

# Creativity coupled with a tinge of freshness



## Why Edible Landscape

The human population is crushing under an increasing number of heads to feed and an inevitably deteriorating economic condition the world over, pushing a lion fraction of the civilization under food crisis. The prices of fruits and vegetables are increasing. Although much of the human race is turning towards carnivorous instinct, is it not a wise decision for the staunch vegetarian brethrens to start cultivating their food themselves? All of us, who possess even a small porch area or a yard in front of their homes, can convert that area into an edible garden! The owner would be blessed with lower food budget and a cleaner environment. That is the sole motivation to go for edible landscaping.

## Creating and managing an edible landscape

A small area is easier to manage, keeping in mind that edible landscapes are more attractive to pests and plant infections. Right from planning the landscape to reaping the fruits of the efforts put in, everything can be done with greater efficiency in case the garden is of a smaller stature. For those who are more fortunate and of course, more responsible to possess a huger green edible area, the entire process would require a lot of delving into and planning. To start with, it is important to sketch out the yard area and compartmentalize it into blocks or rows, and then decide as to what vegetation to grow in which area. This actually becomes difficult for people who have never toiled their hands into their garden soils. There are landscape designers who can do the task in an expert manner. For those who prefer self-help, it is important

With a desperate scraping of cultivable land, it is high time something substantial and more importantly, sustainable is found out. Land is the only problem and also the ultimate solution. Edible gardening can be a blooming alternative to being a part of this scraping.

to be specifically clear about what all is wished to grow. The reason for this is that the light, soil and watering requirements would largely vary depending on the plant species that is being grown.

As an example, leafy vegetables like lettuce and spinach grow well in areas which would not receive a particularly blessed sunshine. Legumes like peas grow in shaded areas. Edible trees like a Giant Pecan could be planted in areas which are geographically open to harsh winds. Apart from keeping the cold air at bay, these trees can be a good shady place to just rest in tranquility during the summers. Tall plants and creepers that could use the tall ones for support need to be planted at the north face of the garden.

Another confusing debate that has perplexed growers is whether to go for row plantations or intensive plantations. The answer would be a factor to whether the owner is open to manual processes like hand weeding and spraying of pesticides or would prefer machines to do their jobs. Row plantation with a gap of at least 18 inches is good for those who would like to use equipments. Row plantations are not visually appealing, but they leave a pedestrian space between the rows to take a stroll. Intensive plantations on the other hand, would involve planting in small clusters, placed closely to each other. This leaves little room for mechanical equipment to be operated properly. So naturally, the clusters have to be small enough in dimensions so as to enable the gardener

work manually without damaging the plantations on the edge. Conventionally, intensive plantations look more beautiful but are tougher to manage.

*An edible garden is not necessarily a huge area thriving in lush green with twinkles of colors embedded in between the boughs. It could be a little space outside your home.*

## The best constituents of an edible landscape

What to grow and what not would basically depend on the type of garden that is being cultivated and the soil and atmospheric conditions under which the garden has to survive. But that does not mean the cultivator has to compromise



drastically on his choice of fruits and veggies. Genetic science has brought into market the dwarf versions of almost all varieties, with a fraction change in the quality and flavor. 'Butterbush' Butternut Winter Squash, 'Golden Rush' Summer Squash, 'North Country' Blueberry, 'Little Leaf' Cucumber and 'Golden Bantam' Sweet corn are some of the small space varieties available in the market. For the possessors of big landscapes, nut bearing plantations like hazelnuts and pecans are just a beauty. They grow hugely to yield a shady canopy, besides producing nourishing nuts and fruits. Fruits like plum, persimmon, peach, apples and apricots are good for those who wish for a short heighted display. For home gardens, it is always better to choose from varieties that have a short fruiting cycle. Apart from fruits and vegetables, certain varieties of flowers also come under the edible cadre. Violas, Pansies, Daylilies, Roses, Tulips, Hollyhocks, selected Nasturtium varieties, Petunia and Garden Salvia are a few of the many varieties that bear edible petals and buds.

The most important benefit that is harvested from cultivating one's own edible garden is that there is always a fresh supply of fruits, vegetables and other raw essentials, and that too, untouched by the undesirable effects of artificial fertilizers and pesticides. Better yet, the cultivator can accumulate the organic garbage, made up of leaf falls and foliage and decompose it to give rise to organic fertilizer. This could then be used to grant health and beauty to the garden. Another benefit, which often goes off the notice of people, is that edible gardens can be a constant source of energy conservation. Trees that are grown in the path of cold winds in the garden, act as an obstruction. This obstacle helps keep the yard and subsequently, the home warm during winters. As per the estimates of the US Department of Energy, trees planted in the right positions, help conserve \$100 to \$250 annually, as far as energy expenses are concerned. Apart from the health, hygiene and energy point of view, edible gardens go a long way in increasing the beauty of the house by manifolds. The beautifully colored flowers are just green to eyes. The red plump fruits hanging down their boughs bear testimony to the efforts that the cultivator has put into them. A well maintained edible garden is just a ravishing sight to look at.



It is always better to have a rotating shower placed exactly at the centre of your garden. This improves the water penetration within the plantations. When all these nuances have been well attended to, the management of the plantations comes into picture. This would involve deciding on the quality and volume of fertilizers and pesticides that are to be regularly applied, along with the time of their application. These factors are indispensable because a garden full of colorful edible flowers and fruits would do well in attracting pests along with those beautiful butterflies and chirping birds.

*When you start running out of ideas, just boom in for spinach, lettuce, foliage and creepers. They are the tough ones and do not require much of a delicate handling*

