

Now, spot the tiger wings at KIA's T2



Botanist Patrick Blanc with BIAL CEO Hari Marar at KIA. | Photo Credit: special arrangement

The “terminal in a garden” at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru now boasts of “tiger wings”.

This is the name of a unique vertical garden designed in collaboration with Patrick Blanc, a globally recognised botanist affiliated with the French National Centre for Scientific Research, which was unveiled at Terminal 2 here on Thursday (November 7).

The 30-foot-high, 160-foot-wide installation has two walls, each of 80 feet, boasting over 15,000 plants across 153 species, many native to Karnataka and the Western Ghats.

Soilless system

“Utilising a soilless system with specialised felt imported from Germany, the garden’s intricate design captures the strength and elegance of India’s national animal, the tiger. Asparagus plants trace the silhouette of aeroplane wings, while vibrant red, orange, yellow, and white Ixora flowers represent the tiger’s signature pattern,” a BIAL release said.

This is touted as Mr. Blanc’s largest project in India. At the unveiling, he spoke about how he visited several forests in the Western Ghats, selecting rare plant species from these diverse ecosystems to ensure that the wall features species native to the region.

“Tiger wings is the realisation of a dream where nature and architecture coexist seamlessly. By employing specialised felt layers, we create an environment where plants thrive, just as they would in nature’s crevices. This project transcends merely enhancing the visual landscape of the

airport; it transforms the travel experience, rejuvenates the environment, and preserves the rich tapestry of the natural world that surrounds us,” he said.

The concept of ‘tiger wings’ will come alive when the flowering begins, he said. “I call this tiger wings because of the airplane wings, while the tiger is a sacred animal in India,” he added.

Water-efficient

The vertical garden is water-efficient, using a carefully designed irrigation system that delivers just the right amount of water to the plants through the felt layers. This method is more sustainable and replicates how plants grow on natural cliff faces or rock walls, where water and nutrients are minimal, but plants thrive in crevices, the Bangalore International Airport Ltd said.

Mr. Blanc’s hydroponic approach allows for a diverse array of plant species to coexist in a compact vertical space, creating a thriving ecosystem that enhances air quality and contributes to a cooler, more pleasant environment, it added. He was also all praises for the array of varieties used in Bengaluru in gardens, as well as the numerous nurseries that play home to them.

Asked about the cost of the installation, BIAL officials said it came up to ₹20,000 per sq.m., all inclusive.

“We wanted to bring in a fresh perspective to our vision of sustainability, artistry, and technological advancement in a way that resonates with Bengaluru’s essence. Patrick’s innovative approach to designing living walls — allowing plants to grow as they would in nature with minimal intervention — was precisely what we envisioned for this space,” said Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO, BIAL.