

IMPORTANCE AND PLANNING OF ORNAMENTAL GARDENS

History and development of gardening in India

It is believed that the gardening in India is as old as its culture. Five to six thousand years before Christ, gardening was in vogue. It is understood that Indians were the first to choose gardening as the proper atmosphere for meditation. Gardening has been mentioned in classical literature of India. Asokavana of Ramayana was believed to be established with trees, shrubs, ponds, etc. The use of 'brindavan' (landscaped city) and 'Raja-vanam' (large park where kings go for hunting) did find very frequent mention in ancient literature. Many trees were considered, 'sacred' to Hinduism e.g. *Ficus religiosa*, *Saraca indica*, *Aegle marmelos* and *Mimusops elengi*. During Buddha's period (about 563 B.C.) gardening received further encouragement. Gardening is considered as a source of peace and solitude. Imitation of nature and improvement over nature were considered as a primary goal in these types of gardening. King Asoka could be considered as the Father of road side avenue planting as he was the first king to order planting of road side avenue trees in India. From 6 to 10th Century gardening received a great deal of encouragement from Indian kings.

During the time of King Somadeva (11th Century) and King Hamira (13th Century) gardening developed into a fine art. The 'Vanas' and 'Ashrams' gave way to gardens established by kings and nobles and gardening became virtually a monopoly of the feudals. The period between the beginning of the 14th Century to the end of 16th Century showed sudden change in the style of gardening due to influence of Moghul emperors who ruled India during these centuries. King Feroze Shah and King Baber brought with them the finest art of gardening from their country and the Mogul style gardens were established in Delhi, Hyderabad, Agra, Kashmir, Lahore and Pinjore. Some of these gardens are still famous to this day, e.g.

1. Garden at Fatepur Sikri (U.P.) by King Akbar
2. Moghul garden at Pinjore (Punjab) by King Fadaikhan
3. Shalimar Bagh at Lahore by Shah Jahan
4. Taj Mahal garden in Agra.

These Mogul gardens had a distinct style. They were laid out near river, or rivulets, slope of a hill or river bank. The garden may be square or rectangular and paths running parallel to water courses. Running water is the life and soul of the garden and the water channels are paved with tiles of brilliant blue colour to reflect the sky and give the impression of depth. On either side of the central channel or sheet of water were planted with flowering shrubs, trees, scented flowers like rose and jasmine. All the mogul gardens had high wall surrounding them.

During the 16th Century when British came to India they introduced the styles of gardening of England and continental Europe. The first style developed by the British was the formal or symmetrical style of gardening. By 18th Century, this style became monotonous and then informal style or natural gardens began to develop. The modern gardens, developed during 19th and 20th Centuries, involved the combinations of the formal and informal styles. The important features in English gardens are lawn, rockery, mixed borders of herbaceous perennials, annuals, shrubs, etc. Lal Bagh at Bangalore, Government Botanic Garden at Ooty, Sims park at Coonoor and Bryant part at Kodaikanal are examples of gardens established in British style.

Importance of gardening

The importance of gardening is realised by every individuals now in the globe. The gardens serve the purpose of public recreation and education. They serve to refresh the body and the mind. They are virtually a retreat for the public from the harsh strains and stresses of public life. Gardens have become essential to modern civilization. Home gardening is an integral part of family life and it lends itself for the family to relax and enjoy the nature and beauty of garden. It also helps to develop some useful hobby and the 'skill' in flower and dry arrangements. In the recent years, landscape architecture has come to play a vital role in the developments of home, public institutions, public places like bus stand, railway stations, towns and cities. Landscaping the roadsides on cities and towns is also given much importance in tropical countries like India as they provide shade and beauty to that area. In foreign countries landscaping of homes and public buildings is an important art and there are professional and qualified landscape architects who do the job. This field of gardening is slowly gaining momentum in our country especially in big cities. The government has also established many parks and a few Botanic gardens in our country. In most of the big cities and towns, Agri-Horticultural societies have been established with the sole objective of promoting horticulture, more particularly gardening. These societies organize annual flower shows and garden competition to have healthy competition among the public to develop gardening.

Scope of ornamental gardening and landscaping

Gardening which was only an art and science in the earlier days has now emerged as a huge industry. With the importance and need of gardening in improving and conserving the environment being strongly felt now, the concept of landscaping and gardening is growing rapidly. Ornamental gardening and landscaping has expanded as a multi-faceted industry encompassing activities such as propagating and rearing ornamental plants, landscaping, production of growing media, pots and other accessories, etc., generating huge employment

opportunities and simultaneously promoting activities that would improve the environment.

Planning of gardening

- **Land:** Analyzing the soil for the suitability of planting is the most important beginning to start a thriving garden. After testing the soil, enrich it with the required nutrients.
- **Plants:** Some forehand knowledge about plants like, which are hardy plants, which are for hedging, flowering, shade giving plants etc. Then the knowledge about the plants suited for dry gardens, clay soils and acid soils will help in planning good gardens. The selection of plant and styles of garden should be in such a way that it should look green and variety show that is going to last for a long time. This can be achieved by using wide range of plants from trees to shrubs, to climbing plants, flowering ones and ferns, annuals and perennials.
- **Environment:** Choose plants that are suitable to the kind of environment and climate conditions of that particular area. It would be useless and expensive to waste money on plants that will hate the environment.
- **Styles and Types:** There are several planting styles from cottage gardens to prairie gardens, from gardens for commercial purposes to those strictly for personal use. Based on the different types and styles, you can tackle the job of planting them all together in a garden, working out which ones will look best where and how they will compliment each other.
- **Cultural aspects:** Knowledge about preparation of land, fertilisation, weeding and disease and pests of plants is necessary to keep the garden productive and for proper maintenance.

1. Who is known as father of roadside avenue planting
 - a. King Babal
 - b. King Akbar
 - c. King Asoka
 - d. King Somaveda
2. Moghul garden at Pinjore was established by
 - a. King Akbar
 - b. King Fadaikhan
 - c. King Shah Jahan
 - d. King Aurangazeb
3. Example of British style of gardening
 - a. Shalimar bagh
 - b. Taj Mahal
 - c. Lal bagh
 - d. Roshnara Park
4. The Indian Botanical garden is situated at
 - a. Lucknow
 - b. Sibpur

c. Calcutta

d. New Delhi

5. National flower of Japan is

a. Chrysanthemum

b. Carnation

c. Lotus

d. Rose