



# Dalyah

Established 1964

Patron: His Majesty the King of Bahrain,  
King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa

January-March 2022 / Issue 39

## ***SUSTAINABLE GARDENING***

*Trees in our life  
Expert advice  
Art and gardening*

*Urban greening  
Basil pesto  
Garden photography*



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**This issue will reflect the vision of HRH Princess Sabeeka bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, The "Forever Green" campaign**

Dear members, please send your articles about your own gardening experience to the garden club editorial team.

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*Images for newsletter were contributed by garden club members.*



Cover image © Irina Averinos

## A word from the Chairwoman:



Congratulations to the newly elected board members and best wishes to the entire team, for the upcoming gardening sessions at the Club.

As we return to part normalcy after 2 years of the COVID 19 pandemic outbreak, we positively welcome and embrace the new growing season in the Kingdom, and look forward to various gardening activities at the Club.

Yet another great news is that, the International Garden Show will be held again in 2022, which has always been a motivational factor for everyone, to put their extra effort in getting more creative with their gardening skills.

Our continuous support goes to the Afforestation initiative by Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, the wife of His Majesty the King, and thereby, we strive for generating environmental awareness across the Kingdom and promote green living.

Considering that this Newsletter edition is based on the theme of "Sustainable Gardens," and it is providing the key guidance and related information, I am very optimistic that all the keen gardeners will make the most of every inch space available to them for growing their own food, either in containers or vertically, by combining edible plants with their existing ornamental plants- such as tomatoes, peas, herbs etc.

I also encourage everyone to prepare their own composting from the kitchen and garden waste. Personally, it was rewarding for me, when I could get a hundred and fifty liters out of my composting barrel. We also need to make use of more indigenous fruit trees, as well as other plants that are drought resistant, eco-friendly, anti pollutant and better yielding.

Let us all participate in tackling global environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, biodiversity etc, that are ultimately having a devastating impact on the entire planet. And thus let us all endeavour to build an attitude towards a sustainable, green living.

Happy gardening season!

**Zahra Abdul Malik**

Bahrain Garden Club Chairperson



*BGC historical book presented to Mr. Yasser Alraee, Managing Director of Riffa Views.*

***New members are always welcome.***

**To become a member of the Bahrain Garden Club,  
please contact 17727625 or 39774194**

### The Roles of Trees in Climate Change and Ecosystems

by Tahera Jaberi



Reference to recent 2021 global conference on health and climate change, and as a member of Bahrain Garden club, I thought of focusing on green environment and highlighting the importance of trees for achieving a more stable and safer climate for current and future generations. Everyone has the right to a healthy environment, free of pollution and its harmful consequences. One of the most pressing risks for human health associated with a changing climate are the increase in heat-related deaths, diseases, and infectious diseases.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the presence of trees and urban nature can improve people's mental and physical health, children's attention and test scores, the property values in a neighbourhood, and beyond. Trees cool our urban centres.

If you are looking for a way to create a healthy environment close to home, then plant a tree. Even if you plant just one, it will help clean the air, filter water, offset carbon, create shade, give birds a place to build a nest, enrich the soil, and provide food and shelter for small creatures.

Benefits of trees are uncountable, but this article will capture the most amazing contributions of trees to help you understand why we need to plant and care for trees.

**1- Trees heal:** Studies have shown that patients with views of trees outside their windows heal faster and with less complications. Children with ADHD, show fewer symptoms when they have access to nature. Exposure to trees and nature aids concentration by reducing mental fatigue.

**2- Trees provide food:** Aside from fruit for humans, trees provide food for birds and wildlife. If we look into our daily lives, we can see that apart from meats and dairy products, everything we eat comes from trees and plants. And also, trees Provide great Shelters for human and animals alike.

**3- Trees beautify space:** Trees absorb dust and wind and cool our homes, streets, and cities by up to 10 Fahrenheit. In addition, trees absorb pollutant gasses like nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, ammonia, and ozone from the air and purify it. They filter particulates out of the air and trap them on their barks and leaves.

**4- Trees and plants provide medicine:** Did you know that aspirin was derived from willow bark? Or that dogwood bark has been used as a substitute for quinine? While many drugs that come from plants and trees have been replaced by synthetics, there is no denying how important they are when it comes to modern medicine and research. They can heal patients from deadly diseases. Neem is one such tree that has enumerable health benefits.

**5- Trees Are Our Only Source of Oxygen:** Creatures on the earth are alive because they inhale oxygen from the air, which helps run their bodily mechanisms and exhale carbon dioxide as a by-product of the function of the body. An acre of land full of mature trees can produce enough oxygen for 18 people in a year.

