminars.

1. Experiment with Compost Amounts

In previous years we noticed that the quantity of radionuclides retained in vegetable, grain, and bean crops depends to a large extent on the quantity and content of the compost. Therefore, we conducted an experiment in the radiation zone using various quantities of compost.

Our research hypothesis held that an increase in the quantity of compost reduces the quantity of radionuclides in plants.

We cultivated three main Russian vegetable crops in three types of beds. These beds had the same soil and climatic conditions, but varying amounts of compost.

Types of beds:

I. the usual method applied in Russian farms – 2 buckets or 20 liters of compost on 10 sq.m.)
II. the GB method – 5 buckets of compost on 10 sq.m.
III. an increased quantity of compost – 8 buckets of compost on 10 sq.m.

Level of crop yield on experiment beds (kg/sq.m)

	Bed amendments: # of buckets of compost/10 sq.m.		
	I	II	III
	2	5	8
	Contamination in Bq/kg		
Potatoes, "Temp"	291	337	405
Cabbage, "Podarok"	621	735	811
Bean, "Option"	93	135	173

Level of radiation contamination of vegetables (Bq/kg)

	Bed amendments: # of buckets of compost/10 sq.m.		
	I	II	III
	2	5	8
	Contamination in Bq/kg		
Potatoes, "Temp"	127	77	67
Cabbage, "Podarok"	92	87	81
Bean, "Option"	167	124	101

Results: The experiment confirmed our hypothesis. In the radiation-contaminated zone, we need to use more compost. Organic matter accumulates radionuclides such as Cs-137, and retards its migration into plants. The results of this experiment are needed for the local population, so they can get yields with smaller amounts of radionuclides in their vegetables, to protect their health.

II. Experiment with Varying Compost Crops

Having studied the literature and conducted experiments in the past, we have learned that plants have varying capacities to accumulate radionuclides from the soil. Therefore, we would like to make a list of the compostable plants that accumulate the fewest radionuclides from the soil. Since laboratory tests of radiation contamination are unfortunately very expensive, we have chosen only five of the crops which are often used for compost preparation in Russia.

We prepared compost according to GB recommendations. We used soil from the experiment garden in the radiation zone, while the mature and immature components were from uncontaminated areas. In each variant we added oat, rye, or barley straw for the mature component, and corn biomass or potato tops for the immature component. Thus, we obtained five variants of compost. After the compost matured, we tested it in the laboratory for radioactive contamination by Cesium-137.

Radioactive contamination (Cs-137) of compost

Experiment compost crops	Oat straw	Rye straw	Barley straw	Corn biomass	Potato tops
Radioactive contamination of compost (Bq/kg)	478	295	67	391	114

The results of the experiment permit us to make recommendations to the local population to use barley straw and potato tops in the compost pile. We can conclude that it is not safe for health and for cultivation of uncontaminated vegetables to use rye and oat straw and corn biomass for compost. These plants take up radionuclides from the soil very easily, and can transmit them to the compost and to the growing beds.

We would like to continue our experiment, so as to prepare a long list of which compost crops are recommended and which are not recommended for people of the radioactively contaminated zones in Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia. ♦

For many years in the past in Palo Alto, Biointensive for Russia held mini-fundraisers locally on sustainable growing and lifestyles topics. Now we have begun organizing GB trainings and mini-fundraisers in the Ojai Valley. If you live locally and you're not already on our email or postcard announcement lists, do be sure to write cvesecky@igc.org or call to sign up!

School Experiment *(continued from page 2)*

suggested that she present her work at the All-Russian Exhibtion Center in Moscow, where the "Golden Autumn-2009" national exhibition was being held. Many agricultural enterprises from Russia and from other countries were presenting the results of their scientific or industrial activities there. The Russian Biological Center also set up a small exhibition hall, and we were invited to present the results of Natalya's school project and the GB method in that pavilion. Many people showed interest, and we talked about GB and I gave the book *Ekologicheskii ogorod* ("Ecological garden"(*Sustainable Vegetable Garden)* to many people. Unfortunately, we didn't have the funds to stay in Moscow during all of the "Golden Autumn-2009" exhibition days, so we returned to Bryansk. The exhibition will continue through tomorrow.

I will send you photos with the description of Natalyas project on Monday. Best regards, Igor

Note: The photos may be viewed on the Web; see bottom of page 4. -cbv

Fundraising *(continued from page 1)*

his handwritten translation of Beeby's *Future Fertility*, after which we'll proceed with the editing. Final editing of our translation of a 30-page excerpt of the *GROW BIOINTENSIVE Basic-Level Training Manual* by Martinez Valdez and Torres will follow, then of *Ekologicheskii ogorod* (*The Sustainable Vegetable Garden)* by Carol Cox. Estimated costs for printing and paper for editions of these books are given in "How *You* Can Help," below.

Your donations to support these publications will encourage us to develop a precise budget for each one so they can be printed at the Educational Methods Center in Novo-Sin'kovo. The publications will be invaluable at future GB workshops in Eurasia.

Through a contact of Anya Kucharev's, a Moscow publisher has been approached who could publish another edition of *Kak vyraschivat' bol'she ovoschei...* (the Russian translation of *How to Grow More Vegetables...* by John Jeavons.) The first two editions were published in Russia in the 1990s. Having the book on the market again in Russia would certainly boost our efforts to disseminate information about the GB method there and in other Eurasian republics. So, let us all toast this prospect!

