

## **BASIC INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS COMING TO BUDDHA GARDEN**

1. **Welcome!** Our volunteers, who come from all over the world, continue to be a very important part of Buddha Garden as we have no paid labour to carry out the regular farm work. Volunteers come for varying lengths of time. Some stay in Buddha Garden, others stay elsewhere and come on a daily basis. We aim to offer an inspirational integrated work and living experience. We hope that you will join us.
2. **Volunteer contributions;** It is important to understand that if you come to Buddha Garden you will not be coming to a guest house. You will be joining us in both the work and the financial contribution that we all make for being here. For a short or long time you will be joining us in our community.

As we are not a guest house we do not ask you to pay for accommodation but request that you make a financial contribution to the farm, and especially the maintenance of the volunteer accommodation, for the time that you spend here. We suggest that as a minimum from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 that you pay Rs150 although amounts in excess of this will be very gratefully received. Like all farms everywhere in the world we struggle to survive financially and these financial contributions are an important part of our income.

Please note that this payment includes a contribution to Auroville which is reduced for you because you will be working in Buddha Garden. This money does not go Buddha Garden but to the Auroville Central Fund and is used to improve the general infrastructure.

We will give you a paper to take to the Town Hall where you will pay for your stay here. At the same place you can register, get a Guest Pass and open an Auroville account.

3. **Work** takes place every morning from 6.15 – 9.00am Monday to Friday. We ask that you come to this work with an open heart and mind, willing to do whatever needs doing with love and care. Don't worry if you have never done this sort of work before, we all started off knowing nothing and since most of the jobs are quite simple you will soon learn how to do them. Indeed, if you stay more than a few weeks you will almost certainly end up showing other new people what to do!
4. **Work exchange;** Generally we are not able to offer a work exchange unless you stay with us for one month as a paying guest and then a minimum of a further three months. Please understand that if you do this, the work responsibilities will be greater and that it is an investment for us to teach you about them. It is also important for both parties to feel happy with the arrangement and during your first month with us we will be able to see whether the arrangement will work for both of us.

5. **Accommodation** is in:

- a. **Capsules;** which are simple huts on granite pillars made entirely with natural materials of wood and thatch made of coconut leaves. We have four of these available in different parts of Buddha Garden. There are no lights in these capsules so you will need a torch. These capsules share two bathroom facilities. During the busy guest season January – March the large capsules are a shared space.

**The dormitory;** we have just created a new dormitory behind the communal kitchen. Some people like the camaraderie of the dormitory and anyone who wants to stay in the dormitory for the whole of their stay in Buddha Garden can do so. Or you can wait until a capsule becomes free.

**Please note;** during the busy guest season from December to March all the accommodation is under intense pressure. Especially when volunteers find that their travel plans do not go quite as expected and they come either earlier or later than booked. **It therefore really helps if you can be flexible** – maybe a share a room or use the dormitory – until a capsule become free. If you must have your own capsule during this time please let us know and we will keep it for you. It is *essential*, however, that you turn up on the date specified. At other times of the year things are much less pressured and we usually have space for everyone.

6. Things you should bring include:

1. **A small lock for your door.** A number lock is very good especially if there are two of you.
2. **A torch:** this is really essential as although you may have a portable solar lamp these are rather large and often a bit too bright to carry around at night.
3. **A hat** for wearing while working in the garden.
4. **Gardening gloves;** many people find these very useful and while we do have some available they tend to wear out rather quickly. If you can leave yours behind for others, or maybe bring an extra pair, that would be very helpful. Please make sure you don't bring fur lined gardening gloves though – they are far too hot to use in this climate.
5. **A mosquito net:** we do have some nets so these are not absolutely essential except in the very busy time – December to March – when we are very full. At this time of year it may also be a good idea to bring your own mat to sleep on.

In the last year or so more and more volunteers are coming with digital cameras, mobile phones and various other electronic equipment. Please note that we run entirely on solar energy so that the necessary power for charging won't necessarily be available especially during the monsoon. We now have a charging place in our new Centre for Sustainable Farming but please ask how everything

works before plugging anything in. Please try to obtain a **12volt DC connector** for your equipment as then we don't have to use the inverter (that changes the voltage from 12volt DC to 240volts AC) which saves a lot of energy. For your mobile phone you could also consider obtaining a **manual wind-up charger**.

Please note that we do not have a fridge so if you bring medication that needs to be refrigerated you should let us know so that we can make arrangements to keep it elsewhere.

For comprehensive information and pictures you can download the free e-book

**'Handbook for Volunteers in Buddha Garden'**

at

<http://www.lulu.com/content/1138135>

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