**5- Trees protect Eyesight:** The colour green is perfect for the eyes. It has a soothing effect on them and helps them function better.



**7-Trees Safeguard Our Environment from Climate Change:** The recent heating up of the planet due to the rise in the concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere is radically changing the climate of the earth. Trees are the best solution to prevent this disaster from progressing.

Today we try to walk in St. Barbe's footsteps, the First Global Conservationist and originally named Men of the Trees, was so dedicated to tree planting.

just one of many organizations he established in his lifetime had a world embracing vision at a time when that wasn't really common. His frame of reference was the whole world. "Nation should be tree covered. as a result of his efforts, the organizations he founded, and those he assisted, some 26 billion trees have been planted globally.





## SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

by Zahra Abdul Malik



The term sustainable gardening has been in vocabulary of farming for many years, but during the COVID19 pandemic, it has been used more often, especially with anything associated with the environment and the climate change.

Sustainable gardening, also known as self-sufficient gardening, is a fancy term for growing fruits, vegetables, grass and shrubs, in a manner that does not use harmful pesticides, and promotes a continuous harvest that does not damage the environment.

If you have a garden, you have a chance to contribute to protect the planet earth. Nowadays, the smallest plot of a contemporary garden design can be environmentally friendly, thanks to a combination of ethically sourced materials and innovative technology.

The Bahrain Garden Club's mission has always remained of encouraging its members and other community gardeners, to be innovative in using the available local resources as an effective tool in their gardening practices.

### *Tips on how to have a sustainable garden*

1. Plant local drought resistant trees and shrubs such as date palm, jujube, oleander, tamerix, bougainvillea, Henna.
2. Plant fruit tree varieties resistant to disease pests.
3. Plant medicinal and insect repellent trees such as Neem.
4. Allocate partial area for grass to help earth worms work their cycle, but also reserve on water consumption.
5. Allocate an area for vegetables of your need.
6. Use locally sourced organic manure.
7. Use palm fronds for mulching.
8. Rooftops and high walls could be beautified by applying the vertical technology in planting herbs, climbing vegetables, and also many perennial climbers that can attract butterflies.
9. Collect, save and share your seeds and with your neighbours and friends.
10. Recycle your garden and kitchen waste into compost.
11. Plant your local fruit trees for food security.
12. Process your produce of food from your garden in many ways (freezing, drying, pickling).





### Aubergines

by Eliza Salman

B.Sc. Architecture, M.Eng. Landscape Architecture, Cand. M.Sc. Sustainable Resource Management



Winter is here, and with the dropping temperatures, the gardening season in Bahrain has officially started. Naturally, many of us get excited about all of the flowers we would like to grow and, for some, even growing herbs, vegetables and greens. What we sometimes forget to consider, though, is what we can sustainably grow in this harsh

growing climate that we live in—especially taking into account the temperatures, the length of the growing season, and the prevalent nutrient-poor, salty and sandy soils. These conditions make growing many species that we'd like to have in our gardens unsustainable, requiring too much alteration of the soil conditions and excessive use of the already scarce water resources.

You might know what I am talking about if you tried and possibly failed to grow some crops; little yield, produce with tough skin, disease, flowers failing, or plants not growing at all.

Plants are sensitive organisms with specific needs and requirements. Different plants have adapted through millions of years to these conditions where some plants are more adaptable and tolerate a wider range of climatic and site conditions. In contrast, others found little niches and have precise requirements where slight deviation from these conditions would significantly hinder their growth and survival.

Today, however, I would like to share with you one marvellous vegetable, loved by many and used in various cuisines worldwide. With their soft and fluffy texture, mild flavour, and the ability to absorb oils and aromatics, Aubergines have become the star in many Asian, Mediterranean, European and African dishes. They are from the nightshade family, related tomatoes, peppers and potatoes, and are considered berries botanically.

However, what makes aubergines the topic of this article is that they can grow relatively well in Bahrain. Aubergines like warm sunny areas, grow best between 21-27 degrees but tolerate 15-32 degrees centigrade. In addition, aubergines prefer to grow in well-drained sandy loam but can tolerate sandy soils if provided with nutrients and water.

You can propagate aubergines directly in soil fertilised with organic compost after the temperatures drop below 35 degrees, or propagate them indoors and transplant them when the temperatures are milder. Aubergines grow well alongside leafy greens, spinach and cabbage family members. However, to avoid pests and disease, do not plant them with or closely after related plants such as tomatoes and peppers or beets and peas.

