

130

Years Of Trust



Calendar

**The Tribune**

ONLINE EDITION



Weather



Archive

**REAL ESTATE**

Saturday, January 28, 2012, Chandigarh, India

**RealEstate**

## **Green house**

**Maj Gen C.S. Bewli**

Aquatic plants have a unique appeal and can enhance the beauty of a garden be it big or small. These are basically of three types with submerged, floating or emergent leaves. For all lovers of aquatic plants this week we talk about the plants with floating leaves. It's much easier to create and take care of water garden than the potted plants. Such gardens can also be placed in living room, dining room or kitchen to bring nature indoors. Some easily available floating water plants are water lettuce, *Salvinia natans*, Hyacinth Azolla or floating fern.

They have special types of leaves which help them remain afloat. Stomata of these plants are situated on the upper surface of the leaves to ease photosynthesis and manufacture food. There's no need to change the water in a water garden, although you should top it every few days to replace the water that may have evaporated.

### **Water lettuce**

Water lettuce, scientifically known as *Pistia stratiotes* is a common water plant and is found worldwide. It is a free-floating perennial plant with leaves forming light green rosettes. The velvety longitudinally grooved leaves are squarish, thick and spongy. It is a fast growing plant and spreads within a year from one plant to cover completely a round tray of 15 inches diameter with 4 inches height by the formation of underwater stolons. The roots of the plant are small and hang in the water underneath the plant. The plant is grown for its beautiful foliage, though it also has flowers that are very small and inconspicuous. Birds also find the plant very interesting and love to have a dip in it.

Summer is the growing season for water lettuce and it can be placed anywhere. However, it is has been noticed that under full sun conditions the leaves tend to bleach. It needs protection from cold during winter.

### **Floating ferns**

Floating fern or *Salvinia natans* is a common plant and is grown for its ornamental leaves. It has a unique formation of three sets of leaves where two leaves lie flat against the surface of water and the third leaf remains submerged in water and functions as a

root. Thus it is a rootless aquatic perennial fern and an extremely beautiful component for a water garden. The leaves are water resistant as they have small hairs on them. It is a fast growing easy to grow plant which can be grown from full sun to partial shade conditions.