

# Echoes of Eco

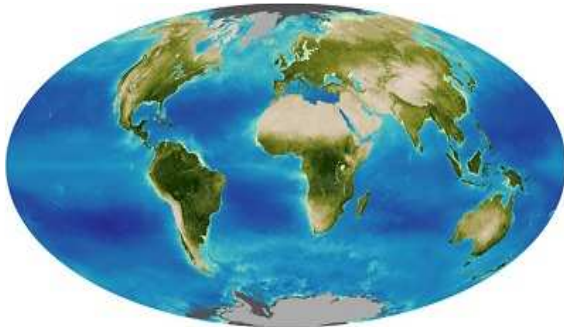


November, 2011

Vivekananda Kendra- **nardep** Newsletter

Vol:3 No:9

## Lynn Margulis (1938-2011)



### In this issue:

- Lynn Margulis (1938-2011)
- The Happenings – I
- The Happenings-II
- Know Sustainable Technology
- From our Publications
- Visions of Wisdom

"What is life?" is a linguistic trap. To answer according to the rules of grammar, we must supply a noun, a thing. But life on Earth is more like a verb. It is a material process, surfing over matter like a strange slow wave. It is a controlled artistic chaos, a set of chemical reactions so staggeringly complex that more than 4 billion years ago it began a sojourn that now, in human form, composes love letters and uses silicon computers to calculate the temperature of matter at the birth of the universe....

All life on earth is a unified spatiotemporal system with no clear-cut boundaries. Encouraging our biophilia, preserving blocks of biodiversity before they are converted to concrete skyscrapers and asphalt parking lots, is a way of enhancing the possibility that human beings will persist into the future. This future may be indefinite, as some few species do not become extinct but "scale back" and become symbiotically attenuated and reintergrated into new forms of life and patterns of living organization.

If we consider, for example, the ancestral oxygen-respirers that evolved into the mitochondria of all plants, animals, and fungi, we would have to say that this mitochondrial "species", codependent as it is, has

resisted extinction, surviving and spreading (and still going strong) in multifarious forms for some 2,000 million years

Humanity seems to have been presented with an opportunity, rare in evolution, to do likewise. By allying ourselves more closely with once distant life-forms, by affiliating ourselves biophyletically, not only with the plants and animals whose ongoing demise weighs so heavily at present on our memory, but also with the waste-recycling, air producing, and water-purifying microbes we as yet take largely for granted, we may be able to aid in the flowering of earth life into the astronomically voluminous reaches of space.

Dr.Lynn Margulis a micro-biologist who was the first one to propose that evolution happens through shared living at the very cellular level. Her theory –endosymbiosis- was first resisted and then accepted by orthodox biologists. She was one of the co-origina-tors of the 'Gaia' hypothesis that states that all life on earth forms one large whole. She died on November 22 2011. These are excerpts from her lectures. VK-nardep pays its homage to this daring woman scientist who raised the planetary awareness of ecology.

### A Hymn for a Tree



***O Lord of the wood, whom this ax  
well-whetted has set in our midst  
with resultant joy, put forth  
branches a hundred times over!  
So may we also with thousands  
be blessed!***

***–Rig Veda (III 8 1)***



*Trees are poems that earth writes upon the sky, We fell them down and turn them into paper, That we may record our emptiness. – Khalil Gibran*



**This Month ...**



**This Month ...**



**This month...**



Intensive Azolla training camp was conducted for one farmer on the 26th of this month by sister Premlata.

Green Health Home at Vivekananda Puram functioned for 6 days and treated 161 patients.

Workshop on “Vermi Compost Technology” was conducted at TRC, Kalluvilai for the students of Govt. Polytechnic College, Konam on the 11<sup>th</sup> of this month. 41 students attended the workshop. The resource person was Shri.S.Rajamony.



**Done with DST core support**

Follow-up work with the farmers in and around Sevaiour was conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of this month by the team of Dr.P.Kamalasanan Pillai, Sis.V.Saraswathi and Shri.S.Rajamony. The project was financed by FORD Foundation, New Delhi. More than 100 farmers benefitted from this follow-up work.

