



The Garden Companion

(Biointensive for Russia's newsletter)

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DONATIONS NEEDED FOR THE AGROCENTER IN CHIRCHIK, VIOLA IN BRYANSK, RUSSIAN ORPHANAGE OUTREACH, AND BOOKS IN RUSSIAN

You've heard it before: following September 11, every cause not directly connected with the tragedy at the Twin Towers or relief for Afghanistan or the Middle East has had trouble staying funded. Foundations are inundated with proposals; dot comers who were beginning to fund worthwhile projects are now out of work themselves, due to the recession. So, what do we do? Switch off our computer and close up shop? No ... we just can't let our colleagues in the FSU down that way. Instead, back we come, hat in hand, to you, our grassroots supporters. (We have also appealed to our FSU partners to try to find their own sources of funding.)

Regarding Afghanistan—yes, we're in the early stages of searching for a way to teach Biointensive (BI) there. How great it would be if we could send Irina Kim or one of the other BI teachers from Uzbekistan across the border to give workshops. But, finding exactly the right way will take time, and we have ongoing projects that need support right now.

Let's start with *Irina Kim* in *Chirchik*, near Tashkent, Uzbekistan. We have been working with Irina and Ecology Action on a proposal to fund a "Biointensive Mini-Ag Center for Central Asia" for five years that would become a base for teaching Biointensive throughout Central Asia. It is nearly ready for submission—please let us know if you can suggest contacts for potential sources of \$80,000 of funding. Meantime, Irina continues to teach Biointensive and soil science in high school (on a salary that is only sufficient for "tea and bread"), and is anxious to continue teaching in remote villages in the summer. She works in a context of increased social unrest and a high emigration rate. **Your gift of \$500-1000** will go a long way to help her achieve her goals! (More information on her work is on our Website and in the Fall 2000 *Companion*, available from Carol Vesecky.)

Ludmila Zhirina in *Bryansk* (see article on p. 7.) and her NGO "Viola" are working intensively to research and teach BI throughout the Bryansk *oblast* [comparable to county or region], including in the zones (*cont'd on p. 3*)

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our efforts to recruit ecotourists for the Culture/Eco-Ag Tour to Russia (see below) have had only modest success to date. So, we have begun to attempt to raise funds in other ways. These include appealing to you for donations, applying for grants, organizing mini-fundraisers, and appealing to our Russian and Uzbek partners to help fund their own expenses.

We received heartening encouragement from Abby Youngblood, who is already in Russia to study Biointensive applications, after traveling in Kenya and India since last August for the same purpose. She is a 2001 Bryn Mawr graduate, who won a Watson Fellowship to support her tour. Abby wrote that, due to the low cost of living in Kenya and India, she has managed to save over \$1000 of her fellowship to donate to BfR to support the workshops!!! (She will also attend them.) Her trust in our work has inspired us to guarantee the workshops personally; we trust it will inspire you to be generous, as well.

In my message to the Russian and Uzbek network, I appealed to the FSU colleagues to attempt to help seek funding through wealthy friends or funding institutions that care about the concept of saving the Russian and Uzbek soils, while growing more healthful food in less space, more sustainably. (*continued on page 3*)

CULTURE/ECO-AG TOUR TO RUSSIA IN JULY

Calling all culture buffs and russophile gardeners! BfR invites you to travel to Russia with us in the full bloom of summer (July 19-Aug. 2), to experience a broad range of Russian cultural and spiritual offerings—including the splendid Orthodox church architecture of the Golden Ring cities near Moscow. You'll help support, and have the option of attending, GROW BIOINTENSIVE mini-farming and greenhouse design workshops for agricultural researchers, teachers, environmentalists and *dacha* gardeners, while having a marvelous cultural experience. The cost from SFO is \$3200; from JFK, \$3050. (The portion supporting the workshops, \$800, is tax-deductible.)



Travel with Carol Vesecky, BfR Director; Steve Moore, Biointensive greenhouse farmer from Pennsylvania; and bilingual escort/interpreter Vladimir Bolotnikov. Visit vibrant Moscow and stately St. Petersburg, ancient Novgorod, the artist's colony artist's colony Abramtsevo, and the Golden Ring towns (*continued on page 8*)

Our Wonderful Volunteers: Looking Back

In our last issue of the *Companion* (Fall 2000), we printed a list of donors dating from 1998 to 2000. Then we promised to print the names of our volunteers in the next issue. In fact, some are listed in the box below. But, let's not forget those who helped launch this project! Here is a translation of the Acknowledgments prepared for the first Russian edition of **How to Grow More Vegetables....** For cultural reasons, it was not printed in the Russian book. Although we had US Peace Corps funding for the final stages of editing and were able to pay those most involved, many offered their time and talent gratis. Following is the text as originally prepared. -cbv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This first authorized Russian edition of *How to Grow More Vegetables...* would not have been possible without the support, in time and treasure, of many. First we would like to acknowledge the Peace Corps of the United States in the person of Benjamin Way, who arranged financial support from the Agricultural, Environmental, and Small Business Sectors. Viktor Yukechev, editor of *Sibirskaya Gazeta* (Novosibirsk), has provided ongoing encouragement, not to mention well-qualified

scientific translators, ever since the project was conceived during his first visit to California in November, 1986.

