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Visit her 'Metta Garden'!

Monday, February 1, 2021 - 01:00

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[Print Edition](#)

[Ishara Jayawardane \(/line/ishara-jayawardane\)](/line/ishara-jayawardane)



(<https://archives1.dailynews.lk/sites/default/files/news/2021/01/31/18-Visit-01.jpg>)

Life is a chain that is a truly wonderful and natural occurrence that takes place all over the planet and in our home gardens. The beautiful balance in life involves living beings visible and non- visible that contribute to life itself in all its glory. Green Thumbs speaks to Founder President of Eco Friendly Volunteers (ECO-V), Kanchana Weerakoon, on loving kindness that turns your home garden into a thriving and bio diverse environment.

WHY YOU'RE NOT LOSING WEIGHT

WAKE UP TIME	6 AM	7 AM	8 AM	AGE	18-25	26-35	36-55	56+
DAILY MEALS	1	2	3	DAILY WATER INTAKE				
HOURS OF SLEEP	5	6	7	YOUR BMI	40+	30+		
				FASTING SCHEDULE	16:8	12:12		

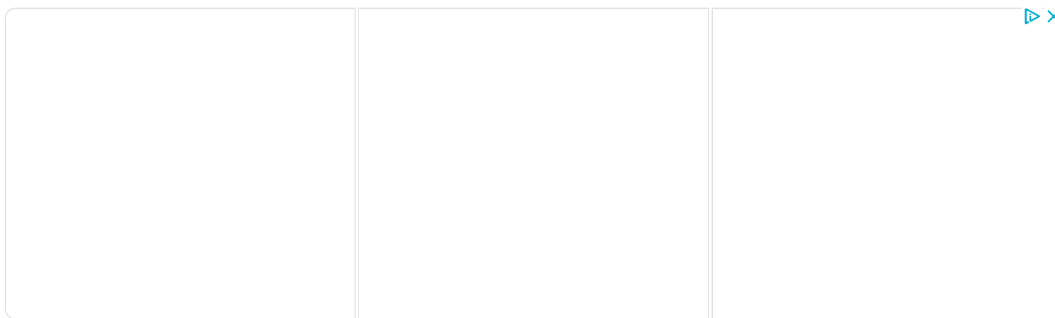
TAKE THE TEST

Weerakoon speaks of a Home Garden with a Buddhist philosophy. She points out that a home garden is a place for not only humans but for other living beings seen and unseen. It is only through loving kindness that your garden can thrive. Your home garden can only thrive if it is biodiverse. Loving kindness to all living beings in your home garden will not only give you nutritious vegetables and fruits, but it will give you mental satisfaction.

“The owner of the Home garden thinks it's his or hers. But once you create that space it's the home for many other living beings. I call these 'Metta Gardens'. Which means a garden with loving kindness and space for all living beings. These beings are either visible or non-visible. i.e macro or micro fauna and flora. Especially when you maintain it as an organic home garden so many animals and plants start living there. Starting from flying animals like birds, bats and insects like dragonflies, butterflies and bees and beetles, and ending at soil fauna such as earthworms, millipedes and centipedes, snakes or lizards. They all start living there! That's because that's their home too even before you started living there. So, you can't claim it's your home garden. It's everybody's. That is the uniqueness of organic home gardening I promote. You eventually learn how to gain altruistic joy! You let others live happily and in return you can gain not only your food or flowers but also happiness and peace and healthy life,” said Weerakoon.

Healthy soil

We need to respect life. This is a very important reality we all have to learn, understand and respect when maintaining our own home gardens. Because since you re-create the home for others, you have the responsibility of looking after them and their home. For example, let's take an earthworm. For many people nowadays it's a very slimy, ugly or yucky creature. But it is the best buddy of an organic farmer! Without earthworms you can't think of healthy soil.