We also plan to research opportunites for funding the workshop for Chernobyl teachers mentioned above (roughly $5000 is needed). We correspond regularly with Igor and Ludmila at the NGO Viola, and they assure us that they want to hold the workshop in Bryansk. We also hope to raise $20,000 or more to support a workshop tour for Steve Moore, who presented a successful workshop in Russia in 2002. All we really need to make these workshops happen is funding support, and every little bit counts! ♦

How *You* Can Help

Purchase a book! *We now have copies of the Russian editions of* ***How to Grow More Vegetables*** and ***The Sustainable Vegetable Garden*** here at BfR for sale at $20 and $13 respectively, plus postage. Write Carol for details. See www.bountifulgardens.org for GB books in English and other languages.

Contribute financially to help sponsor:

- editing and printing of Michael Chusid's translation of Ecology Action's ***Test Your Soil With Plants*** by John Beeby: *$2,000*
- editing and printing of Michael Chusid's new translation of Ecology Action's ***Future Futility*** by John Beeby: *$3,000*
- editing and printing of the ***GROW BIOINTENSIVE Basic-Level Training Manual****: $800 or more*
- printing and paper to publish ***Ekologicheskii Ogorod*** (Russian translation of *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden*): *$4000 will pay for 5000 copies, smaller amounts for smaller editions*
- a workshop to be presented by the NGO VIOLA's **Igor Prokofiev**, **Ludmila Zhirina, Oleg Zavarzin, Natasha Koryagina, and/or Ludmila Kuzenkova** in Bryansk, to various groups from Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan - *$5000*

Network with foundations and major donors to help us find funding for programs to include one, some, or all of the above activities (write or call Carol to discuss priorities)

Volunteer your time:

- hosting, organizing, and/or publicizing events
- co-developing a future Eco-Ag tour to the region of your interest: the Russian Far East? Siberia? 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 Translation/Experiment Supporter* ❑ $100 Contributor* ❑ $50 Donor ❑ $20 Member ❑ Other

May receive the ❑ 2nd Russian ❑ or 7th English edition* of ***How to Grow More Vegetables ....* (Check box)

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Ph/fax: _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: Biointensive for Russia
913 Oso Road
Ojai, CA 93023-9514

Be sure to write your check to "Ecology Action" for tax deductibility!

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

- *GB Workshops and Orchard Tours at Mulberry Haven, TBA: do sign up for BfR's email announcements*
- *Eco-Farm Conference, Asilomar, Pacific Grove, CA, Jan. 21-24, 2009, see* eco-farm.org *(BfR will have a table in the Exhibitor Tent!)*
- *The Russian Festival,* 2450 Sutter Street, SF, *Jan..29, 30 and 31, see* russiancentersf.com *(we'll be there)*
- *GB Sustainable Mini-Farming Workshop, Willits, CA, Mar. 5-7, see growbiointensive.org for details*

Why "Biointensive"...*, continued from page 1*
than other gardening methods. It's described at Ecology Action's website growbiointensive.org, and more fully in the above-mentioned books and in classes offered by Common Ground Garden Supply and Education Center in Palo Alto on Saturday mornings; see commonground inpaloalto.org. Ecology Action also regularly offers workshops in Willits and other locations around the world as listed under Events at growbiointensive.org.

At their mountainside location near Willits, Ecology Action's small staff conducts research into complete economic, nutritional, resource use, and environmental and soil sustainability. A teaching and apprentice program, emphasizing teacher training, networks collaborators throughout the world in order to strengthen GB micro-farming programs. One measure of its success is a marked worldwide increase in the number of highly productive, resource-conserving, low-capital-input, and cost-effective small farms using diverse cropping patterns.

Ecology Action's offerings also include Bountiful Gardens (bountifulgardens.org), a trusted source for organically grown seeds and gardening publications and tools. For more information, write to Ecology Action, 5798 Ridgewood Road, Willits, CA 95490, or drop in to Common Ground, 2225 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Why "Russia"? As long as I have been traveling to Russia (my first visits with family were in 1961 and 1968, respectively), I have been aware of how Russians cherish nature and the soil. Although this was impossible back then due to Cold War restrictions, Russians we met during both of those early visits expressed the desire to invite us to their *dachas*, or country cabins where much of the family food is grown. How I would have loved to visit one! Later, in my home-based Russian-English mini-career translating physics and math texts in the 1970s, I felt fortunate to be able to work with the language I had spent five years studying. However, I had practically no contact with the Russian people. Thus, after my becoming involved in the citizen diplomacy exchanges with the USSR in the 1980s, and also in computer typesetting the French and German translations of *How To Grow More Vegetables…*, it was natural that I would work toward publication of a Russian translation of a book that offered a way to save Planet Earth, one garden at a time. This eventually became a reality in 1993 with support from the U.S. Peace Corps.

Following the appearance of the book, I was asked by John Jeavons to invite teachers from the former Soviet Union to his GB workshops, to encourage them to teach and further extend the resource-conserving method among gardeners back home. What better way to join hands with our former enemy than to help to preserve the environment in Russian-literate countries, it seemed to me! (More BfR history can be found on the website.) *-Carol Vesecky*

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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. Its mission is to share information between the US and Eurasia on environmentally sound lifestyles, in particular GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming. Carol Vesecky is Director and newsletter editor; our Advisory Board members are David Buckley, Sylvia Ehrhardt, Anya Kucharev, Larry Symonds, and Erin and Doug Wood. Our webmasters are Berta Pires, Tamara Kowalski, and Shoshana Billik. The mailing of this issue of *The Garden Companion* was made possible by member donations. Contributors, translators, and proofreaders include Igor Prokofyev, Irina Kim, Deb Cornils, and Ellen Lockett. Do visit our Web site or write to Carol for more info!

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