

Nyari NEWS

April 2015



Malachite Kingfisher

Photo Courtesy of Dr Neal Aggarwal

© Neal Aggarwal, December 2014



Intermediate Egret - rare visitor to Nyari

Photo Courtesy of Dr Neal Aggarwal

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This first quarter

Welcome to your Nyari newsletter covering the first quarter of 2015. As we head towards the Annual General Meeting (AGM) we're ever so pleased that another year has passed so successfully under the stewardship of the committee that our members elected to serve them through 2014 and into 2015. Our AGM is going to be held as below and we hope to see more of you this year than we have done in the past. This is YOUR AGM - make it such. Please show up in numbers and elect those that you'd like to see keep Nyari running through the coming year and come learn a little about what we do, how we can help each other and enjoy the refreshments after the meeting!

Notice

Annual General Meeting of the Nyari Residents Welfare Society will take place on:
Sunday, the 26th April 2015
Venue: # 36 Goodnews Production, Goodnews Area, Time: 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

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Estate finances are in good shape. Reserves currently stand at enough to give us a six month breathing period if we were to lose all income. More importantly these reserves serve to cushion all our members against a catastrophe made made or of natures doing

Estate Finances

As of this writing there is about KSh. 500,000/- outstanding in member dues. Add to this that there are a number of residences now lying vacant and you can appreciate that our financial position though not precarious is not something to put on the back burner. If this situation continues we will have to resort to measures yet to be determined to handle the financial shortfalls that will result. As always we want to do this without raising the monthly subscription but are yet to find a way around the problem. You can help us here - if you have not paid your dues

please do pay up ASAP. If you can please pay for an entire year and if you know that your neighbour is yet to pay please pay them a visit and encourage them to 'do the right thing' and pay up promptly and in full.

Your committee is hard at work in cooperation with Kenya Power to get street light fittings replaced and upgraded where necessary. The roads repair project is now complete and Nyari members are benefitting from smooth rides and reduced vehicle maintenance. Unfortunately many members have yet to pay their road



levy. Please do pay up folks -- you're saving much more in reduced vehicle maintenance costs than what you are paying to your redisent association. The NRWS would like to take this opportunity to thank all those members who paid their levy on time and especially to those that contributed far in excess of what they were requested to pay. We'd also like to thank those members who beautified their roads as in the photographs above. Ms Pamela Namis - who carried out the road repairs also repaired the drainage system on Red Hill Drive. She did this entirely at cost and we thank her for her efforts and generosity. Ms Shelina Popat carpeted her road - Flamingo Drive - with cabro tiles and added potted plants to make that

whole section of Nyari a thing to behold. Mr Karim Meghji and Mr Parminder Matharu carried out the electrification of the road which the NRWS facilitated by liasing with Kenya Power to get the necessary permits and permissions and street connections done.

Manraj Matharu - your member for maintenance - did all the work and is available (his are *the* best quotes) to help you do your road if you so desire. We have to thank him for his efforts and also for coordinating the various meetings between the members residing on Red Hill Lane that resulted in their road being cabro tiled.



Finances at a glance

What we need money for:

- 1 PRIMARY USE is security. 34 guards wages, radio network, police post, emergency response vehicle
- 2 MAINTENANCE - repairing roads, replacing light posts and light fittings, cleaning drains, paint the police posts, auditing etc
- 3 IMPROVING THE ESTATE - tree planting, installing gates and barriers, numbering houses, installing CCTV.
- 4 DEALING WITH LEGAL ISSUES - land disputes, court cases, stopping illegal constructions

Nyari Committee

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MAINTENANCE	- Mr Manraj Matharu +254 722 866 369
YOUTH	- Mr Paul Opondo +254 722 644 995
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ICT	- Dr Neal Aggarwal +254 733 788 501



If you buy charcoal -> you support this

Environmental Matters

In 1998 Neal and Ami had been living in Nyari for just over one year. They went for a walk in the UNEP grounds with their 6-month old daughter in a stroller. While walking around the grounds they came across a side-walk that was filled with seeds. Realising that these were the seeds of the overhead Croton Megalocarpus trees they dumped little Acacia out of her stroller and filled it with over 1200 seed pods. The Chairman set up a small tree nursery outside his house and the seeds were planted under Ami's watchful eye (she was the member for

environment at that time. Crotons grow very well at Nyari altitude (~5800ft amsl) and in it's microclimates. The trees took off and now they adorn Nyari with the flat tops, thousands of fragrant flowers (April to June) that attract thousands of bees and drop leaves that become compost that is so important for the return of nutrients to Nyari's soils.

