# ARBIT it happens here...

# **#TRIED&TASTED**

# Sinful Hot Chocolate

A steaming cup of hot chocolate is just the thing you need on a chilly autumn afternoon or cold winter night.

here are so many words to describe hot chocolate: decadent, creamy, velvety, and rich all apply to a piping-hot mug of cocoa. With one look at our list of the best hot chocolate recipes out there. vou'll realize what vou've been missing out on. After all, win-

want to make your winter drink indulgences count. A steaming cup of hot chocolate is just the thing you need on a chilly autumn afternoon or cold winter night. There's no need to grab that store-bought instant cocoa mix next time you get the craving, especially when you have a rich and comforting hot chocolate recipe at your

# **Old-Fashioned Hot Chocolate**

disposal

### Ingredients

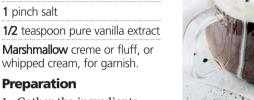
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate

ter only lasts for a few

months, so vou'll definitely

- 1/3 cup white granulated sugar
- 4 cups whole milk

1 pinch salt 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract Marshmallow creme or fluff, or



#### Preparation 1. Gather the ingredients.

2. In a 2-quart saucepan place the chocolate, sugar, milk, and salt. Over medi um-low heat, stir gently with whisk until the chocolate melts and the mixture is well blended.

Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract. Pour the hot chocolate into

3. Simmer for 3 minutes, stir-

ring constantly with a

whisk to create foam. At

this point, taste the milk

and add sugar if it is not

When the milk looks very

smooth, remove from the

Stir together the egg yolk

and 2 tablespoons of hot

chocolate. Whisk this mix-

ture back into the pan with

the hot milk and chocolate

mixture. Return to heat,

stirring constantly, and

whisk to create foam. Do

not let this boil or the yolk

Divide between 2 or more

cups and garnish with

will curdle

Preparation

medium heat.

whipped cream.

. Gather the ingredients.

2. Put the chocolate chips,

cocoa, and 1/4 cup of the

milk (about 60 ml) in a

small saucepan over a

Allow the chocolate to melt into the milk while stirring

with a wooden spoon.

mixed and foamy.

4. Add the rest of the milk

and whisk lightly until well

Add the brandy or rum, if using.

Pour into small cups, top

heat and cool a little hit

sweet enough for you.

mugs and top with a spoonful of marshmallow creme or whipped cream, if desired.

## **Viennese Hot Chocolate**



Ingredients

6 ounces semisweet chocolate (60 to 70 percent cocoa) 1 1/4 cups milk 1 large egg yolk

- Whipped cream, for garnish
- Preparation 1. Chop the chocolate into small bits. Place it in a
- heavy saucepan with the 2. Heat the milk and chocolate, stirring frequently until small bubbles come to the surface, but do not boil. Stir as needed to keep the milk from burning and the chocolate from sinking to the bottom.

## **Classic Dutch Hot Chocolate**

#### Ingredient

#### 1/3 cup (100 grams) dark chocolate chips

- 1 teaspoon Dutch process cocoa
- powder
- 1 1/4 cups (300 millilitres) whole milk
- 1 tablespoon whipped cream,
- best quality 1 shot brandy, or rum, to taste
- Granulated sugar, or sweetener to taste, optional
- Cocoa powder, for dusting



The hopeful little wildflower blossomed in the monsoon for the moth and the bee..... With no burden of beauty - yet Beautiful.....alas for nobody to see.... Sowing its own seeds in its own earth underneath

It withers away in hope....maybe you will see it in the next spree.....

While countries across the world have celebrated, studied, and revered their shrublands and grasslands, in India we have a serious disconnect with these habitats. It is evident from the fact that they are often marked as 'fallowland' and 'wastelands' even in government and forest books. Even in general lingo, such pieces of land are often called "banjar" (impotent) filled with "ihaad jhankaar" (weeds). "Iski to landscaping karni padegi, thodi hariyali honi chahiye". This kind of attitude could well be the most serious threat to their conservation. How can we save or conserve something that in popular belief is ugly, worthless, or dead to begin with? However, when one starts to observe and befriend these habitats, one realizes the infinite beauty that the grasses and the tiny wildflowers behold. Beautiful for nobody to see. Interview with Pradip Krishen



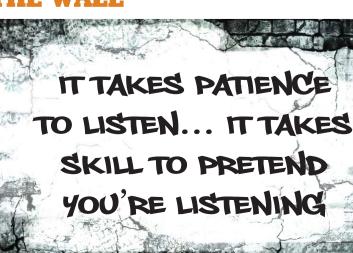
Gaurav Bhatnagar

Puniab Raven breeds throughout the Punjab (except perhaps in the Dehra Ghazee District), in Bhawulpoor, Bikanneer, and the northern portions of Jeypoor and Jodhpoor, extending rarely as far south as Sambhur.