### True Saint who lives in us all



Compassion, simplicity, devotion and prayful attitude, feeling of equality towards all creation, pure life and universal love are the qualities of a true saint.



A person, who has renounced all desires, attachments, illusions, who is above any praise or criticism; and has conquered elation and depressions, is a true saint.

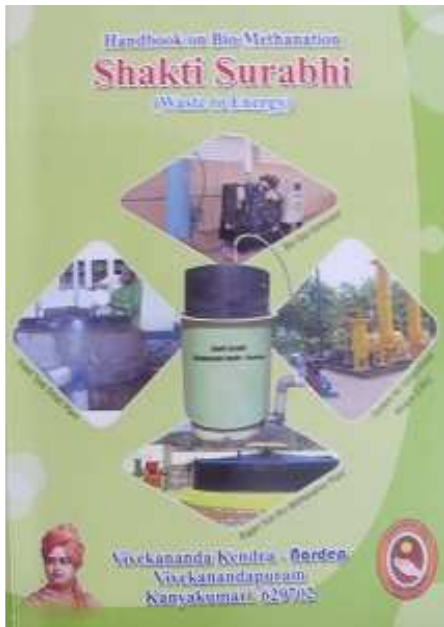
Students learning and discussing the vermi-compost technologies at TRC Kalluvillai. (above)

The four qualities are very obvious in a true saint; compassion, righteousness, surrender to the Divine in all events, and helping others in times of their difficulties.

Apiculture takes roots at Sevaiyur,(down)



**-Kabir**



This new multi-colored book on Bio-Methanation plant Shakti Surabhi is the perfect introduction for the plant, its need and its usage. It also doubles as an excellent manual for optimal usage of the plant and slurry. This book can be availed from VK-nardep. This is a book that will make you an efficient user of Shakti Surabhi.

*In spite of the modern delusion of alienation, of separation from the living Earth, we humans are not aliens, we belong here. The human psyche too is Earth-born, the result of 4000 million years of continuous evolution. – John Seed*



**Shakti-Surabhi Training Programme : Multi-media session in Progress.**



## Happenings: This month

Workshop on “Varma Ethno Medicines” sponsored by Arya Vaidya Nilayam, and was conducted at Vilacherry, Madurai on 4<sup>th</sup> of this month. Dr.V.Ganapathy gave a talk on the “Importance of Ethno medicines and their preparation”. 40 persons attended.

Seminar on “Siddha Pharmacodynamic and Pharmacokinetic Study” was conducted for students of Govt. Siddha Medical College, Palayamkottai, Tirunelveli. The Seminar was conducted at TRC, Kalluvilai on 8<sup>th</sup> by Dr.V.Ganapathy. 23 students attended the seminar.



## Happenings: This month

‘A Workshop on Technology Problems for Rural Areas’ was conducted by RuTAG of IIT Chennai for studying the Technology Problems in Rural Areas and what possible inputs can be supplied by RuTAG. It was held at Vivekanandapuram on 22<sup>nd</sup> of this month. Organizations and institutions involved in sustainable technology sat with officials from RuTAG and discussed. 40 representatives from voluntary organizations, colleges and institutions participated in the workshop.

On 25<sup>th</sup> of this month 50 students from Tamilnadu Agricultural University, Kumalur, Trichy Dist. visited Gramodaya Park, Vivekanandapuram as part of the study tour and learned about various rural technologies.

On 28<sup>th</sup> 100 farmers organized by District Watershed Development Agency, Virudhunagar Dist visited Gramodaya Park, Vivekanandapuram and TRC Kalluvilai and learnt the various sustainable technologies.



