

Ecology Action's  
GROW BIOINTENSIVE<sup>®</sup>  
2-Month Summer  
Internship Information Booklet

June 1–July 27, 2019

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# Summary

Ecology Action's two-month internship will teach small-scale, low input farming methods. The program will take place at two locations in Northern California from June 1st through July 27th. Interns will learn practical skills that address issues of food insecurity through a combination of hands-on fieldwork and classroom teaching. The techniques taught will be a closed system, soil building, and organic approach to food production. In addition interns will learn about positive social solutions to food insecurity. The program will run simultaneously with Ecology Action's six-month internship, hosting farmers and activists from the US and abroad, giving two-month interns a chance to network with people interested in similar work.

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 degrade farmable soil. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has stated that the solution to these problems can be found in localized, small-scale, 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 for almost 50 years to develop an elegant, small-scale agricultural system. This system, known as GROW BIOINTENSIVE, is a high-yielding, sustainable method that emphasizes local food production and is based historically on intensive food raising systems. Ecology Action has a network of affiliate organizations and former interns working around the world to enable people to promote food security.

This two-month internship will be an opportunity to learn valuable techniques and information, to experience an alternative living style and to make lifelong ties with other interns from different states and countries. Interns will be assisting Ecology Action in accomplishing important work that can help farmers, gardeners, and communities around the world. The program will be a combination of lectures, study, garden work, and living the method. Once interns have completed their stay it is hoped they will engage in public service for food security in the community across the country and around the world.

<sup>1</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11503845](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-11503845)

<sup>2</sup> [www.guardian.co.uk/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2011/aug/25/food-price-arab-middle-eastprotests](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2011/aug/25/food-price-arab-middle-eastprotests)

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, [www.fao.org/organicag/oa-faq/oa-faq7/en](http://www.fao.org/organicag/oa-faq/oa-faq7/en)

# Program Information

Ecology Action offers this internship for individuals wishing to learn more about designing a complete diet and planning a sustainable vegetable garden or mini-farm using Biointensive techniques. The program will focus on the growing of your own heirloom vegetables, rare grains, and will emphasize the creation and maintenance of sustainable soil fertility. Living and working onsite for two months, you will immerse yourself in the method, and 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 program will take place at the Victory Garden for Peace Mini-Farm in the town of Mendocino, in Northern California. Interns will learn practical skills that address issues of food security through a blend of hands-on fieldwork and classroom learning. They will learn to use a closed-loop, soil- building, resource-conserving, sustainable organic approach to food production. In addition, interns will learn about positive social solutions to food security issues.

The internship will start on the June 1st through July 27th, 2019. Interns must arrive at least one day in advance at each site to get settled and acquainted with the area.

The 2-Month internship is of particular benefit to those who have already participated in an Ecology Action 3-Day Workshop. The internship covers the basics, and goes into depth of understanding and experiential learning. The program is a combination of:

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

This combination is designed so that participants learn Ecology Action's methods, 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, et al) as well as performing these activities over the long-term. The internships are 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 internship, emphasis is placed on the ability 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 improved with this type of training.

While at Ecology Action, interns have minimal administrative responsibilities, and are able to focus on learning through reading, classes, and work in the field. Time may be available for an independent study project, and there are periodic one-hour meetings with an Ecology Action staff member to ensure progress is being made. There are also weekly meetings with staff and other interns to discuss progress in the research garden. The interns will take part in seasonal courses and workshops. Depending on the work done and the level of involvement demonstrated, it is possible that overtime the internship can lead to an Ecology Action certification as a GROW BIOINTENSIVE teacher at the Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, or Master-Level.

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 other, longer internship, class series, and 3-day workshop programs and will host farmers and food-growing activists from the US and abroad, giving all the interns a chance to network with additional people interested in similar work.

The GROW BIOINTENSIVE method requires patience, commitment, responsibility, attention to detail, a 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 have a hardy, adventurous nature and can make a dedicated commitment to the program.

## Schedule and Routine

An intern's day typically starts around 8 am and finish anywhere from 6–8 pm with a 2 to 3 hour midday siesta. Most days will be spent working in the garden. A typical day could involve preparing beds for planting, seed propagation, harvesting, taking and recording samples, transplanting, seed saving, and other garden tasks. At least one day a week, and some times more, will be spent in the classroom. Classroom days will include lectures, discussions and multimedia covering a range of topics.

Interns will have weekly reading and homework pertaining to the practical and conceptual aspects of GROW BIOINTENSIVE and food security issues around the world. Interns will also work in the gardens of the respective sites and should enjoy physical labor. At least one and a half days and as much as two days a week will be free for personal time. The experience is demanding but rewarding to those willing to engage themselves.

