

## **Green Thumbs Up at ICG**

Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2014

It was a 'green thumbs up' all the way at The Green Living Workshop recently concluded at The International Centre Goa (ICG) Dona Paula. “ The series of workshops conducted focussed on generating awareness about how to reduce the carbon footprint with eco-friendly activities” implied Shweta Shirodkar, resource person for this workshop further explaining that living green and sustainably means creating a lifestyle that works with nature and does no long-term damage.

Shirodkar, a Botany teacher by profession, said that there was immense enthusiasm shown by not only men and women but also children as young as 8 years. During the workshop; which stretched for 8 days, Shirodkar covered a variety of subjects such as bonsai, kitchen gardening, sutli art, madhubani art, paper collage, carpet bedding, terrarium and floral arrangements; with every day devoted to one topic. She began with a small introductory activity on how to use 'the carbon footprint calculator' wherein the participants had to tick mark which eco-friendly methods they were presently following, total it up to ascertain their carbon footprint and thereby make necessary changes in order to minimise it.

She said that the participants were very eager to pick up tips and techniques especially on organic gardening, where she demonstrated how to prepare compost; they were also taken to the kitchen garden at ICG where the food wastage is used to prepare manure which is used to grow organic vegetables. Shweta also taught techniques of Bonsai, demonstrating the popular Japanese art of making miniature plants for small living spaces. Lots of interest was also shown for Terrarium where participants were taught how to make miniature gardens in glass bowls, as also for Carpet Bedding where they were taught how to use stem cuttings for orchid and anthurium cultivation.

The participants used their creative side for activities such as sutli art where jute fibre was used to make vases, coasters and wall hangings; paper collage and mache art where old newspapers and magazines were used to make greeting cards; and madhubani where Shweta demonstrated this folk art wherein natural colours and pigments are extracted from plants and are used for painting thereby avoiding synthetic colours. Besides ladies showed their willingness to learn the tricks of conditioning native and garden plants to make spectacular floral arrangements.

Encouraged by the excellent participation for the workshops, there are plans to hold regular

Green Living activities at ICG. Shirodkar believes that with involvement of like-minded eco-friendly people “every small initiative counts” and will go a long way to save the environment.

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