Over the years various Nyari committees have taken it onto their shoulders to run tree-planting initiatives and that's why Nyari is as tree-lined and forested as it is today. Dr Aggarwal's father - the late

Baldev Aggarwal - planted the Nandi Flame trees you see lining the entry avenue from Barrier 3 to the Nyari Office. Those trees are now about 15 years old and regularly flower their red sprays brightening up the days for all of us.

Trees take many years to grow. Dr Aggarwal's 1 acre plot has 127 trees on it of which 26 are Acacia species collected from various parts of the country. He planted his trees 18 years ago (even before he owned the land) and today has a mini-forest at the bottom of the main lake.

Nyari from the air

Photo courtesy Dr Neal Aggarwal



Nandi Flame on Ibis Drive

Photo courtesy Dr Neal Aggarwal

Taka Collect

TakaTaka Solutions recently started working with the Runda Resident Association as to help Runda in its goal to become a greener estate. Prior to starting services, the following challenges were analysed:

- Lack of 'green' waste management and recycling: Almost all of the waste currently collected was disposed at Dandora dumpsite
- Offering jobs to youths from low-income areas: Residents wanted to create jobs for the youths of the neighbouring low-income areas of Githogoro and Huruma.
- Reliability of current collection service: Waste collection services were frequently unpunctual and left behind waste

Subsequent to this, TakaTaka Solutions started implementing the following waste management services within Runda Estate from October 2014 onwards:

- Three times a week timely waste collection
- Waste separation at source through provision of two bags to houses (organic and recyclables)
- Recycling of waste at TakaTaka Solutions nearby recycling point at an 80% to 90% recycling rate
- Employment of local youths in collection and recycling point
- Waste separation training to Nyari residents and staff
- Provision of high-quality bins to Runda residents

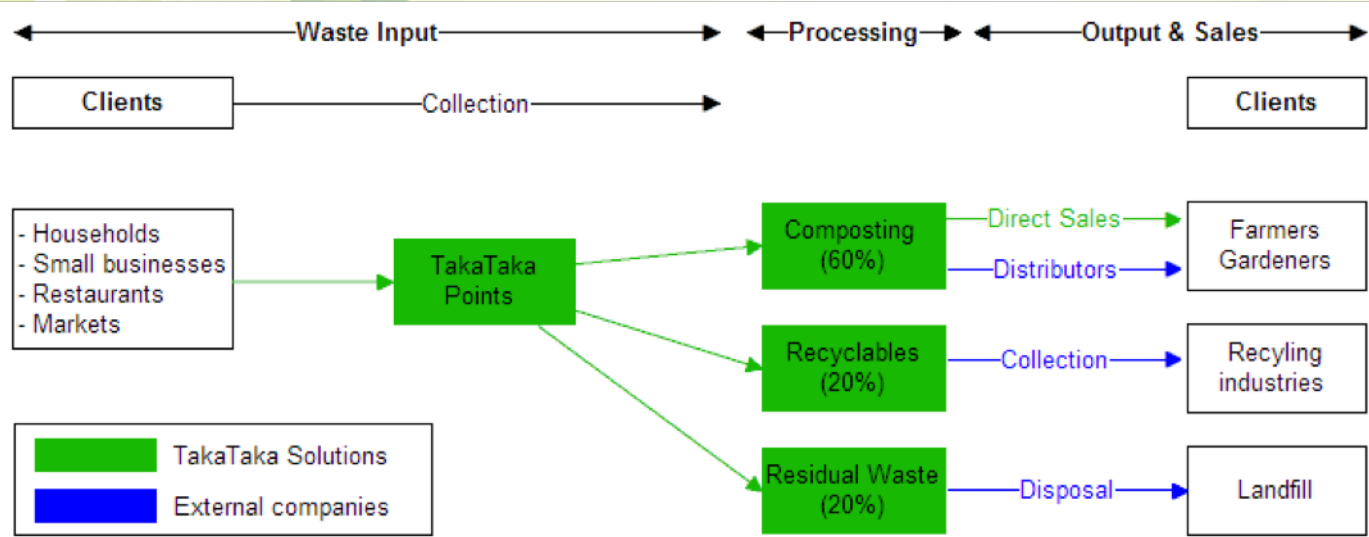
From January 2014 TakaTaka Solutions will also offer the following add-on services to Runda residents:

- Collection of garden waste: TakaTaka Solutions will manage the collection and composting of all garden waste in Runda.
- Collection of waste in neighbouring low-income areas: TakaTaka Solutions will start collecting waste in the low-income areas of Githogoro and Huruma. This will be done with support of Runda Water.
- Selling back of recycled products: TakaTaka Solutions will offer to sell high quality products made from recycled materials to Runda residents: Compost and glasses.

Taka Taka solutions have recently made a proposal to Nyari Residents Welfare Association. They would like to offer similar waste management services to Nyari residents that they are now offering to Runda members:

Pamphlets will be coming around in due course as well as a

form for you to fill in. We need ALL or as many as possible of our members to sign up to this service if it's to be viable to the provider to effect for us. Please do join and fill your form and return it the Nyari office.



African Fish Eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*)

Photo: Wikimedia Commons



Fish Eagles have once more started using the main Nyari lake as a breeding ground. They've raised 2 young over the past 3 years and nest atop the tall trees on Dr and Mrs Aggarwal's plot at the bottom of the lake. The large acacia trees seem to suit them well.

In 1979 Dr Aggarwal and his Biology teacher - John Reynolds - found a breeding pair in Nyari. At the time the African Fish Eagle was endangered and there were thought to be only 400 breeding pairs left in Kenya of which nearly all were to be found on Lake Naivasha. Dr Reynolds was doing a study on these birds and collecting data and photographs for a National Geographic article. Dr Aggarwal, then an 'A' level student at Jamhuri High School, was very lucky to be included in this study. The lone breeding pair in Nyari was a lucky find. At the time the main lake was very small and there was no house on it - indeed there were no

houses in Nyari the area being a coffee plantation.

When Dr and Mrs Aggarwal moved into Nyari to build their house in 1995 there were no fish eagles to be seen anywhere near Nyari. By then Dr Reynolds was long gone from Kenya having obtained a PhD via his research into the species and much accolade the world over for his alerting the conservation fraternity to their plight. 2012 saw the return of a first pair of Fish Eagles their calls heard all over the main lake. Click [here](#) to listen to a recording of that first pair as they circle over the lake coming in for a landing on the trees at the bottom to meet their just-fledged youngster. Since that pair you listened to on the YouTube link in the previous sentence there have been three (3) more nestings with subsequent young. Each time one or other of the tall trees at the bottom of the lake have been the target of their housing intentions. They face a lot of hazards not the least of which being flying golf balls, tree branches lopped off (lucky they've not lost a nest and young yet - though it's inevitable eventuality has us all worried sick) and pesticides indiscriminately sprayed on crops, reeds cleared and even night lighting installed that disturbs their roosting sites.

Breeding season for African fish eagles is during the dry season, when water levels are low. They are believed to be monogamous - in other words, they mate for life. Pairs will often maintain two or more nests, which they will frequently re-use. Because nests are re-used and built upon over the years the nests can grow to be quite large, some reaching 2m (six feet) across and 1.2 m (4 feet) deep. The nests are placed in a large tree and built mostly of sticks and other pieces of wood. In Nyari there is such a nest at the top of a large Australian Ash in Dr Aggarwal's plot at the lake overflow.

The female lays 1 to 3 eggs, which are primarily white with a few reddish speckles. Incubation is mostly done by the female, but the male will incubate when the female leaves to hunt. Incubation lasts for 42 to 45 days before the chicks hatch. Siblicide (the killing of of siblings by bigger ones) does not normally occur in this taxon, and the parents will often successfully rear two or three chicks. Chicks fledge at approx 70 to 75 days, Post fledgeling dependence lasts up to three months. In the stills accompanying the video the images show a mottled Fish Eagle. This is a young one just fledged and learning to fly.

