



Dalyah

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

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Gardens in *Bloom*

Garden Plants
Parkinsonia Tree
Garden Design

Indoor Garden
Edible Flowers
Ikebana

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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 © Irina Averinos

Chairperson Word



This issue of the Bahrain Garden Club newsletter comes out in a very special time of celebration of many milestones of the club achievements. The annual flowers and vegetable show, themed “Bahrain in Bloom- Pearl Path “and we are privileged to have it under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa.

For nearly six decades, the Bahrain Garden Club has been dedicated to preserving and promoting the kingdom’s horticulture heritage. The Bahrain Garden Club has been the linchpin of this historic exhibition, orchestrating it independently from 1966 until 2003 and in collaboration with the Bahrain International Garden show through to 2023. We are excited to continue this tradition with renewed vigour and dedication to our club’s mission.

Our show of 2024 promises to be a testament to the Kingdom vibrant flora and a celebration to our rich cultural legacy. The show will feature a myriad of competition categories ranging from children’s gardening projects to college level horticultural studies, as well as adult classes. The involvement of eco-friendly businesses dedicated to preserving our natural environment. Furthermore the show will pay homage to Bahrain heritage, with special emphasis on the Garden Photography Cup, marking the twenty fifth edition under the esteemed sponsorship of Her Royal Highness Princess Sabeeka Bint Ibrahim Al Khalifa, the wife of His Majesty King of Bahrain. May everyone enjoy the show and be inspired by the many ideas on display.

- Zahra Abdul Malik



Meeting with H.E. Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro, Minister of Industry and Commerce

New members are always welcome.
**To become a member of the Bahrain Garden Club,
please contact 17727625 or 39774194**

Some Of My Favorite Garden Plants

By Anne Al Jalahma



There are some plants that I will always have in my garden, either because they bring back memories or because the sight of them delights me. Here are just a few of them.

NERIUM OLEANDER

One of my first memories from the late 1960s, when I first arrived in Bahrain, was

of driving up the old Awali road, now known as Sheikh Salman Highway, with the car windows wide open. Most cars weren't air conditioned in those days, so we had to keep the windows open. Oleander had been planted all along the central reservation, from the new Isa Town all the way to the Awali Gate! The fragrant perfume from these flowers filled the car! Sometimes progress shuts out the lovely things in life - the perfume of the flowers and the sound of the birds nesting in the trees around the ruler's palace in Rifaa. Nowadays, people remark on the poisonous properties of Nerium Oleander, and they are shunned in many gardens, but not mine!

TAZETTA NARCISSUS

A few of the Tazetta Narcissi have become acclimatized in Bahrain. Some gardens still have the 'Bahrain' narcissus, flowers of creamy white with a yellow trumpet. There used to be hundreds growing in Hussain Yateem's garden in Janubiya and also in the old British army camp in Hamala, which became the BDF camp. My husband used to bring me a bunch of them when they were in flower. Apart from the Bahrain Narcissus, which has no name as far as I know, and which I would love to know when and how it was introduced into Bahrain, you can also grow the Paperwhite Narcissus, which are readily available in English garden centres in the Autumn where they are sold as indoor plants. They take me back to my childhood in England. Our garden was always full of Daffodils and Narcissi in the spring. The Tazetta Narcissi originate from the Mediterranean region, so in Bahrain, they grow well in a sunny place, preferring to be baked in the summer. They usually produce from 3 to 20 small flowers on a stout stem, coming up again year after year. I usually mark where they are to avoid planting above them when they are dormant. Also available are "Avalanche" and "Erlicheer," which flower later in February if you are lucky enough to get them from a specialist bulb nursery.

