

KEEP A GREEN TREE IN YOUR HEART...

The project called "Development of Irkutsk Botanical Garden as a recreational and tourist zone" was presented at the Innovations for Economy and Social Sphere exhibition, held in February 2007 in Irkutsk.

The Botanical Garden of the Irkutsk State University was founded in 1940 and is one of the oldest in Siberia. Today it occupies 27 hectares within the city area, which is 70 km to the west of Baikal. The Irkutsk University Garden was the only one from Baikal region included into the World Botanical Garden Register. Unfortunately, this unique open-air nature museum is presently closed for visitors. To make it open to the public so that they could see the achievements of Siberian scientists has become one of the most important tasks of the educational and scientific centre called Baikal. It was created in the partnership with the Buryatia State University and Irkutsk Scientific Centre of Siberian Branch of RAS.

The project of creating a new botanical garden which would become a recreational zone comprising educational and cultural functions was supported by EU. The experience acquired by Irkutsk scientists during the last 8 years in botanical gardens of

Russia, USA, Great Britain, Australia, China, India, South African Republic, Japan and other countries has turned out vital.

It is planned to expand the area of the existing botanical garden up to 100 hectares by joining it to the Kay-

skaya relic grove, which is situated near the Transsiberian Railway. This will help to save a great intraurban forest area, the green lungs of the city, from destruction and unauthorized construction on its territory.

The new botanical garden will offer a wide range of services and programs for different categories of visitors. There will be a tree park; landscape design and horticulture centres; spe-

cifically styled gardens such as the Baikal flora garden, "biblical" garden, Japanese garden; an aquarium; a zoo; a planetarium and other objects. The garden is going to be divided into three zones of different accessibility, one of them reserved exclusively for research work.

Design of the botanical garden is supposed to be completed in 2007; and first visitors are expected in 2011, the

The Director of the Botanical Garden of Irkutsk State University, Ph. D. V. Ya. Kouzevanov



year of 350th anniversary of Irkutsk. The finishing touches will be put by 2018.

The new garden, designed to accept more than 600,000 people a year, will become a centre for family leisure, ecological education, the site for conducting local, national and international public events. As the ancient Chinese saying goes, "Keep a green tree in your heart and singing birds will be flying there".

Photos by V. Korotkoruchko



There are over a hundred botanical gardens in Russia, 63 of them attached to universities. Siberia has 8 botanical gardens and 3 arboretums.