Kom och shoppa på Temu

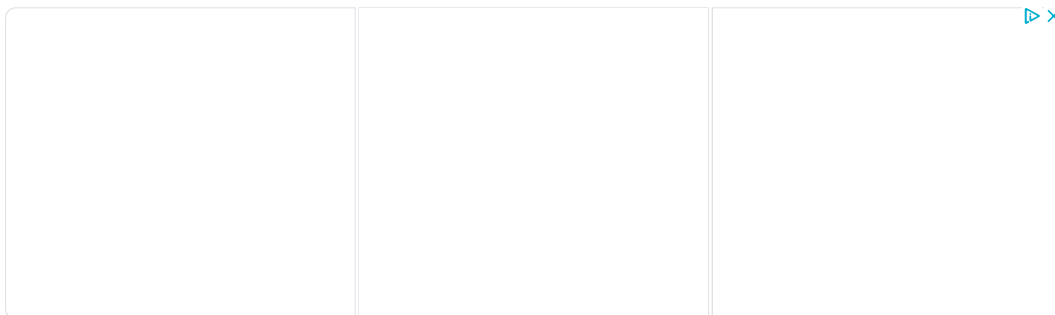
Temu

"I am marinating an earthworm farm in my home garden in Colombo. I share earthworms with other people. I have sent a bunch of earthworms to Jaffna and Tangalle too. Because they said they can't find earthworms nowadays. I look after my earthworms by giving them food (which is my kitchen waste or any other biodegrade waste and some water). In return they give me black, soft soil which is full of nourishment and I use that soil to grow my vegetables and fruits. When I started a home garden with two perches in Boralesgamuwa, Colombo, I could not find a single Bee. So, I had to grow some Bee loving flowers to attract them. One plant was Nidikumba in Sinhalese. Memosa pudica is the scientific name. When I saw the first bee in my garden, I was so thrilled and I knew that he was going to bring more bees and all my plants will have many pollinators to give me fruits. The same is with my Passion fruit vine. The flowers were there but no fruits. So I had to bring the black beetle called Ambalam Paluwa because I heard he can pollinate larger flowers. So, I grew Thunbergia flowers. Beetles came in and I got Passionfruit. Isn't it amazing?"

She further added that some insects become pests but they too are important in nature, in biodiversity. When gardening we are creating a new environment so sometimes something could go wrong so pests originate. Which means we might have eliminated the predator of that pest! She points out that then we must bring back the Katussa (garden lizards) or spiders, dragonfly or thalagoya (land monitor) to control those pests.

Natural balance

Nature is like that, she says. Everything is inter-connected and intra-connected. It is like a cobweb. You can't say one animal is yucky or this animal is bad! This phenomenon is the same for plants. There is a natural balance in Nature. We have to understand that and respect that. So each and every animal plays a role in balancing nature and when we as humans destroy that balance problems occur.



Bästsäljare

Temu

But how do we take care of these living beings and keep them happy? Weerakoon assures us that if you practise 100 percent 'Organic' in your home garden then you don't have to worry. That will make the living beings happy. You will see caterpillars among your plants who ultimately become butterflies or moths! You will see spiders who eat other insects that are damaging your vegetables. Don't worry, that's nature! One is prey and one is predator. So they will act their own role.

Compost making

"So simply make compost out of your kitchen waste and other plant materials, add them to your garden, water the garden in time, grow a mix of vegetables according to seasons and climate conditions, also grow flowers, herbs and fruits and leave some of them for other animals to eat. So, they will be happy and you will be happy too. In fact, this is what our ancestors did. They left some harvest for elephants and birds too. I know today we can't leave a lot as our home gardens are too compacted but within that space you can still give something for others. We don't use 'pesticide or weedicide' in this method. But we do have pest repellent and weed control methods which are not hurting anybody. Some of these pest repellents are plants themselves. So we don't need to worry about buying chemicals to kill them," added Weerakoon.

She warns that we unintentionally harm these living beings and upset the balance in our home garden by using chemicals such as Urea, Kata pohora (nil kata, rathu kata and dam kata) or by adding any other chemicals and pesticides or weedicides. We also do this by burning leaves which have fallen from trees and by cleaning all fallen leaves on the ground to make our garden nice and clean. All these activities are damaging the balance in the garden. Adding

chemicals into the soil ultimately end up in our body as harmful particles. We have many other natural ways to add all necessary nutrients without harming any other being or causing us cancer. Also, all these chemicals are polluting our soil, air and water too. Why grow food in our home and make everybody sick ultimately?

WHY YOU'RE NOT LOSING WEIGHT								
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HOURS OF SLEEP	5	6	7	8+	YOUR BMI	40+	30+	
					FASTING SCHEDULE	16:8	12:12	

TAKE THE TEST

“As I said before all these living beings have a role to play on this planet. Nothing is bad. We make them act bad by removing the balance by our own activities. It's the inter-connectivity among themselves which we call the food chain or food web. Grass is the food for little grasshoppers, and then it will be eaten by lizards and lizards are the food for birds. So, when we remove the grass from our garden how can this chain continue? Also grass keeps the soil moist by reducing the water evaporation. We say that grass is the best 'mulch' where moist will be retained and earthworms will survive. So, when we remove grass to make our garden floor nice and clean how can earthworms survive? Then where is good soil for us? Like this, everything is interconnected and contributes to the balance of the planet,” explained Weerakoon.

