

Gardens of New Delhi blossom with care

It is nearly four months now since I returned from India but hardly a day passes without my thinking of the beauty of New Delhi. During the winter months the gardens are in full bloom. There were three hotels within walking distance of my place of residence and each had a lovely cool garden where I often spent an afternoon studying, reading or writing letters.

It was a long walk to the Delhi Rose Garden but one Saturday morning I made the effort and was well rewarded. Each plant was labelled and well cared for. Whole families happily strolled along the mowed pathways.

Once a year the formal gardens of the President's Palace are opened to the public, during the month of February when the flowers are at their best. This palace was once the home of Mogul Emperors and later the British Viceroy. The terraced gardens and waterways are laid out as only the Moguls could do. I guess I was a little surprised to find that most of the flowers were the ones common to our B.C. gardens in summer.

The people of India admire and respect their parks and make use of them daily. Close to where I lived a piece of land has been kept in its natural jungle state and is full of gorgeous peacocks and monkeys. I could hear the monkeys screaming during the night and enjoyed the fantasy of lying in a comfortable bed imagining I was in a far off jungle.

One day in the middle of my language lesson my tutor screamed and ran off to the back of her house. She then called me to see what those monkeys I thought

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were so cut had done A large male had somehow got into her kitchen and while we were studying he was methodically peeling and eating her whole bag of fresh green peas. Fortunately for me, when I laughed she too saw the humor of it.

Most of the Indian people I encountered knew little if anything of Western Canada. Fortunately I had taken along a good supply of Canadian and B.C. lapel pins and calendars which they eagerly accepted. They were pleased to be given

stamps and coins from Canada, and the women were eager to learn new recipes.

As it drew close to Easter I enjoyed sharing the Easter Story and customs with my host family and their neighbors. I purchased hot cross buns for 75¢ each at a nearby hotel and in the market bought eggs to color and candies, peanuts and balloons to hide in the garden. The Easter egg dyes I could locate were yellow and orange but my host family had great fun drawing pic-

tures or writing names on the eggs with crayon then dipping them into the dye to watch the picture take shape. Easter Sunday morning, I called all the neighbors with their children for an Easter Egg and candy hunt in the small garden where I lived.

Everyone laughed and took part including the two young servants from our household. Later in the day when I went up to my room for

something, I discovered a lovely bouquet of flowers put there by the young servant girl who spoke no English but called me "Joan Aunty". Such beautiful caring people, no wonder I enjoyed my stay so much.

Another day Kanchy the servant girl was calling Joan Aunty! Joan Aunty! So I quickly ran down the stairs to find her excitedly pointing the way from our house. There was

a huge elephant with a howdah chair on top, standing outside a home. It was for a little four year old girls birthday party and her parents had rented the elephant to give each of the children a ride. As I showed up with a camera in my hand the mother invited me in to take pictures of the children riding the elephant.

Where but in India do children ride elephants at a birthday party?