Message from the Director

Dear Friends,

Change is a given in life, and it continues to help direct EA’s actions. We started as a movement of people looking to create solutions to the many challenges the world was presenting. We transitioned to an organization in order to build a sustainable structure that allowed us to receive funding and reach out to people all over the world. We’ve continued re-visioning our pathway over the years in response to our own circumstances and the world situation. Right now we’re building up a new team to strengthen our work into the future.

Change has allowed us to stay flexible and involved. These qualities are important for each of us, as the future long predicted becomes a reality. Changing light bulbs on the Titanic will not keep it afloat. Changing our way of thinking and living is essential. Taking on responsibility is required—not waiting for someone else to do it. When the GROW BIOINTENSIVE Sustainable Mini-Farming Program started, I never wanted all the responsibilities that would be involved in becoming Director. At the same time I could see that this would be the only way that our goals could more easily be accomplished. At this time of intensive change on our planet, each of us, whatever our age, gender or background, has a part to play and skills that can be useful and even crucial. As we discovered many years ago: Tag! Each of us is it!

We’ve been creating a three-tiered structure to help each person be responsible for his or her own learning about the GROW BIOINTENSIVE system. First are the more than 50 publications we’ve written over the years (200 including information sheets) and have updated as new information becomes available. Second is the Self-Teaching Section on our website, containing resources for a person to teach herself/himself the basic principles of GB. This includes videos showing each step of GB’s 8 components. There is also a short GB Manual available in Spanish, Russian, French and Portuguese as well as English. Our goal is to translate it into many more languages. The third tier will be a series of webinars from video taken at a four-week farm course to be taught in 2014 by master GB teachers. The webinars will be available worldwide. A longer-term goal we have is to help catalyze a Mini-Ag Center/Soil Test Station in each state of the US and in each country of the world, to carry on GB demonstration, teaching and training.

As each of us assumes responsibility for our own lives, it will also be essential to build deeper relationships with each other and with the soil. Photosynthesis is the real green—the basis of our lives. The world of the future will involve a dynamic relationship with the soil and will be a healthy way of life. This relationship will be lots more fun than just a job, profession or vocation.

Building stronger relationships with our neighbors and growing our communities will connect us once again to the joy of working and celebrating together as we link many arms and hearts to meet challenges and create positive change around us.

Best Wishes,

[Signature]

John Jeavons, Director
Henry Miller

Henry Miller, a native of the US, has been living in Mexico for the last 18 years. He is the co-founder and director of a small NG, El Maíz Mas Pequeño (The Smallest Grain of Corn), and is the creator of Aprender Sembrando (Learn While Planting), an initiative that seeks the mandatory integration of sustainable agriculture concepts and climate change into high school curricula. For the last two years, Henry has also worked as a trainer/consultant with FAO-Mexico through its Strategic Program for Nutritional Security (PESA) and has transferred the Biointensive method to hundreds of field technicians, development agencies and farmers in twelve Mexican states. He recently wrote:

Last month during a PESA mission while bouncing about the cab of a collective taxi in the mountainous region of Guerrero state, one of the poorest in Mexico, I observed a woman walking uphill, nursing a small child slung across her chest in a rebozo, while weaving multiple strands of palm to make a basket to trade or sell. My driver, having caught the same image, commented that the scarcity of food leaves no time for rest or diversion from activities directly related to nutritional survival.

Throughout this last school year Aprender Sembrando here in Queretaro state brought to light the rampant malnutrition prevalent in rural schools. It’s not uncommon for 75% of a school’s students to come to class with no more than a cup of coffee and a dose of sugar in the belly. The lack of local productivity has been exacerbated by climate change, and hardships from US immigration policies have greatly reduced incomes and the ability to keep sufficient food on the table.

There is a fierce urgency to help create the farmers of tomorrow and to shift the focus of current agricultural policies towards human-scale local production and exchange.

For me, effective communication is vital when giving Biointensive trainings to a variety of age groups, education levels and political positions and, in some cases, to ethnic groups whose language may be spoken but not read. The simplicity and precision of the 8 principles provide the flexibility to explore fundamental factors contributing to the growing food crises, while connecting them with basic and best practices, giving farmers, students and teachers, technicians and politicians a firm platform to stand on, make decisions, and advance in accordance with their needs and available resources.

Justin Cutter

Justin was one of the EA interns at our Green Belt Mini-Farm site near the town of Mendocino during its initial year. After his internship, he and his friend Nick Runkle started Compass Green, a project to bring people, mainly kids, closer to their food. The two built a greenhouse onto the back of their 18-foot box truck, with raised beds 18-20 inches deep. They took their living example of Biointensive agriculture to schools, summer camps, community events, and the Right2Know March for GMO labeling. By the end of the first year they had taught over 1,000 students “from New York to San Diego”. Presentations were given on sustainability and the impacts of industrial agriculture, with one-day workshops on Biointensive gardening. There have been some changes over the years: adjustments to the greenhouse as needed and Nick now headquartered in New York to take care of administration and fund-raising for the project.

