



Dalyah

Established 1964

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

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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 © Zahra Abdul Malik

Bahrain Garden Club

Chairperson Word

October 2022



As the Bahrain Garden Club (BGC) will be celebrating its 58 th anniversary in 2023, it is important to emphasize one of its pivotal accomplishments to date. Through the “School Gardening Program,” BGC developed a long history of launching an essential relationship with the Kingdom’s government schools. The program encompasses all levels of primary, intermediate, and secondary schools by establishing school gardens and getting students to participate in our annual flower and vegetable competitions. Moreover, the program offers students from the ages of three to eighteen the possibility to participate in other creative competitions. Starting this year, BGC is launching the “Youth Kids Initiative.” This initiative includes the private schools of the Kingdom and focuses on building a stronger relationship with their students, management, and staff; through encouragement to allocate space for gardening in the schools’ premises. Additionally, BGC will be involved with the students in practicable and supportive ways by supervising such tasks and providing the required knowledge and experience. In the “Youth Kids Initiative,” BGC is committed to fostering various school gardens across the Kingdom and raising awareness on the many benefits of such setups, which will positively impact the environment, emphasize food security and primarily, develop health and well-being awareness. With BGC, our younger generation will participate in learning to engage and connect to nature and the surrounding wildlife. Furthermore, by being involved in different aspects of gardening, students will build confidence and grow emotionally and spiritually while integrating within a collective creative process; with joy and innovative ideas toward sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. Furthermore, the students will also create and strengthen their connections with fellow students and teachers and gain skills that might help them in their future endeavors. We are all looking forward to beginning the initiative and the starting point of this exciting collaboration with many private schools and reaching as many students as possible. Finally, BGC wishes the best to all our keen gardeners from all walks of life with their planning and working on entries for the upcoming competitions in the annual Garden Show - 2023

Good luck to all.

Zahra Abdul Malik

Bahrain Garden Club Chairperson

New members are always welcome.

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THE INDOOR GARDENING IMPACT ON HUMAN WELLBEING

by Eng. Zahra Abdul Malik



In indoor gardening, different plant varieties have similar needs as us humans, food, water, air, warmth and shelter. But, of course, these needs vary from one plant to another. There are no hard rules on how much to feed or water each plant, but undoubtedly experience is the best guide. For example, all

flowering plants and plants with variegated foliage must have good lighting to retain their vivid colors.

The majority of indoor plants are part of home decoration due to their attractive foliage. Flowering plants, however, are grown without exception for their flowers. People lose interest and attraction to the plant when they have passed the flowering stage. Examples of such flowering plants are different bulb plants.

Many exotic indoor plants, such as orchids and the many caladium hybrids, are considered glamorous. These plants need to be kept warm, though not uncomfortably so (at about 20°C), and in as humid conditions as can be arranged.

Cacti and succulents are other beautiful plant categories to enjoy indoors if placed in a sunny spot, as they need 4-6 hours of light. Overwatering is a common danger for cactus survival, but they can withstand drought. It is best to plant cacti and succulents in equal amounts of soil and organic potting mix. My favorite cactus is the Christmas cactus which comes in several colors. The flowers appear on the tops of long, flattened stems resembling leaves. This plant is considered an originator.

The different plants' appearance, smell, foliage, and texture have many positive impacts on us humans. Research and literature show the decades of scientific studies on the effects of plants on human health, both psychologically and physically.

Writer E.O. Wilson's hypothesis states that "humans have an inherent connection to plants", and decades of studies proved this hypothesis.

When we have job fatigue, focus on an interesting plant. It will recharge and redirect your energy. In addition, when we engage in the work of fulfilling our plant's needs, be it repotting, feeding, or cleaning, these activities release the stress in our bodies.

During the pandemic and the lockdown, studies showed people with indoor plants had less anxiety and depression as plants give a sense of escape. They also change your mood to a better one merely by spending a few minutes with your plants.

The total number of plants one must have indoors to get all the positive impacts they have on us, I would say there is no magic number. However, one big potted palm and a few smaller plants will have a significantly more positive effect than an empty no-plants space.

I, personally, tried growing some outdoor plants indoors. You can also try growing lots of plants in water as our usual conditions of long periods of air conditioning affect the indoor plants and speed up their drying process.

Having an extensive selection of plants we can grow indoors is a great blessing to our mental health and wellbeing. Good luck acquiring your new collection of indoor gardening, and stay healthy.



Indoor Plant

Zamioculcas Zamiifolia

by Tahera Jaber



The *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*, more commonly known as the ZZ plant or the Zanzibar gem, is a tropical succulent houseplant, an easy-care and very beginner-friendly houseplant that does not mind if you forget about it for a few weeks. This plant can be treated the same way as cacti and other succulent plants; it is a low-maintenance plant that would grow in low-light places in your house without any problems. In addition, this plant grows from rhizomes, which help it store water under the soil, making it a drought-tolerant plant.



It is a beautiful plant to keep indoors. The foliage's color ranges from bright green to dark green or purple-black color, and exposure to strong lights or artificial lighting only marginally influences the coloration. Moreover, the ZZ plant was chosen as the Best New Plant in 2018. It is an excellent air purifier; in a NASA study, researchers found that it can remove large amounts of toxins such as xylene, toluene, and benzene from the air.

