

## LOVING AND LIVING WITH PLANTS

BY LAILA KARIM



# Our mother – who taught us love for nature!

People all over the world celebrated Mother's Day on 14 May. Although I believe that every day belongs to the mother who gave us birth and brought a new life to this world! She is always special to the mother earth and to all of us.

I feel that it is always good to find an occasion to be more with her in presence and in spirit, and yet dedicating a day for her is also good. It is important for all of us to make time and space in our busy lives to think about her, be with her and recognise her contributions in our lives.

On this day, many of us like to shower her with cards and flowers, saris and we end the day with special dinners with her. This is needed to tell her the love we hold for her and show her how much we care for her. This is the purpose of celebrating Mothers' Day on a special day in a year.

We know every mother is special to her child and she is also special with her own traits, she is always unique with her nature and way of dealing her world.

My – our mother – whom we lost in 2012, was also very special with her own qualities. She was a nature lover throughout her life. Not a single day she passed without touching a leaf from her own garden or nearby to her. Wherever she went, to a relative's house or on a vacation, within few hours she was out to see the place, the trees and flowers, and greenery around the place always attracted her most.

In raising her children and even the grand children, she was keen to introduce the child to plants, used to speak about the fruits and flowers and their types, which comes in which season, what is the speciality of that individual.

We often hear that 'today' children are hooked to junk food; they do not eat vegetables. The children who grew in her hands or in close association with her are different; their first choice is having something green every day.

Whenever the young kids in our family had a runny nose or showed some hints of

cold, my mother, even in her post 70s, did not hesitate to climb the stairs to grab some leaves from the 'Tulsi' plant.

She always made fresh syrup with the leaves' juice and added some honey to make it tasty and also more powerful for immediate relief from the cold. In our days we also learnt from her which herbs are good for which remedies, like ginger and 'thankuni' for stomach ache, or why we need to have red *joba* to save us from hair fall and grow new hair, why keeping a marigold in the garden is necessary as it is an instant blood stopper from small cuts and injuries.

Our mother passed away about five years ago, but the practice in the family is



still on. The youngest member of our family, her grandson, whenever in cold he asks for the tulsi syrup. The youngest row of children of our family love to see 'bitter gourd' fry or any type of shak in their every day meals. Their dadi made that habit!

My mother as a nature lover spent time with trees and plants till the last day. Her last touch to a plant was two hours before her last breath. It was a routine exercise of my mother - our mother - to go to the roof or take a walk around the balconies after her early morning prayer every day.

A major part of my mother's life was spent travelling around the country with her husband, in civil service. So she had plenty of gardening experience – planting of trees in govt houses with space and servants to help her – it was natural in those days. In her own house in the outskirts of Dhaka city, she along with her husband - my father who was also a die-hard plant lover.

Everywhere they lived, they made their love for plants visible, especially with long-lasting and fruit bearing plants like coconut, mango, jackfruit, and also various wood saplings.

My mother was very keen on planting seeds of any tasty fruit she had. She used to preserve the ripe seeds of good vegetables

like tomatoes, guava, chillies or so for the next season to put into her garden. While travelling within the city, several times she asked me to stop by a nursery if possible – once even while going to the hospital for a medical check up.

In another episode, she was in the ICCU in bad condition, soon after getting some comfort, she asked us about the plants on her rooftop, reminded us to ensure daily watering there. She also asked me to double check whether the plants are okay in her absence.

Just the day before of her final departure, on her way to the airport to a visit to Cox's Bazar, she picked up some fallen 'sheuli' with a smile!

Did she realise that she will not return to this tree? It was the first bloom of the tree that she had planted two/three years ago in the corner of the main entrance of our house. The next morning, in Cox's Bazar town, she as usual after her morning prayer and tea, had a one hour walk in the garden of the govt house, spoke to my brother and the gardener on various plants and their products, she also asked the cook to pluck some vegetables of her choice for lunch, then she went up to the roof to see the container garden – specially to see the just-bloomed pink water lilies there!

My mother and her life were synonymous to plants. Today, when we look back to the albums – photos and videos, we have reconfirmation on her vision of life and love for nature.

P.S. Dear readers, in several of my earlier pieces, I spoke about the value of nature in the lives of our seniors, parents, particularly when they become dependent on us. It is more applicable for our mothers, who largely are shy about speaking about their hobbies or needs.

In their old days, in most cases, they remain confined in the apartment house within the four walls, watching TVs or some time sit for a while in the strip of a balcony.

So, dear readers, those who are lucky to have your parents and mother (or elders) with you, give them a regular chance to be with nature, if possible in everyday life. It is extremely helpful to make them raise some plants of their own. Or help them go out to the plants and trees and field whenever possible. Because, nature is the best company for anyone!

Ma, many salutes to you!

Please share your thoughts, experience on everything and anything related to gardening. Mail us at [lifestyleds@yahoo.com](mailto:lifestyleds@yahoo.com) and your letters will be forwarded to the writer.

## মাদার নতুন নাম

কালার গার্ড

কাপড়ের রঙকে রাখে নতুনের মতো ঝকঝকে

মাল্টি বুস্টার

কাপড়ের যে কোন দাগ-ময়লাকে নিমিষেই দূর করে

Fast wash  
Brilliant White

with color guard

DETERGENT POWDER

সবচেয়ে ফাস্ট, সবচেয়ে কার্যকরী ..