

Permaculture is a mindset based on copious scientific principles and research while also drawing on timeless folk wisdom. Making the most of our environment through this farming technique is a progress Aranya Agricultural Alternatives (AAA) along with IPC India wish to engender through its city-wide two-day festival on May 6th and 7th.

Australian biologist Bill Mollison's widely well-received book *Permaculture One*, written along with David Holmgren, lead to the coining of the term 'permaculture' in the 1970s.

This revolution has three basic principles: care for the earth, care for the people, and the return of surplus to the Earth and people or 'fair share.' "If we are talking about human energy versus mechanisation," explains Smriti Agarwal of IPC, "then two of the ethics of permaculture: 'people care' and 'fair share' come to play here. 'People care' sees people as part of the natural system and anything that's a part of the system needs to be taken care of. We can take care of people in simple ways; for example, when AAA worked with people from slums near S R Nagar, we helped them get solar bulbs for lighting. 'Fair share' talks about not hoarding anything excess and distributing or bartering with people in need. That's what farmers who follow permaculture believe in too. Hyderabadis can draw a leaf from this."

### Sprouting progress

Now AAA has joined in on this move-



# Heirloom Harvest

Permaculture Day continues to provide Hyderabad a new set of lungs through conscious farming

ment, furthering this movement in India for a sustainable future without damaging the greenery the city already has. Smriti shares the current state of the city's environment, "Urbanisation, encroachment of water bodies, and natural resource management. Owing to the expanding city limits, incessant construction, and population inflow, there's a dire need to do long-term planning for water harvesting, green cover, and waste management.

Today, in Auto Nagar, one can see at least 300 truckloads of trash being put to flames every day.

Constructors and so-called developers are unabashedly flouting construction rules.

Trees are being felled, rocks are being cut— all in the name of urbanisation."

While the situation seems grave, resolving it takes a city-wide effort, as Smriti points out, "The solutions to these problems are simple but strong only if we apply them. Local people need to take these issues at hand and decide to solve them. We need to start growing our own food, anyway— be it through terrace garden, balcony garden, or backyard garden. Every house should first plant trees and then construct houses. Water harvesting should be done at big catchment places like cantonment areas, Government or administrative spaces, universities, or

any big campuses. Water catchment in these areas will compensate for the loss of water in thickly constructed dry areas."

### Homegrown values

Permaculture Day does not just celebrate this farming technique but it also displays the profound impact it is making on the way Hyderabadis think about farming, farm, harvest and eat. Smriti hopes people within Indian culture will take away these principles, "Know how people are living with limited resources, know about traditional practices, across the country.

Realise and acknowledge that Indian women are very hard working and that



**Down to Earth** (left) Aranya Agricultural Alternatives team at an event, (right) Sridevi Jasti enjoying nature's best

When permaculture movement started, it focused on environment issues, now we are moving towards growing your own food from depending on farmers or government. Today, human exploitation has reduced as there's more awareness and more intervention from the governments. Even pesticides and fertilisers use is reducing. Evolution is happening. It'll show its results in a long time, but it'll happen. People are getting hurt with even a tree being cut— that's a start."

### Earthy goodness

But what about the dietary benefits? Nutritionist Sridevi Jasti, who will be attending the fête, had her first real experience of permaculture at the Torino-based *Terra Madre: Salone Del Gusto*. She shares how this technique deserves the importance this festival is promoting, "I'm a gourmet foodie; nothing gives me more joy than getting an ingredient that is not so naturally common but was used by our ancestors, and people who are following these practises are my only hope whereby I get that kind of food to experiment with, create miracles with, and to inspire people to eat more of what comes from the Earth. Permaculture is showing farmers how to return to traditional methods and to build biodiversities through bio-dynamic farming."

When Sridevi finally moved to India, she observed how the likes of Madhu Reddy were boosting permaculture and bought her produce from them for her culinary business, in hopes of showing not just Hyderabadis, but also the world the charisma of Indian produce, "At the international *Terra Madre* festival, there was cacao from Guatemala and vanilla beans from Madagascar. Indians sadly brought a very basic variety of basmati. We have such a treasure of culinary finds, and why can't we present the best of that at these places?"

Permaculture Day is clearly more than just about the earth, it's a matter of national pride and a wholesome happiness that can potentially span generations.

**WHERE THE ROOTS ARE**

International Permaculture Day, May 6 - 7

- Lamakaan, Banjara Hills
- Our Sacred Space, Maredpally
- Kalachaakra, Jubilee Hills