Translators and scientific editor S. Krainikovskii, N. Shaikina and Elizaveta Grinberg of the Russian Academy of Agricultural Sciences provided a fine translation of the third English edition; Vladimir Bolotnikov of Express Russian Services (Oakland) brought it up to date by translating the additional material in the fourth edition and editing the whole to a uniform style. In this he was given invaluable aid by Wadim and H el ene Kolosovich, Natalya Lukomskaya, Romouald Fessenko, and Alla Gavrilova.

The camera-ready computer typesetting in Russian, accomplished in Palo Alto, California, was made possible by generous donations of time and software by Claris Corpora-

tion and Adobe Inc. Nicholas de Paul of Claris arranged for the use of ClarisWorks 2.0 and provided continuing encouragement and technical support, while Bur Davis and John MacMillan of Adobe Systems enabled us to use Minion Cyrillic, the latest Adobe Cyrillic font (designed by Robert Slimbach to match his original 1990 Latin version of Minion) with Adobe Type Manager. Felix Shor's talent with software wrought (cont'd on page 6)



Art/Eco-Ag Tour to Russia, January 2001

In January of 2001, BfR conducted its first ecotour, an Art/Eco-Ag tour to St. Petersburg and Moscow. The first week featured art events in St. Petersburg arranged by Bay Area artist and teacher Stephanie Tsuchida, as well as meetings with gardeners who have learned Biointensive from our books, from Albina Kochegina's lectures and courses, and at BfR's 3-day workshop in the area in 1998. The second week, coordinated by Carol Vesecky, included Moscow and Golden Ring art sightseeing offerings and also a 3-day workshop in Biointensive Sustainable (BI) Mini-farming for ag teachers and environmentalists. These were held in Novo-Sin'kovo, near Dmitrov, north of Moscow, and led by Aleksandr (Sasha) Avrorin, Director of

Biointensive for Russia is a project based in Palo Alto and supported by Ecology Action. Founded in 1993 with the aid of LO*OP Center, Inc. to help promote Biointensive minifarming in the former Soviet Union, its current goals include a two-way sharing of information on ecologically sound lifestyles. Carol Vesecky serves as the only full-time staff member; other volunteers include Shoshana Billik, Erin Wood, Ari Solovyeva, Shereen Rahman, Margarita Orlova, Dr. Ninel Kushchenko, Doris Robertson, Virginia Moseley, Judy Fo, Bruce Benedict, Barbara Brown, Lynn Visson, Lois Salo, and others. The mailing of this issue of the *Companion* was made possible by membership contributions. This issue of the *Garden Companion* was edited by Carol Vesecky and Jane Chai.

Biointensive in Siberia. The St. Petersburg art touring included excursions to the world-renowned Hermitage and State Russian Museum led by Sergei Katin, a knowledgeable, English-speaking art instructor. American and French artists Pat and Larry Jones, Brigitte Curt, Jim Smyth, Nancy Mercury, and Stephanie Tsuchida, and interpreter Darina Drapkin dropped in to several private art studios, got acquainted with the artists, and compared techniques over tea around the samovar. They met students and teachers at an internationally respected children's art school and viewed the children's astonishing paintings. They visited Repino, location of the charming dacha studio of renowned late 19th- and early 20th-century Russian painter Ilya Repin.

Albina Kochegina (from St. Petersburg) and Sasha Avrorin conducted follow-up meetings with BI gardeners of all ages in St. Petersburg. Aleksandr and Albina also presented an introductory session on Biointensive, for Russians new to the method.

During the second week in the Moscow area, the American artists spent two days sightseeing with local Russian guides: City Tour, Kremlin, Tretyakov Gallery, Novodevichy Convent, and Abramtsevo and Sergiev Posad. Darina Drapkin, Stephanie Tsuchida, and Carol Vesecky drove out to the Educational Methods Center (EMC), a Ministry of Agriculture short-course college in Novo-Sin'kovo, north of Moscow. There, Sasha Avrorin taught a 3-day workshop on Biointensive that also included solar home design. Double-digging and other demonstrations were performed (continued on page 6)

Donations needed, cont'd from p. 1 irradiated by the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Viola's daughter NGO, Provincial Women, has applied to the Global Fund for Women for a grant to teach BI and business methods to rural women in the radiation zone. Women in the Bryansk *oblast* have already been amazed by their increased yields since they have been gardening Biointensively—they now have more produce to sell in the marketplace! Women in all zones desperately need income since the local economy is depressed, and men are usually the only family members with jobs.

