

Matrimandira

August 2014



The pool flows smoothly over its rim into the cascade in the Garden of Consciousness.
The rim is inlaid here with gold-in-glass tiles.

The Pool in the Garden of Consciousness

As our last newsletter went to the press we had just filled the pond in the garden of Consciousness and initiated its flowing cascade. What happened in the days to come was a bit of a biological adventure, -due to a very high UV index and temperatures above 41 degrees Celsius that we experienced during the summer months of May and June.

All bodies of water, unless they are doped with strong chemicals, are living arenas, filled with microscopic plant and animal life. They feed on the minerals and organic compounds in the water and they are fed too by the life giving energy of the sun. Such bodies of water will very quickly become home to burgeoning populations of plant and animal life, and the first to come will be Algae. (Only natural ponds which are well shaded by trees and filled with aquatic plant life and fish can escape this green transformation!) Within a few hours our beautiful clear freshly filled pond began to turn green, and within about four days it was covered with a brilliant green layer of very healthy algae! It looked good enough to eat, like Spirulina.

We of course were expecting a development like this, as we knew that in this first moment there were a lot of nutrients in the water for the algae to feast on which could give only this result as a preliminary stage in

the pond's development. We temporarily covered a third of the surface of the pond with water Hyacinths to begin to absorb these nutrients and to help cool the water that was reaching a temperature of up to 38° Celsius under the hot sun of May-June. This double action of the Hyacinths began to make it harder for the algae to continue reproducing.

But our main combatant against the algae was a special mixture of microscopic beneficial organisms called Consortia Probiotics. The Consortia Probiotics, - composed of 16 strains of microorganisms, - were known to be effective against the spread of algae. We had prepared small sacks of clay-like balls ahead of time, inoculated them with the Probiotics and had then placed these sacks in the pond to act against the algae - but would they be a strong enough agent to reestablish the clarity of our previously pristine pond water?

On the morning of day five, we were amazed to find that the marvelous green layer of algae seen floating on top of the pond the evening before had mostly settled down to the bottom of the pond, -this was due to the action of the Probiotics seeded in the small balls in the pond. The microorganisms in the Probiotics reduce the phosphorous and nitrogen available in the groundwater which had been used to fill the pond. These are the two main foods of the algae, and so, deprived of their nutrition, the algae die, and in dying they clump together and fall to the floor of the pond. Over the next two weeks, the pond became more and more clear, until it returned to being quite transparent, like the day of the original filling. We had indeed hoped that this would be the case, but were very happy to see that the Probiotics introduced were powerful enough to produce this very fine result.

Follow up was then required: 200 small fish were introduced to consume more of the decaying plant life and deposited algae. And then, to really clean up the pond we started to vacuum its floor, and this is continued now once a week to remove any fallen plant matter along with the thin layer of dead algae that accumulates there.

Algae continues to grow because fresh nutrients are introduced into the water of the pond regularly, either by rains (which we are thankful for!) or by the top-up water that we have to add to the pond to replace water



Vacuuming the pool is now done once a week to remove dead algae from the green slate stone cladding of its floor.

lost constantly due to evaporation under the hot sun of Tamil Nadu. Thus it is an ongoing cycle,- some new algae is formed as it feeds on these nutrients,- then this new algae too soon dies off because of the action of the Probiotics and after it falls to the bottom of the pond we vacuum it away to maintain the overall clarity of the water.

This life process has stabilized now, and as long as we keep up the supply of Consortia Probiotics organisms (adding little bit each week to the water) and keep up with our vacuuming, we will have a wonderfully clear pond to enjoy in the garden of Consciousness. And we await the marvelous day, soon to come, when our Lotus plant in the pool, now showing many new green leaves, will offer its first white bloom to the sun.



In the Garden of Bliss a model of one of its seven fountains (1.2 meters wide), is tested.

Designing the nine remaining gardens of Matrimandir

As the final stages are reached in the building of the three first gardens of Matrimandir, there is, going on quietly behind the scene, a deep process of consideration and planning for the next nine garden areas to come: Light, Life, Power, Wealth, Utility, Progress, Youth, Harmony and Perfection.

A lot has been learned, and is still being learned, from the construction of the first three gardens: Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. The design group, continuing to delve into the depths of Mother's descriptions of the garden, now approaches the design as being that of ONE garden, composed of intimately linked and related sections. This aspect is reflected in the design proposals being now developed.

Many Auroville residents and others who have lived with the idea of these gardens for many years have been interviewed, reviewing what has been done, and considering the direction that might be taken in the future.

Overall, the approach to the gardens now moves towards a design that should be flexible, simple, softer and evolutive in nature. One of the chief things understood in this regard has been the need to reduce the



The garden design office, - filled with models and drawings as proposals for the future gardens are developed.

amount of “hard elements” in the designs. This term refers to the built up parts of the gardens, - for example the foundations for stone pathways or concrete basins or solid walls. The perception is there that we can make much more use of simple forms shaped directly in the earth, of more natural and simple shapes.

To arrive at concrete ideas of how to translate the qualities of the next gardens into matter, the garden team has passed a great deal of time, moving through several stages of conceptualization, translating the ideas that came down through simple paintings, through working with movements in sand, and then into the more material medium of clay modeling. The process to bring these ideas more and more into material detail is still very much under development.

When these proposals have been developed sufficiently, they will be shared with wider groups in the community for feedback and finalization. This design work is a fascinating process, - of slowly, quietly, giving space for new shapes and concepts to come down in to the minds and hearts of the team who have taken up this adventurous task.

Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You may make your cheques, money orders or DD payable to **‘Matrimandir’**

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