Terrace garden checklist

Every check for a terrace or rooftop garden in India, in the order the work has to happen. Tick each one before moving to the next.

1 · Before anything is carried up

- [ ] Decide the two main uses: seating, herbs, food, scent
- [ ] Find the structural drawings or get the roof assessed
- [ ] Mark beams and columns: heavy beds, trees and water go there
- [ ] Note sun hours in summer and winter, and the wind direction
- [ ] Find a water point on the roof, or plan one

2 · Waterproofing and drainage

- [ ] Inspect the existing membrane; repair or upgrade it
- [ ] Flood-test for 48 hours before anything is placed
- [ ] Root barrier and protection board under every bed
- [ ] Screed slopes to outlets; no hollows
- [ ] Every outlet clear, guarded and reachable

3 · Irrigation

- [ ] Drip line to every bed and pot
- [ ] Filter and timer at the tap
- [ ] Separate lines for pots, beds and trees
- [ ] Water early morning; check emitters monthly

4 · Growing mix and depth

- [ ] Light mix: compost, coco peat, coarse grit
- [ ] No plain garden soil on a roof
- [ ] Herbs and greens: about 150 mm deep
- [ ] Shrubs and flowering plants: 200 mm or more
- [ ] Small trees: 450 mm or more, over a beam
- [ ] Mulch every bed

5 · Planting

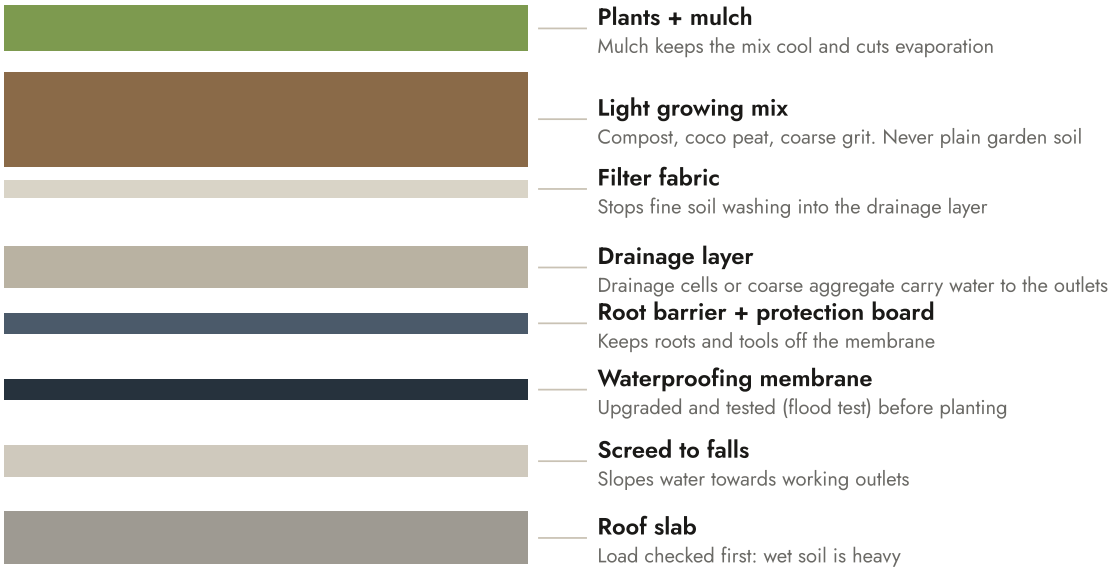
- [ ] Plant September to November, or February
- [ ] Do not start in May
- [ ] Shade over seating before delicate plants
- [ ] Heat-tolerant structure: plumeria, karonda, Tecoma, bougainvillea
- [ ] Climbers for shade: jasmine, Rangoon creeper, curtain creeper
- [ ] Herbs: curry leaf, lemongrass, tulsi, mint

6 · Monthly care

- [ ] Check drip emitters and the filter
- [ ] Clear outlets, especially before the monsoon
- [ ] Top up mulch
- [ ] Prune climbers and tie in new growth
- [ ] Feed with compost, not chemical salts
- [ ] Look under pots for standing water

The build-up under a terrace bed

Terrace and rooftop garden build-up, layer by layer



Plants + mulch
Mulch keeps the mix cool and cuts evaporation

Light growing mix
Compost, coco peat, coarse grit. Never plain garden soil

Filter fabric
Stops fine soil washing into the drainage layer

Drainage layer
Drainage cells or coarse aggregate carry water to the outlets

Root barrier + protection board
Keeps roots and tools off the membrane

Waterproofing membrane
Upgraded and tested (flood test) before planting

Screed to falls
Slopes water towards working outlets

Roof slab
Load checked first: wet soil is heavy

Order of work: load check → waterproofing → drainage → irrigation → growing mix → plants.

Want this done properly? Nature's Touch designs, builds and maintains terrace and rooftop gardens across India. WhatsApp +91 63751 08140 or visit naturestouchlandscape.com/services/terrace-garden.html.

Full guide online: naturestouchlandscape.com/journal/terrace-garden-guide/