

RECREATIONAL FARMING RECOMMENDATIONS

by

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with

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staying productive in times of corona virus disease 2019 (covid 19)

farming - a recommendation– in backyards, lawns, corners, edges, pots, roofs, balconies...

benefits – recreational activity, fresh food, social connection, psychological wellbeing, economic value, boost your immunity!

given the present scenario, it seems the corona virus (COVID 19) pandemic is here to stay for some time and make things worse for us. the disease has already permeated into most aspects of our daily living and changed their order including our health, livelihoods, education, and food systems.

in our response to stay put and cope with the monstrosity of this disease, we also need to carve out survival strategies that will ease its impact now and in the long term. we must arm ourselves for the foreseen as well as the unforeseen consequences. the COVID 19 does not have a life even. we do. and there is plenty that we can do to preserve ours.

one of the critical aspects that needs our immediate attention is our food system in the place which is going through a severe crisis. the supply chain is already disrupted and may lead to widespread food shortages, or at the minimum an inadequate access to farmers' produce especially in urban areas.

so, the time seems just right to turn to our own resources and methods for growing our food. the practice may not be sufficient in itself. it will nevertheless help us a great deal to get going, fight the chaos effectively, and relish on garden fresh produces and harvests.

to begin with, the season could not be better. yes, our beloved **sōʔt (spring)** is promising on many levels. whatever we sow or plant, most of that is going to germinate, blossom, grow, produce, and yield! so, why wait?

some of us are fortunate to have the land in all shapes and sizes - fields for staples, orchards, and kitchen gardens; may be some barren patches too. all we have to do is use it efficiently and **grow as much as we can.** for our orchards and staple fields, we have a more or less structured blueprint for the process and dependent on the temporality of the seasons. it is our vegetable farming that needs urgent attention now that **nowruz** has also opened doors for us to get our hands dirty.

which seeds and saplings can dive into the earth right now? plenty. what can you think of?

here is a list of some:

#	name
1.	<p>haakh (collards green) and lettuce seeds.</p> <p>yes, our culturally beloved green leafy vegetable. the farm will be incomplete without its sight. and it is a good friend, in all its varieties, throughout the year.. lettuce is great too, more on a plate of fresh salad.</p>
2.	<p>potatos</p> <p>lets plant these and leave them in the care of our land. the produce from these in early summer can be self sufficient to run our kitchen for some time.</p>
3.	<p>tomato, eggplant (brinjal), and chilli seeds</p> <p>the yield from these creates some quick summer magic in the kitchen. the harvest can also be dried and used in harsh winters later!</p>
4.	<p>cucumber, wax gourds, pumpkin seeds, and spring onions</p> <p>sow these. take care of the saplings. and they can yield produce beyond our imagination.</p>
5.	<p>rajma and other lentils</p> <p>let's not say much about the beans, which can be used as green as well as in they ripen. sown as both plants and creepers, the stock is our best friend throughout the year.</p>
6.	<p>coriander, mint</p> <p>these are certainly most friendly to grow and spread. so make an effort, for these will also help you cool as summer heat catches up in the valley.</p>
7.	<p>babri byol and fennel seeds/saplings</p> <p>we need these too! grow plenty.</p>

for those of us with no such resources, especially in urban areas, we can engage in **micro-farming** in and around our houses. urban agriculture has been around for centuries now. so, city folks do not despair. it basically requires growing food on the property of our homes. use every inch of the land you have, and every nook and corner.

you can definitely entrust your seeds and sapling to your front yard, the backyard, or just the four walls around your home to also give way to creepers and crawlers, such as those vines of cucumber. what better sight than to pluck your own garden fresh produce and savor on these. and perhaps share some with neighbors and friends too! see the picture above.



there are several others methods and means that we can explore to make the best use of our resources, including our land, to cultivate and farm naturally. lets also pay good attention to the variety of fruits that we can grow as well. strawberries, for example, would be a good choice!

another strategy that we have in store for us something we have known as **pot farming**. so think about all the used containers, tin boxes, plastic bottles, clay pots, used tires, used utensils- basically anything that you can fill with soil and sow in to set it rolling. these pots can be hanged in sunshine, if needed, or placed indoors/ outdoors or even in greenhouse if you have one. you can also make pots from clay. it takes time, patience, and perseverance, but here is what you can get if you give wings to your creativity and necessity!



using pots and tires to re grow! | using plastic bottles to create some magic on the walls

roof top farming, as the name suggests a roof garden is a garden on the roof of a building. here, many households have concrete slabs, verandas, or parts of tin roofs that can be decorated with some fertile soil and make home for a variety of veggies and spices to grow.



rooftop farming in full bloom.

for good and plain land, the **square foot gardening (sfg) method** has been found more efficient. if you can, try it. it saves time, effort, tools, space and water. the method costs less, uses less space and water.

the following picture illustrates it.



the steps, in brief for **sfg**, are:

- ✓ materials to build your 4' X 4' box [from anything that can be up-cycled]
- ✓ blended organic compost into the soil [mix of soil, food / paper / wood waste – anything that decomposes on its own]
- ✓ add a grid and start planting.

we can always explore all of these techniques further - on the Internet, talk to experts and doer-s in our families / neighborhoods, or turn to other resources to figure out what will suit our needs and resources.

we can also always go for **boujwoaff (collaboration)** to temporarily borrow land from our neighbors, like we would do before. we can cultivate it, investing our resources, and then share the produce with them - a practice that is commonly also known as '**lagun**' in the Kashmiri vernacular.

all we need is time (and we have enough of it), some expert advice, landscape and resource mapping, seeds and saplings, manure, tools, and some good helping hands

if need be! all of these are shareable among neighbors, relatives, and acquaintances, and have been for centuries. let us not hesitate to review the sharing practice too and weave it in to further strengthen our community ties!

these farming endeavours will make us resilient; strengthen us physically and emotionally; become something fun to do with family especially kids; improve our social ties by sharing the process and the outcome with those around us; help us respond to emergencies; lessen our expenditures; unleash our creativity; improve family ties by creating something together; and, reverse the processes of our ecological ageing. how delightful we will be to pluck our fresh produces and share them with others!

stay safe, stay home, stay healthy, stay productive!

prayers!

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for more information or if you have any questions, please write to us at moolsustainability@gmail.com or whatsapp at 9622565003.

this note is intended to be like an idea seed that you can use as you deem appropriate. we hope it is useful for you in some way.

all the best!