Eventually we will work with Ludmila and Igor to find substantial funding for Viola's programs to experiment with and teach BI in the long term. For now, our smaller-scale assistance can help them to do research this summer on the effect of BI double-digging on the levels of radionuclides in the produce grown. Local scientists tell farmers that the soil should be dug very deep, so that irrigation and rainwater can carry the radionuclides down past the mass of the roots. Labs exist in Bryansk that can perform analyses of these radioactive substances in vegetables. To date, Viola has lacked funding for the analyses required to prove this widespread belief. Please assist us in helping Viola to test this promising concept! **Experiment cost: \$500**

Closer to home, **Linda Marsh** of the **Outreach To Orphans Project (OTOP)** called recently. OTOP is a new branch of Word to Russia, a group based in Sacramento that has brought the Christian Gospel to the FSU for 30 years. Linda would like to invite teachers to our workshop from five orphanages that OTOP is helping materially and morally. Our first attempt in 2001 to include orphanage teachers having failed, we hope to succeed this time. **Travel and living for one teacher: \$100-150**

(Director's message, continued from p. 1) Our initial response includes the following comments. "It's short notice for foundations, but I'll try." (Dr. Bakhtiyar Jolibekov in Nukus) "I'll give the matter some thought." (Svyatoslav Zabelin in Moscow) "If our grant comes through, we'll help pay for our travel." (Ludmila Zhirina in Bryansk, whose university teaching salary is \$30 per month)

Ludmila adds, "As regards wealthy friends—Carol, you probably know that in Russia there are rich people, even extremely rich people. Unfortunately, they are interested in only one thing—how to get even richer. And they don't make friends with provincial teachers like us. We've had some experience in requesting funding from them. Almost every time, they ask just one question. 'What will I get out of this?'"

"When we explain that the project will offer a common benefit, they refuse to talk with us further. Thus, we know that we can depend only on ourselves and the help of volunteers and of foreign friends and foundations. We are sure that if we did not have this support, there would be no environmental movement in Russia. We *truly* appreciate the help of our American friends. We hope that in the future, our children will help to develop democracy and the environmental movement in other countries, such as in Asia and Africa."

The travel cost of bringing Steve Moore and myself to Novo-Sin'kovo, Novgorod, and St. Petersburg comes to

The Russian translation of *The Sustainable Vegetable Garden*, by John Jeavons and Carol Cox, should be published in time for the workshop. Marina Dadayan in San Jose and Yury Azovtsev in St. Petersburg have edited and proofread the translations, and Yury is in the process of final layout. This book offers a more concise presentation of the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method than does *How to Grow...*, and can be a valuable aid in teaching. **Printing and mailing the initial edition: \$500**

A Russian edition of Ecology Action's teacher certification booklet is also in process, with the aid of Irina Maslennikova in Brooklyn. **Final editing and printing: \$200**

So, your donations, large and small, are needed to help our Russian and Uzbek friends attend workshops and carry out their experimental and teaching work, with the necessary materials published in Russian!

MOR STORIES ONLINE & AVAILABLE FROM BfR

BfR Web masters Shoshana and Ari invite you to visit our site www.igc.org/biointensiveforrussia for more info on the Art/Eco-Ag Tour to Russia in Jan. 2001, and travelogues of the seminar tour with Daniel and Amber Vallotton to Uzbekistan in July-August 2000. News of our Palo Alto-based mini-fundraiser events and garden tours ("Cooking in Harmony with Nature," Alan Chadwick Garden at UCSC, etc.) has been uploaded, as well as links to our newsletters and recent fundraising letters. Some photos have recently been added, along with an article on BfR history and short bios of our partners in the FSU. (Their e-mail addresses are usually given.)

Please sign up for the BfR email list, if you haven't already, for advance notice of fundraisers and more timely updates. Contact Carol at 650 856-9751 or <cvsecky@igc.org> for the above if unable to access the Web.

\$2350. The workshop costs for interpreters and materials are \$875—including for workshops of approximately one day's duration each in Novgorod and St. Petersburg. The hosting institutions will donate their space and equipment.

We have cut the number of participants to 37 (including 3 each from Uzbekistan and Siberia), to be divided between Ag Ministry college teachers and teachers from our BfR network of ecology NGOs and orphanages. We have budgeted \$2315 for travel and \$4280 for room and board (including lunches for Novgorod and St. Petersburg). To control costs, we are asking the one-day Passive Solar Greenhouse seminar participants to try to pay for their accommodations and meals at the EMC at \$20 per night. **Total cost: \$9820**

So, BfR supporters, you see the situation. In the short term, you and I and the resources we can muster are the best hope for these worthwhile projects. Please help me to partner with Ludmila in Bryansk, Irina in Chirchik, and the EMC in Novo-Sin'kovo, to lead the way for hundreds and thousands of gardeners in their regions and in those where they will teach in the future, to provide better-quality produce for their families and for sale, from smaller areas of land. And in so doing, to save forests, and meadows, and all the biodiversity they support—wildflowers, butterflies, birds, trees, microorganisms. Please donate generously, and help us to find others who can potentially do the same! *Carol Vesecky*