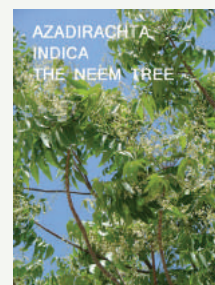
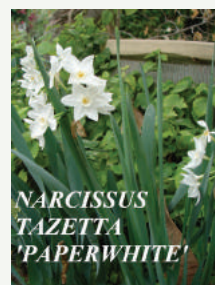
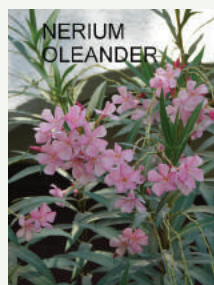
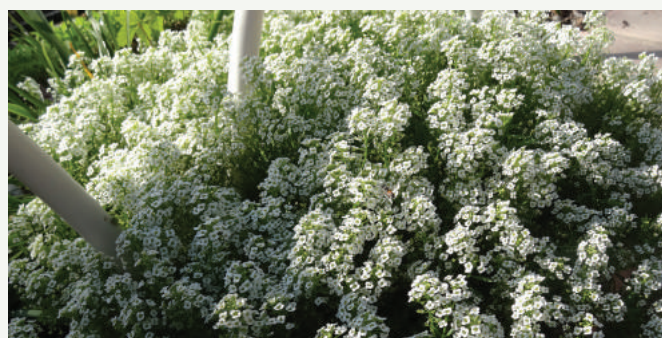
SWEET ALYSSUM (LOBULARIA MARITIMA)

Another of my favourite plants, an annual, is Sweet Alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*) in the Brassicaceae family. It grows very easily from seed, directly in the

soil, in a well-drained sunny position. The honeyed fragrance wafts in the air on a warm day so that you notice the perfume before the flowers! I plant it everywhere, every year, as an edging plant, in pots or hanging baskets, in any nook or cranny in the sun. It also reminds me of my childhood garden as Sweet Alyssum grows in England as easily as it does here in Bahrain, requiring very little maintenance. It is a low-growing, clumping plant, just a few inches high. It is one of Cruciferae, meaning that each flower's four tiny petals form a cross. The sweet honey fragrance attracts pollinators like bees and butterflies. I prefer the white varieties, especially "Carpet of Snow," although there are also purple, pink, and peach-coloured varieties.

NEEM TREE (AZERDIRACHTA INDICA).

The Neem tree, a tropical tree that originates from the East Indies, is a favourite in Bahrain. It can be found everywhere, in gardens, parks, and as a street tree. It is known as the Pharmacy tree in India because of its many health-giving, medicinal, and organic insecticidal properties. The leaves, bark, and fruits are all used. It is widely used in Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines, especially in the Indian subcontinent, to treat and prevent various diseases. Mosquitoes don't like the active ingredient Azadirachtin, so it is good to have a Neem tree in the garden, especially these days when Bahrain seems to be infested with mosquitoes everywhere. It is an attractive tree which grows easily in a well-drained soil in a sunny spot. It has a beautiful, strongly fragrant white flower that can be smelt some distance away when in full bloom. Hundreds of Neem trees have been planted around Bahrain as part of the National Afforestation Campaign, "Forever Green."



Parkinsonia Aculeata

by Eng.Zahra Abdul Malik



The origin of this tree is the Southwest USA, specifically in the tropical zone. It has been introduced to many areas and has become naturalized. This tree is either a large, glabrous bush or a small, upright, fast-growing tree with a weeping habit. It is armed with sharp, woody spines

and features light foliage with long, arching branches. The leaves are 15 to 35 cm long and bipinnate. The leaflets are small and numerous, tending to fall under dry conditions. This tree is exceedingly used as a decorative plant when covered in tiny yellow-white, fragrant flowers, which are produced in spring. The tree grows to a height of 7-10 meters with a 5-8 meter spread. It produces linear pods that hang in clusters as fruits.

The tree is propagated by seeds and grows quickly, but it requires careful training. It thrives in well-drained, sandy soil, and needs full sun. Regular watering is necessary during its establishment, followed by light watering thereafter. The tree can endure long periods of drought and high heat and is frost-tolerant.

