

Festival of Uncultivated Food: Weeding out the myths

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Earth connection: A view of Paaka Cafe which hosts the festival

[This culinary and agrarian event celebrates 'orphaned greens' to let you dig into earth's bounty](#)

This is a culinary event with a difference. It doesn't just give you a yummy and wholesome lunch, but also promises to make your weekend interesting with a knowledgeable tour of unconventional fields. Ever heard of *elaka chevula kura* (curry with rat's ear-shaped leaf) or *Gunugu koor*a whose scientific name is *Celosia Argentina*. According to local agrarian community, *gunugu koor*a is highly nutritious and can be used in multiple ways — in making soups, as a body wash, home remedy to treat diarrhoea and as an antidote for snakebites.

Deccan Development Society and Disha's Beyond Organic are hosting 'Festival of Uncultivated Food', the first of its kind in India claim the proud organisers, at [Paaka Organic Café and Cultural Space](#), one of Hyderabad's most indie venues for all things green.

This festival celebrates edible plants and crops which we ignoramus tend to dismiss as weeds; plants that grow without their seeds being sown and alongside other crops. These low-maintenance plants rate high on the nutritional scale and farmers vouch that one single plant can contribute to many positive health aspects.

Women of Disha's Beyond Organic

"They grow best on lands designated as degraded by human beings," elaborates Jayasri Cherukuri of Deccan Development Society, "They are never sold in the market, but are several times more nutritious than the marketed [greens](#). Probably they are God's own socialist crops; they create a society of equals by offering the best nutrition for the poor. They are termed weeds by agricultural science dominated by western thinking."

Frequently pegged as 'right plants in a wrong place,' these foraged plants are popular with the rural people. The food fest will introduce people to these plants and leaves and make them try interesting local dishes.

Bharath Dantuluri, a long-time advocate for such a movement, and founder of Paaka Café, is super excited to host the event. "The biggest contributor in the loss of biodiversity is human activity. We hope events like these would inspire us to review our basic priorities in life and in adopting more sustainable life styles in our best interests. We wonder how humans are failing in their basics of understanding nature, despite giant leaps in science and technology. Is it the lack of knowledge or temptations that lead us to a self destructive path?"

What to expect

At Festival Of Uncultivated Foods, about ten varieties of indigenous plants and crops will be cooked by the local farmers for guests. The event will include an organic buffet, a movie screening and conversations with the experts.

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