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Urban Gardening for the Pandemic

As the century witnesses rapid urbanization and the year 2020 witnessing a hard pandemic it necessitates new ways of gardening. This article emphasizes that by designing and planning for a green space, it is possible to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic. By arranging, for appropriate gardening and related activities to the people staying inside at home, the impact of severe mental illness claimed by the Indian psychiatric Society could be minimized. Special types of gardening like Terrariums etc., lessen the threat of children's addiction towards the gadgets. The article has provided important tips for the beginners who wish to start the gardening. In addition, the overall goal of this article was to make the urban and peri-urban people to have a safe and healthy life with greeneries.

INTRODUCTION

Think of our garden with full greenery and fragrant flowers inducing our senses with fresh air and a handful of organic vegetables being freshly plucked from our kitchen and serving our family members with pesticide-free products during this pandemic. To fulfill all our above dreams, gardening comes as the best solution for the urbanites, who are not having enough place for gardening. When we spend an overabundance of our time indoors we lack the connection with nature. When there is no innate connection between nature and human beings, the quality of life could be depleted. We all had experienced, our senses are kindled with the smell of fresh soil after a shower, and the blooming flowers at dusk improving our mood and calming our mind. Most of the rural areas/ villages have a small house with a big garden, but in urban area, the living space is maximum and there is no way for gardening. The houses in villages will have moringa on the front yard and Banana the kalpavriksha on their backyard, with tomato, chilli, brinjal etc., Even now villages do have the same, being self-sufficient with vegetables. We can say in this pandemic we the urbanites are the most affected than the people in the rural areas who are self-sufficient by producing their vegetables and rice. Due to the

subsequent forced lockdown continuing, most of them use gardening as a therapeutic escape from Covid -19. A lot of people are interested in growing their food as not knowing when and how this pandemic will shut down. Gardening has become a way of escaping the chaotic times. They could realize the therapeutic qualities of working with the soil.



BENEFITS OF URBAN GARDENING DURING THE PANDEMIC

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The pandemic Covid – 19 has closed your gyms, halted your fitness classes trying to mask your Physical activities, but the alternative is right in your backyard. Yes, combining sunshine and sardening is a greater way to burn between 210 to 240 calories per hour as proved by the CDC (Centre for Diseases Control and Prevention). Digging, shoveling, and lifting are the muscle–strengthening exercises the CDC recommends at least twice a week.

INCREASING YOUR MENTAL STRENGTH

The novel corona virus had witnessed a steep rise in the number of patients i.e., a 20 % rise in cases, who were suffering from mental illness as claimed by the Indian Psychiatry Society. To overcome these,

health-boosting benefits of gardening could be a positive option as it relieves stress.

PREVENTIVE

Risking a grocery run at this time to buy coriander, Curry leaves and basil is not safe at this dull time of lockdown, instead simply we can reach over our kitchen garden grabbing few leaves which will be satisfying. Greens play an important role in our Indian Kitchens, instead of panic buying we could opt for growing on our own, which could be grown within a week (fenugreek) or fortnight (other greens).



IMMUNITY BOOSTERS

The microgreens being a superfood can be grown easily and quickly which boosts our immunity and due to high nutrition value, they can be taken as an immunity supplement, as they are harvested immediately after the cotyledon emerges. Recommended, eating around 8 ounces (231 grams) of vegetables or up to a combined 18 ounces (500 grams) of fruits and vegetables per day may help reduce the risk of heart disease and increase your lifespan. Chekkurmanis is a multivitamin plant, which is a perennial should be a priority in any kitchen garden

HORTICULTURE THERAPY

There is increasing evidence that there is a health value when you put your hands into the soil, which has all sorts of beneficial microorganisms in it. When these organisms are healthy to the plants why wouldn't it be beneficial to the Humans? It's therapeutic when u pinch a lemongrass or a tulsi from your kitchen garden and add it to your tea kindling your senses, relaxing your mind.



GREEN SPACE

The urbanites spend their time mostly indoor either at home or inside the four walls of the office with



grey space disconnecting from the greenery loosing their healing connection with nature. The chances of walking over the lawn, hearing the rustling hisses of leaves and breathing in quality air is lost, due to which ones quality of life gets depleted. Therefore, the concept of bringing in the green spaces through either interiorscaping or exteriorscaping will add boon to their life. The green spaces can be created interior with indoor plants like Snake plants, Aglonema, Dffenbachia etc. and exterior through lawns in the frontyard and kitchen garden cum



herbal garden at the backyards therefore colouring the grey spaces of home with green space.

ECONOMICAL PERSPECTIVE

The kitchen garden at the rooftop and terrace in the apartments saves household expenditures on our food and saves money as well as on bartering. The excess of vegetables can be pooled together in the apartments and a mini market can be created just like our car pooling which is famous in the apartments and can be campaigned as “know what you grab” thus we can generate income. When the senior citizens are involved in this activity due to lockdown, the expenses on food and medicines will be gradually reduced and some cash is generated from sales of surpluses.

CHILDREN AND GARDENING

The worst part of this pandemic scenario is the exposure of the children to the gadgets estranged from the nature, causing screen strains, which is an alarming sight. To draw their attention from the gadgets window to nature's doorstep the special types of gardening like terrariums/ Bottle gardening, mini hydroponics grown vegetables, aquaponics can be an immediate solution.

IMPORTANT TIPS FOR YOUR URBAN GARDEN

- Ornamental Gardening comprises all your indoor plants mostly foliage and flower crops whereas the kitchen garden will have your fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, greens, and microgreens.
- Plan your space and list your vegetables with a rough plan. Not that you need a plot of land for growing your vegetables. Many vegetables and indoor plants can be grown in containers/grow bags on your balcony, porch, or even indoors.
- Purchase seeds from online retailers that will be right now to support social distancing.

- Plan for vegetables that mature quickly, like raddish, greens, turnips, carrots, beetroots, cucumber, and onions for your garden.
- Arrange the plants in a way that the taller plants do not shade the smaller ones.
- Determine whether they need support or staking based on the crop you choose.
- Plants thrive well in sunny areas, most of the vegetables need at least six hours of full sunshine.
- Composting: Put your Garden scraps, kitchen scraps in a compost bin or heap it in your garden.
- Do not overwater the plants, use coco peat for good water retention.
- Do not expect to be 100% successful the first time itself, try to learn from your mistakes and try again. Take advice and important information from experts in the industry and as well as people

who have long nurtured their gardens. Learn and become better with practice.

CONCLUSION

While all the gardening requirements are available at nearby nurseries and online shopping, the only compulsory element, which is unavailable in any store, is your time. It is only this quality time and the dedication, which brings in a successful garden. Moreover, this is the right time we nurture our garden during this pandemic for establishing our garden and reap the harvest in our future. A house designed with a high ratio of soft scape (plant material) to hardscape (walls) will have an impact on people's well-being. Besides, especially people during this pandemic will like this softness, making them feel safe and protective.