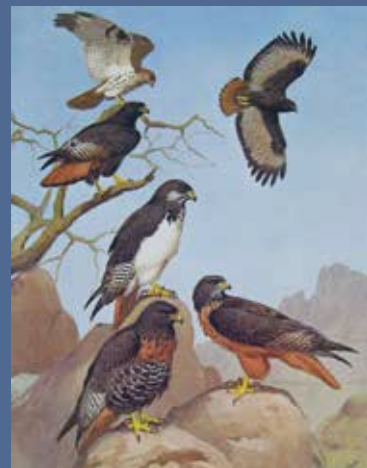
The African fish eagle feeds mainly on fish, which it will swoop down upon from a perch in a tree, snatching the prey from the water with its large clawed talons. The eagle will then fly back to its perch to eat its catch.

Like other sea eagles, the African fish eagle has structures on its

toes called spicules that allow it to grasp fish and other slippery prey. The osprey, a winter visitor to Africa, also has this adaptation. Should the African fish eagle catch a fish over 1.8 kg (4 pounds) it will be too heavy to allow the eagle to get lift, so it will instead drag the fish across the surface of the water until it reaches the shore - we see this sometimes in Nyari. If it catches a fish that is too heavy to even allow the eagle to sustain flight, it will drop into the water and paddle to the nearest shore with its wings - again this has been observed by Dr and Mrs Aggarwal. The African fish eagle is known to predate other bird species (such as goliath herons) of their catch. This behaviour is known as kleptoparasitism. It will also feed on waterfowl such as ducks, small turtles and terrapins, baby crocodiles, greater flamingos and lesser flamingos, lizards such as Nile monitors, frogs and carrion. Occasionally, it may even carry off mammalian prey, such as hyraxes and monkeys. It has also been observed feeding on domestic fowl (chickens).

What has happened to the populations of this magnificent bird? We are happy to report that there are now over 2,000 documented breeding pairs on the various Rift Valley lakes. The population has bounced back thanks to the efforts of those of us that have been running around educating, reporting tree cuttings, stopping pesticide use and more. This species is now listed as Least Concern by IUCN. The estimated population size is about 300,000 individuals with a distribution area of 18,300,000 km².

Next newsletter we look at another bird of prey that has a prominent presence in Nyari - The Augur Buzzard.



Nyari Image Gallery



More pictures can be dowloaded
from:
[Facebook](#)

Maintenance

We lose a tree ... and power

ON Thursday the 26th of March, 2015 an NRWS members gardener was cutting down a tree on Ibis Drive when he dropped a large palm tree on the power cables outside House Number 12. The tree pulled the cables to the ground with it and started a domino effect. Poles outside houses 13, 14, 15 and across the road from these all came down taking the JTL and Zuku fibreoptics with them. 12 houses lost internet and it took JTL 6 days to rewire their fibre trunk and drop cables.

The Kenya Power contractor impressibly was able that very evening to have power restored by working late into the night (1030pm). They installed new poles next to the fallen ones and had the electricity back before midnight. That said though -- the job is still not complete two weeks after the event and the leaning poles are still jury-rigged to the new ones.

Sukuma Twende ...



ICT

Stay safe - ENCRYPT!

The [Edward Snowden](#) revelations were eye-popping. If they weren't for you then you're missing a very current, alarming and critically important topic. Haven't watched the movie Citizenfour? What are you missing out on?

In January 2013, Laura Poitras started receiving anonymous encrypted e-mails from "CITIZENFOUR," who claimed to have evidence of illegal covert surveillance programs run by the NSA in collaboration with other intelligence agencies worldwide. Five months later, she and reporters Glenn Greenwald and Ewen MacAskill flew to Hong Kong for the first of many meetings with the man who turned out to be Edward Snowden. She brought her camera with her. The resulting film is history unfolding before our eyes.

