

INTRODUCING

**BLACKBERRY HILLS
MOUNTAIN ECO LODGES
OR
VETIVER ECO LODGES**

PAUL TRUONG



The Vetiver Network



Following a very successful Vetiver Workshop in Kochi, Kerala, India (21-23 February 2008) we went on a field day to Munnar to look at various VS applications at the Kannan Devan Hills Tea Plantations. We stayed on for another few days to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the tea estates around Munnar. Kestrel Holidays Kerala booked us into Blackberry Hills Mountain Eco Lodges for 3 nights.

Unaware of the connection between the Indian Vetiver Network and Blackberry Hills Mountain Eco Lodges, I was completely surprised and delighted to discover the extensive and beautiful uses of vetiver around the lodge and its nature walks.

I should have known better, as the Executive Director of Blackberry Hills, Mr KA Abdul Samad kindly offered us one free night accommodation at the Lodge. Mr Samad was one of the organisers of the Workshop.

We greatly appreciated the hospitality extended to us by Mr. Samad and the General Manager, Mr. Ruresh Babu.

BACKGROUND

Mr Haridas, Coordinator of the India Vetiver Network who was responsible for the organisation of the Cochin Workshop, was Director of R & D of Tata Tea Estate in Munnar until his retirement just prior to the Workshop.

Blackberry Hills Mountain Eco Lodges are located right next to the tea plantation and it was probably a part of the Tata plantation itself until recently.

I believed that Mr Haridas introduced and convinced Mr Abdul Samad to the Vetiver System, which Mr Samad has adopted whole heartedly as shown in the following slides.

Above all, Mr Ruresh Babu, General Manager of Blackberry Hills proudly showed me a DVD which I believe his staff has downloaded the whole www.vetiver.org website. Based on the information on the website and undoubtedly under the guidance of Mr Haridas the staff of Blackberry Hills Mountain Eco Lodges have done a magnificent job in showing how VS can be incorporated beautifully and artistically to the local environment.

0 KM

WELCOME TO



Blackberry Hills

MOUNTAIN ECO LODGES

25 2 2008

View of Tata Tea plantation from the balcony of our unit



Introduction to the Vetiver System in the unit information book



take the pulp inside using a spoon. The homeo medicine Passiflora is prepared from the plant which is used to treat symptoms like hypertension. If in an unlikely event you remain tense at Blackberry Hills, eat a Passion Fruit. Even otherwise, you may!

Spices : In addition to cardamom, we have Pepper, Coffee, Cinnamon, Clove etc. in Blackberry Estate. We have adopted strict organic methods in agriculture.

Bio diversity conservation

We believe in the co-existence of all sorts of plants in our plantation area. Thus, Jackfruit Tree is found next to Mango Tree. Pepper creeps on both. Also see that Cardamom grow well beside an unidentified wild tree. Thus many of these trees and plants complement each other for their own sustainability.

Vetiver System : The name *vetiver* (botanically called *Vetiveria Zizanioides*) is originated from *Vetri* ie; success and *Ver* ie; root in South Indian language, Tamil. This wonder grass is extensively used in Blackberry Estate for multiple purposes. Vetiver is grown on those characteristic walls at Blackberry Hills. This ever green wall protects the terrain more than it beautifies.

Its roots grow deep into the soil and prevent soil erosion. Also it allows rain water to sweep into the earth and helps water conservation. Its roots are aromatic and have multiple uses. Its leaves are used to make roof of huts. Many of the handicraft items

are made out of its leaves. We at Blackberry Hills, make our humble contribution in popularizing this wonder grass. You may visit www.vetiver.org for further information.

Plantations

Tea, rather than coffee is what makes Munnar unique. Large stretches of tea plantations in the undulating terrain is one of the charming sights that attract tourists to Munnar. Tea plantations have a history of more than a century. There are more than 22 Tea estates in Munnar.

There are Coffee estates also in lower altitudes. Thousands of acres of coffee plantations also attract tourists.

