

MEDIA RELEASE

NParks launches new garden to celebrate Singapore's natural heritage and kick-start Biodiversity Week

- Highlights importance of native plants to people and biodiversity
- Kicks off a week-long series of programmes from 20 to 28 May 2017 for community participation in biodiversity education and conservation efforts

18 May 2017— The National Parks Board (NParks) is launching the enhanced Native Garden @ HortPark to mark the start of Biodiversity Week (20 to 28 May). The Native Garden, with more than 100 species of native plants, has the highest concentration of native plants, including edibles, shrubs, and trees, in a single location in Singapore. The Garden aims to promote the use of native plants in gardens and will provide visitors with a wealth of information on their uses (for food, medicine and timber), how they support native fauna, how they can be used in landscapes and how to grow them.

Showcase of native plants

Native plants are a critical part of our ecosystems. They help to support our native biodiversity, and are key to our habitat enhancement and species recovery efforts. They have also been extensively used culturally for traditional and commercial purposes for food, medicine and as timber.

The Native Garden features different landscapes that showcase native plants in their various natural habitats, and demonstrates how native plant species can be effectively used for urban landscaping. Aiming to provide an immersive experience, visitors will be able to see the *Lasia spinosa* in its native aquatic habitat, and the *Lumnitzera littorea* in its native mangrove habitat. These landscapes also provide habitats for fauna. In the rainforest zone, the running water from a man-made stream and the use of a combination of logs and rocks help to mimic a rainforest habitat conducive for insects, small mammals, reptiles and birds.

Visitors will also be able to explore the five zones where plants are categorised based on how they are used – as medicine, food, timber or to enhance habitats for birds and butterflies. Rare species such as the *Nephelium maingayi*, which has edible fruits that

resemble hairless rambutans and taste like rambutans, can be found in the Food Zone, while the *Knema globularia*, which is found in the Bird Zone, has fruits that are eaten by the Oriental Pied Hornbill.

A free guided tour of the Native Garden will be available daily during Biodiversity Week (20 to 28 May). The specially curated hour-long tour will take visitors through the Garden to learn about the different plants and their uses, and end off at the native plant collection display at the Hands on House. Participants will also get to see some of the items and materials made from the plants. At Gardeners' Day Out at HortPark on 20 May, visitors can purchase native plants which are otherwise not commercially available, including the Singapore Kopsia.

More details of the Native Garden, guided tours and native plants on sale can be found in [Media Factsheet A](#).

Biodiversity Week and Festival of Biodiversity

The United Nations has designated 22 May as the International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Based on the overall IDB theme of sustainable tourism, NParks has developed a local theme "Encountering and Exploring Singapore's Biodiversity" to encourage the community to not only explore and embrace our rich biodiversity, but also take ownership of our shared natural heritage by caring for our flora and fauna.

The theme has two key objectives:

- To encourage people in Singapore to take notice of the urban biodiversity around them
- To take specific actions to care for our flora and fauna, so that everyone can enjoy our parks and nature areas for a long time to come

To commemorate IDB, NParks has organised a suite of events and activities during Biodiversity Week (20 to 28 May) to encourage the community to explore and



encounter nature in Singapore. These programmes are taking place in schools, and our parks, gardens and nature areas, and involves some 300 partners from schools, research institutions, and nature-interest groups.

The celebrations will culminate in the sixth instalment of the Festival of Biodiversity (FoB) on 27 and 28 May at nex shopping mall. Organised in collaboration with the Biodiversity Roundtable, the community-led Festival of Biodiversity celebrates Singapore's biodiversity. Through games, crafts, interactive workshops and exhibitions, the Festival aims to enthuse the general public about conserving our natural heritage.

Highlights of the Festival include a nature-inspired art exhibition and the FoB Speakers Series, where our panel of guest speakers from the local biodiversity conservation scene will share fascinating insights of their experiences with Singapore's rich natural heritage. The speakers, who come from various backgrounds and working groups, will share on a range of topics, from mammals, such as the Raffles' banded langur, to insects, reptiles, marine ecology and more. The objective is to generate engaging discussions between visitors and the panel of speakers on the conservation of our native wildlife.

More details of the activities taking place during Biodiversity Week and at the FoB can be found in [Media Factsheet B](#).

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About National Parks Board (NParks)

National Parks Board (NParks) is responsible for providing and enhancing the greenery of our City in a Garden. Beyond building green infrastructure, NParks is actively engaging the community to enhance the quality of our living environment.

NParks manages 350 parks and 300 km of park connectors, 3,347 hectares of nature reserves and the Singapore Botanic Gardens. We also manage Pulau Ubin and the Sisters' Islands Marine Park. Adding to this is the extensive streetscape, or roadside greenery, that forms the backbone of our City in a Garden. The island-wide Park Connector Network is also being developed to link major parks, nature areas and residential estates.

As the lead agency on biodiversity conservation, NParks has developed an urban biodiversity conservation model, which aims to conserve representative eco-systems in land-scarce Singapore. NParks also monitors and coordinates measures to enhance the presence of biodiversity in our urban landscape.

NParks is working closely with partners in the landscape and horticulture industry to increase productivity, and provide training for all levels of the workforce. Enhancing competencies of the industry will support Singapore's vision of being a City in a Garden.

For more information, visit www.nparks.gov.sg and www.facebook.com/nparksbuzz.

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