

Write a letter to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to Save Pavlovsk Station

Please consider writing to the President of the Russian Federation to register your concern over the imminent destruction, during the International Year of Biodiversity, of this unique, and irreplaceable, collection of fruits and berries - a vital resource for Russian and international agriculture.

You can use the following text to draft a courteous letter requesting that the Pavlovsk Experimental Station be saved. You can send a 2,000-character message to President Dmitry Medvedev online here: <http://eng.letters.kremlin.ru/>

Key Points to consider when drafting the letter:

The deliberate destruction of unique biodiversity is always of great international concern. That concern is exacerbated because of the scientific, economic, symbolic and cultural importance of the Pavlovsk station.

- The plant germplasm maintained at the Pavlovsk Experiment Station of the Vavilov Institute of Plant Industry is a “gold mine” on a global scale, because it contains the genetic resources needed for the development of modern cultivars, i.e. for modern agriculture. In the case of the Pavlovsk’s strawberry collection alone, genetic diversity from 40 countries and all continents is stored there.
- For all practical purposes, the collection cannot be moved elsewhere. It would cost some millions of dollars perhaps, and take over 10 years to ensure the safe duplication of all the accessions, and there is no guarantee of 100% success.
- An intrinsic part of the value of the collection is the expertise of the scientists who have studied it and maintained it. Continuous in-depth studies have provided vital information on detailed characteristics of major economic and biological traits, and allowed the collection to be used successfully in breeding many commercially successful crop varieties. The loss of the botanical wealth at the Pavlovsk Station would also result in the loss of the human knowledge associated with this important collection.
- The Vavilov Institute of Plant Industry remains a source of inspiration worldwide, particularly as a demonstration of the importance to humanity of the genetic diversity of our crops. It was the scene of great heroism during the Siege of Leningrad, when scientists chose to die in the Institute, surrounded by samples of seed that they could easily have eaten, but they preferred to ensure these collections would be available to future generations.

We would like to thank everyone who has joined us in this call for action to save Pavlovsk Experimental Station.