

Gurgaon Residents Have a New Weekend Hobby: Grow Their Own Vegetables on Land Leased from the Govt

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The Horticulture Department of Gurgaon will make some agricultural land available to city residents who want to do farming and grow their own kitchen gardens for household needs.

In this first-of-its-kind initiative, the city of Gurgaon will be emulating the community gardens of the US and UK where busy city people, who have very little space in their flats and apartments to grow vegetables, get away on weekends to do some gardening.

The department has taken 27 acres of farming land in Bhondsi from a third party; it will be available for lease in small patches to those residents who apply to the horticulture office in Gurgaon. The land will be leased out for at least a year. The rate has not been decided as yet. The department will provide seeds and pesticides at subsidized rates but regular maintenance, watering and security will be the responsibility of the person or families leasing the land.

People will be able to grow many vegetables they use at home everyday – like tomatoes, beans, gourds, brinjals, cauliflower, etc.

Farming tools like ploughs, etc., will be made available at the site but the gardeners will have to bear the full farming costs. It is also a good idea for prospective farmers to test the soil quality before beginning to grow their vegetables.

There is a *gaushala* near the community garden space at Bhondsi where residents will be allowed to milk cows and goats if they want.

Since the department cannot make staff available to answer all the queries from residents about farming techniques and other issues, it will set up a WhatsApp group. The residents can post queries in the group on soil, water, vegetables to grow in a particular season, pest control, etc.

This initiative will come as a boon to many city residents who complain of the high levels of toxicity in the vegetables they buy locally. Most produce in the National Capital Region (NCR) is grown on the banks of the Yamuna, where crops are irrigated with sewage water.

“There is no way to trace the source and origin of vegetables we consume these days, or to keep track of the level of chemicals and other toxins in them. Under such circumstances, especially in our urban lives in apartments, growing one’s own vegetables is the best way to eat healthy,” the District Horticulture Officer in Gurgaon, Deen Mohammad Khan, said to [Times of India](#).

City residents too are delighted at getting the opportunity to take care of their own health and that of their children and other family members. “While authorities need to adopt sustainable practices, citizens too can do their bit by reducing their household waste that goes into landfill, by composting, and using the compost to fertilize their kitchen garden” said Shubhra Puri, founder of Gurgaon First, which is working closely with the horticulture department to promote the concept.

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