**Seminar on Siddha Pharmacodynamic and Pharmacokinetic study in progress.**

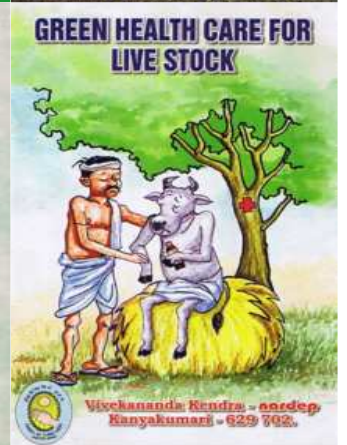
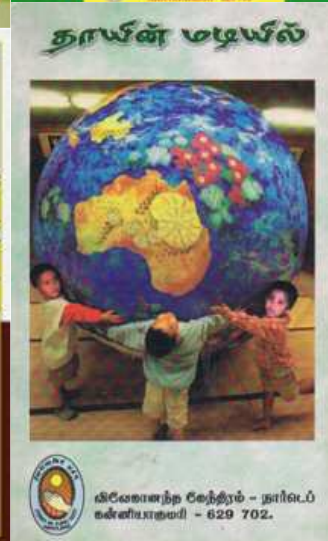
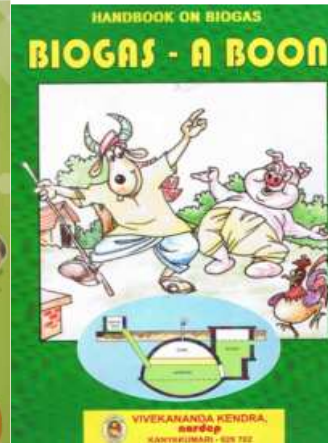


**RuTAG workshop discussion of institutional representatives with RuTAG officials. Sri.Shivkumar of Gandhigram Trust during workshop discussion.**



**Sri Kathiresan explaining the working of Shakti Surabhi to the participants of the camp**

*Of all the organisms on earth, only bacteria are individuals. We are walking communities. There's not a single chemical ability present in animals and plants that isn't already present in bacteria. The only thing that makes an organism unique is the way it combines them. – Lynn Margulis*



Indigenous wisdom has many treasures which are becoming extinct. VK-nardep wants to conserve the traditional wisdom for posterity. Treatment of poison intakes and venomous bites is one such area and VK-nardep has been documenting the traditional knowledge in this field. It has brought together traditional physicians and students of Siddha medical system and has conducted conferences and workshops. Many interviews and field visits have been made by VK-nardep team headed by Dr. Ganapati. Now all this comes in the form of a well documented book on 13<sup>th</sup> of December in the form of a Tamil book titled 'A practical Siddha handbook for poison bites'. This is perhaps the first time that the traditional indigenous wisdom of this aspect of Siddha tradition is being documented so extensively.

## This month... Shakti Surabhi



Workshop on "Kitchen Waste (Shakti Surabhi) Biogas Plant" was conducted at the Technology Resource Center of VK-nardep. This was organized under DST, Core Support

It was conducted on 26<sup>th</sup> of this month and 27 persons attended it. The media also provided good coverage of the technology. With gas prices rising the technology has been seen as an alternative cost-effective technology for the house wives to economize on the cooking gas.



Tested water from 14 wells in Kanyakumari Dist – programme of Central Ground Water Board, Chennai.

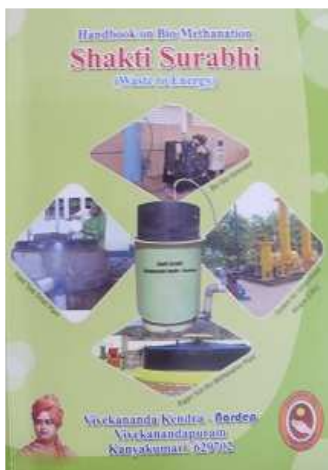
Because I am, heaven overhangs and earth is upheld. Because I am, the sun and the moon go round. The four seasons come in succession, all things are born, because I am, that is, because of Mind.

-Zen Master Eisai



## From Our Publications

### Handbook on Bio-Methanation Shakti Surabhi



Vivekananda Kendra **nardep** has published a new multi-coloured book which serves as both an excellent introduction as well as a good instruction manual on Bio-Methanation plant.

The book has two parts: the first part provides a detailed introduction to Shakti Surabhi plant. It explains the principle of Bio-Methanation. It also gives elaborate data on how to increase the working efficiency and obtain optimum results. The special features of the plant as well as key indicators of the plant health are also given.

The Second part deals with the fixed plant as well as scaling up operations. It provides a brief on biogas for electricity generation and compressed biogas (CBG).