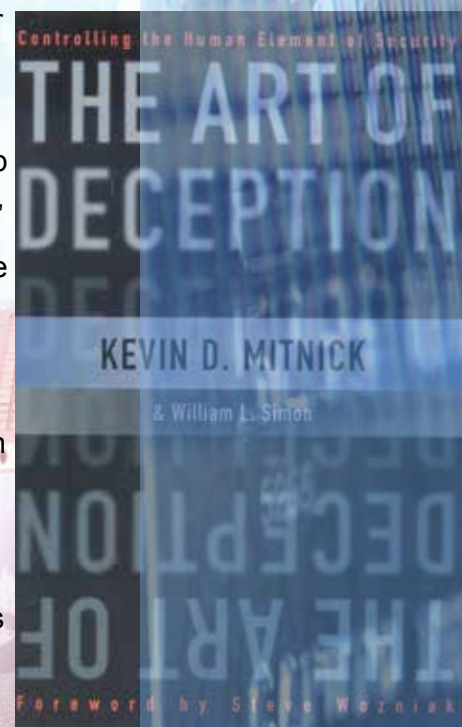
And the point of this writing here? ARE YOU SAFE? Or are you sending mails to your friend or work or bank thinking that you are safe in sending them? Ever sent a postcard with all that you wanted to say written on the back for all the world to read? Then think about this -- when you send an



e-mail you're doing just that -- anyone and everyone on the internet can read what you are sending. Indeed ISPs are [REQUIRED by law](#) to keep your correspondence for 7 years so all this time your correspondence has been sitting on some server just waiting for a nefarious character to drop by, hack the account of the administrator, and pour over your bank passwords, credit card details and more assuming of course that you've been lax and sent these things in an email to a colleague, friend or bank manager.

So, you ask, is it possible to send an email such that no one would be able to read it? Yes it is and the graphic at left here shows how it's done. [It's really quite simple](#) once you get the hang of it and set up a few things on your computer to accomplish the feat. And when you've done that you could even send your credit card details and NO ONE would be able to decode your mail given today's technology and you'd be safe from prying eyes. Oh! I hear you say "I have nothing to hide, I don't need this complication in my life." All we can say is read the book - [The Art of Deception](#) - by Kevin Mitnick. Be

prepared to be scared out of your wits by the breadcrumbs you've already left all over the internet leading back to ... YOU! In this book Mitnick lays out step by step how anyone can hack any server, any mail, any teller machine. After [a well-publicized pursuit](#), the FBI arrested Mitnick on February 15, 1995, at his apartment in Raleigh, North Carolina, on federal offenses related to a 2½-year period of computer hacking which



included computer and wire fraud. Mitnick was charged with wire fraud (14 counts), possession of unauthorized access devices (8 counts), interception of wire or electronic communications, unauthorized access to a federal computer, and causing damage to a computer. Intrigued enough to spend some time learning more about the risks you are facing? Below are some links to websites that will get you started.

- 1) [GNUPG](#)
- 2) [GNUPG for windows](#)
- 3) A [lifehacker article](#) on why encryption is so important
- 4) Why you should [encrypt your Android phone](#)
- 5) The Codebreakers – The Story of Secret Writing ([ISBN 0-684-83130-9](#)) is a book by David Kahn, published in 1967 comprehensively chronicling the history of cryptography from ancient Egypt to the time of its writing.

Security

In days gone by ...

In days gone by things were not what they are today. Now we routinely report that the past quarter has been quiet with little to report in terms of robberies. This was not the case when the NRWS committees were formed and implemented the security systems that you now enjoy. The situation in the country continues to deteriorate and this has inevitably impacted Nyari. On the 19th of March there was a break in at House Number 19, Red Hill Gardens. A gang of four thugs cut the perimeter fence and then the weakest grills on the house which happened to be the bedroom of the son of the home owner. In an obvious show of knowledge arising from insider information the thugs took the son to his fathers bedroom and stole phones, laptops and some other valuables holding the occupants of the house at gunpoint. Fortunately no one was hurt. The thugs then kidnapped the son and had him drive them out of the estate making their getaway because the guards were not alerted the son being the person they usually see driving that car. A few hours later they dropped their victim off on Waiyaki Way near the Safaricom building and made off with the car.