The excerpt above describes the distribution of a magnificent glossy bird called the Puniab Raven (Corvus corax subcorax) in a book ublished in 1873 - "The nest and eggs of Indian Birds" by Allan Octavian Hume. Hume was a noted ornithologist and botanist in the British Raj and is often referred to as the father of Indian ornithology. Many Indian birds have been named after him. The Punjab Raven is noticeably larger than its ubiquitous cousin - the house crow - and differs not only in size but also in its habits and habitat. The Punjab Raven pairs for life and inhabits and breeds only in the arid and semi-arid tracts of the Thar Desert. Best places to see them in India are the sandy tracts of Bikaner. Barmer and Jaisalmer

The breeding record of the Punjab Raven gives us great insight and perspective into what Jaipur might have been like in 1873. Indeed, Jaipur and much of western Rajasthan was and remains arid and sandy. Arid; but by no means dead or lifeless. The sandy soil was layered on top with an extremely rich and vibrant layer of hardy, xerophytic flora. Trees like the Bambool. Kumttha. Kheiri. Rohida. Ronih - to name just a few dotted the landscape but far more dominant were shrubs and grasses like the Sarkanda, Kair, Phog, Bui and Kheemp - all perfectly attuned to the soil and the harsh climate. Within this rich flora flourished an immensely rich faunal biodiversity

# THE WALL



– birds, insects, rodents, mammals, reptiles

# "Landscape on Ventilator"

This 18th century painting of "Jaipur and it's environs" from the archives of the Jaipur Court reminds us of Jaipur's naturally arid ecology. My grandfather made our family home in Bapu Nagar in 1960 and clearly remembers there were sand dunes all around for miles and hyenas and jackals were quite commonly seen in the vicini ty. Young Jaipurites, however, will probably not connect Jaipur with any kind of Desert. The city's landscape aspirations now are totally different. Today's Jaipur is lined with green exotic tree avenues and parks with manicured lawns – all made possible by exploiting precious underground water reserves which have already plummeted to more than 600ft below ground. Although there has been a major shift with people now recycling or harvesting water and using native species of trees, most of them are unsustainable to maintain and wither away in just a few days of no watering – Ours is now a "Landscape on ventilator". Even if sustained, it is nowhere near the natural ecology of the area.

The people of the Thar under stood, connected, and conserved the ecology of the desert and used it brilliantly for centuries for their survival in a place that often gets less than 4 inches of rain in a year.



# **KISHAN BAGH** Recreating the Roee

# **#WILDERNESS**

"Charagahs and charnotes" – traditional grazing lands, full of nutritious grasses and shrubs - were protected by the people. They drew their food, building material, clothing - all from the desert and harvested every drop of water - a lesson in sustainability and frugal living. "The connect....."

#### My first introduction to these rich habitats as a young nature observer was when I visited the tiny Tal Chhapar Wildlife Sanctuary in Churu district in 2001, once a hunting ground for the erstwhile Bikaner state. When we arrived at the place. at first glance, it seemed like a large open grassland with virtually no

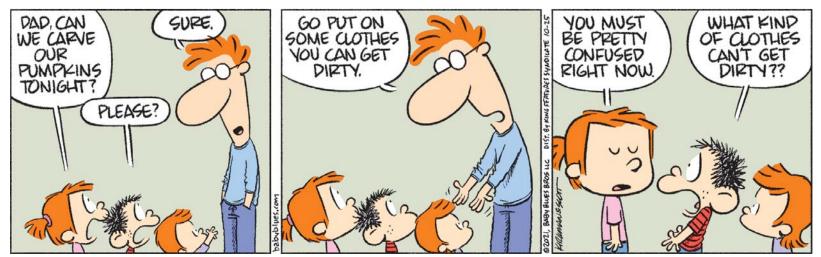
trees, except some acacia tree clumps here and there. My first reaction was to wonder if there would be any wildlife in such a degraded landscape with such a small number of trees and water bodies? I was pleasantly surprised when we went exploring and I realized how rich the area was in terms of its biodiversity. It was unbelievable how many bird species were seen in that little area of just 9 sakm.