Climate sensitivity

When you take living beings in the home garden, the basic ones are everywhere in the country but we also know they are climate sensitive. Creatures living in cold areas can't be present in the hot areas like the dry zone. So, there is a difference and we call it 'diversity'. For example, we can't invite the largest butterfly in Sri Lanka to a home garden in Anuradhapura because it lives close to Sinharaja forest in the wet zone. However, Weerakoon went on to explain that we can invite many other butterfly species anywhere where you have a garden in Sri Lanka according to their availability. But you must grow their host plants. It's such a beautiful science and it is worth practicing as it will give you more happiness, knowledge and satisfaction maintaining your own garden.

“Obviously you can't have all these living beings unless you have an organic (poison free) home garden. So you will surely get healthy food. Then other living beings automatically come to your garden. In some cases, you need to plant some host plants among your vegetables enabling specific butterflies to visit your garden. For example, Seeniyas flowers, Sun flowers or nil katarolu, or daas pethiya can be planted among your vegetables,” pointed out Weerakoon.

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TAKE THE TEST

When you want to make your soil rich and favorable to the growth of vegetables and fruits this is mainly done by the earthworms. When no poison is added they will function in their normal way. These living beings get their nutrition from mother Nature! They have everything available in her -soil, air, water and on plants unless we destroy that.

Calm mindset

“The other main gift we are getting by doing organic home gardening is a calm mindset among people. When you love Nature, you don't poison it or destroy it. You protect Nature. Of course when you love nature you can start loving other people too. So gardening is a very peaceful activity which will lead to peace in society. Since organic home gardening is a topic that we must promote to stop all of us getting cancers and becoming tech maniacs (when you don't go out and be with nature, the only option of entertainment is technology which makes you sick slowly) we have made some groups to teach home gardening. We have an Organic Garden Club on WhatsApp group too where we share much information, exchange plants, seeds and promote learning from each other. So anyone can join with us,” said Weerakoon