The Home Front

Our Russian BI partner Vladimir Loginov, whose home is near Krasnodar (near the Black Sea), participated in a conference in Washington, DC the week of Sept. 11, 2001. He rode the Greyhound to San Francisco, then spent several months between Palo Alto and Aptos, earning dollars doing handyman and construction work that he is now using back home to build "reed-bale" dwellings for his Biointensive volunteers. He also participated in many seminars at the Foundation for Global Community and elsewhere. Here is his article written for **The Sustainable Household**, a weekly newspaper in Nizhny Novgorod. He based it on what he learned at the Sustainable Landscaping Seminar held at Palo Alto's Lucie Stern Community Center in January, 2002. -Ed.

SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING IN CALIFORNIA

Our Current Practices Are Not Sustainable

These days, many changes in nature are occurring at such an accelerated rate that they are becoming noticeable. If a time traveler arrived here from, say, the year 1902, she would say, "What ... are ... you ... DOING? How can you possibly treat the earth that way?"

Natural landscapes are disappearing fast, and being replaced by man-made landscapes. Rainforests are cut down to make way for cattle grazing. Millions of tons of the fertilizers and other chemicals used in mechanized farming run off into our streams and rivers, rendering them undrinkable. These practices are sustainable neither for our own health, nor for the health of the earth.

Closer to home, most contemporary landscapes created by man are extremely fragile and unsustainable. We plant water-thirsty lawns in the desert. We spray pesticides and fungicides on our flowers and trees, to fight pests that might not attack them if we planted them where they thrive naturally. When we run a gas-powered lawn mower for an hour, this is equivalent to the exhaust from a small car driven 70 kilometers on the highway. We are polluting our very homes, and using up natural resources, to maintain these fragile landscapes.

How can we sustain the viability of our biosystem? What alternatives are there to our current landscaping practices?

The Role of Ecological Landscaping

Ecological landscaping provides an alternative. Its chief task is the design of natural forms of greenery, that is, landscapes that sustain themselves. The expenses of maintaining a landscape generally run much higher than the initial investment in designing and establishing plantings. Ecological landscaping seeks to reverse this relationship, by using careful analysis of our environment and careful plant selection, so that our gardens work naturally and easily in our climate, with little maintenance. The motto of ecological landscaping is "Landscaping work should be based on ecology, to create beauty." Long live this rule! The garden that preserves or copies naturally occurring local forms is a sustainable garden.

Ecological Landscaping Practices

How do we put ecological landscaping into practice? Some guidelines are given below:

Copy natural landscapes: Recreate a prairie or meadow, or create a bed of wildflowers. Use stone dividers and bunches of grasses and flowers, in varied shapes, with contrasting native trees. Better a meadow than a lawn.

Plant Natives: In selecting plants, don't choose exotics (plants that do not grow naturally in the surrounding area); instead use plants that are native to the particular location. Use their natural shapes in the design.

Copy Natural Processes: Compost. Mulch. Allow the leaves to rest where they fall.

Use what's there: If shrubs, trees, and grasses are already present, the only thing we humans may need to do is to observe.

Minimize Required Inputs: Choices in a plot's development should be made in order to reduce expenditures of fuel, water, fertilizers, and herbicides.

Growing food: Use the above rules in planting vegetable gardens. Additionally, use open-pollinated, rather than hybrid seeds. (Open-pollinated seeds will produce plants with viable seed that can be used the following year, whereas hybrids will not.) Then, we can save our seeds, eliminating the need to buy new seed every year.

Patience: Finally, be patient. If a garden is left to itself, nature herself will create this beauty with time, filling out the area with local meadow and forest plants.

Conclusion: Working with nature will always involve creativity. The main thing is not *only* to think about how the garden will look, rather, to consider how it can survive independently in nature. We should seek not only to create exterior decoration, but also to build inner harmony within our natural environment. Our garden is not a factory for producing alien products with a background of exotic trees. By selecting the appropriate plants, we can show respect for our local ecology.

By Vladimir Loginov

Edited by Eva Henin

CURIOUS ABOUT BIOINTENSIVE? Write for a free catalog or visit the Common Ground store!

Companion readers interested in filling in the gaps in their knowledge of what GROW BIOINTENSIVE is all about should write to Bountiful Gardens for a free, 70-page catalog that contains information on the method, as well as workshop and tour schedules, books, organically grown seeds, gardens you can visit, volunteer opportunities, and more. Write to Bountiful Gardens, 18001 Shafer Ranch Rd., Willits, CA 95490, or visit www.bountifulgardens.com. Ecology Action's Web site, www.growbiointensive.org, is another good information source.

If you're in the area, do drop by the Common Ground garden supply store and educational center in Palo Alto. Well stocked with seeds, books (including *How to Grow ...* and other books on Biointensive), tools, soil amendments, and seedlings, the center also offers classes on most Saturdays. Its new location is 559 College Ave., Palo Alto. Call for a class schedule at 650 493-6072, or visit www.commongroundinpaloalto.org.