Subsequently NRWS fenced off the area with mabati sheets. Devki Steel contributed 40 galvanised sheets for which we'd like to thank them from the bottom of our hearts. Investigations by the NRWS point to an inside job as the perpetrators knew exactly where to go inside the house and did not deviate from their carefully executed plan.

NRWS recommends the following:

- 1) Vet all staff, casuals and maintenance technicians
- 2) Light your house with perimeter security lights
- 3) Keep a small dog (inside your house if you can) especially at night
- 4) Avoid frequently changing staff/guards
- 5) Minimize movement especially at night and limit yourself to essential trips

The world around us continues to experience troubles. As though the Westgate attack was not enough - we had the Lamu attacks and just a few days back the Garissa one. None of us needs to be reminded about the 148 lives lost on that day in the senseless way in which terrorism works especially the terrorism of the day. Guerilla style attacks have now become the norm and the attackers are choosing smaller and smaller targets that are near-impossible to secure. This past Easter weekend reports circulated warning all and sundry that an attack on a mall or other prominent public site was planned. Fortunately none such took place but all the same we were all, once more, victims of terrorism hiding in our homes or maintaining a low profile and not going out for fear of becoming one of those caught in such an incident.

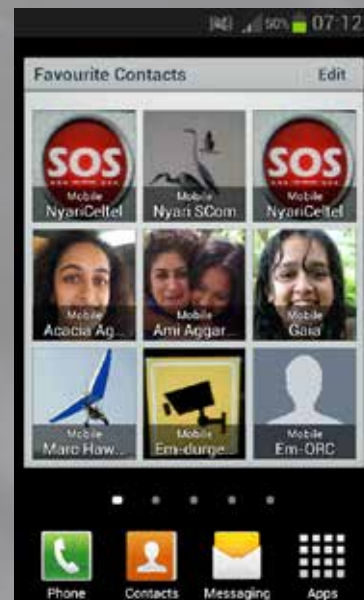
We draw your attention to this and to the fact that you must remain vigilant in your travels and avoid places that could be targets in the coming days. Your ICT department points out that the quickest news channel is Twitter and that we also have a WhatsApp group that regularly exchanges news about the latest happenings. Please do join in and add your voice to those keeping us all informed minute-by-minute.

Do also take advantage of the Nyari Emergency Response System. Submit your cell phone numbers to the office and put a shortcut on the home screen of your Android or

iOS device. Should you suspect that your house is being broken into press the shortcut to initiate a call to the Nyari office. Then leave the line open so that the guards can hear what is going on at your end. If you've registered your phone numbers with the office the guards will know which house has called and will dispatch the Rapid Response vehicle to your home as quickly as possible. Some members have found that this system has the vehicle at their gates within a minute - far faster than any security company can manage and have opted out of their security company charges thereby saving far more than what they pay to Nyari as quarterly subs!.

SECURITY

Your NRWS committee is looking into the possibility of acquiring equipment to issue ID cards to staff and casuals. Watch this space in the coming months to learn more about this.



Emergency & frequent dialling icons on Dr Aggarwal's Android phone

Please report any suspicious activity to the Nyari Office as soon as you can. Contact numbers are on page 1.

Staff Profile

Thomas Muesva – Senior Guard at Nyari



Most of the Nyari Residents are familiar with his face and have seen him at one or the other barrier. Thomas Muesva has been working for Nyari for the past 15 years. He is 43 years old and is our most senior guard. Coming from Machakos County, in 2000 he moved with his wife and a child to Nyari Estate to pay attention to a plot he is still living on. His family has grown since then. "I am the father of four, and I feed them with my work which is something I am very proud of", he says.

Thomas Muesva likes the residents in Nyari Estate and his job as well as his working environment. More than once he has shown readiness for action. In 2008 he caught a thief who tried stealing at Egrets Close. In recognition of this initiative he was given an appreciation letter by the NRWS committee of the time. At Nyari West he caught three thieves with the support of Nyari Police. All were arrested and brought to court. In earlier years, incidents like these happened more frequently than nowadays, Muesva tells. "The safety in the Estate has improved a lot during the last years."

