

Ecology Action's  
GROW BIOINTENSIVE®  
9-Saturdays Course Series  
Information Booklet

Part 1: Growing Abundance in Your Backyard  
Nine Saturdays, June 1 – July 27, 2019

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# Summary

Despite technological advances in agriculture there are still more than 1 billion malnourished people in the world.<sup>1</sup> Rising food prices have led to political unrest in many countries.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the social problems of our global food system, current farming practices are unsustainable. Conventional agricultural techniques depend heavily on non-renewable resources, outside inputs from other soils, and deplete farmable soil - our most important finite resource. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has stated that the solution to these problems can be found in small scale, localized, low-input agriculture:

*"Global food production is more than enough to feed the global population, the problem is getting it to the people who need it. In market-marginalized areas, organic farmers can increase food production by managing local resources without having to rely on external inputs or food distribution systems over which they have little control and/or access<sup>3</sup>."*

Aware of the intensifying world challenges and the basic need of people to feed themselves, Ecology Action has been working since 1972 to develop an elegant, small-scale, truly sustainable agricultural system. This system, known as GROW BIOINTENSIVE, is a high-yielding agricultural method that emphasizes local food production (based historically on intensive food raising systems) while building and regenerating the soil that feeds us. Ecology Action has a network of affiliate organizations and internship graduates working around the world to enable people to promote good health and sustainable food security.

The GROW BIOINTENSIVE® method focuses on using small-scale, organic, non-mechanized food-raising techniques as a way of life. The work we do requires commitment, responsibility, patience, time, attention to detail, willingness to follow detailed instructions, self-motivation, and mental and physical stamina. While we do not wish to discourage those genuinely interested in the program, we also want to make sure that applicants are looking to enjoy a lifestyle of *simple living* with a focus on holistic health and sustainability.

Ecology Action offers the 9-Saturdays Summer Course Series (Part 1 and Part 2, see [www.growbiointensive.org/9WeekCourse](http://www.growbiointensive.org/9WeekCourse)) where qualified participants who want to be GROW BIOINTENSIVE resources for their communities can get involved in hands-on demonstration, teaching and research in sustainable agriculture and closed-system food production. The program focuses on the GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming technique and the low-technology lifestyle appropriate to development work.

# Program Information

Ecology Action's summer teaching program returns with the 9-Saturdays Course Series (Part 1) running from June 1 through July 27, 2019 from 9AM to 3PM each Saturday. We are inviting everyone to join us to learn the essential components of sustainable agriculture and closed-system food production using the GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming technique and low-technology lifestyle. The course will focus on the growing of your own heirloom vegetables, rare grains, and will emphasize the creation and maintenance of sustainable soil fertility.

Ecology Action offers this 9-Saturdays Summer Course Series for individuals wishing to learn more about designing a complete diet and planning a sustainable vegetable garden or mini-farm using biointensive techniques. During the course you will learn the eight principles of biointensive gardening that will **increase your yields, grow your soil and conserve resources for the whole planet.**

The course will take place at The Victory Gardens for Peace Mini-Farm at the Stanford Inn in Mendocino, California. Program participants will learn practical skills to create a productive and regenerative garden/mini-farm system. The techniques taught will be a closed system, soil building, organic approach to food production. In addition participants will learn about positive social solutions to food insecurity.

The 9-Saturdays Summer Course Series is of particular benefit to those who have already participated in an Ecology Action 3-Day Workshop, or those who are looking to learn more about the basic procedures of biologically intensive food production. The program is a combination of:

- Lecture and demonstrations,
- Study,
- Field work, and
- Guided Practice

This combination is designed is so that participants learn Ecology Action's processes both theoretically and practically, and can understand the processes that are involved in starting this type of work (GROW BIOINTENSIVE farming, low-tech living, teaching the method to others) as well as doing it over the long-term. The Summer Course Series is an opportunity to assist Ecology Action in accomplishing its mission to teach people to grow food and soil fertility while conserving resources, with both direct and indirect learning occurring in the process.

During the program, emphasis is placed on the ability of participants to learn to farm and develop GROW BIOINTENSIVE designs and approaches, in the belief that the most creativity and strength come from people joining forces and working as a team after they have fully developed strength and independence. We have found that skill levels can be dramatically upgraded with this type of training.

Ecology Action's research, demonstration and education mini-farm garden sites, while beautiful and enjoyable to work in, are first and foremost research gardens where a multitude of experiments are run concurrently. The research focus is on using the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method to conduct scientific tests and collect data to provide practical solutions to the challenge of growing food, creating and maintaining sustainable soil fertility, and conserving resources on a closed-loop basis, while living a sustainable life.