It is one of the best small flowering trees for a small garden. It can be used as an informal hedge, creating an impenetrable barrier. However, it provides little or no shade.

The Parkinsonia tree is one of my favorite trees to grow in a small garden under our Bahrain growing conditions, which include the ability to grow in high soil salinity, drought resistance, very low water requirement, high light exposure, wind tolerance, and the benefit of being an elegant tree with fragrant flowers.

Facts about Parkinsonia (from literature sources):

1. It is listed as a weed of national significance in Australia, some parts of tropical Africa,
2. The massive population of the parkinsonia trees in Australia was combated by introducing the bean weevil which feeds on seed pods; the leaf bug prevents the photosynthesis mechanism. It is also mechanically removed by herbicides and fire.
3. The Seri people, Native Americans of northwestern Mexico, grind the seeds for flour; boil the green pods with meat, and eat the green seeds and flowers.
4. Some eco-friendly jewelry is made from the strung seeds of Parkinsonia."



Creating a beautiful indoor "Zen" garden

By Godfrey Kuo

Consultant at the Taiwan Technical Mission



As time passes, lifestyles and living environments have also changed, and apartment buildings have become the first choice for modern living. While people opt for modern life, they also distance themselves

from the countryside and natural environment, which means living in narrow spaces and enduring harsh working conditions, surrounded by rebar and concrete. Therefore, indoor green landscaping has gradually received attention, highlighting the importance of indoor green landscaping design.

In the case of the featured design, green beautification is carried out in the staircase area of an office building. The designer aims not only to place a few shade-tolerant plants but to introduce an entire miniature garden landscape into the building. After surveying the construction site, the decision was made to adopt an oriental garden theme combined with local elements from Bahrain as the main design axis.

Design Concept

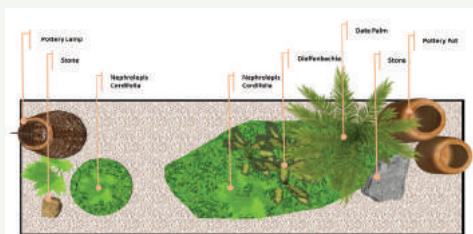
"Integration of cultural elements" is the main axis of this design. A "rock garden" is a significant element in oriental gardens. It uses unique stones to represent the mountain scenery, and white sand or gravel to symbolize flowing water. Placing rocks and

shade-tolerant plants is suitable for places with little light like office buildings. Stone lanterns and garden lights are also commonly used materials in oriental gardens. In this case, we incorporated pottery lamps and pots produced locally in Bahrain in the design, creating a beautiful and harmonious visual effect and presenting a unique indoor landscape.

The most challenging aspect of the indoor garden is the subsequent plant maintenance and management. In order to simplify the maintenance work, a movable potted plant design is adopted. A metal mesh structures the envisioned courtyard's undulating terrain, with reserved positions for placing the potted plants. Green moss is used to mimic grassy slopes, white gravel is scattered representing flowing water, and pottery lamps and pots are added to balance the scene and lighten up the design.

Finally, preferred potted plants are placed in the reserved spots. The selected plants for this project include the iconic Bahraini Date Palm as well as various sizes of *Dieffenbachia* and *Nephrolepis cordifolia*. Utilizing different plant heights creates multiple layers and gives the garden structure. This design perfectly combines elements from both cultures; thus, completing the indoor Zen Garden!

This design approach not only simplifies the subsequent care of the plants but also allows one to change the style according to preference. By simply changing the potted plants, one can create an entirely different-looking indoor garden.



Visiting local farms



BGC Workshops



BGC Activities



Edible Flowers

by Eng. Irina Averinos



Flowers are an integral part of our lives and significantly impact us physically and emotionally. They can awaken positive emotions in us, create a pleasant unique atmosphere, and have a beneficial effect on our psychological state. Flowers fill our world with

colours and aromas. They decorate our dinner tables, but some of them can also be present on our dishes.

