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Your garbage isn't a waste

Ayesha Matthan

— Photo: Sampath Kumar G.P.



Making a difference: Using bio-degradable mud pots to make compost from household waste.

Bangalore: Piles of garbage generated from households has everyone frustrated and cursing. But Poonam Bir Kasturi has decided to face the problem and do something about it.

An alumna of the National School of Design and founder-member of the Srishti School of Design and Industree Crafts, she set up Daily Dump a year ago — a project which uses bio-degradable mud pots to make compost from household waste. These “kumbhas” or three-tier composting mud pots are made and supplied by 40 potter families in Palamner village.

With 1,500 pots sold so far, Daily Dump has now tied up with the Bruhat Bangalore Managara Palike (BBMP) on two pilot projects. “We have decided to look at combining street waste with organic home waste,” said Ms. Kasturi. She said that street waste, mainly dry leaves, was mixed with non-biodegradable and hazardous waste such as plastic or batteries in airtight landfills. This could result in groundwater and nearby streams being polluted. This prevented the earth’s natural cycle of decomposition and contributed to the Greenhouse effect, she added.

To work on this, Daily Dump is creating a user-friendly, interactive book which will involve home owners looking at their waste once it is thrown out. “We don’t want this to be an ‘us and them’ relationship, where the BBMP, contractor and citizens don’t work together. As we are all in the same loop, Daily Dump wants the three parties to involve themselves in this process of segregating garbage and making composting.” They plan to publish the findings

next month on their website www.dailydump.org.

“We find that tree waste has not been used productively and that it is swept and then loaded on to a garbage truck and transported to the dumping yards,” she said. Ms. Kasturi added that tree waste had to be combined with food or organic waste (which constituted 70 per cent of household waste) at the site of disposal instead of dumping it far away. “We are training self-help groups (SHGs) in sweeping, separating and composting the tree waste and are looking at two streets for a two-month period now,” she said.

They are using the “mota-lota” mud pot (three large pots placed vertically over each other), which facilitates aerobic decomposition where waste is broken down by microbes.

“As we’re dealing with it street-wise, the volumes are small and manageable, as opposed to dealing with it at a landfill.” This means that the organic waste will be easy to maintain and does not emit any odour or cause health hazards. The current project involves Daily Dump monitoring and auditing a visual diary of the process and its practicality.

Daily Dump recently won the Better Interiors Green Products award in Mumbai. Ms. Kasturi said that a cause for concern is plastic waste since food bought from supermarkets is packaged in plastic.

Daily Dump is located at HAL II Stage (Near Café Coffee Day) and can be contacted on 41152288 or 9916426660.

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