

Terrace farming— an answer to shrinking space, water scarcity

City resident Jaspal Anand shows the way by developing hydroponic terrace garden at his house

CHARU CHHIBBER

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For the land-strapped denizen, the desire to utilise the terrace of one's home for gardening is nothing unusual. While filling functional spaces in one's house with a multitude of plants that yield rich dividends is a movement abroad, the trend is catching up albeit slowly in the country.

Sector 33 resident Jaspal Anand is one of the few people, who have opted to develop a hydroponic terrace garden for growing food. It is a method of growing plants without soil, using mineral nutrient solutions in a water solvent, he informs.

In three years, Anand, a retired merchant navy officer, has grown thousands of herbs, vegetables and fruits on the terrace of his house. Not only does his terrace garden cater to the family's food requirements but also generates a lot of interest among his family and friends.

When Anand started his own terrace garden after



Jaspal Anand looks after plants at his Sector 33 house in Chandigarh on Wednesday. TRIBUNE PHOTO: NITIN MITTAL

retirement, his wife Komal, son Somveer and daughter-in-law Sohaila came out as his biggest support.

"All I give is 3-4 hour's time daily and look what I get in return," he says, pointing towards his nearly 1,500 sq ft rooftop,

which happens to be the favourite area for the family to unwind.

Divided into two parts, one large area has a green shed where he works with his helper Nafiz, who is more of a friend, he remarks.

On this side of the ter-

race, Anand grows tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, brinjal, spinach, cabbage, many varieties of lettuce, Italian parsley, basil, radish, sweet potato, oregano, strawberry, mulberry, guava, bok choy, aurugula – you name it,

his garden has it. The other part has a host of succulents, herbs, olives, fruits and Australian lemons.

While seedlings for most of the greens are imported from across the globe, thanks to family and friends and Anand's trips

abroad – the indigenous varieties find equal place in his garden.

Anand says the youth needs to be motivated to adopt terrace farming because future generations will face a shortage of space, water and organic food. "Even if it begins with just a single pot, it is a good start," he says, hoping that he manages to buy enough land to do organic farming and provide residents of the region home-grown, chemical-free food.

Anand educates whoever expresses interest and as a rule, the family gives plants or packages as gifts on birthdays, anniversaries and festivals.

Apart from the rooftop, the household has a sprawling lawn with two ponds in the backyard and a garden in the front of the house full of ornamental plants, which, he points out, are his wife's "babies". Apart from that, Anand's son and daughter-in-law aspire to foray into aquaculture soon.

"The love for green runs in the family, you see," he says before signing off.