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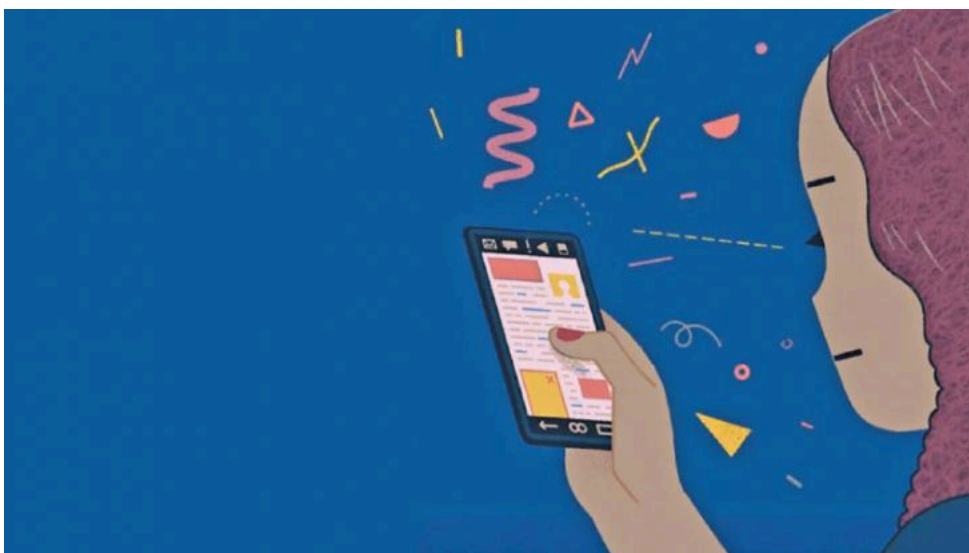
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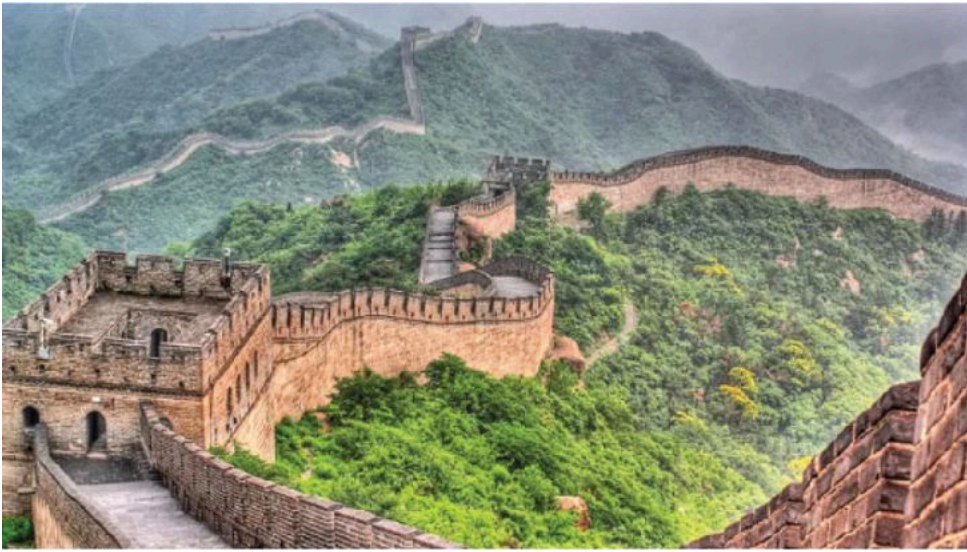
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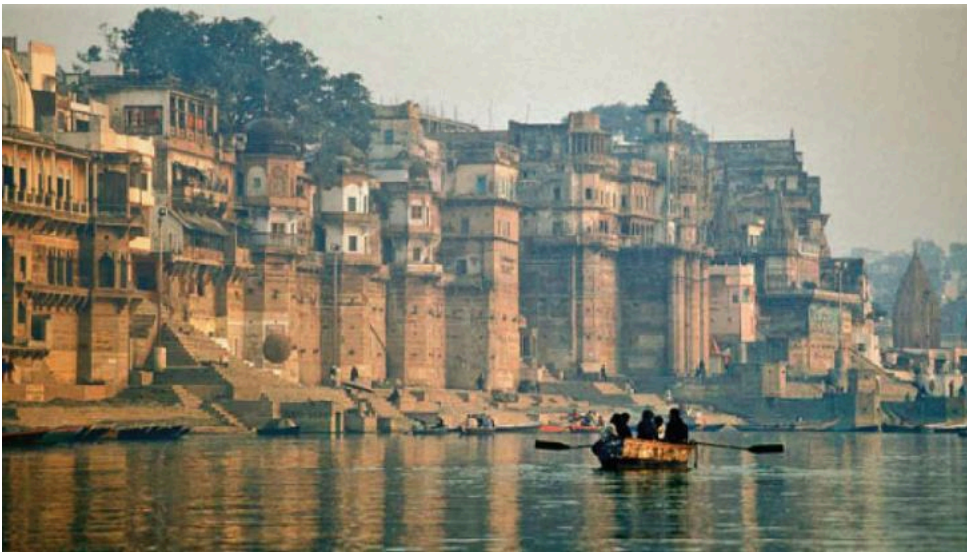
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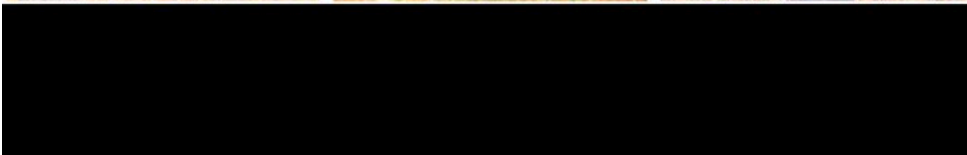