Security is a combined, team effort. You can help us keep you safe by observing some simple guidelines:

1. Vet all staff, casuals and maintenance technicians
2. Beware of meter readers & others requiring entry into your home/compound.
3. Light your house with perimeter security lights - make sure you have no dark corners in which a person could hide.
4. Become more aware of your surroundings especially when coming home at night. Be 'street smart' when out and about.
5. Install a burglar alarm with passive infrared sensors and/or ultrasonic sensors.
6. Fit reed switches to your window grills and link these to your burglar alarm.
7. Install CCTV if you can. These days you can buy at reasonable prices CCTV units that you can monitor on your phone over the internet.
8. Keep a small dog (inside your house if you can) especially at night.
9. Avoid frequently changing staff/guards.
10. Minimize movement especially at night and limit yourself to essential trips.

Member Project

From time to time we ask members not to burn garbage in their gardens. Burning plastics is especially hazardous to our health. The gases are poisonous and go into the upper atmosphere where they damage the ozone layer and contribute to global climate change. Please don't burn garbage. Some of our members already split their garbage into three bins. One for paper and other 'office' type waste, one for cans, bottles, plastic bags and such and the third for 'green' or 'wet' kitchen garbage like peelings, skins, coffee grounds and so on.

This latter one is idea for composting. Here is a series of pictures to show you a member project. This member had a plastic drum lying in his yard that he converted into a composting bin as in the photos. You can get a 210L metal drum in Gikomba or buy a plastic water tank from someone like Kentank for very little money and start producing wonderful compost that is much, much better for your plants than chemical fertilizers. Here is the drum cut open using a jig-saw. Don't discard the flap - it will become your lid as in the image below. The images show you how easy it is to make this device.



As you add food wastes, cover them with a layer of sawdust or another "brown" material to reduce odors. Brown materials include any dry, dead plant matter, such as leaves, paper or straw.

Fill the drum three-quarters full. It's important to leave space inside the drum so that the compost will mix when turned. Close and turn the drum to mix the compost. Check the moisture level. Compost microbes need water in order to survive, but too much water cuts off their oxygen supply. A handful of mixed compost, squeezed in your hand, should produce no more than a few drops of water. If the compost feels too dry, add water. If it feels too wet, add some extra leaves or paper shreds to soak up the moisture. Turn the compost drum every few days to keep the compost well mixed and aerated. Continue checking the moisture level regularly, adding water or dried materials as needed to keep the compost moist but not overly wet. When ready for use, your compost will look dark and have a pleasant, earthy odor. Aside from woody pieces, you should not be able to identify the original materials in the compost. In a compost drum, finished compost takes about two months

If you have an interesting project that you've undertaken please share it with us. Send your notes and images to our Nyari e-mail address and we'll include it in here.



Tai-pan Forex

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 1st Floor - Opp Food Court

Branch
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 Tel: +254 20-827378/9

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Red [& black] Alert

by Dr Neal Aggarwal

Lately I've been coming across a number of garter snakes. They're colourful, fast and really tiny. And also they're ENTIRELY [NON-POISONOUS](#). Not only that folks but they're also very useful in our environment keeping down the numbers of rats, field mice and toads. Toads in particular are a nuisance that the snakes should soon bring under control. The rat menace has not declined substantially as our environment recovers from the ravages of the days when Nyari was a farm and get's back its correct complement of predators that keep the system in check humming along smoothly.

Here's what [Wikipedia](#) has to say about garter snakes.

Garter snakes, like all snakes, are carnivorous. Their diets consist of almost any creature they are capable of overpowering: slugs, earthworms, leeches, lizards, amphibians, ants, crickets, frog eggs, toads, minnows, and rodents. When living near water, they will eat other aquatic animals. The ribbon snake (*Thamnophis sauritus*) in particular favors frogs (including tadpoles), readily eating them despite their strong chemical defenses. Food is swallowed whole. Garter snakes often adapt to eating whatever they can find, and whenever, because food can be scarce or abundant. Although they feed mostly upon live animals, they will sometimes eat eggs.

NOT POISONOUS; PRESERVE AT ALL COSTS - SAVE OUR ENVIRONMENT!



Authors daughter with rare find



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