

Curry Leaf Thief

By : Juggernaut

Curry is integral part of Indian cooking. A curry ain't curry without curry leaves. Few Indians like Juggernaut even resort to stealing curry leaves to satisfy their curry taste.



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Subba Rao

“ I notice my curry plant losing leaves steadily from the bottom up, I am wondering if you Juggernaut has something to do with it,” said Mia looking at her curry plant, around 3 feet high with lush green tender leaves on the upper branches and leafless lower branches. Mia first tasted curry during her visit to South India three decades ago to attend her friend’s wedding, ever since she hooked on to curry. When she saw a curry plant for sale at a local nursery few years ago, she purchased and planted just outside her front porch among other plants mostly flowering plants.

“ Me, no why should I pick curry leaves?” Juggernaut looked at Mia with a look of surprise.

“ Well, I am not blaming you of any grand theft or calling you curry leaf thief, I just thought you might have pick some leaves steadily to make curry.”

“ Since I am an Indian you were blaming me for the missing curry leaves, you do get other visitors besides me. Also you have 4 goats, one donkey and a horse not mentioning few rabbits and free-range chickens running around in your yard, any one of them could have chewed up curry leaves.”

“ The goats, donkey and horse were fenced and the rabbits always in the cage, I doubt the chickens are interested in curry leaves, besides if any animal got loose and like to devour a plant, it may eat the entire plant, not systematic disappearance of leaves gradually from the lower branch towards the upper branches, it seems somebody carefully selecting the leaves to pick,” Mia gave a look of a detective.

“ Well, I was making *sambar* the other day, without curry leaves Sambar ain’t sambar, so I picked few leaves,” Juggernaut looked apologetic.

“ That’s fine, you could have mentioned to me. I did remember you sharing delicious sambar with me the other day, I liked its strong curry leaf flavor, I wondered how you got the curry flavor, and it didn’t occur to me that it came from my curry plant.”

“ Remember the egg plant curry I made few weeks ago you said you loved it.”

“ Yeah.”

“ I needed a few curry leaves for that dish too.”

“ OK.”

“ Pumpkin curry without curry leaves is no curry at all.”

“ I know that a curry without curry leaf is not a curry at all but you should have asked me for the curry leaves before you pick them,” Mia did not appear mad but was not pleased.

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“Well next time I will ask you for the leaves before I pick the leaves,” Juggernaut appeared sincere.

“There were not many leaves left on the plant so give a break until the plant recovers to grow to put more leaves.”

“Maybe you should consider applying fertilizer to the plant to grow fast,” suggested Juggernaut.

“I am an organic farmer you know; I will put more of donkey dung along with goat and horse droppings to the plant.”

“With my soil chemistry background, I suggest that you don’t put fresh animal dung to any plant let alone to the precious curry plant, it will kill the plant. First compost the fresh animal dung for several weeks then apply to the plant to benefit.”

“I will do that but I suggest that you buy your own curry plant at the nursery,” suggested Mia looking at her curry plant.

“Certainly I will do that,” Juggernaut agreed. After few days, he found at his front porch a potted curry plant with a note that read “Keep cooking curry with curry leaves,” a gift from Mia. Now Juggernaut travels on the island with a portable potted curry plant for fresh curry leaves to make curry.

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