At the beginning of July 2013 Justin sent us this report: “In mid-May Compass Green finished its most successful tour to date. Starting in April, we drove our mobile greenhouse through California’s delta region, central valley, and southern coast, and by the end of it, we had taught almost 4,000 students. We focused our tour on teaching at-risk youth at under-privileged schools, but had the opportunity to teach our curriculum to students from all walks of life: urban areas in L.A., earth-loving festival-goers in Santa Barbara, and young college activists at UCLA. Regardless of socioeconomic status, every student takes part in the food system by eating, and all of them have the same power to improve their local food system by growing more of their own food or supporting local farms. Empowering them with the skills and knowledge to do so is vital for their health and the well-being of the environment. After such a successful tour, we are tremendously inspired and excited to continue with Compass Green and expand our network for the coming school year. We’ll be focusing our efforts in California, and in September we’ll be at the Heirloom Expo in Santa Rosa.”
Patricia Mayagoitia

I first learned of the Biointensive method when I was a child in Chiapas, Mexico. My father, Gaspar Mayagoitia, learned of the method while listening to the BBC from London on his shortwave radio. He and Enrique Reyna, a Biointensive mini-farmer and teacher in Chiapas, taught me the method. We established two gardens on our farm. We also conducted two workshops where I joined some children in teaching other children the method. I have fond memories and recollect the time we presented a puppet show in which we explained the importance of the earthworm. I played the voice of the lazy butterfly. In 1995, we moved to Bachiniva, Chihuahua, where I helped my father in workshops for government staff, university professors, Tarahumara Indians and anyone who asked for help.

I have been afforded the opportunity to travel and teach in many different places. When I was 15, my father and I were invited to attend the 100th anniversary of the Agrarian University of Havana in Cuba. We spent two weeks participating in events and workshops hosted by the university. When I was 17, I interned for six months at Ecology Action in Willits. Afterwards, Juan Manuel invited me to teach two workshops in Bolivia. It was a long trip, but rewarding, as it proved interesting and productive.

I gained a deeper respect for different cultural values after a trip to the Sierra Tarahumara when I was 19. The trip was a major influence on me, changing my college studies from agronomy to international relations. Upon graduation in 2009, I worked as an agricultural consultant for local municipalities in Chihuahua. In 2010, I entered New Mexico State University where I attained a Master of Science in Agricultural Economics in 2012. Later that year, I started work as an assistant to Juan Manuel and traveled with him to give trainings at two sites in northern Mexico.

My goal is to collaborate in the creation of strong GB Centers in Latin America and facilitate information that can help strengthen the GB network. I would also like to continue learning about soil fertility and teach its importance to others.

Rachid Boutihane

Rachid was an EA intern at the Golden Rule Garden in 2011.

In 2011 I traveled 6000 miles to learn an agricultural method that actually has some of its roots only a few steps from where I live in Paris, France. Up until the end of the nineteenth century, most of the vegetables eaten in the city were grown in gardens and fields all around the city. By now the “city of lovers” is a big megalopolis, the fields have disappeared and the agricultural knowledge too. At least I thought so! However, in the early 1970s, John Jeavons began working with the Biointensive mini-farming method, greatly inspired by the Parisian farmers, who were known to use intensive manual labor to grow big amounts of food on small pieces of land. Mini-greenhouses, glass bell jars and horse manure were used to extend the growing season.

Times have changed, but agriculture is still here—it has just evolved to fit our new life-style. What we now call urban agriculture is seen by many people as the new solution to many inner-city challenges. The trend that comes from cities like Montreal, New York and San Francisco is now arriving in Paris, where about 300 acres of rooftops and outside spaces are potentially usable for urban agriculture. In early May this year the city launched a call for projects. However, lots of projects such as community and social gardens lack a clear farming method to follow. Twice this year I gave Biointensive classes in a social garden on a rooftop in downtown Paris with about 30 people each. Most of them were happy to find a method that has clear and easy-to-follow principles that can be adapted to most environments and situations. How to optimize the use of space, increase soil fertility, and create biodiversity in the growing space and the surrounding area are questions GROW BIOINTENSIVE is answering.

I’m working to promote sustainable practices as a consultant on urban farming projects and programs for the city of Paris and for community gardens. I’m also starting a business with the founder of SlowMoney France, creating sustainable gardens for companies to create a better, more healthful environment for their workers.
2012 Income and Expenses for Ecology Action Mini-Farm Program

**Income**
(Total $785,418)

- EA Grants: 34.9%
- Outreach Grants: 25.7%
- Donations/Memberships: 24.4%
- Reserve: 4.7%
- Royalties: 5.0%
- Sales: 0.5%
- Program: 4.8%
- Fund Raising: 6.2%
- Maintenance: 0.9%
- Miscellaneous: 2.4%

**Expense**
(Total $806,082)

- Education: 42.0%
- Outreach: 24.7%
- Administration: 23.8%
- Miscellaneous: 2.4%

Note: Funds raised in 2011 provided the funds needed to meet the remaining expense.