Not all flowers are safe to eat, but some flowers are edible. Edible flowers are those that can be consumed safely. They have been part of our diet for thousands of years and have been used in cooking by many cultures in the ancient world: China, Rome, the Middle East, and India. The practice of using edible flowers is still going strong today, with many restaurants using petals to add a unique flavor and appearance. But it is not only restaurant chefs who can use flowers in cooking, you would be surprised at how many edible varieties you can find in your own garden.

Edible flowers can be eaten fresh in salads and sandwiches, frozen in ice cubes and ice creams, minced for herb butter, and cooked in some dishes and sauces. They can also decorate cakes and cookies or be made into jams and teas, and some may offer healing benefits as well. Petals are the best parts of many edible flowers.

Edible flowers are always best when picked fresh from the garden early in the morning before they have been exposed to too much sun. If you need to store edible flowers, put them in a container straight in the fridge and use them within a couple of days. Because edible flowers are extremely delicate, wash them gently by dipping them in a bowl of water and gently shaking them. Dry them on a towel.

Here are a few edible flower varieties:

- Nasturtium (*Tropaeolum* spp.) - savory and slightly spicy flavor, peppery undertones. They are good for decorating crisp green salads, or serving a top of starters and cakes for extra beauty. The green seeds can be pickled.
- Pansy (*Viola tricolor*) – mild and fresh tasting. Use them with green salads or as a garnish, for desserts, cookies, and cakes.
- Roses (*Rosa* spp.) – the petals can be used to make jams and jellies, fruit salads, cold and hot drinks, and herbal teas. Remove the white portion of the petal to avoid its bitter taste.



- Calendula (*Calendula officinalis*) – Its petals have a slightly bitter taste and can be used in soups, stews, herbal teas, or as a saffron substitute.
- Borage (*Borago officinalis*) – blue star-shaped flowers taste a bit like cucumber. Lovely addition for raw salads, starters, sandwiches, soups, jellies, jams, or cooked for garnish.
- Squash blossom (*Cucurbita* spp.) – can be chopped and added to fresh salads, or stuffed and cooked, baked, or pan-fried.
- Marigold (*tagetes*) – the petals of some varieties are slightly citrusy; others have a mildly spicy undertone. Use the petals for aesthetic purposes in salad mixes, on avocado toast and scrambled eggs, or floated on top of drinks. Dried petals (“poor men’s saffron”) can be used in soups and stews for a slightly yellow colour.
- Lavender (*Lavandula* spp.) – sweet and intensely floral flavor. It is strong, so use it in moderation. It is an essential component of French and Mediterranean cuisines. Used them in cookies, chocolate, lemon tarts, herbal teas, and baked goods. Sprinkle over drinks, and ice creams, or add to the syrups.

- Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) – the mild, unique, bittersweet, and slightly nutty taste of petals make a nice contrast to other flavors in salads or as a garnish. Use in stir-fries as well.
- Chive blossoms (*Allium schoenoprasum*) - lavender colour with a sweet, mild allium flavor. Great for omelets, soups, sandwiches, and salads.
- Butterfly pea (*Clitoria*) – its blue flowers are natural food colorants. Use the flowers for a blue herbal tea. The colour of blue tea changes to pink or purple by adding a slice of lemon or lime.

- Hibiscus (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) - known as Roselle Rouge. Petals and calyxes for fruit salads, in sauces, syrups, jellies and teas.

Always be sure to double-check that the flower you are consuming is edible, that you are eating the edible part, and that you have no allergies to this plant. When sourcing edible flowers make sure to source organic flowers and wash them well before using. Grow your own in your pesticide-free garden, or on the balcony. Edible flowers will give you an amazing and flavorful addition to your garden, enhance its colours, attract pollinators, and expand your culinary horizons.