Harvest your aubergines by cutting the stem above the cap when the aubergines are still relatively young but after the skin turns dark (if you are planting dark varieties). The skin should look glossy and feel slightly elastic. Then, enjoy your homegrown aubergines cooked as a starter, salad, or main dish. Make sure to try international dishes such as Georgian “Nigvziani Badrijani” (eggplant rolls filled with walnut spread), Italian Parmigiana Aubergines, Mediterranean “Fattet Batinjan” (baked eggplants with ground meat), French Ratatouille or Libanese Raheb Salad.





## BGC weekly activities

Nursery visit



Election Day



Garden Solution Lecture



Indoor Plant Lecture



Winners' Experience



Pest Control Lecture



Pottery Visit





## 55th 2021 Annual Prize Ceremony





### The Pocket Forest: a way to urban greening

by Farzana Shaker



We are all part of the natural world and I believe we should live with it, not against it. We need solutions to support the environment so that it nourishes us into the future, for generations to come.

I have walked regularly in my neighbourhood and often passed by a vast overgrown wilderness in Duraz Village. I am saddened at its misuse. It seems to have been abandoned and is in need of much care. As I walked there over the years, I envisioned its potential to be regenerated into a green, forest oasis, where flora and fauna could thrive and humans reconnect with nature and learn.

However, my goal was not simply to clean the area, but also to teach the community about planting, pruning, composting etc. and garner a stronger sense of connection to the nature. The idea would be to use the Pocket Forest methodology. This is an urban reforestation technique used to reintroduce native biodiversity by reproducing the natural dynamics of a forest. The result is that the native forest grows quickly and requires no maintenance. In our environment a primary goal would be to introduce native ecosystems and plant locally adaptable trees, such as konar, tamarind, louz and neem. These are trees which grow tall and propagate by themselves, but most people are unable to have them in their home gardens due to lack of space.

With this goal in mind, I approached local institutions in 2018 with a video of the locality to see if there was support for my idea. Unfortunately, as it's not always easy to bring about change, my proposal didn't materialize as anticipated.

But I didn't give up. In 2020, I sent my video and proposal to the Northern Municipality and volunteered to supervise the clean-up and restoration of the wilderness with their help.



This was the beginning. On 1 November 2020 a group gathered to clean the area. We created an Administrative Group to manage the project and take vital decisions. The Group comprised myself, Nadiya Al-Zeera (who gave her unwavering support) Mr. S. Hassan S. Sharaf from Duraaz (who pulled me back on track when I nearly gave up) and Mr. Suraaj from the Northern Municipality.

As the proposal began to lag behind, I contacted keen environmental enthusiast, Architect Mr Kai Miethig, who was very supportive and joined the Group. As a well-known and dedicated environment activist, Mr Miethig played an important role in attracting media attention and volunteers. We communicated through social media to bring the wider community on board.

The Second Phase (cleaning and clearing debris etc.) began on 23 January 2021. Since then, our volunteers gather every Saturday to carry out work in phases as a team. The project was officially announced and promoted under the patronage of Works, Municipality, and Urban planning on Earth Day 23 April 2021.

We would have not reached so far with the project without the commitment of the Administrative Group and the endless support of Mr Fouwzi Al Durazi from our village, as well as the volunteers from all over Bahrain, Bahrainis and expatriates alike. We are supported by children, students, environmental enthusiast, garden lovers etc. and last, but by no means least, those from my neighbourhood Duraz Village; I am enormously proud of them.

Finally, I would like to thank The Northern Municipality for patronizing our efforts to make this project a reality and providing the necessary tools in a timely manner.

**VOLUNTEERS** - Thank you for being there and helping us to make a difference one day at a time.

*Thank you to*

*Mrs. Jalila Mahdi, Mrs. Mahjeda Al Zayani,  
Mrs. Bahai Alkhaja, Mrs. Faika Al Ameer,  
Mrs. Batoool Bader, Mrs. Shamaa Aldosari,  
Mrs. Najla Shaheen, Mrs. Tahera Jaber*

*and Mrs. Zahra Abdul Malik,  
for sharing their seeds, plants and providing  
refreshments for the tea table*



## Flower photography

by Gaye Bentham, Photographer



Who doesn't love a beautiful photo of a flower? But there are a few things to be aware of before you start out, if you want to create an image that stands out from the rest. A lot of flower photos lack impact because of poor composition, or bad lighting, among other things.

