

This Dutch technology can help grow local trees without much watering

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DOHA

TWO years ago, the Netherlands introduced to Qatar an innovative Dutch technology, the 'Groasis Waterboxx'.

The 'Groasis Waterboxx' is a planting concept that relies on natural feeding methods and water consumption rationalisation without irrigation. For this reason, the Ambassador of the Netherlands to Qatar HE Yvette Burghgraef-Van Eechoud, who was speaking at a recent event, said that this concept requires patience, but it is a good model.

"We introduced waterboxx, an innovative concept that allows growth of indigenous trees without much water. So, you don't have to water them. They actually use it from condensation. The challenge here is that the landscaping and beautification in Doha is taking place at a rapid pace. In some neighbourhoods they prefer concretes or bricks because it is quicker. So, you have to have the patience with these systems to let those trees grow because they take years. This is an example where you can actually grow trees and plants without having to water them."

The ambassador further said that if you are in a hurry to beautify the city, then the process may take too long. "What you can actually do is make a nursery for plants and trees outside the city, and ensure that they are growing well without watering them. And then, in 15 years you will have beautiful trees. Patience is the key as trees don't grow in two years time. This is a good mechanism, particularly for Qatar, where rain water is scarce," she added.



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The ambassador also said, "This mechanism was introduced for some specific indigenous trees because, in countries like Qatar, you don't want to grow trees that consume too much water. You need to save water. There are specific species that are more and more appropriate for this water model."

Talking about joint ventures between Qatar and the Netherlands, the ambassador said that there is not much in horticulture, but there are co-operations in research and technology.

"At the Qatar Science and Technology Park, we have some Dutch institutions. We have engineering institutions, also on water and energy efficiency, however, not much in the field of flowers and horticul-

ture. The big pride is Al Maktab Al Qatari Al Hollandi," she added.

On future partnerships between the two nations in this sector, the ambassador said that the University Wageningen in the Netherlands – which has a specialty in tropical agriculture – is in talks with some parties here to make sure that there is agricultural production in a sustainable way.

"And I think we have lots of technologies that are suitable for Qatar to produce more food products in a sustainable way, and not using too much water or energy. We have efficient technologies for that, and the Qataris are interested. I think in the coming 10 years there will be a lot of cooperation in this field," the ambassador concluded.

The Netherlands had reportedly introduced to Qatar this innovative Dutch technology, the 'Groasis Waterboxx', about two years ago