Meet the Young Naturalists (*Yunnaty*)!

HISTORY OF THE YUNNATY

In “*The Main Trends of Environmental Education in Russia*,” Alexander Bogoliubov writes: “The ‘naturalistic’ approach in teaching biology and educating children was used in the first years of the Soviet period. ‘The Biostation for young naturalists’ was founded in Moscow in 1918 and young naturalist movement started at the same time. ... The first Russian young naturalist groups were naturalistic in the full meaning of the word—children lived and studied in nature (lessons in the woods), and carried out research work in the woods on the specially arranged areas (camps). The first experience of combining studies and original research work in nature proved to be successful and began to extend fast throughout the country.” (The entire article can be read at www.ekosystema.narod.ru/fieldeduc_eng.htm.)

Later, the program took on a more agricultural focus and united with the Pioneer organization, which became the Center for Youth Creativity after the end of the USSR. The program was introduced to Biointensive after 1995, when Yunnaty teachers Albina Kochegina and Natasha Krestiankina came to Willits for a 3-Day Workshop and returned to teach the method to children in the Yunnaty after-school program.

Here’s a reminiscence from her childhood in Pavlodar, Kazakhstan (near the Russian and Mongolian borders), by Yelena van Immerzeel-Kharitonova, who now lives in the Bay Area with her Dutch-born husband:

We were sitting in one of Palo Alto’s lovely cafés. The sun was shining; the people around us were smiling. We were in California. ... We began talking about my school-days back in Kazakhstan, and nostalgic thoughts crowded into my mind when asked about the *Yunnaty*.

Each and every child from age 9 to 13 in the schools in my city of Pavlodar at that time was obligated to help his or her school during summer vacation. We had a lot to do on our school’s land. There were lots of trees, flowers, and bushes needing care, especially during the summer! Everybody was expected to contribute 3 hours per day for 10 days. We even had special booklets, where our teachers could stick stamps (stars) for each day of our work. One had to collect 10 stars in his or her book, which was a very exciting process.

Boys and girls performed the same jobs: watering the flowers, weeding rows of vegetables, and working inside the green-house. Except for one thing: girls were not to carry heavy things like buckets filled with water. And boys were expected to help the girls all the time, whenever needed! Everybody wanted to work in our greenhouse, as a matter of prestige. It was big and clean, and had many exotic (for Kazakhstan) plants, such as orchids. We had birds as well, which was the main attraction of the greenhouse for almost all the girls. The boys were attracted by a well and tried to gather near it all the time! The temperature inside the greenhouse was also very pleasant, so children were happy to come to the greenhouse and stay for a few minutes (even when they weren’t supposed to).

I do remember our teachers always trying to explain to us the “why’s and wherefore’s” of what we were doing

and trying to achieve for our school. These were botany, zoology, and *prirrodovedenie* (nature study) teachers. They explained some of the characteristics of the plants and flowers — their growth habits, etc. We were able to use this knowledge of nature outside of the school, for example at our *dachas*. It was very useful! I recall that sometimes even my grandmother was amazed by advice I gave her regarding the flowers at our *dacha*, that I learned at school. Even my grandmother didn’t know some of that information, and she was a wonderful gardener.

These summer work days were a good opportunity for friends to gather together. After working all day we could go and drink tea or lemonade at somebody else’s home or go to the movies. I remember that we even tried to dress up a little bit (no old T-shirts), because we perhaps considered the session as a social event and not really as work. It was a great opportunity, as well, to show your friends and classmates your new toys and to tell them about your recent vacation.

For us it was more like playing, while also being a helping and learning process. We were happy to help our school look pretty (because of the amount of flowers and plants), to always have fresh and beautiful flowers in each corner of our school, to be one of the best schools in our neighborhood, or even in our community. We had a sense of involvement (even though we didn’t always realize that), out of a sense of duty. (Not all of us felt that way, of course). A great sense of responsibility had been cultivated and I am still very grateful to our teachers for that: for their boundless passion to teach us how to work with nature, how to respect it, and how to be a part of it.

Yelena van Immerzeel-Kharitonova

FIVE STUDIES BY YUNNATY presented at the Jan. 2001 Biointensive Seminar at the Alive Earth Agroecology Center in St. Petersburg, and sent to us by their teacher, our colleague Albina Kochegina. Erin Wood edited the English in Richmond, VA, where she has a BI market garden. (These five are by girls, but boys join in the program in equal measure, and as successfully.)

Study # 1 by Sveta Yankovskaya (Class 8, School 214), “Comparison Study of Indoor and Outdoor Cultivation of Tomatillos in St. Petersburg’s Climatic Conditions”

The objective of the experiment was to study the development of tomatillos grown both in a greenhouse and outside in a garden. My interest in tomatillos is based on their being an excellent source of vitamins and easy to prepare. They are also very productive and keep well.

