

VICTORY

GARDENS FOR PEACE

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Victory Gardens for Peace is a collaboration between the Stanford Inn Eco-Resort and Ecology Action. Their generous has helped make all of this possible. We are located at the Stanford Inn in Mendocino, CA contact us for more information!

2018 AT A GLANCE

This past year was an exciting year at Victory Gardens for Peace! We traveled to Nicaragua to visit leaders of the biointensive movement, released our latest booklet *Achieving More With Less*, expanded our garden space and programs and doubled the size of our Seed Bank. Thank you to everyone who donated, volunteered and participated!

In this issue of our newsletter we will look back at the year, share some stories and let you know about upcoming events!

Our 2018 Summer Program Participants



OUR 2018 PROGRAMS - A YEAR IN BLOOM

The Victory Gardens for Peace Mini-Farm is located in the town of Mendocino, CA at the Stanford Inn. We are dedicated to training individuals and communities in the *Biointensive Method of Agriculture*- a resource conserving, soil building and revolutionary approach to growing food in our backyards and community gardens. We believe that a sustainable future is rooted in the simple action of consuming less and growing more-empowering ourselves to reclaim the lost art of local food production. When food is grown at home we disconnect from the resource-intensive system which keeps us dependent. When we grow our own food and soil using the biointensive method we enrich our lives and our communities through reconnecting and giving back to Nature more than we take. The result is peace, health and ecology in our own backyards!

In 2018 we integrated our programs to diversify student experiences and enhance our capacity to work with more people across a broader spectrum. We host a live-on-site internship consisting of 2-month, 4-month and 8-month programs; 1-year and 3-year apprenticeships; and 2 9-part courses teaching the biointensive technique and how to plan and grow a complete diet sustainably in your own backyard.

We also hosted Ecology Action's 14th Basic Level Teacher's Workshop. This year's programs brought together people from Bermuda, North Carolina, Vermont, Texas and across California. We partnered with the Stanford Inn's Sustainable Mindset Course, a 2-month summer internship for highschool and college students looking to expand their understanding of the philosophy of environmentalism. For more information on our programs, contact Matt@Victorygardensforpeace.com or visit www.growbiointensive.org.



“It is amazing what
can be done when
people share the
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UNA Training Program Presentation



VICTORY GARDENS FOR PEACE TRAVELS TO NICARAGUA

In January of this year we travelled with Ecology Action to visit biointensive projects across Nicaragua. We had the pleasure to visit biointensive programs and participate in a conference of certified teachers and university specialists to investigate the projects and hear the stories of biointensive farmers working in their communities.

The work of these farmers has blossomed into a dynamic cultural movement which is growing rapidly and influencing many lives. Soon there will be over 100 certified biointensive teachers across Latin America!

This conference was organized by Juan Manuel Martinez of ECOPOL, John Jeavons of Ecology Action and many wonderful community leaders across Latin America. Victory Gardens for Peace Manager and Master Level GB Teacher Matt Drewno presented at the Universidad Nacional Agraria, the National Agrarian University (UNA), on the important research being conducted at garden and seed bank in Mendocino, California. UNA is developing a 3-year biointensive training program including outreach into rural areas for spreading the method.

We visited several farm sites which serve as important nodes in a growing network of small scale biointensive farmers who are working in their communities to increase local resilience through sustainable agriculture and social programs.

Highlights of our trip included visiting:

- *Las Centra Cooperativa Las Diosas*, a network of cooperatives run by women in the rural countryside who are transforming the culture of small scale farmers who face discrimination based on class, race and gender.
- *Rayo del Sol*, a small but powerful non-profit working with communities to end poverty.

- *Artistas Para La Sopa (Artists for Soup)*, a non-profit working with women and teenagers to overcome poverty and malnutrition through biointensive agriculture, cooking and nutrition classes, human rights training and the arts.
- *Nicaphoto*, a non-profit working with children integrating education, biointensive gardening and community service.
- *Rayo del Sol*, a small but powerful non-profit working with communities to break the cycle of poverty.

The 5 days spent with these amazing individuals was a joyful experience. The energy permeating the biointensive movement in Nicaragua is deeply inspiring. We left feeling the biointensive family was strong and making great progress. Weeks later, the country would erupt in protest as calls for social reform rang across the country. Now more than ever, these projects are demonstrating the importance of communities working together to provide food security and education where resources are scarce and the need is great. It is amazing what can be done when people share the vision and work together for a better future.

Mini-Farm Tour of La Granja, Nicaragua



What is the GROW BIOINTENSIVE® Method?



