



International Journal on Eternal Wisdom and Contemporary Science

Volume 2 • Issue 1 • June 2025 • pp 82-87

A Case Study on Murugan Mandala Vaatika – The use of Sacred Geometry in Ancient Gardens

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Abstract:

«The Mandala Vaatika is the art of garden design derived from ancient Vedic scriptures that, in a unique manner combines the science of sound vibrations (Naad), geometric patterns (Cymatics), plants & their unique frequencies - and becomes a medium for one to experience different dimensions of consciousness when these elements join together. It not only resonates with the theory of modern Quantum Physics (how wave functions & their vibrations combine to create the physical world around us) but it also finds similarities with the ancient cultures from Asia, South America, Middle eastern Arabesque, Christianity and Judaism. This knowledge, being so universal and profound, and yet so simple, caters to the intellectual mind of scientists, of those curious individuals wanting to explore different dimensions of life - garden enthusiasts, homemakers and students perfectly well. The paper explores the science of Mandala Vaatika and its relevance to the modern day.»

Keywords: Mandala Vaatika, Sacred Geometry, Vedic Landscapes

INTRODUCTION

When I think of landscapes, the first thing that comes to my mind is the lay of the land and the kinds of greens that come into play. The structure, the materials, and the design principles alongside the greenery, all come together to define the aesthetics of an outdoor space. Whether it's a Japanese garden, a Zen arrangement, an English-style setting, or even a free-flowing, forest-like design, most people can picture these styles easily.

But what's harder to imagine is a garden designed entirely on **Vedic Principles**.

For many, Vedic wisdom isn't immediately associated with landscapes or gardening. But as someone deeply rooted in both agricultural science and landscape architecture, I've delved into

the Vedic past to unearth a different understanding. Ancient Vedic gardens, those that existed thousands of years ago, followed a set of principles where structure and rhythm weren't just aesthetic but channeled energy. The choice and placement of plants weren't random, they followed a clear code aligned with Vedic wisdom, intended to amplify the physical and resonant vibrations of the space.

In my journey, I've explored these deeper meanings, especially those found in the **Gardens of Ancient Gurukuls**. What I've found is that **Sacred Geometry** was the foundational structure of these gardens. At the heart of this geometry is the **Mandala**, intersecting triangles nestled within a circle. This Mandala symbolizes primordial energy, and the surrounding circle acts as a container that holds and stabilizes this energy.

This form isn't unique to India. You'll find the six-pointed star, this sacred structure, in Buddhist, Christian, Chinese, and even Western mystical traditions like Freemasonry. But in Vedic gardens, these symbols referred to as the **mandalas**, were not just decorative. They served as the energy portals and structural foundation of the space.

ELEMENTS OF MANDALA VAATIKA

Each mandala can contain different numbers and types of Chakras, and with that, different energetic signatures. For example, a **Ganesha mandala** might contain the six-pointed star, whereas a **Subramanya mandala** might include six hexagons. The variation isn't random, it reflects different frequencies and vibrational energies derived from the **Universal Sound** or **Nada**. This concept is closely tied to **Cymatics**, the study of how sound and vibration influence geometry of form.

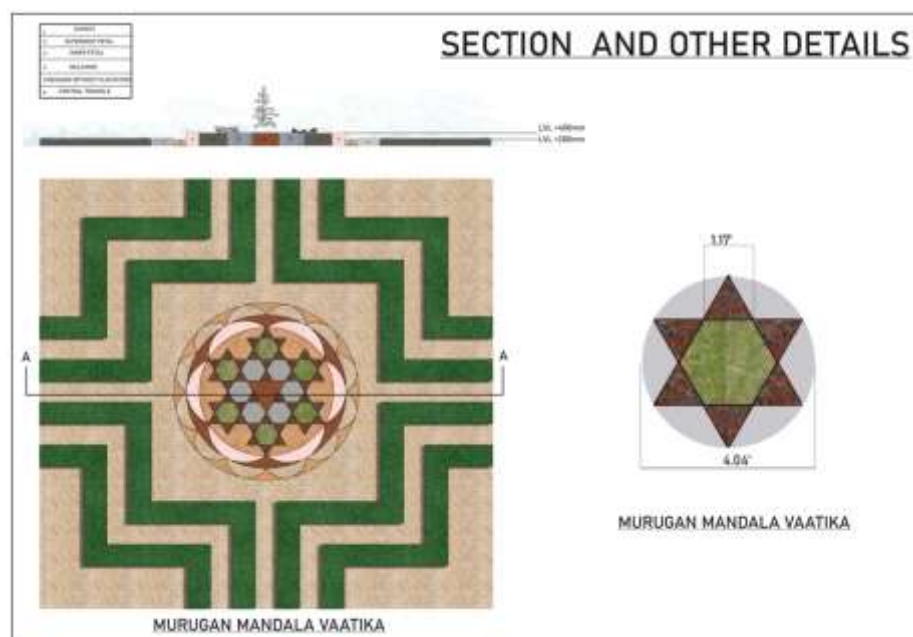
In these **Mandala Vaatikas**, three core elements come together:

