

Neotia picked up this Ambassador car artwork in Delhi for his beloved garden



Photograph: Subhajit Pal

# Unwinding in the greens

To Harshvardhan Neotia, his sprawling office garden is the place he turns to find solace, says **Tasmayee Laha Roy**

**T**he Neotia family has been an integral part of the business scene in Kolkata for nearly a century. There is no dearth of exotic escapades for 53-year-old Harshvardhan Neotia, chairman of the Ambuja Neotia Group to unwind. Yet, it is always the gardens that surround his home or office where Neotia's heart finds solace. He takes ET on a walk through in one such space—the garden at his office in Kolkata's Rajarhat area.

The terrace garden on the second floor of Neotia's office is spread over a sprawling 10,000 sq ft and one view from this garden is enough to get a bird's eye view of the city's new information technology and residential hub—Rajarhat—that this office stands in.

"I moved to this office two years ago and seeing the space here, I knew that this is where my dream garden could be," said Neotia.

Neotia's home at the tree-lined Queens Park area too houses a beautiful garden that is worth a walk through, an ambiance which Neotia wanted to recreate around his work space. Brick and mortar apart, green spaces is what this city real estate tycoon associates the most with.

He might not be seen putting on gardening gloves or yanking weeds but Neotia loves to see his garden grow and on his frequent travel trips, Neotia hand picks embellishments for his garden. "I travel frequently on work and whenever I travel or I visit an exhibition and I

see something interesting, the first thing that comes to mind is whether it would suit my garden," adds the garden enthusiast.


For example, once at an exhibition in Delhi he saw a pair of artwork put together with rear seats of an Ambassador car. He picked them up and they now find place in his garden as one of the most interesting seating arrangements in the landscaped terrace.

"It's a huge space, so I decided to do away with the plain land and got it landscaped and split into two levels for that extra drama." The flood-

lights in the evening give the terraced garden a richer look.

Neotia loves looking at his garden at all times, which is why he never pulls down the blinds that separate his cabin and the garden lawn. "The view brings with it a soothing feeling. Though sometimes when I am too worked up just

the view is not enough and I get up and take a walk through my greens to get refreshed," says Neotia. A huge infinity pool on the left side of the garden adds to the calming effect.

Neotia may not have a green finger but he loves the plants that adorn his office garden. He quickly comes up with a American politician David Hobson's oft quoted lines: "I grow plants for many reasons, to please my eye or to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow." 

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