

In conversation : Part I

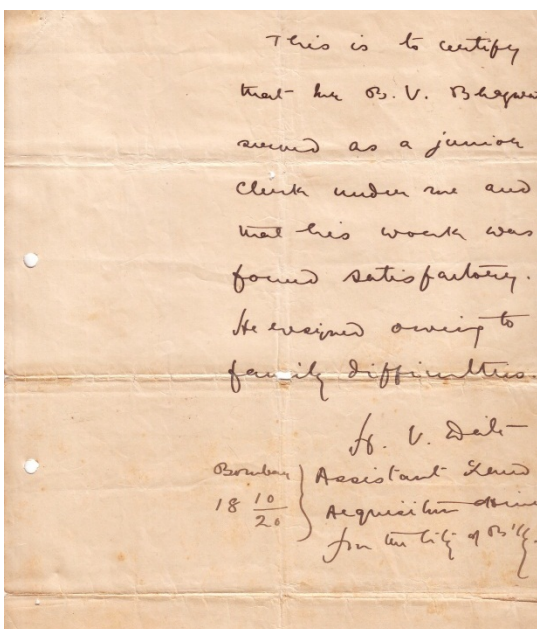
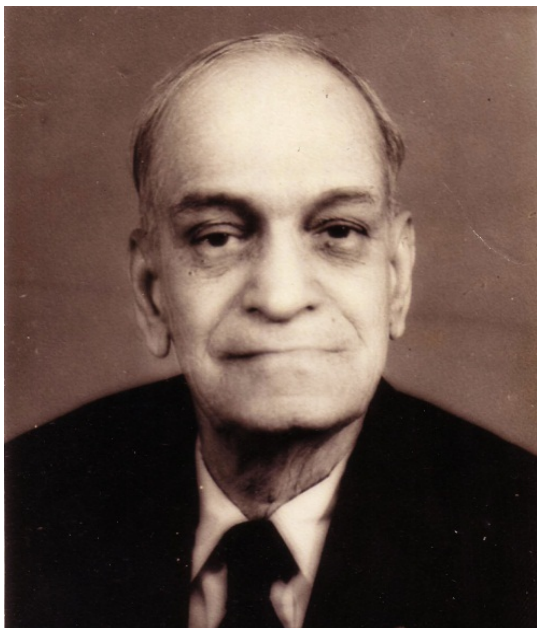
Professor P. B. Bhagwat talks to Aniket Bhagwat.

Tell me a bit about my grandfather, Bhalchandra V. Bhagwat; How did he learn about gardens; what was his life like?

You know him - he was a tall, regal and fair man who always turned out immaculately. He lived his life by a motto; "If anyone can do it - I can do it better". He believed that fully and he had three qualities that were to be his strength always. He spoke the English language with aplomb, he had excellent cursive writing skills and he had a quick head for figures. This had led to him taking jobs as they were available as a clerk or an accountant where possible. My early memories of him are when we were living in a village called Raita, near Kalyan. This must have been 1934. Someone told the local land owner who had a flower garden and was looking for a farm manager, about a man called Bhagwat and he was offered the job. As all things, he learnt on the job.

Years later, on a trip to Pune, he went to the Empress Botanical Gardens and inquired if there was a job there and as luck would have it, there was an opening as an accountant. When there, in addition to his work, he learnt as much as he could in the gardens and spent a lot of time in what was a small but excellent library. There was Firminger's Manuals on Gardening, and George Watts' Dictionary of Economic Products of India, along with a host of old books on English Gardening.

When the Superintendent of the gardens had to retire, the committee felt that since young Bhagwat was there and had shown great interest, commitment and had learnt a lot in his time there, there was no need to look elsewhere and he was offered the job.



Above: Bhalchandra V. Bhagwat.

Below: Letter of recommendation for B. V. Bhagwat circa 1920.