1. The physical mandala, derived from **Sacred Geometry**
2. The **Beej Mantra**, the sound or vibration linked to the geometry
3. **Specific plants** that resonate with the mandala's frequency

These plants are not selected at whim, they are chosen for their ability to **carry and transmit energy**, much like a radio tuned to a specific frequency. Each plant is a **Vahana**, a carrier of energy, that connects the visitor to the mandala's frequency

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OF INSTALLATION OF MURUGAN MANDALA VAATIKA

Let me share an example that's particularly close to my heart: the **Murugan Vaatika** inspired by **Siddha Bhogar**, a master who lived over 2000 years ago. Siddha Bhogar envisioned the **Murugan Mandala**, as composed of six stars and hexagons enclosed in a circle. He also specified which plants must be placed in this mandala, each with a specific position based on cardinal directions and the location of the six forms of Murugan or Shanmukha.



AN INSTALLATION OF MURUGAN MANDALA VAATIKA

Inspired by this ancient wisdom, I recreated the **Murugan Vaatika** at the **International Art of Living Centre** in Bengaluru, after **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** drew my attention to this powerful tradition. This mandala includes six specific plants:

- *Origanum majorana*
- *Jasminum articulatum*
- *Michelia champaca*
- *Aegle marmelos*
- *Nerium oleander*
- *Artemisia princeps*

Each of these was carefully placed according to the traditional layout to maintain the resonant frequency and harmony of the original Vaatika.



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravishankar consecrating the Murugan Mandala Vaatika

CLOSING REMARKS

Interestingly, sacred geometry isn't confined to explicitly Vedic spaces. Take **Lutyens' Delhi**, for example. Its layout incorporates triangles and hexagons reminiscent of the **Freemason tradition**, which in turn parallels Vedic geometry. The **Star of David**, widely used in Masonic symbolism, is functionally like the Ganesha Mandala. Even the **Incas, Arabs, Shinto, Taoists, and Buddhists** embedded sacred geometry in their traditions. In India, we refer to this six-pointed star as the **Shatkona** or **Ganesha Mandala**.

But perhaps the most powerful and complex example is the **Sri Chakra**, the ultimate mandala in Vedic philosophy. It holds **108 energy portals**, each encircled with petals representing specific types of energy. Plants aligned with each portal's frequency are planted in specific locations in the **Sri Chakra Vaatika**, making them the **Vahanas** of that Tattva's frequency.

To me, designing landscapes is not just about beauty, it's about **resonance, energy**, and connecting with a timeless wisdom that our ancestors knew and practiced.

The Vedic Garden is more than a green space, it's a living, breathing Mandala of Life Force itself.

Brief Profile of the Author:

“Dr. Prabhakar Rao (Chairman, Sri Sri Institute of Agricultural Sciences & Technology Trust) is popularly known as *The seed man of India.*”

“A visionary landscape architect and sustainability champion, Dr. Rao has brought to life some of the world's most iconic projects. From the luxurious Palm Island Village in Dubai and the serene Qurm Park in Oman to the scenic Volga Waterfront in Kazan and the vibrant Amochu Waterfront Township in Bhutan, his work spans continents and captures imaginations.”

“In India, his genius has shaped legendary landmarks like the majestic Sardar Patel Statue in Gujarat, the grand Central Vista Redevelopment in New Delhi, and the transformative Kashi Vishwanath Corridor in Varanasi.”

“But Dr. Rao's journey goes beyond landscapes. During his doctoral studies in agriculture, he realized the pressing need to move away from chemical farming. This sparked his passion for promoting sustainable alternatives, leading him to champion Sri Sri Natural Farming as a trustee of the Sri Sri Institute of Agriculture and Technology since 2013-14.”

“His tenure as COO of the International Association for Human Values in Dubai (1997–2001) saw him spearhead projects on environmental restoration, disaster management, and sustainable ecosystems.”

“A dedicated faculty member of the Art of Living for over 27 years, Dr. Rao blends ancient Vedic wisdom with modern solutions. His promotion of traditional techniques, like the mesmerizing Mandala Vaatika, is inspiring people worldwide.”

Statements and Declaration: Some sections of this paper are also available on my website - mandalavaatika.com. The common sections, which constitutes about 10% of this paper, are included within the quotation marks « and ».

I declare that I have no conflict of interest with my places of employment or anybody else in publishing this article. No financial support was received for the work within this article.