

Ionia

Ionia is a nonprofit foundation and a family-oriented macrobiotic community located on eighty acres of spruce forest in Kasilof on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. Ionia's mission is to be a place where macrobiotic families can create for themselves a full and satisfying way of life. This includes promoting the conservation of Alaska's natural beauty, growing grains and vegetables for organic food, protecting a relaxed and happy life for children, and helping others to do the same.

In the past fifteen years we have made an acre of organic vegetable garden with seventy raised beds and four 50-foot greenhouses, and a 3 acre cereal grain field. We grow organic vegetables - cabbages, carrots, burdock, leeks, greens, etc. - for summer use and winter storage for our population of forty people.

Presently, the only grains produced on the Kenai Peninsula are for animal feed. In the past twelve years, Ionia has consistently grown garden trial plots of several cereal grains. The seed varieties that mature in our short, cool growing season can only be found in far and obscure locals around the world. They are available only in tiny seed packets. Ionia has a continuing interest in reaching out to find these traditional strains wherever they may be -- China, Nepal, Sweden, Finland, Mongolia, Japan, Maine. We collect and trial varieties which yield well in the Alaskan climate and soil. Ionia not only researches these varieties, but also increases the amounts in order to plant substantial acreage, and over the years this seed has acclimated to our Alaskan climate. This summer, in spite of very little rain, we had a bountiful harvest of sheba barley. We have now grown enough barley seed to plant twenty acres, which we hope to be clearing in the spring.

-- Ted & Eliza Eller