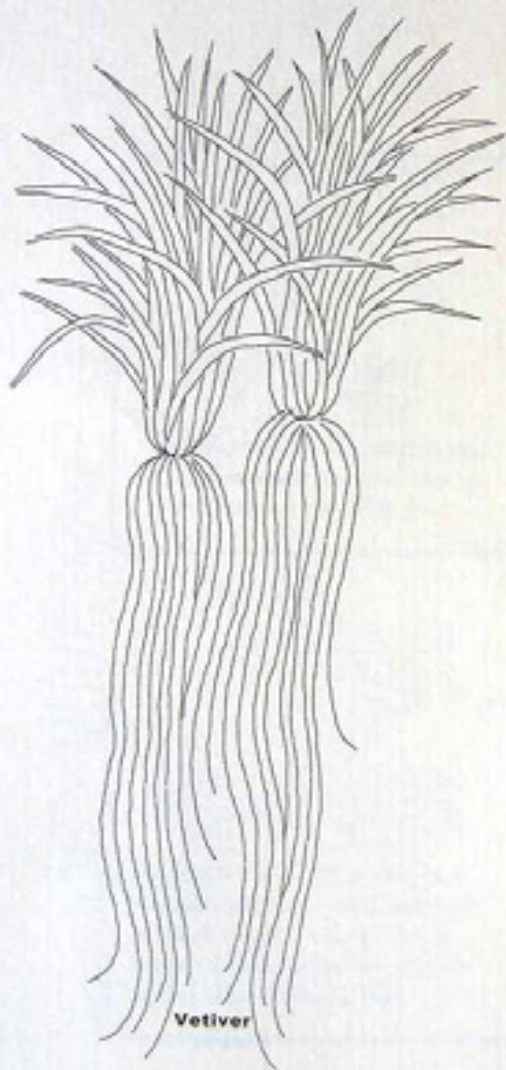
Cardamom was originally a hill produce, before it found its place among plantations. It was a wild plant, seeds of which were collected by tribes and changed hands until it reached markets in Alexandria etc. during ancient times. Now, cardamom is cultivated in thousands of acres in and around Munnar. In lower altitude places like Adimali, pepper and nutmeg fruit are cultivated.

Cinnamon also is found in this area as an intercrop.

Colonial Touch in Munnar's History

Cardamom, the king of spices was a wild plant abundant in the forests of Highranges. The name appears in ancient books and is known to have traded in Alexandria. The

24 2 2008



take the pulp inside using a spoon. The homoeo medicine Passiflora is prepared from the plant which is used to treat symptoms like hypertension. If in an unlikely event you remain tensed at Blackberry Hills, eat a Passion Fruit. Even otherwise, you may!

Spices : In addition to cardamom, we have Pepper, Coffee, Cinnamon, Clove etc. in Blackberry Estate. We have adopted strict organic methods in agriculture.

Bio diversity conservation

We believe in the co-existence of all sorts of plants in our plantation area. Thus, Jackfruit Tree is found next to Mango Tree. Pepper creeps on both. Also see that Cardamom grow well beside an unidentified wild tree. Thus many of these trees and plants compliment each other for their own sustainability.

Vetiver System : The name *vetiver* (botanically called *Vetiveria Zizanioides*) is originated from *Vetri* ie; success and *Ver* ie; root in South Indian language, Tamil. This wonder grass is extensively used in Blackberry Estate for multiple purposes. Vetiver is grown on those charecteristic walls at Blackberry Hills. This ever green wall protects the terrain more than it beautifies.

Its roots grow deep into the soil and prevent soil erosion. Also it allows rain water to sweep into the earth and helps water conservation. Its roots are aromatic and have multiple uses. Its leaves are used to make roof of huts. Many of the handicraft items