The program will overlap Ecology Action's internship programs, tours, and 3-day workshop programs and will host farmers and food-growing activists from the U.S. and abroad, giving all the participants a chance to network with additional people interested in similar work. The 9-week Course Series participants will work closely with our 2-Month and 8-Month International and Domestic Interns who are living on-site at Ecology Action.

This program provides an opportunity to learn valuable techniques and information, to experience an alternative living style, to make lifelong ties with people from different states and countries and to assist Ecology Action in accomplishing its mission to help farmers, gardeners, and communities around the world to raise food, conserve resources and build fertile soil sustainably.

## Schedule and Routine

Class days will begin at 9AM and end at 3PM and will involve both garden learning and classroom work, lectures, discussions, and multimedia covering a range of topics. Participants will have readings and homework to complete each week. The weekly readings and homework will pertain to the practical and conceptual aspects of GROW BIOINTENSIVE and food security issues around the world. The experience is demanding but rewarding to those willing to engage themselves.

Please note that Ecology Action is a non-profit organization focused on teaching motivated people about the principles of small scale, sustainable food raising and community involvement. It is not a market farm. If you are looking for experience in production and marketing on an organic farm, visit the WWOOF or ATTRA websites. Also, we appreciate that people who are interested in sustainable agriculture are interested in exploring other methods. Please note though, that this program will focus exclusively on the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method. For more information about this method you may visit:

[http://www.growbiointensive.org/grow\\_main.html](http://www.growbiointensive.org/grow_main.html)

# Curriculum

Over the course of the program, the following topics will be covered:

Growing Abundance in Your Backyard			
Class #	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	6/1	Intro to Ecology Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop Manual: In Defense of Old Fashioned Training, Dear Workshop Participant, WorldWide Soil Loss and Possible Solution, Ecology Action In Perspective, The Functions of Ecology Action, GB 7 Year Approach</li> </ul>
2	6/8	Principle 1: Deep Soil Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: Introduction and Soil Creation pgs. 1-32</li> <li>Workshop Manual: Double Digging vs. Roto-Tilling, Double Digging vs The U-Bar, Triple Digging, Cultivation, Living Quarters for Plant Roots.</li> </ul>
3	6/15	Principle 2: Composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: Composting pgs. 44-62</li> <li>One Circle: Amino Acids pgs. 34-40</li> </ul>
4	6/22	Principle 3: Close-Plant Spacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: Sustainability pgs. 33-39, Fertilization, Seed Propagation and Transplanting pgs. 63-90</li> <li>Workshop Manual: Art, Craft and Efficiency of Scale</li> </ul>
5	6/29	Principle 4: Carbon Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: 60:30:10 pgs 39-43</li> <li>One Circle: Vitamins and Minerals pgs. 41-72</li> <li>Workshop Manual: Micro-Macronutrients</li> </ul>
6	7/6	Principle 5: Calorie Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: Sample Garden Plans pgs. 180-190</li> <li>Booklet 26: Learning to Grow All Your Own Food pgs. 1-25</li> </ul>
7	7/13	Principle 6: Companion Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: Companion Planting and Rotations pgs. 101-118</li> <li>2WFC Video: Crop Rotations, Cover Crops and Multi-Cropping with Steve Moore</li> </ul>
8	7/20	Principle 7: Seed Saving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Booklet 13: Growing to Seed pgs. 1-38</li> <li>2WFC Video: Seed Saving and Plant Breeding with Steve Moore</li> </ul>
9	7/27	Principle 8: Whole Systems Perspective, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGMV9: Watering, Moons and Season Extension pgs. 86-100; Interrelated Food System and Balance pgs. 119-132</li> <li>Workshop Manual: Industrial Economy by Wendell Berry</li> </ul>

Participants will have several books and publications that they will use for readings and design projects. By the end of the program participants will have a strong understanding of basic gardening and farming principles which will increase yields sustainably, using fewer resources and building soil in the process.

## Program Expenses

### Cost for a 9-Saturdays Course Series at Ecology Action, 2019 (non-refundable)

Item	Cost
Tuition and Administration	US\$575
Room	participants provide their own housing
Food	participants provide their own lunch
Publications	\$50
Medical Insurance	participants provide their own insurance
Transportation	participants provide their own transportation
TOTAL Due (Payable to Ecology Action, non-refundable):	\$625

Note: A \$250 deposit is due within one week of acceptance.