Here are some useful tips when shooting flowers and plants:

1. **Avoid direct sunlight.** It causes too much contrast and blown out highlights, and your image will appear flat. Overcast skies are best when shooting in natural light. Unfortunately, here in Bahrain we are pretty much stuck with the bright blue skies and harsh sunlight. But try to take your shots in the shade or dappled light – or early morning and evening, when the light is softer (the 'golden hours').
2. **Wind is your enemy.** The slightest breeze will move your subject so that the end result is going to be a blurred photo unless you use a very fast shutter speed. If you can, avoid shooting on windy days, or try to pick sheltered spots. On the other hand, you could use the wind to create a blurry artistic image!
3. **Simplify the background.** Avoid cluttered backgrounds. You don't want to draw attention away from your subject by it being surrounded by unsightly fencing, other plants, etc. You can use a black cloth or board as a backdrop if the background is too cluttered. Or use a wide aperture to blur out the background.
4. **Shoot from different angles.** Be creative with perspectives and angles. Try lying on the ground and shooting from underneath – that way you also get the benefit of the sky as background. Move around your subject to find the best angle. Try shooting from above, to get an entirely different perspective.
5. **Use back lighting.** Natural or man-made, lighting up the area behind the plant can result in a beautiful ethereal glow. You can use sunlight as back lighting - this can be very effective, especially later in the day when the sun is closer to the horizon.
6. **Use textures.** A juxtaposition of a flower against a different texture, such as a tree trunk, or a plant pot, can add interest to the image. Include other elements like a bee, butterfly or bird.
7. **Fill the frame.** Capture the detail inside a plant by taking a close-up (macro) of part of the flower. This can be quite dramatic.

8. **Step back and take in the wider scene.** Sometimes we are focusing so much on one plant that we forget to look at the complete scene – which maybe more stunning than just taking the shot of one flower (for example, a field of lavender or sunflowers).

9. **Use water.** Water droplets on a flower can add to the depth and add a bit of sparkle. You don't have to wait for it to rain – just grab your spray bottle and spray the plant with water before taking the photo.

10. **Think outside the box.** Try converting to black and white, instead of sticking with colour. This works well with architectural type plants, or images with strong contrast. Don't neglect flowers that are past their best. Fading flowers have their own beauty – the Japanese have a term for this – they call it "wabi-sabi" (beauty in decay).

11. **Shoot indoors.** You have more control on your set-up inside. You are limited only by your imagination!

12. **Learn all the rules – and then break them!**

Each plant and flower has its own personality. Some are brash and showy, and deserve our undivided attention (think hibiscus, or water lily). Others are modest when seen alone, but spectacular when in groups (think bluebells in an English woodland). Yet others complement the surrounding flora, so that the image is a harmonious whole, and yields a better result than if taken individually (think a field of wildflowers in Spring).

Some flowers are delicate and ethereal, calling for more gentle or soft treatment, while others are highly structured and architectural. All these factors will play a part when deciding how to approach taking the photo, depending on the result you wish to achieve.

Finally, an integral part of the photography process is post-editing. Even if you only make a few minor adjustments, such as cropping, sharpening, removing imperfections, etc., it's going to make a big difference to your finished image.

If you are using a DSLR, then you probably already have a software editing program such as Photoshop. If you are photographing on your mobile phone, there are many free editing apps available but I can recommend Snapseed, which will enable you to make various edits to enhance your photos. It is one of the best free photo editing apps, with a lot of options that give you control over the editing process, through the use of percentage sliders.

Finally, be creative, experiment with different techniques and, most of all, have fun!!





### Inspirations

by Meriel Cooper, Artist



Making or re-making a garden and creating a painting are processes that have much in common but are a little difficult to explain.

When we first arrived in Bahrain 16 years ago we rented a wonderful house in Barbar. It was brand new with big, sunny rooms, a pool about 6ft

from the front door and rather elegant steps down to the garden. The latter was an unploughed field with the remains of the builders' bonfires and two conocarpus saplings! We did a rough sketch of where the flower beds and the lawn would go and then set about finding somebody who knew about plants in Bahrain.

Happily, I met a wonderful man called Mr Ravi at one of the plant nurseries. He was very knowledgeable and a joy to work with. We both enjoyed pouring over the catalogues. I also had the able help of my gardener and friend, Shafqat.

First we needed to improve the soil by adding a lot of chicken manure and compost with occasional doses of iron chelate and fertiliser when needed. Then the visual 'frame' for the rest of the garden, the lawn, needed to be planted, prepared by digging in large quantities of coconut fibre and treated with fertilisers.

