

Matrimandir

August 2018



Lotus flowers open to the sun in the garden of Progress

Rain Water Harvesting

The dry summer months saw the beginning of work on the site to build a rain water harvesting system to collect the runoff of the storm water from the entire 22 acres of the Matrimandir gardens. A six meter long rain water catching channel had been dug and lined with HDPE pond liner during April and May. Various trials using stone slabs and ferrocement panels are now underway to see how to best protect this liner from sunlight and inadvertent punctures and other damage.

Now the main project is in full swing, with excavation of this channel being carried out along its whole one kilometer length, just a few meters

outside the oval road surrounding the Matrimandir gardens. Three separate systems will feed water into this channel. First the direct run off from the garden paths which all slope outward towards the edge of the gardens. Second, the channel will collect the water which is pumped up from the large hidden tank below Matrimandir where rain water is accumulated. Third, water will be collected from a system installed about 45 years ago, which allows storm water to flow out of the amphitheater by gravity to the lower lands to the west of Matrimandir. Water from this system will be fed into a new open well just outside the oval road, from where it will be pumped into the open water channel surrounding



Work proceeds on the basic excavation of the one kilometer long storm water harvesting channel that will surround the entire Matrimandir gardens.



Masons begin to build the brick walls of the deep open well which will receive runoff rain water from the Amphitheater. Pumps located here will then send the harvested rainwater into the open water channel being now constructed around the gardens oval.

the oval. This channel will feed the storm water into a large test pond soon to be built on the south east side of the gardens.

As usage of water and rainwater harvesting become more and more critical in these times, it is heartening to begin to undertake this important work at Matrimandir.

Looking ahead to the Big Test Pond

The project described above, the open water channel currently being built to encircle the Matrimandir gardens, is a forerunner to a much larger project which is under preparation on site. This project is a large test pond to be built on the South East edge of the gardens, which is itself a first full scale trial for the future lake which the Mother envisioned as surrounding the Matrimandir. Research is currently underway to find a suitable excavator in the Tamil Nadu market which will be needed to dig out the 70 – 80,000 cubic meters of soil of the large test pond. Before long, we hope to see on site the first digging of this portion of the future lake of Matrimandir!

Summer maintenance

The month of June saw multifaceted activity inside and below Matrimandir in the form of several important maintenance works. The entire “Inner skin” of the building, which one sees as glowing orange triangular panels, was cleaned from the

inside and the outside, - a huge task requiring quite some acrobatic skills. Carpets were cleaned, marble floors were polished and the Chamber’s AC system was given a significant hardware upgrade. Urgent repairs were also carried out with regard to the waterproofing of the outer ferrocement skin.

Even though we are still constructing various aspects of the Matrimandir, (the amphitheater underground rooms, the 12 Gardens and the rainwater harvesting system and the test pond) the building itself is now 46 years old and, like many other buildings, it needs regular and sometimes significant maintenance to keep it in best condition!

A Call for designs for the Garden of the Unexpected

During the month of June, the Matrimandir team put out a call for design proposals for the Garden of the Unexpected. This is not one of the 12 major gardens of Matrimandir, but is rather one of the large park-like spaces within the Matrimandir area lying on its north western side.

Roger Anger, architect of the Matrimandir, was keenly interested in this particular garden space and envisaged it as a place focused on giving children a unique experience. He described this space as an “initiatory place” for children; not an ordinary playground, but a place of wonder and for discovering the unexpected; and a place of



The Garden Tools Center beneath the Western rim of the Amphitheater has been under construction for the last two years and is nearly complete. This space will be the center for storage and distribution of garden tools for the maintenance of the Matrimandir gardens over the generations to come.



Work takes a step forward at the new location for compost production for the Matrimandir gardens, with the installation of an overhead water tank on June 30th. The next step will be the construction of a shed for vermi-compost production.



Polishing the marble floors was one of the many maintenance works undertaken inside Matrimandir during the month of June

‘reversed reality’, for example, a place where one can feel the sky on the ground and the ground in the sky.

The call for design proposals for this special space is being made to bring in the creative energy of the Auroville residents and of those connected with Auroville.

At the time of writing, some 17 individuals or design groups have registered to participate in

this event. Design submissions are due in by July 31st, after which they will go through a process of verification and expert evaluation. The most appropriate designs will finally be placed before an Auroville public panel to make the final choice of the design to be implemented. It is a fascinating experiment in gathering design energies from around the community and we look forward very much to the outcome and to building the Garden of the Unexpected over the next year!

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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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