

Home gardening – More than a lawn - Miniature biosphere reserve for Insects

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Home Gardening is low maintenance plant based food production and agroforestry system which have laid foundation to modern agroforestry in Agricultural fields in India. It combines all branches of agriculture like forestry, Floriculture, Horticulture ... It is considered to be the best way to use the urban land areas as in the form of home or kitchen garden.

A reeling back towards 1950's home garden generally denotes the kitchen garden or forest garden grown near the house especially in the backyard. This practiced in India from time immemorial. Earlier the home garden in Kerala is generally called as 'Kaavu' which comprises of some rare endangered and also useful herbs apart from the conventional fruit and vegetable crops. These are maintained for family and cultural identity in Kerala. Indirectly they have been conserving the ecological value and the biodiversity. Similarly this sort of practice has been also demonstrated by the farmers of Kandy in Sri Lanka.

Earlier the home garden consists of indigenous species but far recently this has been demolished to the ground. The very concept of home garden has been turned out into ornamental gardening which is seems to be no harm in it. Deep insight in undergoing through the species composition of the ornamental gardening most of the plants and trees are grown are evergreen, non fruit yielding exotic plants like *Codiaeum variegatum*, *Adenium obsecum*, *Portulaca grandiflora*... apart from this large variety of Cacti, Agave are grown. Trees like *Roystonea regia*, *Simarouba glauca*, *Thuja occidentalis* and many other gymnosperms which do not act as food or shelter for the common insects and birds but they are generally grown for the ornamental value. As the species are not suitable even for Bird nesting, there is no mean to maintain it. Recent days, it has become a pride to say that we do have a home garden which is not actually a home garden but land scaping work done in very expense manner for the pride and prestige.

In the past the home garden where it generally comprises of Coconut tree, Neem Tree and lot small indigenous shrubs and herbs like *Ocimum sanctum*, *Cardispermum halicacabum*, *Clitoria ternata*, many Cassia species, in some big garden especially in big bungalow and palace they might have a miniature of pond too. That have act as natural water storage facility during the period of monsoon. This entire set up will be the home for many sorts of birds especially Doves, Bulbul, Weaver birds; Fishes, Frogs etc.



Model of home specially maintained for butterfly conservation

List of Butterflies and their host plant

1. *Papilio demoleus*- Common lime Butterfly- *Citrus plant species*
2. *Pachliopta aristolochiae* - Common Rose - *Aristolochia indica*, *Aristolochia bracteolata*
3. *Graphium doson* - Common Jay- *Polyalthia longifolia*, *Miliusa tomentosa*, *Cinnamomum macrocarpum*, *C. malabathrum*, *Michelia champaca*, *Annona lawii*, *Magnolia grandiflora*
4. *Catopsilia pomona* - Lemon - Emigrant/Common Emigrant - *Bauhinia racemosa*, *Butea monosperma*, *Cassia fistula*, *Cassia tora*, *Cassia siamea*, *Cassia allata*
5. *Eurema hecabe* - Common Grass - Yellow *Cassia fistula*, *Cassia tora*, *Albizia spp.*, *Moulluva spicata*, *Cassia alata*, *Cassia sophera*, *Cassia mimosoides*
6. *Delias eucharis*- Common Jezebel- *Dendrophthoe falcata*, *Helianthes elastica*, *Scurrula parasitica*, *Viscum spp.*
7. *Acraea violae*- Tawny Coster- *Passiflora edulis*, *Adenia bondala*, *Hibiscus cannabinus*, *Passiflora foetida*, *Passiflora subpeltata*

These are some examples for the plant and insect relationship. The entire insect particular butterflies that can be seen urban are few due to the loss in the host plant species. In order to preserve the butterfly population in urban areas is to promote home garden as these garden acts as breeding ground for these colorful insects.

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