The GROW BIOINTENSIVE® (GB) Method uses simple low-tech and accessible agricultural techniques based on a *best-practices* approach to food production derived from millennia of agricultural development from various cultures around the world. The goal behind biointensive is to create an agricultural system which wholistically addresses the challenges created by our current agricultural system and in a way that nurtures healthy soil, produces high yields and reduces the agricultural footprint from our ecosystems. These 8 basic principles are the foundation of a scalable (from backyard to farm) highly productive future for agriculture:

1. *Deep Soil Preparation*: Creating a healthy soil ecosystem 2' deep to encourage conservation and cycling of nutrients, water, carbon and life.
2. *Composting*: Giving back to the soil so that nutrients and humus are retained.
3. *Intensive Planting*: Maximizing production and efficiency while creating a living mulch to protect the soil microclimate.
4. *Companion Planting*: Encouraging diverse living relationships- increasing resilience.
5. *Carbon Farming*: Growing plants efficient at fixing atmospheric carbon dioxide and then stabilizing this carbon into the soil through proper composting.
6. *Calorie Farming*: Selecting crops to maximize calories grown per unit of space and time.
7. *Seed Saving of Open-Pollinated Seeds*: Developing and saving varieties that are otherwise rare and unique to local growing conditions while promoting healthy seed.
8. *A Whole Systems Perspective*: Understanding the garden as an organism and using these principles in harmony so that sustainability can be achieved and maintained.

Ecology Action has demonstrated that with the GB Method, farmers can grow food while using:

- 67-88% less water than in conventional agriculture
- 50-100% less purchased fertilizer
- 99% less energy

And in addition:

- Produce 2-6x the yield of conventional agriculture
- Grow soil sustainably up to 60x faster than normally occurs
- Reduce the agricultural footprint 50% or more, leaving more land for functioning ecosystems.



VICTORY GARDENS FOR PEACE SEED BANK BROADCASTER

The Victory Gardens for Peace Seed Bank has continued to expand in 2018. Thanks to the efforts of those local gardeners and farmers and a generous donation by Bountiful Gardens earlier this year, our current inventory has tripled to over 450 varieties as of fall 2018.

All of these seeds are procured, conserved and made available to our community for free of charge. Donations of seeds and dollars are gratefully accepted and keeps our communitiy seed bank growing strong!

But our seed bank is about more than the seeds – it's also about celebrating and enhancing the culture of community seed-saving. Each spring and fall we host the annual Mendocino Seed Exchange held at our local farmers market. We also are represented each year at the Seed Library Summit at the National Heirloom Festival in Santa Rosa, CA. This winter we again be hosting our annual Seed Cleaning Jamboree where local gardeners and farmers come together to clean and share seeds.

I would like to thank all of those who volunteered at the Seed Bank and grew out so many beautiful seeds for our community to share. Special thanks to Erica Harrold, Jaime Jensen, Anna Lea Garza, Carol Cox, Leslie Roberts, Kimberley Fisher, Brooke Eichenlaub, Gabriella Cobb, Marin Williams, Iris Steffenson, Justin Bartolini, Magnolia Barrett, Sakina Bush, Robert Kuhn, Ron Ortman, Pia Rolandelli, Morgan Dashko, Jenna Hassle and Kristine Askholm!



UPCOMING EVENTS AT VGFP

Seed Cleaning Jamboree

November 20, 2018 at the Mendocino Botanical Gardens in Fort Bragg, CA 12-8PM

Ecology Action's 3-Day Workshop in Willit's, CA

March 1-3, 2019

GROW BIOINTENSIVE® Sustainable Mini-Farming 8-Month Internship

April 1 – November 30, 2019

GROW BIOINTENSIVE® Sustainable Mini-Farming 2-Month Internship

June 1 – July 27, 2019

GROW BIOINTENSIVE® Sustainable Mini-Farming 4-Month Internship

June 1 – October 12, 2019

GROW BIOINTENSIVE® Sustainable Mini-Farming 8-Month Internship

April 1 – November 30, 2019

GROW BIOINTENSIVE® Mini-Farming 1-Year Apprenticeship

April 1 – March 31, 2019

9-Part Summer Course *Introduction to GROW BIOINTENSIVE®*

Saturdays 9AM-3PM June 1 – July 27, 2019

9-Part Summer Course *Garden Planning Simplified*

Saturdays 9AM-3PM August 17 – October 12, 2019

If you would like to make a donation to VGFP or more info on our programs, contact Matt Drewno at (847)404-2586 or email Matt@Victorygardensforpeace.com We are a project of Ecology Action, a 501(c)(3) non-profit.