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 WWOOF or ATTRA. Also, we appreciate that people who are interested in sustainable agriculture are interested in exploring other methods. Please note though, that this internship will focus primarily on the GROW BIOINTENSIVE method. For more information about this method please visit: [www.growbiointensive.org/grow\\_main.html](http://www.growbiointensive.org/grow_main.html).

# Curriculum

Over the course of the program, in addition to study, fieldwork, and guided practical applications, the following topics will be covered:

Growing Abundance in Your Backyard		
Class #	Topic	Assignments
1	Intro to Ecology Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop manual: In Defense of Old Fashioned Training</li> <li>Dear Workshop Participant, Worldwide Soil Loss and Possible Solution, Ecology Action in Perspective, The Functions of Ecology Action, the GROW BIOINTENSIVE 7- Year Approach</li> </ul>
2	Principle 1: Deep Soil Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: 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	Principle 2: Composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: Composting pgs. 44-62</li> <li>One Circle: Amino Acids pgs. 34-40</li> </ul>
4	Principle 3: Close-Plant Spacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: Sustainability pgs. 33-39,</li> <li>Fertilization, Seed Propagation and Transplanting pgs. 63-90</li> <li>Workshop manual: Art, Craft and Efficiency of Scale</li> </ul>
5	Principle 4: Carbon Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: 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	Principle 5: Calorie Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: Sample Garden Plans pgs. 180-190</li> <li>Booklet 26: Learning to Grow All Your Own Food pgs. 1-25</li> </ul>
7	Principle 6: Companion Planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: Companion Planting and Rotations pgs. 101-118</li> <li>2WFC Video: Crop Rotations, Cover Crops and Multi-Cropping with Steve Moore</li> </ul>
8	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	Principle 8: Whole Systems Perspective, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HTGM: Watering, Moons and Season Extension pgs. 86-100</li> <li>Interrelated Food System and Balance pgs. 119-132</li> <li>Workshop manual: Industrial Economy by Wendell Berry</li> </ul>

Participants will be provided with several books and publications (including *How to Grow More Vegetables* (9th Edition), internship manual, One Circle and EA Booklets 13 and 26) 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 build soil in the process.

# Internship Expenses

This is an unpaid, fee-based internship program. Program interns will be placed at two different Mini-Farm sites. Housing/accommodations will be provided at each site. However, other expenses need to be provided by interns, see the list below. Partial scholarships may be available to those who qualify. Please note that these internship fees are non-refundable.

**Summer expenses must be submitted no later than June 1, 2019, and include:**

Item	Cost
Tuition and Administration	US \$1,500
Room	Provided by EA
Supplies	\$200
Publications-hardcopies	\$320
Food	Provided by EA
Utilities	Provided by EA
Internet	Provided by EA
Incidentals	Provided by participant-\$400
Medical Insurance	Provided by participant
Transportation	Provided by participant
TOTAL: Payable to EA, non-refundable:	\$2,420
A \$500 deposit and a copy of your insurance card are due by May 1, 2019.	

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

*Note: At the beginning of each month of the internship program, from the funds deposited above, interns will receive a personal check from Ecology Action for \$200 for his or her own incidental expenses. Requiring interns to provide this money ahead of time guarantees the interns have funds to support themselves through the entire internship program. If you have questions about expenses please email [contact@growbiointensive.org](mailto:contact@growbiointensive.org).*

## Program Site

Victory Gardens for Peace Mini-Farm (VGfP), Mendocino, CA

Victory Gardens for Peace Mini-Farm 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 the cool, foggy coastal 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 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 distinctive growing climate.

# 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 2-Month Summer Internship 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 research/demonstration gardens in Willits and Mendocino, CA. Ecology Action currently has affiliated partner organizations in five other countries. The organization conducts research, internships 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 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 few resources. Lack of access to water and land, as well as the 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 can increase soil fertility and does not use chemicals.

For more information visit, [www.growbiointensive.org/](http://www.growbiointensive.org/)



# HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this internship, please fill out our secure online application, which you can find at [www.growbiointensive.org/SummerInternship](http://www.growbiointensive.org/SummerInternship). Applications will be accepted through May 1st, 2019. Candidates will receive notice of acceptance no later than May 15th, 2019. If you have any questions, please email [contact@growbiointensive.org](mailto:contact@growbiointensive.org).

*If you are accepted, you must send:*

- 1. a signed hard copy of the release form (following page)*
- 2. valid proof of insurance to the address listed on the form*
- 3. the deposit to secure your place in the program*
- 4. one professional and two personal written references, with contact information.*

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

**RELEASE FORM**

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: \_\_\_\_\_