During the growing period of the study, St. Petersburg experienced a cool, wet summer. The tomatillos grown outside in the garden did not thrive due to their heat requirement. Those in the greenhouse grew well.

Conclusion: A greenhouse is necessary for the successful cultivation of tomatillos in the St. Petersburg area. The summer weather in St. Petersburg is too cool for the plants to thrive outdoors. The added expense of a greenhouse and the limited planting space inside will be a consideration for most people interested in growing tomatillos in this area. (continued on page 6)

Volunteers, continued from page 2 the miracle of translating Vladimir Bolotnikov's IBM files from the Romanov font in WordPerfect into Minion Cyrillic for use on Carol Vesecky's Macintosh computer in ClarisWorks, with no loss or alteration of characters. Nicholas de Paul, Mark Gilford, Dan Schafer, Vera Lind of Lind Publishing in Palo Alto, and Marvin Miles of the Sleep Research Center at Stanford University made various state-of-the-art Macintosh computers and monitors and high-resolution printers available to typesetter Carol Vesecky to augment her own (Language Specialists') hardware resources. (Early drafts were produced using a Macintosh Portable and HP DeskWriter.) Amy Spade and Vera Lind performed superbly the setup and typesetting of the charts in Chapter 5 in ClarisWorks, again with the support of Nicholas de Paul. Natalya Lukomskaya, Michael Eager, and Joan Spannagel were of invaluable help in the final stages of inputting the metric data into the charts and final pasteup of the illustrations.

Assistance in networking from Palo Alto to other parts of Silicon Valley, as well as to Novosibirsk, Siberia, Washington, D.C., and Moscow, and communication and liaison via fax, electronic mail, and telephone was provided by various friends along the way: Frank Ahern (*The Journal of Commerce* and *The Siberian Review*), Joe Therrien (Peace Corps Regional Office), and Dan Dippery (Agricultural Initiative, Center for Citizen Initiatives), all in San Francisco; Liza Loop, Hans von der Pfordten, Michael Eager, and Valerie Kockelman (Palo Alto); Roger Gilbertson (San Anselmo); Cheryl Draves (Novosibirsk); Amy Davis of the Food Industry Crusade Against Hunger (New York); and Jill Schiager of Citizens Democracy Corps (Washington, D.C.).

Boris Khersonski of Pacific BVL Corporation, our publisher, deserves our gratitude for his belief in our ability to accomplish the production of a translation in a strange tongue and script. Last but most definitely not least, we would like to thank the staffs of Ecology Action in Willits and Common Ground in Palo Alto, and the Vesecky and Benedict families in Palo Alto, Ann Arbor, Santa Cruz, Idaho Falls, Dallas, and Lynchburg, for their support and forbearance through times of alternating anxiety and hope.

Carol Vesecky, Project Coordinator
John Jeavons, Author
March 12, 1993

Art/Eco-Ag Tour, cont'd from page 1 in a warm greenhouse (see photo at top of p. 1), despite the icy outdoor temperature. And we even enjoyed a cross-country ski run on local trails, with perfect snow in the forest and around the town!

The proceeds of the ecotour supported the BI and ecodesign workshops in St. Petersburg. (Those in Novosin'kovo were funded by an Ecology Action grant.) This was an unforgettable trip, of which a more complete account can be found on our Web site. We invite you to sign up for advance notice via e-mail of future trips, for example to Central Asia and Russia in 2003. And, if in time, let us know if you can join us for the Culture/ Eco-Ag Tour this July! (See article beginning on page 1.)

Yunnaty experiments, continued from page 5

Study #2 by Nastya Yershova, "Comparison of Growing Citrus Cuttings in Pots in Two Different Climates"

The study's objective was to compare the success of cuttings grown in two different places. Two cuttings of a citrus plant, each 10 cm long, were taken from a plant growing in my St. Petersburg home. Both cuttings were planted in an opaque container. The first was placed near a south-facing window in our apartment. The second was near a south-facing window in Belgorod. The water in both cases was local.

During the three month period, I found that the humidity in Belgorod was higher than in St. Petersburg, and the number of sunny vs. cloudy days was equal in Belgorod (50/50). In St. Petersburg, there was a 70/30 ratio of cloudy to sunny days. Despite there being fewer sunny days in St. Petersburg, the cutting there grew sturdy roots and was transplanted into a soil medium. The cutting in Belgorod did not survive.

Conclusion: East or West, home is best! The success of the cutting grown at home was due to the fact that I was present to ensure the necessary growing conditions (i.e. water, temperature, etc).



Prof. Yury Soskov and 3 Yunnaty planting Granola potatoes by the Ushakov method, Summer 1999

Study #3 by Katya Pimenova (Class 11, School 214), "The Benefits of Microbiological Technology"

Our research has shown that the implementation of microbiological technology can make a valuable contribution to the overall improvement of the condition of our planet. The use of this technology in agriculture can result in higher quality, more nutritious food being grown, which leads to the general improvement of the health of the population. It can also greatly affect the pollution problem by means of cleansing the air on a large scale, and conserving our natural resources by recycling.