I often just go to a good garden centre and potter about for a little while looking at what is available. There are frequent and wonderful surprises.

Throughout the planting process I learned a great deal from Mr Ravi and in the end I think we produced something rather lovely. At least a garden expert from the UK who was visiting Bahrain and was often on the radio and TV in the UK said he thought we had done a 'remarkable job'.

The size and shape of beds, paths, steps, etc. is easy enough to decide but the planting is a different story. Rather like a painting the subject is simple to choose but how to make it interesting is the quandary.

With regard to a garden you need to start with the big plants of course and select trees, bushes, etc. for the rear of the scheme. This will determine what comes next with regard to shape and colour of the smaller plants and lastly the smallest plants in front which are more likely to be annuals. So, as with a painting, it is a matter of balance. For example, if the trees at the rear are dark in colour, then pale shrubs need to be selected next to and in front of them.

In Jidhafs where we now live there is a wall at the back of the rear garden and this I planted with many different coloured climbing Bougainvillea, forming a tapestry of white, pink, orange and different shades of magenta. This is interrupted with a large Indian Jasmine bush in a huge pot, a Tamarisk tree and two Frangipani trees, one white and one pink. In front of this I put a selection of Hibiscus bushes to be interspersed with annuals, Marigolds of various kinds and an old fashioned Petunia with small, pale mauve, heavily scented flowers.

A bed full of one plant can also be very effective. In the Barbar garden I planted a bed of Cannas against a low wall and they flowered wonderfully with a mixture of their vivid colours, red, orange, yellow, etc., and the attractive foliage when they are not blooming. Bright colours are useful in Bahrain where the light is bright for most of the year. Cannas need a lot of water and a great deal of fertilizer.

The whole Jidhafs garden is set off by 3 Bauhinia trees that supply us with the vivid display of their magenta orchid-like flowers.

The same sort of thought goes into a painting. A balance of shape and colour is needed to make it visually appealing. In a still-life for example an arrangement of shapes forms the 'main squeeze' but it needs to be supported by softer, supporting shapes with the colours repeated.

The results of both gardens and paintings will, hopefully, give people pleasure and joy.





## Cooking recepies

### Basic Basil Pesto Sauce

by Irina Averinos

2 cups fresh basil leaves  
3 cloves garlic  
1/3 cup pine nuts  
1 cup virgin olive oil  
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese  
Salt and pepper to your taste

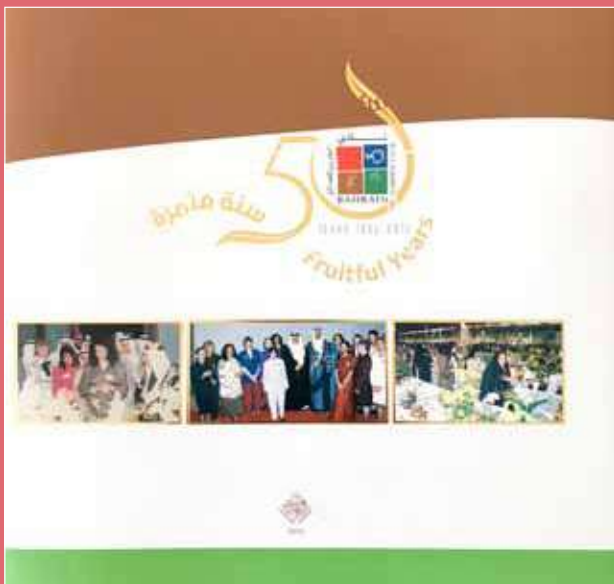
1. Mince washed basil leaves in a pestle and mortar
2. Peel and crush the garlic cloves
3. Blend garlic, half cup of olive oil and cheese on low speed of blender or food processor, stop often to stir
4. Add pine nuts and reminder of olive oil and blend again
5. Leave for at least an hour before using
6. Store left over basil pesto in an airtight, sterilized, glass jar in the refrigerator



**Breakfast and cooking  
demonstration  
at LATITUDE 26  
restaurant at Swiss-Belsuites  
Admiral Juffair**







This historical book “50 Fruitful Years” was published on the occasion of the Golden Anniversary of the Bahrain Garden Club in 2015. It takes an in-depth look at the history of gardening experience in Bahrain from early days to the present time.

*ur book is on sell at THE BAHRAIN GARDEN CLUB. Tel.: 17727625*

*Gift your friends or family with this memorial gardening history in Bahrain.*



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