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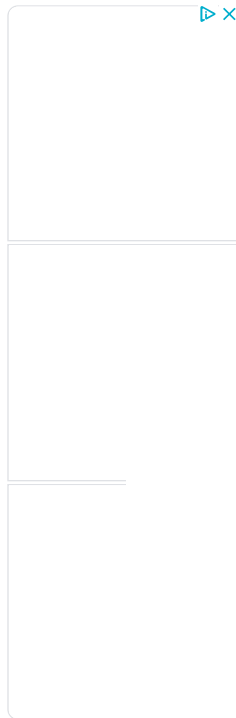
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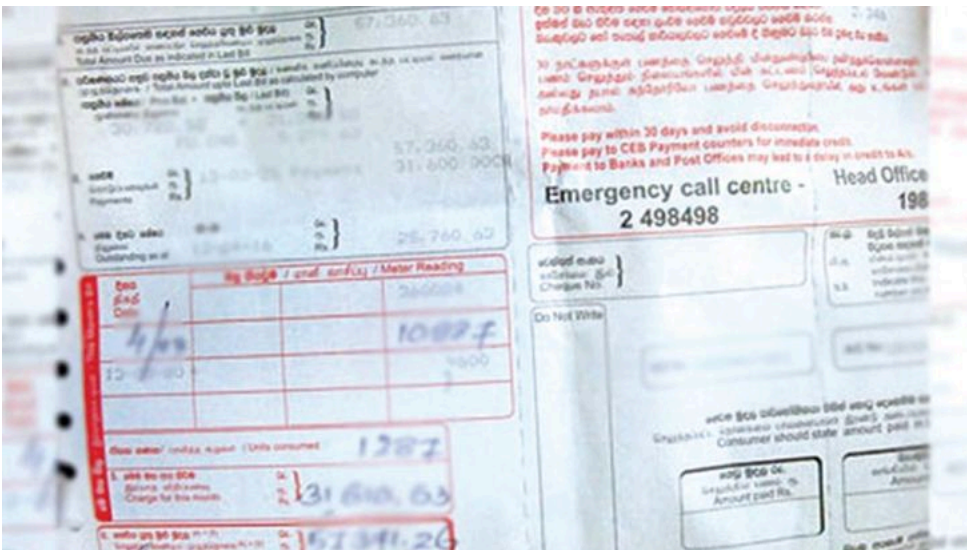
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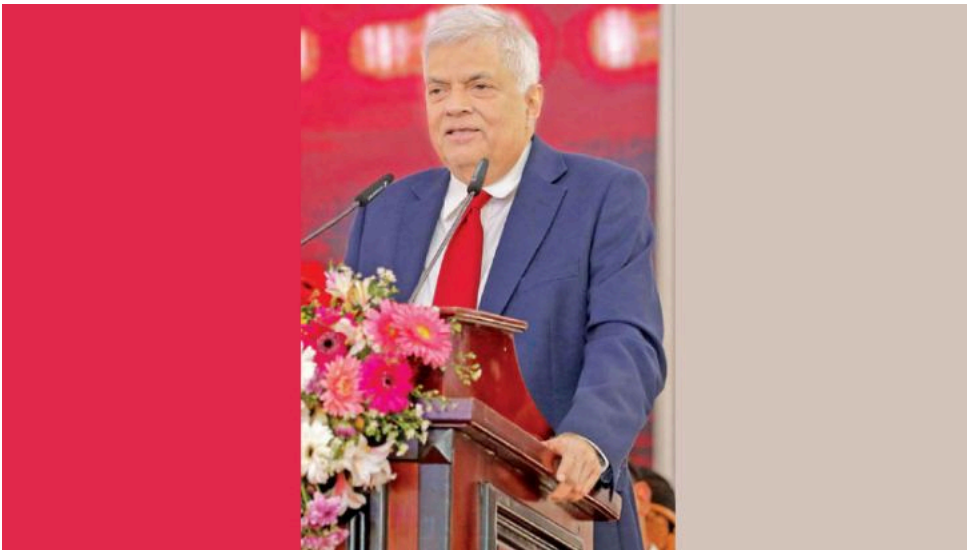
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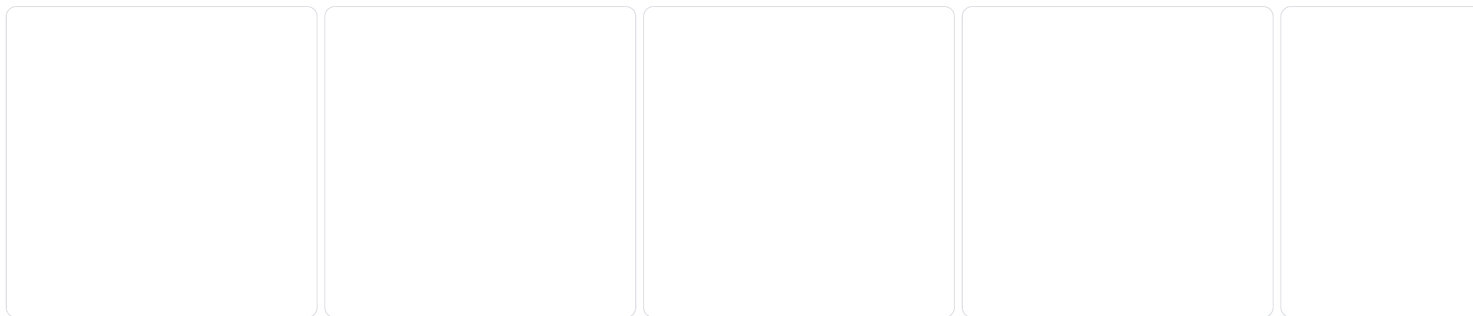
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