We found four basic groups of microorganisms as a result of our research on the microbiological composition of a liquid culture with microbial suspension: sticks bacteria, yeast fungus, mold spores, and actinomycetes.

The composting process revealed that the presence of these microorganisms in the microbial mixture caused the decomposition of materials which are difficult to compost. This same compost, when added to a planting of the Swedish hybrid rutabaga *Kuusicu*, increased the yield by about 30% and shortened its ripening time by two weeks.

Conclusion: For these reasons, we believe that future methods of environmental management should be based on microbiological technology.

Study #4 by Katya Vasilyeva (Class 7, School 214), "The organic cultivation of transplanted turnips"

My intention was to observe the transplant success rate of organically grown turnip seeds (continued on p. 8)

Ludmila Zhirina of Viola in Bryansk, Russia

Dr. Ludmila Zhirina lives in Bryansk, a Russian city near the Ukraine and Belarus borders, about halfway between Moscow and Kiev. She holds the *doktor* degree (Russia's second Ph.D.) in biology, and teaches ecology and education at Bryansk Pedagogical University. She is also the Director of Viola, an environmental NGO formed in response to the 1986 nuclear accident at Chernobyl. About a third of the region around Bryansk received fallout, although not the city itself. Viola is made up of teachers, doctors, and students determined to do whatever they can to educate the population on the dangers of radiation and on methods of cleansing the body of radioactive substances.

Ludmila first learned about Biointensive when she and Carol Vesecky met at the ISAR Eco-forum near Kiev in 1995. Then, Viola's Albina Samsonova taught her the method after returning from a 3-Day Workshop in Willits in 1996. After BfR's workshop held in Bryansk in 1999, Ludmila began to focus her considerable energies on disseminating Biointensive mini-farming throughout her region.

Early this year, Ludmila sent an impressive packet of color photos, many of which show her presenting 15 Viola-sponsored seminars in spring of last year (we reported on them in the August 2001 issue of the *Ecology Action Newsletter*).

On March 27, 2002, Viola conducted a Biointensive conference for the directors of all the Bryansk schools. This included lectures, demonstrations, and breakout groups, with Ludmila and Viola's co-director, Igor Prokoffiev among the facilitators. Ludmila reports: "Our conference went really well. There were 80-90 participants. The *oblast* administration, school principals and teachers were there." There were also two hours devoted to hands-on work done in groups. Viola members had sponsored a contest for the best 'Earth Flag,' dedicated to Biointensive mini-farming. At the conference about



150 of these small flags, showing various aspects of Bio-intensive, were sewn "into 8 huge flags and hung on all the walls." The flags were also to be used during the Earth Day celebration, which is a new holiday in Russia.

In April of this year, Ludmila e-mailed: "Today I saw a real BI wonder. Five years ago I decided to apply your method completely to a small plot, in order to see for myself, and show to people, what can happen. I marked out two plots in my parents' garden (where the soil was worse, very heavy and clayey, than it was on mine). On these small plots, my father and I set up a greenhouse using plastic. For the entire five years, we worked it Biointensively. Today, after the winter, I went into the greenhouse and couldn't believe my eyes. It's as if someone had replaced the soil, giving us rich, loose, delicious soil! I even brought it in for my house plants, where I formerly only used purchased soil. Now, during demo tours, I can show everyone how any soil can be, if they will take care of it Biointensively.... I am so happy; it's as if I received an unexpected gift."

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Last November, Ludmila Zhirina and Igor Prokoffiev were on their way to check out the plots where the

Biointensive experiments were being conducted. A car coming in the opposite direction at high speed swerved into their lane and slammed into their car, which turned over several times. Ludmila was seriously injured (with a concussion, damaged vertebra and cut forehead), and spent a long time convalescing. However, in her April e-mail she was able to write: "Today, for the first time after my accident, I worked doing BI for seven hours in our plot!! And nothing hurt!!... It's so great to feel so well after the doctor said in November that I might not even be able to walk again."

By Mary Zellachild, reprinted from the Ecology Action Newsletter of Spring 2002

Volunteer your time:

- Networking for grants & donations: help us find groups or individuals that could take an interest in our work. Carol will be happy to present a program!
- Hosting, organizing and/or publicizing events
- Office organization, database, and filing help in three-hour stints
- Newsletter layout & writing assistance

Contribute financially to help pay for:

- One month of Web site hosting: \$15
- Tempered steel garden fork for Russian NGO: \$60
- Enable an orphanage teacher to attend the Novo-Sin'kovo workshop in July 2002: \$100-150
- Sponsor a workshop taught by Ludmila or Igor of Viola in Western Russia or Ukraine: \$800-\$1500
- Fund a book printing: \$500-2000 or more

