



LS SUGGESTS

Environmental Care 101

HOW TO INCORPORATE GREEN LIVING IN OUR URBAN EXISTENCE

Do you ever wonder why we have such a lack in compassion when it comes to nature? Think of it this way — our ancestors made dwellings from trees and other raw materials. They made mud huts beside beautiful river landscapes. By definition, these are primitive housings, but to any city person today, it sounds like a resort!

Civilisation was cool until we ran out of sustainable ways to extract resources from nature. Then the Iron Age took its first breath. It's like petroleum failed to be Marvel's Vibranium. Like Vibranium, almost everything is made of/for petroleum. However, unlike Vibranium, the petroleum that once fuelled the industrial revolution is now the cause of the global mess we call urban life.

Could it be that we have an 'out of sight, out of mind' relationship with nature? In the absence of rivers and forests from our periphery, we have turned the ocean into our garbage disposal. Perhaps it is the distance between the soil and the pent-house that accounts for the lack in compassion we have for Mother Nature.

So how can we transform our relationship with nature from 'out of sight, out of mind,' to say, 'absence makes the heart grow fonder?' We can't bring the earth's biomes into our sky scrapers, but we can try to incorporate green living into our urban lifestyles.

Nature has its own clockwork. As long as you understand that all organisms require time to heal and replenish, you will never run out of natural resources. The innate system of nature is sustainable. In order to integrate green living into our grey lifestyles, we must develop sustainable habits.

