

# Life STORIES

Ensure that happiness-enhancing structures are built in your home

## You can plant your joy, birthdays and prayer

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It is not all about money. Since we started contributing to this section, it has been about making money, saving money, rationalising money, and money, money, money. But money is a tool that should ultimately enhance happiness, otherwise, accumulating money for money's sake could end in misery.

During the terrible 1980s, when we were young, energetic students at Makerere University, an incident that happened at the main library comes to mind.

It was approaching exam time and pressure to use the library was at its peak. The library would close at the normal closing time for offices, at the close of the business day and reopen at night around dinner time. Hundreds of students would jostle to be among the first to get in when the doors were flung open so as to get a seat.

On one such evening, the pushing and shoving was too much that nobody could get in. One big guy near the door, towering over everyone, then turned and faced the pushing crowd, "What are we fighting for?"

Because of his strong and loud voice, everybody kept quiet and then the answers started coming.

Books, someone said. Chairs, said another. More reasons for the struggle were volunteered; grades... degrees... jobs... money. Until someone shouted... sex! This eased the shoving and as 'members' started laughing, the entering process became more gentle and orderly. "Happiness," came the final answer. Final because everybody seemed to agree and they kept mumbling happiness as they dashed to secure seats before looking for



With different types of flowers, you will be able to send them to stressed friends and put a smile on their faces

the books.

### HAPPINESS

We may not be in the US, where Independence means the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But even if your right to happiness is hindered by a weak shilling, irritating politicians and lurking iron bar hitmen, you can still ensure that happiness-enhancing structures are built in your surroundings. You will need them as you grow older and spend more time at home as

employers and businesspeople out there will require less and less of your services.

Even if your plot is a 50 x 50 (and your house, therefore, by law covers maximum of 850 square feet), there is enough garden room to plant lots of happiness. If you plant different types of flowers in this lovely climate where planting and cutting is not seasonal, you will be able to send flowers to many stressed people and put a smile on their faces.

These days when facebook

tells you whose birthday it is every morning, you can do better than sending a message by sending flowers cut from your garden.

Of course some of our people may ask if they can eat your flowers. That is why you should also plant enough fruits around and knowing the characters of your friends, you will know whom to send fruits which they can eat and whom to give flowers.

Besides plants, different corners of the compound that have different views and

sunshine angles will offer different enhanced moods at different times of the day.

And the beauty with things in the garden is that you can change them any time. Nobody said you should plant the same type of flower or fruit year in, year out.

Also, there are tonnes of information on the Internet about better ways to do things for yourself, including setting up your aquaponics. I shall not go on and on about the economics of an aquaponics system today.

### SECRET TO HAPPINESS

**1 FLOWERS**  
Plant different types of flowers so that you can send them to stressed people and put a smile on their faces

**2 FRUITS**  
You can also plant enough fruits around the compound to eat and share with friends.

**3 YOUR OWN SPACE**  
Different corners of the compound can be angled to offer different enhanced moods at different times of the day.

### SIMPLICITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Let us stick to the beauty of it. Instead of buying an aquarium with those delicate gold fish, you can use *kavera* (the variety for dams of which you can get 20 square metres for 500k) put a few hundred fish fingers, plant your vegetables and then start that magical relationship of fish feeding as the plants feed the fish.

The whole thing is so fascinating to develop and maintain, but then it also puts food on the table! After you have eaten, given or sold the entire generation of the fish in a year, you can fold the *kavera* pond and put up a rabbit house - whatever is called. When you get tired of their prolific multiplication lifestyle (rabbits do not believe in family planning), you can try those huge Indian chicken that eat almost anything.

All this flexibility will be possible if you observe the rules of building on one-third of the plot from day one.



You should also plant enough fruits around for people to eat when they visit

### YOUR RELAXATION AREA

Even as you are still running up and down chasing money in your prime years, take a pause and look at your space from an older point of view. Suppose your parents or elder relatives came to stay for a while, where would you like them to relax? And how would that corner be enhanced in structural terms to give the senior citizen peace?

Mind you, it is not only older people who need peace. You need it too, regularly. You need somewhere to read a book, away from the TV and other noise in the house. By the way, if you want to pitch a hammock, plant and shape the trees now where you will want it. A hammock on metallic supports can't be the thing.

At some stage, hopefully, sooner than later, you may want to have your own prayer corner, whether you are Muslim, Christian or non-denominational. So make your own grotto in your favourite corner. It is your damn compound after all, and you should pray from where you prefer. You can meet your old friends there and talk stuff that your present contacts cannot appreciate. It is your place and your space.