NOTE: Not included in the expenses is personal travel to and from the program site, which will vary per participant, medical insurance, and money for incidental expenses or entertainment over the course of the program. All participants are responsible for providing for these items.

## Program Site

### Victory Gardens for Peace (Mendocino, CA)

The Victory Gardens for Peace site in Mendocino, California is situated on the grounds of the Stanford Inn, an eco-resort nestled on the cliffs overlooking the confluence of the Big River and the Pacific Ocean. Our program is focused on: developing the GROW BIOINTENSIVE model for our coastal, cool, foggy climate, improving the soil and teaching the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method. There are many challenges at the site that create opportunities to demonstrate practical and effective ways of maximizing resources and managing fertility. There is an inherently good soil here but it underwent years of compaction as a horse paddock. We are working to build soil structure and fertility to restore the soil health. We experiment with growing complete diets and different crop varieties to find which are best suited to this unique growing climate. Our internships and classes are unique and offer a great experience in water conservation, soil fertility management and food raising through the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method.

## Follow-Up Activities

One of the unique aspects of this program is that we will allow you time throughout the summer to plan your next steps after you complete the course. It is expected that graduates of the 9-Week Course Series program will be prepared to use their gained knowledge in some project within their home community, their school, or in some other way to help promote sustainable food raising. During the program, participants will be able to work with a staff member to help plan and work through their future activities.

## About Ecology Action

Ecology Action is a non-profit tax-exempt organization based in Willits California. It operates an organic gardening supply and educational center in Palo Alto, an heirloom seed company in Willits, and research/demonstration gardens in Willits, Mendocino, and Palo Alto, CA. Ecology Action currently has affiliated partner organizations in five other countries. The organization conducts research and apprentice training in the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method, as well as publishes and distributes information about its method around the world.

Ecology Action founded the Common Ground research and community garden in Palo Alto in 1971 and began the formal apprentice program in 1977. Since then, low-input and high-yield farming has been studied in training/research gardens under the direction of John Jeavons. The years of work have resulted in positive, paradigm changing new ideas for the abatement of world hunger, for family food sufficiency and for urban and rural small-scale farming. Our goal is to give more people the capability of raising their own food while nurturing the earth for posterity.

The GROW BIOINTENSIVE method has been developed as a sophisticated, low technology food security safety net for people in virtually all climates and soils where food is grown. It seeks to build on thousands of years of traditional smallholder farming methods. Long-term sustainability is a crucial requirement and the work is completely manual. The system includes eight important aspects: double-dug raised beds, composting, intensive planting, companion planting, carbon farming, calorie farming, open-pollinated seeds, and a whole-system approach. This method offers people a way to produce nutritious diets despite having fewer resources. Lack of access to water and land as well as inability to purchase outside inputs like fertilizers are challenging problems to tackle within the framework of conventional agriculture. GROW BIOINTENSIVE seeks to address these challenges by minimizing the need for outside resources and maximizing the use of available land. In addition, GROW BIOINTENSIVE creates a more sustainable system of farming that does not use chemicals and can increase soil fertility.

For more information, you may visit our website at <http://www.growbiointensive.org/>

## HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this program, please fill out our secure online application, which you can find at <http://www.growbiointensive.org/9WeekCourse>. Applications for Part 1 will be accepted through May 21, 2018. Candidates will receive notice of acceptance no later than May 25, 2019. If you have any questions, please email [\*\*contact@growbiointensive.org\*\*](mailto:contact@growbiointensive.org).



## RELEASE FORM

***If you are accepted, you must send 1) a signed hard copy of the release form (following page), 2) a valid proof of insurance to the address listed on the form, and 3) a deposit to secure your place in the program.***

### ECOLOGY ACTION

5798 Ridgewood Road, Willits CA 95490-9730  
Phone: (707) 459-0150 Fax (707) 459-5409

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Male / Female: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Country of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Emergency Contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a heart condition, back condition, or other present and/or pre-existing conditions that could limit your full participation in the physical activities of this program?

If so please describe in detail:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any medications you are currently taking:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of last medical examination:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide your current primary/catastrophic medical insurance coverage information

Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_ Policy No: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Waiver:**

I hereby certify that I am in good physical condition and do hereby release, acquit and discharge ECOLOGY ACTION, its staff, officers and members, of any and all claims, causes of action or damages whatsoever, in any way arising out of or in any manner connected with their program or any medical treatment rendered in event of need. I understand that I am responsible for the coverage any medical expenses during my time at Ecology Action.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_