Contact Carol at 650 856-9751 or cvesecky@igc.org

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

- \$20 Regular Member \$50 Donor Other
 \$100 Contributor: \$ 250 Supporter *Receive the 2nd Russian edition of **How to Grow More Vegetables** (check if desired)*
 \$1000 Workshop Sponsor

Name: _____

Address: _____

Ph/fax: _____ E-mail _____

Mail to: BfR, 831 Marshall Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94303-3614

Upcoming Events:

Ongoing one-hour classes in **Beginning Conversational Russian** are being held Monday evenings at 7 pm, into July. \$10 per lesson; \$10 for manual and 2 tapes. Evening may be changed to Thursday. Contact Carol at 650 856-9751 or <cvesecky@igc.org>. Make-up lessons can be arranged.

Departures for Moscow and Golden Ring July 19, Novgorod July 28, St. Petersburg Jul 30, return to US Aug 2. Extension with Carol Vesecky to Nevo-Ecoville Aug 3, St. Petersburg Aug 6, Bryansk and Yasnaya Polyana Aug 8, return to SFO Aug 11

Young Naturalist Study #4, cont'd from p. 6 started in paper pots, with minimal soil. The *Kuusiku* turnip seedlings were germinated in paper pots and then delivered to the Tveris region for transplanting. The germination rate was 100% for the 40 seeds planted at the Alive Earth Agroecology Center. The seedlings survived transport and all grew well. The yield was good, with each turnip weighing an average of 1500 grams.

Conclusion: The organic cultivation of turnips started in paper pots and then transplanted is an effective growing method, with a 100% germination and survival rate.

Study #5 by Galya Tarasenko (Class 7, School 214), "Organic Cultivation of the Ricinus communis Tree"

The *Ricinus communis* tree, native to Africa, is valued for its healing properties. It is used in surgery for healing various injuries as well as burns. The purpose of my experiment was to grow this tree organically from seed, and to observe the effect of vermicompost vs orchard soil.

Before planting the seeds, I soaked them in a solution of one percent manganese and potassium for twenty minutes. Then the seeds were thoroughly washed three times with filtered water. Germination occurred in ten days and the first true leaves appeared in seven more days. The planting medium was a mixture of rich soil and EKOST. One seedling (the test plant) was fertilized with a mixture of soil and vermicompost, and another (the control) with only orchard soil. The test plant grew 2.5 to 3.0 times more quickly than the control due to the addition of the vermicompost.

Conclusion: The addition of organic matter greatly enhanced the growth rate and health of the plant.

July tour, cont'd from p. 1 so rich in religious tradition and crafts: Suzdal, Vladimir, and Sergiev Posad.

City tours and other guided excursions to art galleries, churches, monasteries, and literary museums will be offered daily. Those interested could visit museums honoring Tolstoy or Chekhov in Moscow, or Dostoevsky or Nabokov in St. Petersburg. Traditional Russian architecture, including a wooden church and an *izba* (carved peasant log house), can be viewed in an open-air traditional architecture museum in Suzdal. Visits to the ballet or opera and a symphony or folk concert will be arranged. Group members will be given the opportunity to help decide the tour schedule, whenever possible.

Accommodations will vary from a modestly priced, full-service hotel in Moscow, to a college guest quarters in Novo-Sin'kovo and Novgorod, to elegantly furnished apartments at an art academy in St. Petersburg. Breakfast is included with accommodations. Lunch and dinner, while not included in the overall cost, will be arranged *ad hoc* at hotel or guest quarters, or in local cafés and restaurants. Some flexibility will be required of ecotourists, but every effort will be made to ensure comfort.

Carol Vesecky will coordinate the tour, and is offering Russian instruction prior to the trip (in person and/or via printed materials and audiotapes). Vladimir Bolotnikov, bilingual émigré and experienced interpreter from the FSU, will facilitate the tour, if six sign up. Vladimir will escort the ecotourists on sightseeing excursions and during cultural events; local linguists will interpret for the workshops for Russian and Uzbek teachers. Tatyana Perova in Moscow, Evgeny Shmelev in Novo-Sin'kovo and Novgorod, and Vladimir Shestakov and others in St. Petersburg will coordinate the hosting.

Serving as our Basic-level certified GROW BIOINTENSIVE workshop presenter will be Steve Moore, Biointensive, passive solar greenhouse grower in SE Pennsylvania. Steve has assisted John Jeavons in presenting GROW BIOINTENSIVE workshops at Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Carol will stay on in Russia until Aug. 12 to travel to Nevo-Ecoville and Valaam Island, St. Petersburg, Bryansk, Tula, and Yasnaya Polyana. If interested in joining her, call for details! The Russian landscape in summer is lovely! Limited to 12 ecotourists. For the brochure and application form, contact Carol at 650 856-9751 or <cvesecky@igc.org>. Some info is also on the Web site, www.igc.org/biointensiveforrussia.

Biointensive for Russia
831 Marshall Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94303-3614