Caring for the ZZ plant:

The ZZ plants developed rhizomes and thick upright stems that can retain water for the plant. Because of this, they do not need to be watered as often as many other indoor plants. Therefore, water it only once a month in winter when it goes resting, upping the watering frequency to twice a month in the summer, but only if the soil has dried out completely. Use a balanced fertilizer once or twice a year.

ZZ plants will stay small if you keep them in smaller pots. For the plant to grow to three feet (1 meter), use a pot at least a foot and a half across (45 cm) and deep. ZZ plants have naturally shiny leaves that can become dull as dust accumulates. However, never clean their leaves with a commercial leaf shine, as it will clog the plant's pores. Instead, gently wipe away dust and debris with a damp washcloth to restore its shine.

Propagation:

ZZ plants propagate in two main ways: through division or stem cuttings. Propagation by division is the simplest way to create more plants. For this, separate the rhizomes the next time you repot your plant and place them in separate containers. Propagating with stem cuttings takes longer than propagating by division, and it might take six to nine months before roots begin to grow.



Judges' workshop



Caper plant

By Eng. Irina Averinos



Capparis spinosa, the Caper bush, also called Flinders rose, is a shrub-like perennial plant with rounded, fleshy leaves and ornamental white flowers with beautiful pinkish-purple stamens. Traditional caper bushes have sharp thorns on their vines. Sweet fragrant flowers only last for one day, and then the fruits start growing.

Native to the Mediterranean, caper plants are found in the wild in many countries of southern Europe, the Middle East, and Northern Africa, especially in warm weather and dry stony areas. For example, in Bahrain, the viney brambles of caper plants can be found on wasteland or along dirt roads.

Is it a useful plant or a weed?

If caper bush has grown by itself in your garden, as it happened in my garden, do not rush to weed it away.

This Mediterranean gourmet delight produces edible flower buds (capers) and edible fruits (caper berries). In addition, the plant's leaves are a natural water conservator and are edible too. Eaten raw, capers, berries, and leaves are unpleasantly bitter. However, once cured in a vinegar brine or salt, they develop an intense flavor, giving capers their trademark savory, briny taste profile.

You may be familiar with capers; they are used for culinary purposes worldwide, and you have probably seen them on the shelves in grocery stores without realizing that they come from a common bush.

As they are picked by hand only, they are relatively pricey.

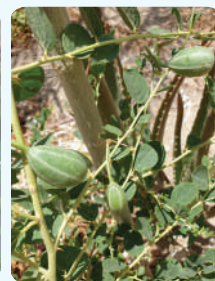
However, they are ideal for adding distinctive sour and salty flavor to many savory dishes: sauces, pasta, pizzas, salads, potato, fish, and chicken dishes. Capers are low in calories at only 23k Cal per 100g, making them an excellent addition to a healthy weight loss diet.

In addition, they contain a variety of antioxidants and are very good sources of dietary fiber, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, Riboflavin, Folate, Iron, Magnesium, and Copper. Capers can be a major source of sodium, depending on how they are prepared and stored.

For this reason, they are best consumed in limited quantities as a source of flavor for nutritious meals.

Even if you are not a fan of pickled capers, this plant can make a fantastic addition to your garden or rock garden.

Caper bushes like full sun, are drought tolerant and easy to maintain. The freely spreading bushes will be full of white flowers throughout the hot summer.



Cooking recepies

How to pickle capers and caper berries at home?

The tightly close buds, immature berries (fully matured fruit are not preferred, as they contain many hard seeds), and leaves can be picked daily. You can collect and pickle them separately or mix them together. Capers, berries, and leaves must be soaked first to eliminate the bitterness. Soak them for three days and change the water twice a day.

Pickle Capers recipe

1/2 cup washed fresh capers

1/2 cup vinegar

1/2 cup water

1 tbsp salt

- Have ready 1/2 cup of soaked and drained caper buds

- Make a brine of vinegar, water, and salt

- Put the capers in a glass jar and cover them with the brine, secure the lid, and then store the jar in the refrigerator. The capers will be ready to use in one week, but they are better after a month.

Little white spots will appear on capers; this is a natural reaction to the fermentation. Rinse pickled capers before eating to reduce their saltiness.

You can pickle berries and leaves in the same way, but for the berries, you will need more brine to cover the fruit generously.



BGC weekly activities



Annual competitions 2022



Our gratitude to all the judges who have given their time to select the winners.

56th 2022 Annual Award Ceremony



Go Green

by Nishrin Kothambawala



To help the gardening enthusiast community of the Kingdom learn different ideas and ways to incorporate more greenery into their living spaces, and help solve their gardening-related queries, a motivational talk show was recently organized by the Bahrain Bohra community, with the Bahrain Garden Club Eng Zahra Abdulmalik: Chairwoman- Bahrain Garden Club.

She encouraged the Garden Club's extensive work towards raising green awareness across the Kingdom for over 50 years, with regular lectures and workshops, annual competitions, site visits etc.

