

Kitchen Gardening

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Introduction:

Kitchen gardening is growing fruits and vegetables on a small piece of land near the residence in a planned manner to get fresh produce throughout the year to meet the requirements of the family. These gardens are also known as home gardens, nutrition gardens or vegetable gardens. The main purpose of the kitchen garden is to get a regular supply of nutrient and energy-rich fresh vegetables which helps in diet diversification. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for vegetable consumption is 300g/day including roots and tubers, green leafy and green vegetables. In India, where one out of every three children is malnourished, kitchen gardens can act as a potential and sustainable solution for significantly improving the nutritional status of rural and middle-class urban households. Kitchen gardens, along with improving the intake of healthy food, also promote physical and mental health through relaxation and satisfaction as well as helps in building communities.

After the adoption of kitchen gardening in rural areas of western Uttar Pradesh, production of vegetables at beneficiaries increased to 412 percent (%) which resulted in increased consumption and distribution to 175% and 100% respectively., and the purchase of vegetables was decreased by 40% (Savita et al., 2018). A similar study conducted in tribal areas of Adilabad district (Telangana), concluded that backyard kitchen gardening in tribal areas decreased the expenditure on vegetables, increased the availability of varied vegetables and green leafy vegetables in the diet, increased community connection and the people were able to earn a supplemental income of Rs. 1500 to 2500 per annum (Poshadri et al., 2019).

Getting started on Kitchen Gardening:

For a family of 4-6 members, a kitchen garden of an area of 250m² is sufficient. It can be in the backyard, terrace, balcony or even on the windowsill. For beginners, starting with micro greens or leafy vegetables is an ideal deal. Vegetables like tomato, chilli, brinjal, bitter gourd, onion, okra, moringa, cowpea, pumpkin etc. and fruit crops like papaya and banana can be integrated.

To ensure healthy production, good maintenance of the garden is quintessential. This can be taken care of by regular and judicious watering, regular pruning or clipping of dead or dried leaves of the plants, using kitchen wastes as compost and harvesting with frequent pest management using neem oil or other available botanicals.

Advantages of Kitchen Gardening:

- ✓ It provides the family with fresh and organic produce.
- ✓ It helps in improving the food and nutritional security of the household.
- ✓ It has the potential to create supplemental incomes in rural households.
- ✓ It helps to purify the air around the house and can increase the attention and focus of the people.
- ✓ The wastelands around the house can be made productive using kitchen gardening.
- ✓ Utilisation of kitchen waste and recycling of wastewater is an added advantage of kitchen gardening.

Drawbacks:

The main obstacles to the widespread adoption of kitchen gardening are a lack of information about the many types, their management techniques, the prevention and treatment of pests, diseases, and insects, as well as a lack of skills in the production of high-quality farmyard manure.

Conclusion

A resurgence in the popularity of kitchen gardening is reviving. A kitchen garden is often smaller and more frequently created to link aesthetically with the design and architecture of the home, which sets it apart from a "normal" vegetable garden. Kitchen gardens are planned areas with symmetrical beds that are arranged and planted in a beautiful way. In other words, kitchen gardens are attractive in addition to being useful. Additionally, they are intended for eating fresh rather than growing a lot of food to can and preserve. The



beneficial effects of kitchen gardening included providing the family with wholesome food, easing financial burdens, and keeping everyone busy and healthy. People must follow this practice to reap the numerous benefits because it is a fruitful activity to obtain fresh, healthy, and toxic-free vegetables.

References:

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