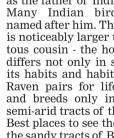
Almost every tree was dotted with a bird of prey, clouds of thousands of Larks bursting out of the grasses when the harriers flew past, the Blackbucks roaming and pronkThe hopeful little wildflower blossomed in the monsoon for the moth and the bee. With no burden of beauty - yet Beautiful.....alas for nobody to

underneath

ile and fast diminishing ecosys-Mehrangarh Museum Trust. it has Thank you for your kind words. I'm been conceived, designed, and exevery interested to see how Jaipur 'receives' Kishan Bagh. It's not at all cuted by the noted environmental ist. author. filmmaker. rewilder like a usual municipal park. I hope Pradip Krishen. I knew Pradip Jaipur opens its heart and welthrough his books, 'The Trees of comes this quirky addition to the Delhi' (2006) and 'Jungle trees of city's recreational areas! Central India' (2015) – both path breaking and phenomenal books, Is Kishan Bagh a 'Roee habitat'? Sowing its own seeds in its own earth not only in terms of their content Could you please tell us what It withers away in hope....maybe you and research but also the way they these habitats are and the story will see it in the next spree.. have been designed. So naturally, I behind the word 'Roee'? While countries across the world was excited when my good friend, Kishan Bagh is not per se a 'Roee' have celebrated, studied, and Tarun, told me we would be meet We've used some aspects of Kishan ing Pradip in Vidhyadhar Nagar Bagh to tell the story of a 'Roee' revered their shrublands and grasswhere he is making an ecological lands, in India we have a serious which is a Marwari word to park with the Rajasthan disconnect with these habitats. It is describe the 'natural jungle of the evident from the fact that they are Government. desert', which is not a forest but a We met Pradip on-site atop an old often marked as 'fallowland' and shrubland. There are hardly any 'wastelands' even in government dune in Vidhyadhar Nagar abutting trees out there, maybe a khejdi or and forest books. Even in general the Swarna Javanti Park. Pradip two here and there, but the domilingo, such pieces of land are often was centered amidst great noise and nant plants in harsh, arid places are called "banjar" (impotent) filled chaos as he was guiding a crane carshrubs and grasses that have found with "jhaad jhankaar" (weeds). "Iski rving a humungous block of granite the means to survive in really difficult conditions. Roees are very to landscaping karni padegi, thodi to be placed precisely where he hariyali honi chahiye". This kind of wanted it to go. He was in animated endangered now. We felt it's impor

# **BABY BLUES**







#### **Bangkok's Full Name is 163 Letters**

he city with the longest name is Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Yuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit. Rather than going by this 21-word name, the city goes by its widely known nickname: Bangkok. This true name is the longest name of any place on earth. (And indeed, it's hard to fathom something longer..





ing in large groups grazing the grasslands and the unforgettable sounds of "kurrr...kurrrr....kurrrr" of the Kurja or Demoiselle Cranes slowly coming down to land on the grasses and feeding on their seeds. Till date more than 350 bird species have been spotted in Tal Chhapar apart from countless insects, rodents, reptiles, and mammals. Since then, I have visited this magical place countless times to observe its avifauna and have realized just how important it is to save and conserve these extremely frag-

all walks of life to visit the park and attitude could well be the most seri appreciate the effort made by ous threat to their conservation. Pradip and his Team. There is some How can we save or conserve something to take away for everyone. thing that in popular belief is ugly, worthless, or dead to begin with? hear his thoughts on the park and However, when one starts to how he came about "Kishan Bagh". observe and befriend these habitats, Here are some excerpts from the one realizes the infinite beauty that interview: the grasses and the tiny wildflowers behold. Beautiful for nobody to see. One concerted and conscious effort to conserve and educate people about the desert and its ecology has been the exemplary Rao Jodha Park in Jodhpur. Supported by the

tant to try and draw attention to these small pockets of remaining Roee, and we thought - wouldn't it be great to introduce the word 'Roee' into the vocabulary that people use when they talk or think about the desert? And then, hopefully, if the word catches on and becomes popular, people will go out into the desert to look for it. And in this way, who knows, maybe the Roee becomes known and loved, and eventually, onserved too?

