

DECCAN Chronicle

Why Native Plants Are the Secret to Lowering Maintenance Costs and Boosting Property Value



Take a walk through many new apartment complexes in Bangalore and you will notice a familiar landscape: trimmed hedges, imported lawn grass, and a few ornamental palms. It looks tidy in brochures, but these spaces often come with a hidden cost. Many of these plants require excessive watering, chemical fertilizers, and regular pest control, while contributing very little to the local ecosystem.

Nagabushana Reddy, the founder-CEO and managing director, said, "At NBR Group, we have been moving away from this purely cosmetic approach. We believe the landscape around a home should do more than just look green. It should be functional, resilient, and beneficial to the people living there. That is why we are focusing on native plant species—trees and shrubs that have adapted to South Indian conditions over thousands of years. Instead of decorative greenery, the aim is to create living infrastructure that improves everyday life in our communities."

The maintenance challenge with exotic species

Exotic plants often struggle in Bangalore's red soil and intense climate. Because they are not naturally suited to these conditions, they need regular fertilisers, pesticides, and close monitoring to survive.

Water use is the biggest concern. In a city where water scarcity is a growing issue, maintaining large stretches of non-native grass can be inefficient. Native trees such as neem, amaltas, or honge are far more suited to the local environment. Once established, they require significantly less irrigation. In many cases, outdoor water consumption in landscaped areas can drop by as much as 70 percent. For residents, that translates directly into lower monthly maintenance costs.

A natural cooling system

Urban areas with large expanses of concrete and glass tend to trap heat, creating what is known as the "heat island" effect. This is why parking lots and open paved areas feel especially hot during the summer months.

Native trees, with their wide canopies, help counter this effect. They provide shade and cool the surrounding air through a natural process called evapotranspiration. In developments with large green zones, this can noticeably reduce ambient temperatures. Shaded pathways or streets can be several degrees cooler than exposed ones, making outdoor spaces far more comfortable for residents.

Helping the ground absorb rainwater

Bangalore's flooding issues are partly the result of excessive paving and reduced soil absorption. When rainwater cannot seep into the ground, it quickly overwhelms drainage systems.

Many common lawn grasses have shallow root systems that do little to improve soil absorption. Native plants, on the other hand, tend to have deeper and more complex root structures. These roots create channels in the soil, allowing rainwater to percolate down and recharge underground aquifers. Landscapes designed with native species can therefore play a role in improving local water balance.

Bringing back biodiversity

There is also a lifestyle and ecological benefit to native landscaping. Spaces dominated by imported plants often support very little wildlife. In contrast, native fruiting and flowering trees attract birds, butterflies, and other pollinators.

This makes residential environments more vibrant and engaging. For families and children, it creates opportunities to experience seasonal changes and local biodiversity up close, rather than only through screens or occasional park visits.

The practical advantage

In the long run, native landscaping is not just an environmental choice—it is a practical one. It reduces water use, lowers maintenance costs, and creates more comfortable outdoor spaces. It also contributes to stronger ecological balance within urban communities.

For developers, this approach leads to landscapes that age gracefully and remain cost-efficient over time. For residents, it means living in environments that are both sustainable and enjoyable.

Ultimately, the goal is simple: to build homes that are not just placed on the land, but designed to belong to it.

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