Herbal gardens for urban homes

Amruth Home Garden is about a simple but innovative idea - to offer customised packages of medicinal plants for urban homes - that has proved to be a tremendous success.

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All city-dwellers would have dreamed of having their own small home garden at least once, if they don’t have one already. But they stop short of actually creating one because of the sheer effort and space constraints involved. This is exactly what the Institution of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (I-AIM), located at Janaikande Kaval, near Attur in the outskirts of Bengaluru, seeks to tackle.

For over five years, they have been successfully running the Amruth Home Garden programme, which offers plant packages (mostly herbs and medicinal plants) that can be grown within the confines of apartments, and allows people to benefit from exposure to their medicinal qualities.

Amruth Herbal Garden draws its strength from our old age healing traditions, espousing the mantra ‘People’s health in people’s hand.’ For generations, Indians have been using plants around them for their day-to-day medicinal needs, a tradition that has been almost totally lost as people are forced to seek help from medical experts and hospitals for even the slightest of health problems, because of their lifestyle and other limitations. It was to keep this tradition alive and to bring these plants into the urban household and establish a relationship between them and people that I-AIM (originally called Foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Tradition) started the Amruth Home Garden packages.

Launched in 2005, the Amruth Home Garden is a unique garden which has been aesthetically landscaped exclusively with medicinal plants. Several themes based on different parts of the country - the central theme being Tamil Nadu, which has 500 native species ranging from grasses to trees. There are also some rare species that have been collected from different parts of the country.

The Amruth Home Garden first assesses the space available at their homes, and also makes inquiries about the frequent health problems in the family, if any. For example, if there is a diabetic in their house, they are advised to choose a customised Diabetes package. If the customers are teetotallers, they suggest Stress Relievers Package, if they have kids at home they suggest the Child Care Package, and so on.

Each package has different types of plants which are useful for curing and preventing diseases, including some that can support daily usage for general healthcare. For example, the Hair Care package consists of Hibiscus, Rosita sinesis, Eclipta Alba, Acacia Senita and the Phyllanthus Embeica species. Lovelari (Aloe vera) is beneficial for treating cuts, warts, burns, eye problems, scabies, urination, stomach ache, menstrual disorders etc. Adusoge (Adhatoda Vasica) is recommended for cough, respiratory problems, fever, bleeding disorders. Morinda Oleifera (Nagke) is for stomach ache, worms, fungal infections.

Suggesting various packages of medicinal plants selected to suit the requirements of houses and public and private institutions, organizations and parks, are available at nominal costs. Their range starts from Rs.200 per package and goes up to Rs.4000, depending on the needs of the subscriber. If people want Amruth staff to set up the garden in their home, it will incur an additional charge. If the customers want their own selected plants, they are free to do so and do not have to buy the packages. Those customers who buy a package, however, will get a free special user guide that contains detailed information about the identification, maintenance and the use of the plants for various ailments.

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