How important is the Roee in an ecological sense? How do these nabitats compare with other better-known habitats like forests and wetlands? The desert has had a very bad deal.

because even professional foresters - who really ought to know better treat the desert like one big wasteland. As if deserts are a 'mistake' that needs to be transformed into something else. But the desert is very far from being a wasteland it's actually very rich in its natural flora and flora, in its birdlife and reptiles that show remarkable adaptations to harsh conditions. The point is that it is a natural ecology that has achieved a fine balance, and any attempts by government or the forest department to divert Himalavan river water into it or plant trees in it that don't belong there are misplaced and will surely end in disaster. We have seen this again and again. Deserts are the way they are because of global veather patterns that control moisture and movements of air and precipitation and so on, and the plants that grow there naturally have evolved to be wonderfully adapted to those conditions. I don't think we ought to try and change deserts into something else.

Why a Roee in Jaipur? Was there a specific reason for you to choose this particular habitat? I believe when the Govt. of Rajasthan approached you, they were looking for something quite different? When I first saw Kishan Bagh it was basically a set of dunes made of sand that had piled up at the base of these hills and now had nowhere to go because the hills stood in their way. When I first saw these dunes, I thought we could treat them like the dunes you find much further out west, with plants that develop long roots and live 'happily' in sand dunes. This seemed the only sustainable way to work with these dunes. And then the idea of the Roee struck! And I decided to use this landscape to introduce the idea of the Roee, what it is, how beautiful it is, and how perfectly suited it is to its natural landscape. This was the seminal idea – a Park about Rajasthan's natural Roee

It's true that for the JDA and the government this was a radically different kind of proposal than what they were thinking of, but I give them a lot of credit for being open and accepting the idea on its merits.

Pradip, let me first start by congratulating you on Kishan Bagh. It is a fantastic culmination of your research, vision and hard work. It's surely a feather in the cap for Jaipur.

conversation with the driver to get

whenever I am with Pradip. What

were these huge rock monoliths

doing here? Afterwards, he took us

around the Park explaining his

design and concept with great pas-

sion and 'encyclopedic' detail. He had a tale to tell for every rock,

grass and shrub he was trying to

plant there. My eyes lit up when I

realized what he was trying to con-

eptualize and achieve atop that

wasted dune. "I want to try and

recreate a Roee," he said. "It's what

Kishan Bagh is now finally com-

mination of Pradip's research on

olete for Jaipurites to visit. It is the

Rajasthan's native flora and a fan-

tastic place for everyone to learn

and observe about this much neg-

lected and dying habitat. Kishan

Bagh is also impeccably designed,

detailed, and articulated. The Park

is made using local materials and it

surprises, enthralls, and educates

you at the same time. Apart from the

plant displays, there is a section

rocks of Rajasthan have been show-

cased and their relationship with

the flora explained in succinct

words. I would urge Jaipurites from

I met up with Pradip Krishen to

vhere all the different types of

you call an arid shrubland".

It's a word I am now used to

placed to "perfection".



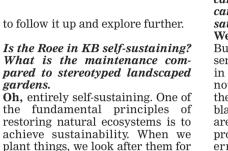
We've conceived Kishan Bagh as a long walk through a rewilded habitat with lots of little 'islands' of interest - the islands are all different kinds of landscapes in the desert. It's about trying to tell our visitors something interesting about each of these landscapes. little things that might snag their nterest or arouse their curiosity to a point where they might want to nd out more, explore further. when they get home. I'm hoping that older children, in particular will find lots of things in Kishan Bagh to interest them. And the walks, especially through the dunes, will only get better and better as time goes on and more plants grow up. And more birds spot the rewilded dunes in northern Jaipur and decide to visit too

#### The geological installations in KB. Why did you choose to include them?

One of the 'interpretation islands' s called "All About Sand". Kishan Bagh is made up nearly entirely of sand, so I thought it would be interesting to tell the story of all of Rajasthan's rocks that are made up mostly of sand – or silica. The more we probed, the more interesting things we found. One of the mos striking exhibits here is an installa tion of sandstone we cal 'Madhattan' because it looks a bit like a set of tall skyscrapers (in a slightly mad kind of way!) What it is is actually a collection of different kinds of sandstone that formed n Rajasthan, with the oldest and newest spanning more than a bil lion years! And the colours and patterns and swirls of this wonderfu stone look beautiful when you bunch them together like we've done. There's so many stories in there!