There is a section on frequently asked questions and also a glossary of technical terms used by the book. The book provides both an introduction to the technology and also guidelines to the user for optimum use.

The experiences of various users are shared with the reader in the form of attractive box items. The book also provides good detailed illustrations in colour. This is a welcome addition to the library of books on sustainable development technologies.

Dr.A.R.Shukla, Adviser (Bio-Energy), Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, GOI, in his forward to the book states that 'the book provides the layman an introduction to use of the technology and for those who are using it already, this book makes them efficient users. A sustainable technology has to be integrated with the society and its socio-cultural heart beat to make the technology people's technology. This book has come out as an important catalyst in that transformation".

Authored by Er.Ramakrishnan the book is richly illustrated with photos, cartoons and also technical diagrams and all are presented in an unobtrusive way – blended into a simple and effective whole. This book is a must for every bio-methanation plant user.

## Online Catalogue on our publications

Online catalogue of our publications with price list as well as description and cover pictures has been published in our website.

## Shakti Surabhi Featured in women magazine



*If you yourself, who are the valley streams and mountains, cannot develop the power which illuminates the true reality of the mountains and valley streams, who else is going to be able to convince you that you and the streams and mountains are one and the same?*

—Dogen



## Planet Lives

We now see that the air, the ocean and the soil are much more than a mere environment for life; they are a part of life itself. Thus the air is to life just as is the fur to a cat or the nest for a bird. Not living but something made by living things to protect against an otherwise hostile world. For life on Earth, the air is our protection against the cold depths and fierce radiations of space. There is nothing unusual in the idea of life on Earth interacting with the air, sea and rocks, but it took a view from outside to glimpse the possibility that this combination might consist of a single giant living system and one with the capacity to keep the Earth always at a state most favorable for the life upon it.

If we are "all creatures great and small," from bacteria to whales, part of Gaia then we are all of us potentially important to her well being. We knew in our hearts that the destruction of a whole range of other species was wrong but now we know why. No longer can we merely regret the passing of one of the great whales, or the blue butterfly, nor even the smallpox virus. When we eliminate one of these from Earth, we may have destroyed a part of ourselves, for we also are a part of Gaia.



*James Lovelock*

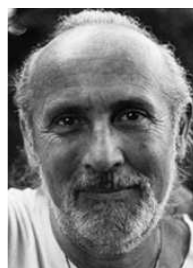
Bio-Physicist



## I am That

Yes, our psyche is itself a product of the rainforests. We evolved for hundreds of millions of years within this moist green womb before emerging a scant five million years ago, blinking, into the light. When we enter the rainforest we become acutely and PERSONALLY aware of the exquisite intelligence of Nature, holding millions of species in dynamic, evolving equilibrium.

In the light of these forests, our puny human intelligence becomes aware of itself as a mere fragment of this vast compassionate web. Our tiny, momentary life finds a true frame of reference there, against which our humanity can see itself. We realize the matrix within which (regardless of any arrogant fantasies we may have to the contrary) we are inextricably embedded. The intelligence of the rainforest which gave rise to human beings (as well as the other myriad creatures) remains accessible to humans who choose to surrender to it. Unfortunately the thick insulation of social fictions that we call our "selves" may prevent us from recognizing that we are just one leaf on the tree of life, just one strand in the vast biological fabric, incapable of independent existence.



— *John Seed*

Deep Ecologist



## All is One

Virtually no one is born with this unitive world-view. How does one acquire it? Actually, many people experience glimmerings of the interconnectedness of life at one time or another. Such insights often change the way they see the world, making them feel more a part of it and therefore more responsible for its welfare. Self-realization or awakening brings the unshakable conviction that everything is intrinsically one, whole, and complete.

In time, feelings that had arisen from an intellectual acceptance or a nebulous impression of oneness become a sure knowledge of the unity of all life. With spiritual awakening comes the realization that we are not just a tiny speck in the universe, two hands, two legs, a face, and a mind, but that we embrace all existence. In other words, awakening brings the realization that we are no less than the universe itself....

If at a deep level we accept that all phenomena are in essence one with our own body, we will treat everything, animate and inanimate, with reverence.



*Sanyara Graef*

Zen Buddhist