

Promote kitchen gardens, ministry tells Chandigarh schools



CHANDIGARH: Taking the School Nutrition Gardens (SNGs) project a step further, the Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) has issued further guidelines to schools for not only setting up SNGs, but also on how schools should impart knowledge to students about how every part of a vegetable or a fruit can be used.

The MHRD guidelines can also be used by people for growing small gardens in their homes, even if the space available is less. The

ministry has also mentioned the names of vegetables and fruits that can be grown and how, especially in areas with little land or less rainfall. The MHRD has further asked schools to motivate students to start SNGs at homes using the methods shared by the ministry, like using pipes, tyres, etc to grow vegetables and plants.

According to the MHRD, given the rapid rate of urbanisation, many schools do not have free spaces to grow vegetables, etc. "For them, there is an effective alternative that is simple and practical, i.e. gardening in 'containers'. Such a garden has many benefits for schools in urban areas as they help to 'green' the school and reduce air pollution."

By using containers, students will learn to grow vegetables and fruits in small spaces. After knowing that a large piece of land is not essential for this, they will be able to utilize and reuse discarded containers, said the ministry. Further, organic garbage such as kitchen scraps and anything that decays, can be processed into compost in such containers. Through a careful selection of plants, the temperature of the immediate area of the school can be lowered.

The MHRD also offered suggestions on how students can use unused spaces in schools and homes, like vacant staircases, school entrance sites, etc. Containers that can be used include tyres, earthen pots, cemented pots, buckets, water cans, drums, damaged sink, wash basins, old plastic pots, old polythene bags, etc.

The MHRD also suggested to use climber plants like pumpkin, bottle guard, bitter guard, cucumbers, beans, tomatoes, tinda, etc, and advised schools to consult local experts for their advice before making the final selection. Vegetables and fruits which are appropriate for SNGs have also been shared in the guidelines.