Steps leading to the lodge store



Path leading to the unit



Walking path to different units around the Lodge









23 2 2008

Slope stabilisation and erosion control around the Lodge





Eragrostis curvula used for erosion control around the Lodge





Vetiver now replaces *Eragrostis curvula* for erosion control around the Lodge





25 2 2008

Path leading to the village of the tea plantation several km down the slope









24 2 2008

**Vetiver roots used for decoration, pest repellent and deodorant
in the toilet of the lodge restaurant**

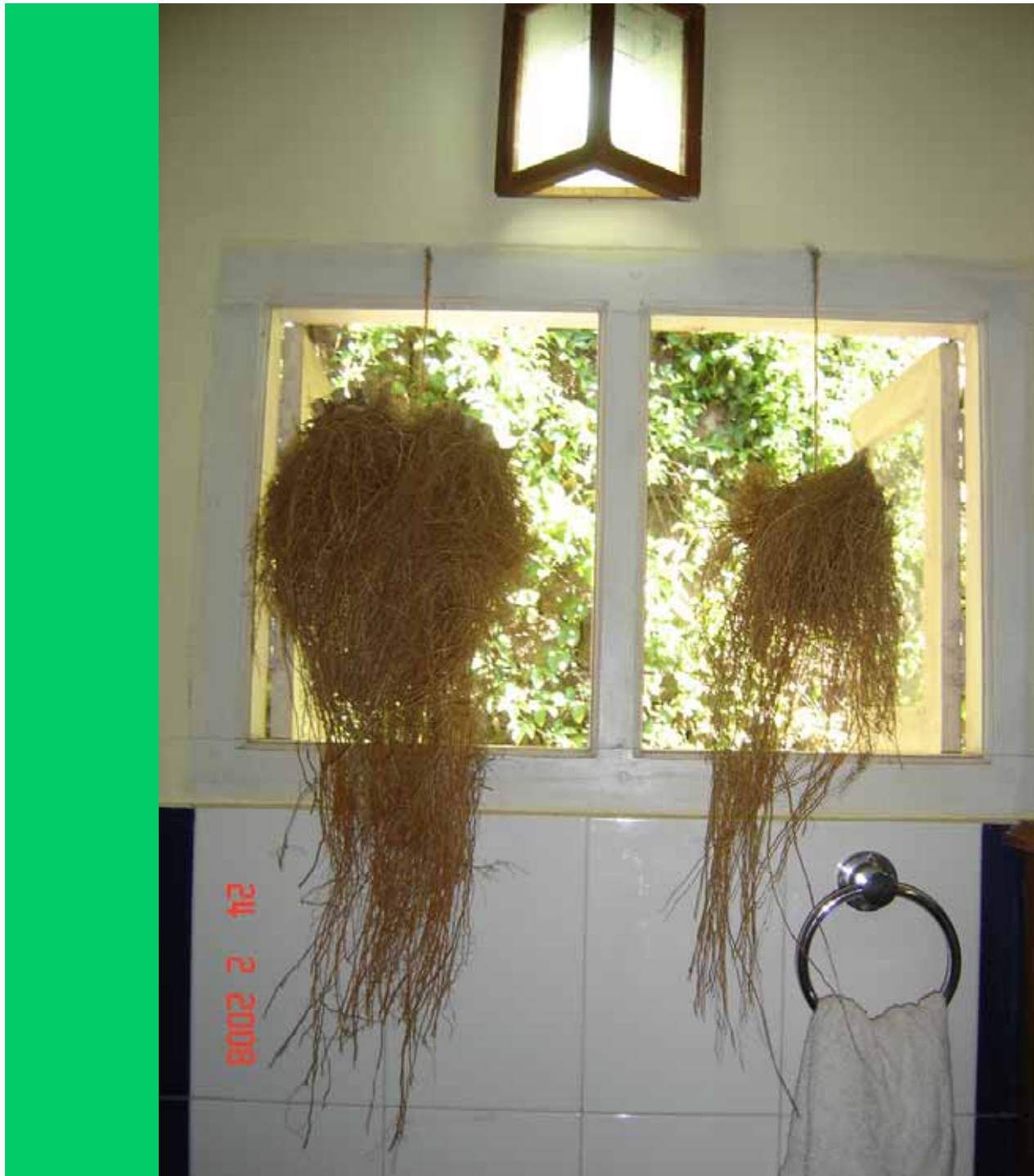


Roots of vetiver grass is
aromatic. Middle ^{note} knot of
perfume you wear is probably
vetiver oil extracted from its roots.

Here, it is used as a pest
repellent

Team Blackberry

24 2 2008



**This clearly shows that
VS applications are
only limited by your
imagination!**

***PS: Life is too short so
when you sit down
next time make the
most of your
imagination***

CONGRATULATIONS

TEAM BLACKBERRY