Lavender



Chive Blossom



Squash Blossom



Calendula



Marigold



Borage



Nasturtium



Sunflower



Pansy



Rose



Butterfly pea



Hibiscus

Cooking Receptions

Gardener's Spectacular Fresh Salad

Ingredients:

Fresh crispy lettuce mix of your choice, Cherry tomatoes, Baby cucumbers, Sweet capsicum, Green onion, Green kitchen herbs of your choice, Edible flowers (pansies) and petals (marigold) for decoration

Dressing:

Cold press virgin olive oil, Fresh lemon juice, Salt, Pepper



The Timeless Elegance of Ikebana: A Symphony of Nature and Creativity

By Sossie Mahoney



Ikebana, the ancient Japanese art of flower arranging, has transcended centuries as a profound expression of harmony between nature and humanity. Rooted in Japan's cultural history,

this disciplined art form has evolved from a pastime of the aristocracy to a revered practice that not only brings aesthetic beauty to spaces but also instills a sense of calmness and clarity in the minds of its practitioners.

The origins of ikebana can be traced back to the aristocratic appreciation of plants and flowers across the four seasons in Japan. It has always been considered a dignified accomplishment, a pursuit beyond the mere arrangement of flowers in a container. Ikebana elevates the act of floral design to an art form that engages with the inherent beauty of each element, focusing on the stems, leaves, shape, line, and form of the plants involved.

Contrary to the Western concept of a vibrant burst of multicolored blossoms, ikebana emphasizes simplicity and understated elegance. Each arrangement tells a story, and the choice of materials carries significance. While ikebana allows for creative expression, it is guided by certain principles that govern its form. The ancient belief in the influence of good and evil fortune on the selection of materials and the form of the arrangement has been incorporated into the art's tradition.

One distinguishing aspect of ikebana is the balance it seeks between all elements of the arrangement, including the container. The choice of the vase or vessel is as crucial as the selection of flowers and their arrangement. The careful consideration of negative space, proportion, and placement contributes to

the overall aesthetic, creating a visual poetry that resonates with viewers.

Asymmetry is another key principle in ikebana. The use of an odd number of branches, flowers, and leaves with varying stem lengths adds dynamic energy to the arrangement. This intentional imbalance reflects the impermanence and transience of life, a core philosophy in Japanese aesthetics. The asymmetry in ikebana is not a random choice but a deliberate decision to create visual interest and evoke a sense of movement within the stillness of the arrangement.



Moreover, ikebana is deeply intertwined with the changing seasons. Practitioners use seasonal flowers to convey the essence of the time, linking the arrangement to the natural world's cyclical beauty. This connection to the seasons enhances the overall meaning of the arrangement and adds a temporal dimension to the art.

Over time, ikebana has evolved, and contemporary practitioners have embraced new perspectives. Unlike its historical roots, where arrangements were viewed only from the front, modern ikebana encourages viewers to explore the arrangement from various

angles, breaking free from traditional constraints and allowing for a more dynamic engagement with the art.

In conclusion, ikebana stands as a timeless testament to the profound intersection of nature and human creativity. Its disciplined approach to floral design, adherence to principles, and connection to the ever-changing seasons contribute to its enduring elegance. As a contemplative practice, ikebana not only beautifies spaces but also cultivates a sense of mindfulness, inviting individuals to appreciate the fleeting beauty of nature in each carefully crafted arrangement.

Finding inspiration for your garden style

By Nishrin Kothambawala, Landscape architect.



When it comes to garden design, some homeowners have some idea about what garden features they prefer, which kinds of plants they like, and what paving and garden lights they are considering. But, at the same time, many others are unclear about their preferences. Hence, they look for ideas & inspiration that can help.

This "inspiration" can be sought from a professional designer, self-prepared mood boards by visiting show villas, neighbors, magazines, or online pictures and videos. Let us discuss how new owners can make choices and how they can put it all together in an appealing and functional garden design.

Selecting a "design theme" can offer inspiration and guidance for making decisions about garden features and appropriate plant material selection. So what is a garden theme? And how will you select it?

