

Danuta Mniewska At Her House In Warsaw In 1990s



This is me in Warsaw in the 1990s. I am standing in the garden next to my house. The bank of Vistula is visible behind me. I do not remember who took this picture. My husband and I were in the theater business and lived in many different places. Upon returning to Poland from Belgrade, I was really fed up with all that - that wandering around the world, not having my own place. I said, 'I'll buy myself some land, settle in the countryside,' I hit upon the idea of setting up a fruit orchard. It was 1975, I think. I wrote to Pieniazek, a biologist, pomologist, nestor of Polish orcharding. He wrote back immediately. I went to meet him at the Institute. He told me what and how and where, and took me to the orchard. I bought 10 hectares of land in the Kutno province and started with the basics, with planting. I worked like a horse, people helped me greatly. I also had a permanent contract with a theater in Lodz. It's not far from Lodz to Kutno, 50, 60 kilometers. I had a compact Fiat, I'd drive to the rehearsals, the shows, and drive back. I had had the orchard for three or four years when there came such a bumper crop I couldn't manage it - such large apples! I signed a contract with a cooperative but then they told me, 'We have so many apples ourselves we can't take your crop.' And then my son Piotrek came to visit me - his marriage was falling apart. He met boys in the village who agreed to help us. He went three times a week to a market in Gdansk, to a middleman, bringing back incredible amounts of money. He started building a cold store, buying machinery - he really got down to it with great vigor. I handed everything over to him as a younger farmer. We built - I had already started - a large, nice house. The farm was such that excursions from abroad came to view it. Piotrek met Ewa, his second wife. They settled in the countryside. My marriage crumbled, we got a divorce. After the boom had passed - business became slow - I went to Elblag, to play in a theater there, because I was just one year short of retirement age and I no longer wanted to be in my husband Dejmek's theater.