Zahra, with her profound knowledge and experience in the field, also answered the most frequently asked questions:

1. Why is indoor greenery so important?

Having greenery around you can uplift your mood subconsciously. It is relaxing and fills your mind with positive thoughts. Even a simple activity such as weeding your garden's grass or cleaning your indoor plants' leaves works as therapy.

2. How can one look after indoor plants during summers, especially while you travel out of town?

For potted indoor plants (not under central AC control), any sudden temperature fluctuation can lead the plant to undergo shock and even kill the plant. This can be avoided by keeping indoor temperatures constant. However, plants growing in water (hydroponically/ NFT) and closed terrariums will thrive well under these conditions. Therefore, you will not need to worry about watering while you are away on holiday.

3. Can indoor plants be grown in artificial lights?

Indoor plants need a minimum of 3 to 6 hours of light for photosynthesis. So yes, they can be grown under any energy-saving artificial light such as led, fluorescent, etc., if kept for up to 3 to 6 hours according to specific

plant requirements.

4. If one runs out of soil, what is an alternative?

Growing plants in water is a good option. One can place pebbles in the container to hold roots and support the plant. Provide nutrients once a month for healthy plant growth. All kinds of plants such as trees, herbs, shrubs, even rhizomes and tubers like potato or turmeric/ginger could be grown in water.

5. Tell us more about terrariums.

Terrariums are closed glass containers used for growing plants that work on the water cycling principle.

- Use regular compost without perlite, vermiculite, or other soil ingredients/texturizers.
- Include bottom layers of crushed gravel and activated charcoal for adequate drainage and toxin absorption.
- Then fill one-third of the terrarium with regular compost.
- Use compatible plants (with similar needs) and water them well.
- Keep the lid closed. Open it once in 6 months for feeding.

6. Tell us more about Composting in homes/balconies.

- Use any kind of recyclable container- a wooden box, for example.
- Make sure it has holes/perforations for air circulation.
- You can use fruit skin, vegetable peels, egg shells, tissue or non-glossy magazine papers, grass clippings, leaves, and organic manure in your compost bin.
- For egg shells, wash and dry them thoroughly, and grind them into powder before adding them to your compost pile for faster decomposition.
- Mix once in 2-3 weeks.
- The compost will be ready in about 3 months.

7. Tell us more about plant Pruning.

- Pruning means cutting back the unnecessary stems/branches to encourage new growth.
- For fruit trees such as mango: prune weeping branches and keep the vertical ones. Fruit trees are generally pruned after harvest is done.
- Bougainvillea could be pruned at any time of the year.
- The general rule for any flowering plant is to prune when the plant is done blooming and is in the dormant phase.



BASIL CONFUSION!

Article by Anne Al Jalahma



Sweet basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), or Genovese Basil, is a tender annual culinary herb, famously used as a flavouring in Italian dishes and other worldwide cuisines. It is propagated by seed or cuttings annually. It should not be confused with *Ocimum tenuiflorum* or Bush Basil, known as Mashmoom or Tulsi in the Gulf and parts of Asia.

The two Basils should be identified separately when entering a Collection of Herbs in a Garden Club competition. Sweet Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) is always grown as an annual herb and will be part of the kitchen garden as it is used extensively as a flavouring. The leaves are soft and bright green with a mild liquorice flavour, a spicy clove fragrance, and full of antioxidants. Many varieties of *Ocimum basilicum* differ in leaf size and colour, flavouring and scent. Examples are var. *thyrsiflora*, or Thai, var. *citriodorum* Lemon or Lime, var. *minimum*, which is small and compact. There is also a Dark Opal variety with deep purple leaves and pink flowers. Different varieties can be obtained from specialist seed suppliers and nurseries.

Bush Basil or Mashmoom (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) is a hardy perennial plant grown as a bush, with stiff stems, smaller leaves and a very aromatic flavour. It is also known as Tulsi or Holy Basil in Southeast Asian regions. In Bahrain, the leaves are traditionally mixed with rose buds and petals, widely used at weddings and to sprinkle over the marriage bed. In addition, it is used in traditional folk medicine and Ayurveda for common colds, coughs, headaches, stomach disorders, skin disorders etc.

N.B. Although *Ocimum tenuiflorum* can have many benefits, it should NOT be taken without medical advice as it may pose health risks in some situations and during pregnancy.

Basils belong to the LAMIACEACE or Mint family.

How to use Sweet Basil?

1. Top whole leaves onto pizza
2. Finish pasta with whole or thinly sliced leaves
3. Blend it into sauces
4. Puree it into soups
5. Chop it up to add to a salad
6. Use it to garnish avocado toast
7. Turn it into an ice cream topping!

Jazz up vanilla ice cream with strawberries, basil and a balsamic reduction.



Riffa Views workshop



Breakfast and cooking demonstration at the Swiss Cafe

Swiss-belhotel, Seef



BGC Annual 2022 luncheon



Price giving students ceremony 2022





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.

our book is on sale at THE BAHRAIN GARDEN CLUB. **Tel.: 17727625**

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



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