And all we can do as storytellers is to spark an interest, in the hope that someone will find it rewarding

Apart from the plant displays, there is a section where all the different types of rocks of Rajasthan have been showcased and their relationship with the flora explained in succinct words. I would urge Jaipurites from all walks of life to visit the park and appreciate the effort made by Pradip and his Team. There is something to take away for everyone.



plant things, we look after them for no more than about 4 or 5 months after the rains, and then they have to look after themselves. No more watering, no after-care. If

they don't survive, it's a sign that we've done something wrong, planted the wrong plant in the wrong place.



How many people were involved in the making of KB? What was your core team?

There were 4 of us – Golak Khandual was the architect in our Team. He's a brilliant artist and is responsible for designing all the intriguing and unusual structures you see inside the Park which are meant to evoke the desert and how people build in the Thar

Then there is Vijay Dhasmana. who, like me, works in planting up wild, natural landscapes. And then there's Harpreet Kaur who runs a landscape architecture office in Delhi and was instrumental in translating ideas into sketches and figures into BoQs. But I have to include Ali, who joined us 4 years ago as our Supervisor and the way he has grown and learnt all about our unusual ways of working with plants has been amazing, and he is now definitely a core member of our Team.

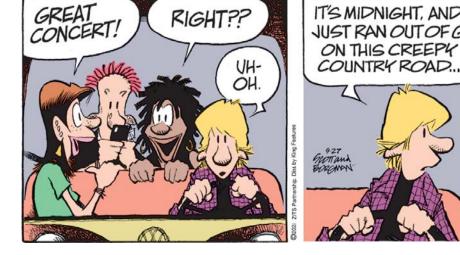
environment with human and animal interactions. **People** like us, who call ourselves ecological restoration' practitioners, only get to work on relatively small projects - 100, 200 acres at best. All the vast lands that really cry out to be restored are with the Forest Departments, and they don't know how to do any restoration and don't wish to invite anyone in to do it for them either. The result is that we're fiddling around with 200 acres when we should ideally be rewilding 20,000 or even 200,000 hectares of degraded forest land. When you do restoration work on that kind of scale, it has to be a landscape that has synergy with the people who live in it, with their needs and aspirations, as well as the animals that live in it. A large rewilded land scape with deer and gaur and other kinds of browsers will just have to find a way of becoming sustainable instead of fencing itself off. But while we're only dealing with small pockets like Kishan Bagh, we're forced to make fences and protect what's inside. It's a pity, really.

What next after Kishan Bagh? What are your future endeavours? **I'm** restoring part of the natural ecology of Scindia School, up on a hill in Gwalior, for starters. Hoping to get the kids involved too. At least some of them. And I'm still very connected with Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park in Jodhpur, even though I've handed over the reins to some one else. I'll continue to be involved with Kishan Bagh too, even after new management steps in very soon now. It's one of my babies How can I just walk away. 🛛 📖 🔳 writetoarbit@rashtradoot.com

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman







ZITS



#### What can landscape designers and horticulturists take away from Kishan Bagh and it's unique application.

Mainly the idea that it's not hard to plant ecologically, gardening with nature instead of uphill, against it. It's a very simple idea, really - if you use native plants that are wonder fully adapted to doing well in a par ticular ecology, life becomes very easy! What we do, the things we build, always tend to look different and unique because we're always experimenting, never wanting to repeat ourselves. I hope our structures will also be inspiring - Golak has a very special eye and an unusual aesthetic!

As shrublands and grasslands are under great threat in India. can there be a roadmap to conserve and revive them? In other words. can Kishan Bagh be a model that can be replicated and upscaled to save degraded habitats?

Well, there ought to be a roadmap But there's 2 big obstacles to conserving shrublands and grasslands n India. One is Foresters, who are not trained to value or respect them. Grasslands are called 'forest blanks' in their parlance, as if they are nothing, an absence. The other problem is the way our present government at the Centre has no respect for nature or wilderness but wants to take over any land it possibly can for industry or so called 'development projects'. Until we can deal with these 2 big prob lems, we will continue to lose grass lands and shrublands like they are

Can conservation projects, like KB, survive in a more porous