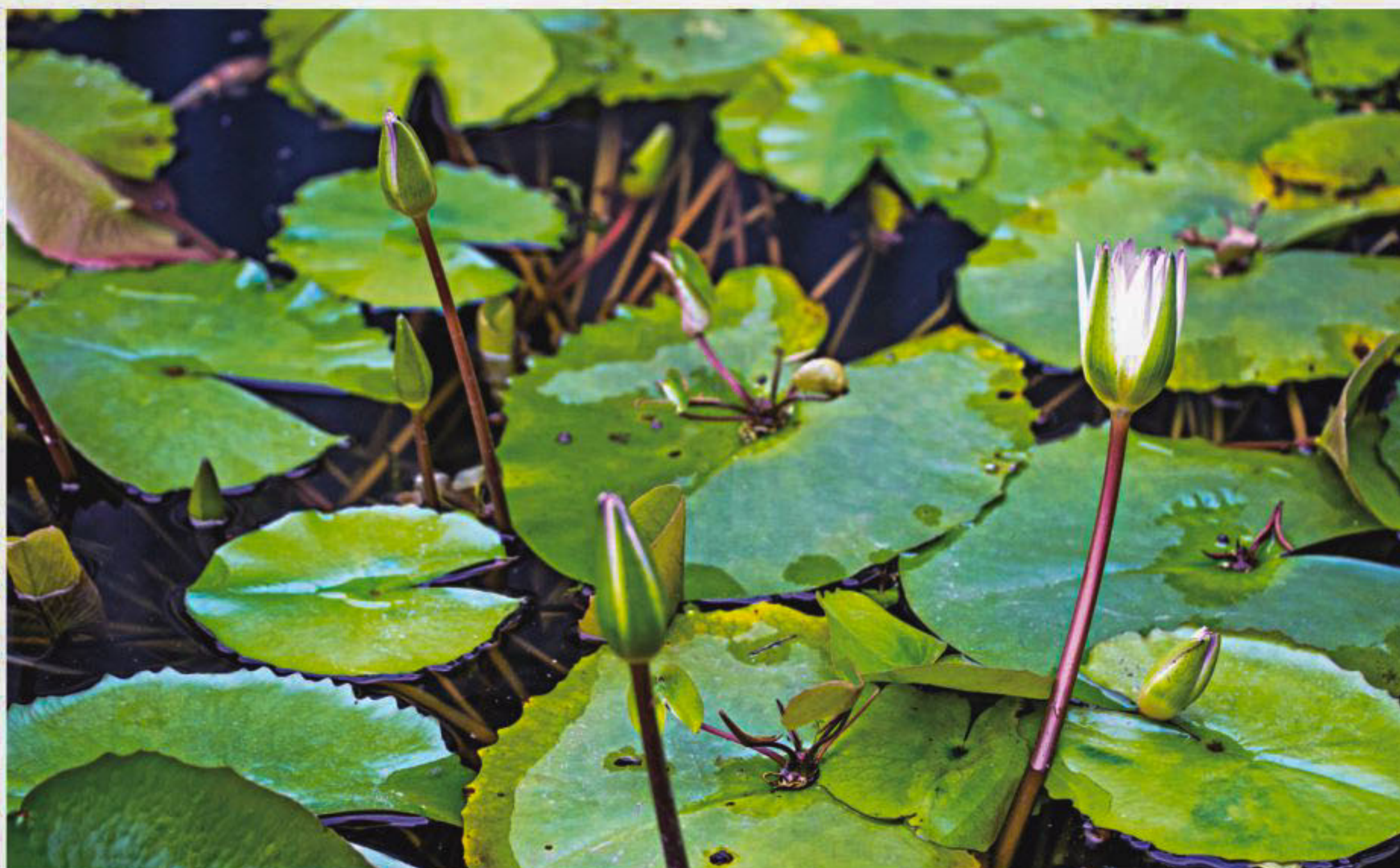
THE START

Household behaviour is a decent way to begin with. The threshold for a newly learned habit to go on autopilot is 66 days. For 66 days, try to strictly abide a few rules that will help you get in sync with nature.

Creating sustainable habits at home

It is your right to reap the benefits of washing machines, but know that when you opt for a hot wash, more than 50 percent of the energy goes to the heating process.

Try to wash your clothes with cold water



more often.

For showers, set yourself a timer to keep it short and optimum. You can use up to two gallons a minute. For other utilities, unless absolutely necessary, try not to use lights at day time. Wake up early and switch your air conditioner off for a 12-hour energy break. With habits like this, you can save water, energy, money, and time.

Indoor gardening

There can be no better way to bring the soil closer to your tiles than indoor planting. There are many herbs, micro-greens, flowers and succulents that are apartment friendly. You can have your supply of the classic Italian mix right from your balcony — basil, oregano, and parsley are all easily grown indoors.

Mints are uncontrollable and can colonise your balcony if not properly maintained, but on the plus side, they diffuse the

nicest fragrance.

There are many plants that are not only ornamental, but also double as incognito insect repellents. Lemongrass, marigold, and lavenders are all beautiful to us, but bugs hate them. So, let nature do its job, and you can layoff on the aerosol.

Every gardening aficionado reports to growing an emotional attachment with their harvest. So, can you imagine if you



had acres of the earth as your garden?

REDUCE REFUSE REUSE RECYCLE

Urban life basically means you are a consumer, and not a producer. This lifestyle keeps adding to the on growing pile of pollution. It is like we are pushing all our rubbish into the nature (landfills), rather than bringing nature closer to us.

To incorporate green living into our urban-consumerist lives, we can change the

way we deal with the surplus of trash items.

It's high time we add refuse to the 'reduce reuse recycle' mantra. Reducing is only possible if we stop the demand for pretty packaging for basic survival items, like your favourite brand of basmati. Reusing is tricky because the compounds like BPA in plasticware can be harmful for storing food and beverages. And last but not least, recycling factories cannot break down everything, and they are very expensive. Therefore, refusing must be the answer.

Earlier last year, the 'plastic attack' happened where protesters in UK challenged unnecessary packaging by shopping at supermarkets and leaving the boxes there, only taking the items inside.

If you think money makes the world go round, demand is the key to its ignition. If we can curb the demand for plastic packaging that ends up as garbage, we would have ample time to clean up the existing ones.

VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

There are many organisations in Bangladesh that have kept compassion towards nature sacred to their mission. Look for communities where the team is young, because they have all the might and heart to make the change, like Waste Cop. Co-founders Tahsin Rahman and Ahmed Imtiaz Samad are on a mission to recycle the world one step at a time by collecting and studying the almost imperishable goods we call trash.

Being environment friendly only requires a change in our mindset. Even your individual contribution as the solitary in-door gardener can go miles. And you never know that the next guest at your house will follow suit.

By Sanumkia Siddiqui

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Note — To find out more on how you may contribute to the green movement, you may wish to follow Waste Cop on Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/Waste-Cop-289749528512295>