

Matrimandir

August 2019

The Garden of the Unexpected

Finally the long awaited summer rains have come, bringing to an end the weeks of hot, arid days which often reached 40 degrees in the burning afternoons.

The young trees in the Garden of the Unexpected have been waiting for this relief too. All through the summer they were carefully watered and mulched; – indeed they were showing signs of new growth in spite of these harsh conditions.

And now, with the rains, the land has palpably relaxed, the air has cooled, and the branches of the young trees move happily under the cooler breezes of July.

This new garden project was inaugurated during Auroville's birthday week this February with the planting of twelve plumeria. Then, in early April

we planted thirty local hardy trees to increase the shady green spaces in the garden.

The trees chosen for the Garden of the Unexpected have qualities of robustness and are able to survive droughts as they are mostly part of Tamil Nadu's coastal evergreen forest. There are many varieties. Here are interesting descriptions of three of them given by one of Auroville's experienced foresters:

The ebony tree, *Diospyros ebenum*, will for example give fine shade. Its fruits are edible and serve medicinally as a blood thinner. Ebony is rare as it was recognized in early times as a prized hard dark wood: it has been used for scabbards, gun stocks, piano keys, and golf club heads. Visitors to the garden will love its beautiful form, its elegant trunk and the protection it will give them from the sun.

One of the many hardy trees which have been recently planted in the Garden of the Unexpected is the rare tree named "Streblus asper" which has been given a position close to one of garden's significant stones.



The yellow silk cotton, *Cochlospermum religiosum*, gives big yellow buttercups as flowers that Mother called, "Success in Supramental Works". Its name *Cochlospermum* indicates that the seeds lying in the finest silky cotton look like snails. The seed pod is one of the most beautiful of our flora. The second part of its name, *religiosum*,

indicates that the flowers were traditionally offered in temples.

The tree planted next to a large stone in one section of the garden, (shown in the photo above) is named *Streblus asper*. It is also special and rare and will live a long time. Ayurvedic medicine uses the bark, the roots, the seeds, the leaves and the

A crane and JCB were needed to position most of the large stones in the Garden of the Unexpected. In this photo, the position of the central stone in the area called the "Circle of Humanity" is carefully adjusted.



One section of the Garden of the Unexpected will feature a wide, dry stone garden. A few hardy trees will be planted here too for shade.



latex to treat a variety of ailments from infections to headaches. The old leaves are suitably rough to be used as sandpaper to smooth and polish fine furniture. One can eat the fruit and the leaves are made into a tea.

There are many other notable varieties. One of them is *Caesalpinia coriaria* with the Mother's significance: "Intuitive Knowledge". Locally, this is called the "butterfly tree", because the flowers are very attractive to butterflies. In the flowering season the three trees of this type which have been planted will add a delightful living feature for the children visiting the gardens.

The other aspect of the Garden of the Unexpected which has seen a lot of development over the summer has been the placement of decorative boulders in two of its main sections.

Placing of the stones is a very sensitive, creative work, moving the stone a little this way, a little that way,— perhaps turning it on its side,— until the desired effect is achieved. The driver of the crane was sometimes distracted by three different people waving their hands to move the stone in different directions! Eventually a consensus was reached

for each stone with everyone saying, "OK good! Leave it like that." Of course sometimes the design team comes back after a few days and decides to turn the stone on its head. We all learn to smile a bit waiting for the stones to find their final resting places.

The New Compost Section

The second main work in progress at Matrimandir is the ongoing construction of the 76 meter long shed being built to shelter future vermi-compost production and related composting activities for the Matrimandir gardens. Work continues steadily on the construction of this shelter located in a new site close to Auroville's main Visitors Center. When the shed is ready we will begin trial production of vermi-compost and then also bring the machine which has been purchased to produce compost from kitchen waste to the site. Several Auroville kitchens are already supplying vegetable waste for trial production by this machine. It is now housed in the composting area at the central Matrimandir site.

The large roof of the new composting shed nearing completion in late July. The roof is 76 meters long and 15 meters wide and when completed, will shelter large scale production of vermi-compost and kitchen waste compost.



Main Gardens Design Call

Of the twelve main gardens envisaged by the Mother to surround Matrimandir, four have so far been constructed, – Existence, Consciousness, Bliss and Progress. We are now in a process of creating a design call so that designers from around the world can be approached to create designs for the next four gardens: Light, Life, Power and Wealth. The design call will generally follow the process that was successfully used to call for design proposals for the Garden of the

Unexpected. The success of that process has led us to the building of the Garden of the Unexpected today.

While still under preparation the design call for the next four gardens will give the full background of these gardens within the context of Auroville as given by the Mother. It will call for designs from the highest level of inspiration. The aim is to put out the design call in the coming months. We look forward very much to this event, as it is important that the twelve gardens of Matrimandir are built as soon as possible.



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Dear Friends, the Matrimandir requires a substantial amount of finances to carry out the ongoing projects and regular maintenance of the site. Your continued help is very much appreciated. If there are other people you know who may be able to help with the growth of Matrimandir we would be very grateful for their assistance, too.

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Important information on sending your offerings: Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You can send us by post your offering by DD/Cheque payable to “Matrimandir”. You may also give your offering in cash/cheque/DD at the Matrimandir Office during your visit for meditation.

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