Garden themes are key factors that unify all the plants and design elements into a cohesive idea. A few examples could be a moon garden, butterfly garden, wildlife garden, edible garden, vertical garden, water garden, xeriscape garden, etc.

Firstly, one needs to identify how the garden will be utilized. For example, will it only be used by close

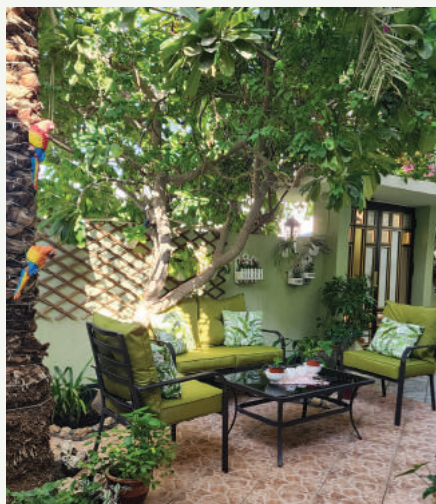
family members or for a wide range of entertainment for extended family and friends?

The geometry of your garden is a crucial aspect of designing, which will be based on whether one wants a "formal garden" with repetitive straight lines and angles. Or a more casual, relaxed, informal one with meandering curves that will create a sense of inquisitiveness to explore more. In the decision-making process, the villa architecture design should also be considered, whether modern, classic, traditional, or contemporary.

Once you get to this stage, selecting the regional style for your garden becomes easy. Afterwards, you can choose French, Spanish, Mediterranean, lush tropical Japanese, or English cottage garden styles. Whichever style you opt for, the most successful gardens I have seen are the ones that are based on indigenous plant material selection. Nonetheless, there is great fun in experimenting with a few varieties that may be considered exotic to your region!

Once you have identified a theme, decide what features to incorporate in your yard. Having all your ideas drawn into a design, and setting a budget for building it, will be critical to avoid major errors and save money. In addition, selecting quality materials and hiring an experienced installation and maintenance team will be vital to having a beautiful and flourishing garden.

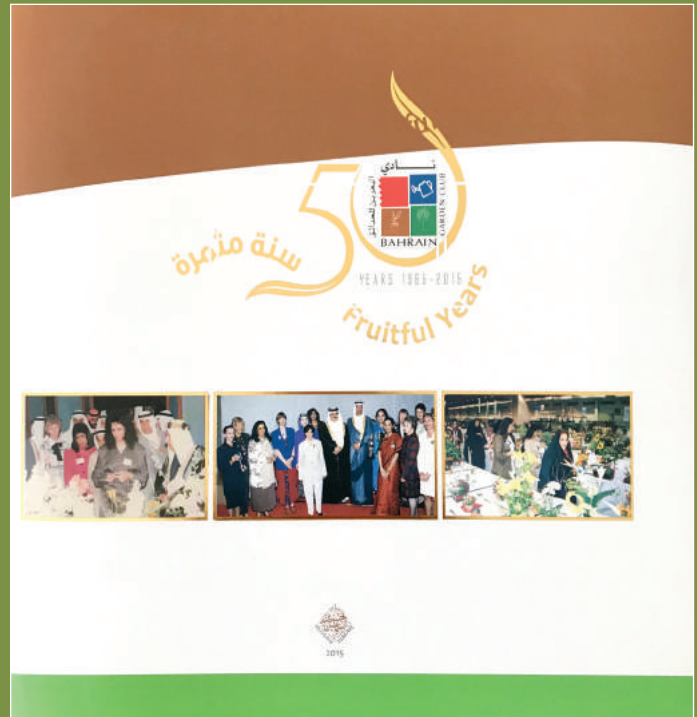
Beautiful corners of competing gardens



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.*



“Flowers always make people better,
happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine,
food and medicine for the soul.”

- Luther Burbank

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