

Unique sanctuary for medicinal plants opened

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'Serene', a sanctuary of unique decorative, medicinal and aromatic plants, located in a sprawling four-and-a-half acre botanical preserve on the Sankey Tank bund, was inaugurated in City today.

The sanctuary, promoted by the Singamma Sreenivasan Foundation, houses more than 100 species of medicinal plants and about 235 species of other plants including herbs, shrubs, climbers, trees, epiphytes and water plants. Rare species of economic, ecological and medicinal value have also been grown here.

Speaking after inaugurating the sanctuary, noted agriculture scientist and botanist, Dr M S Swaminathan, said mere compilation of endangered species in the 'red data book' has no value unless these species are conserved and preserved for the future generation. The best way to protect the flora and fauna in our country is to educate the children from the school level, he added.

Referring to the import of pulses from Australia, Dr Swaminathan said, "It is a pity to see that our native plants are unhappy in our own country and happy elsewhere."

Quoting statistics, Dr Swaminathan ridiculed the present condition in which the number of people below the poverty line is equal to the entire population of the country at the time of Independence. He said that pur-



Agriculture scientist Dr M S Swaminathan (left) examining the plants at 'Serene', a sanctuary of medicinal and rare plants in Bangalore on Sunday. Chairman of Singamma Srinivasan Foundation M A Parthasarathy, noted scientist Dr Raja Ramanna and Dr Sita Bhateja are seen. DH photo

chasing power and unhygienic conditions are bigger problems than the production of food grains in our country. Dr Swaminathan recalled the services of Mr M A Srinivasan, who donated the garden, as a visionary who started the national movement for preservation of flora and fauna, reclamation of waste land and recycling of waste water. He suggested that a community gene programme

could be started for conservation by the Foundation. Cautioning against using medicinal plants as 'showcase items', he advised people to use them in a sustainable way. Chairman of the Singamma Sreenivasan Foundation, Mr M A Parthasarathy said a 'herbarium' or 'poly house' will be put up, along with a mist chamber required in horticulture, to grow medicinal plants at the sanctuary. He

said entry will be made selective for those genuinely interested in research work.

Former chief justice Nittoor Srinivasa Rau, former chief secretary T P Issar, nuclear physicist Prof Raja Ramanna and former administrator of Bangalore Mahanagara Palike, Mr Laxman Rau, the minds behind 'Serene', later participated in a discussion session entitled 'Sadas' which was also held on the occasion.