

## French botanist to install vertical garden for biennale

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**Kochi:** Adding more colour to Kochi Muziris Biennale's (KMB) second edition renowned French botanist Patrick Blanc will create a vertical garden at Fort Kochi. But, the garden he creates at biennale would be the second one that he has created in India. "The first garden was created 10 years ago at the French embassy in New Delhi. It was not open to the public," he said.

The Frenchman said that he hoped his biennale installation at Veli garden would be a permanent work that would 'evolve into something useful over the years'. The Veli garden was chosen because it was originally where the study for the plant treatise Hortus Malabaricus took place in the 17th century. Speaking at KBF's Let's Talk event at St Teresa's College on Saturday, Blanc took the audience through a presentation of his gravity-defying vertical gardens around the world. He has created over 250 such gardens at prominent



**LET'S TALK:** French botanist Patrick Blanc (C) along with curator Jitish Kallat (left) and architect G Shankar in Kochi on Saturday

locations. "Vertical gardens are ideal for crowded cities which cannot afford the luxury of spacious gardens. I prefer to use plants available in local nurseries. Then we can slowly introduce native plants," he said. In his gardens, Blanc uses 100-450 species.

He spoke about the visits he made to Nilgiris, Munnar and Periyar a decade ago. "Kerala probably has the largest va-

riety of Impatiens in the world. I found a range of colours and a variety with only one leaf, which I have not seen propagated anywhere," he said.

Though vertical gardens provide insulation against pollution and radiation, green architect G Shankar, raised doubts about the environmental viability of such gardens in Kerala's climatic conditions.