

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

New Ethnobotany Garden with complementary Centre for Ethnobotany opens at the Singapore Botanic Gardens

First Centre for Ethnobotany in a botanic garden will strengthen the Garden's role in botanical research

Singapore, 30 June 2018 – The National Parks Board (NParks) today opened the approximately 1 hectare Ethnobotany Garden at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. This new themed garden is the first in Singapore where visitors can learn about plants used by indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia. The garden includes a Centre for Ethnobotany which complements the outdoor landscape with an interpretive exhibition of artefacts and interactive elements. The Centre will also manage a research programme for ethnobotany¹, strengthening the Gardens' position as the premier tropical botanical research institute.

The Ethnobotany Garden is in the Gardens' Bukit Timah Core and located at an area historically known as the Economic Garden (See map in [Media Factsheet A](#)). This section of the Gardens was previously a space for experimentation with plants that had potential commercial applications, many of which were first derived from traditional uses.

Development of the Ethnobotany Garden is aligned with the Singapore Botanic Gardens' UNESCO World Heritage status, supporting its Outstanding Universal Value by showcasing its unrivalled collections of economic, medicinal and ethnobotanical plants – the largest such collection in Southeast Asia. This new garden enhances the Gardens' role as an educational provider, which is in line with UNESCO's mission.

The opening also kick-starts festivities for the annual Singapore Botanic Gardens Heritage Festival which will return from 30 June to 8 July 2018.

Strengthening the Gardens' position in tropical botanical research

To kickstart the research programme, researchers from the Singapore Botanic Gardens will collaborate with Nanyang Technological University's Asian School of the Environment on two locally-based research projects. The first will be focused on the local Singaporean markets to record the different uses of less familiar vegetables, fruits and spices according to their cultural significance. The information collected from interviews with the stall holders will be used to

¹ Ethnobotany is the scientific study of the traditional knowledge and customs of a people concerning plants and their medical, religious and other uses.

build a database and the knowledge, shared with the public. This will be done through videos and talks conducted at the Centre for Ethnobotany. The second project will be based on Pulau Ubin. More details will be released later.

Showcase of plants used by indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia

The Ethnobotany Garden features plants that are native to Southeast Asia which are traditionally used in four areas – living, symbolism, medicinal and craft purposes (See [Media Factsheet A](#) for details). This is the largest such collection in Southeast Asia. Various artefacts that reflect the different aspects of indigenous living are also displayed throughout the garden.

The Centre for Ethnobotany within the Ethnobotany Garden further highlights the roles plants have played in shaping the world we know today. The two-storey centre is organised according to three themes – plants shaping the region and beyond; the cornucopia of the botanical world; and, preserving indigenous knowledge (See [Media Factsheet B](#) for details). It aims to provide visitors with an immersive experience through interactive displays, artefacts and information panels.

With the Ethnobotany Garden, the public will also gain a better understanding of the Gardens' important historical role in the introduction and promotion of many plants of economic value to the region. In addition, visitors will be able to learn about how early settlers made use of plants in their local culture and daily life.

Community support key to extending the Gardens' heritage

Various contributors from the community have helped to enrich the development of the Ethnobotany Garden. These include Ms Aileen Toh from Singapore Sculpture Society who created sculptures depicting indigenous people, with the use of salvaged tree logs from within the Gardens. Another contributor is regular park visitor Ms Serene Koh, who commissioned artist Mr Yip Yew Chong to do a series of four murals.

Singapore Botanic Gardens Heritage Festival returns from 30 June to 8 July

In conjunction with the opening of the Ethnobotany Garden, the Gardens returns with its annual Heritage Festival, featuring some of the plants used by indigenous cultures of Southeast Asia, including Singapore. Over the next two weekends, activities and programmes will be spread across the Gardens. Highlights of the festival include a carnival with stalls selling plants, games and food, free concerts and movie screenings at the Shaw Foundation

Symphony Stage, as well as educational tours around the Gardens. The cafes and restaurants in the Gardens will also be rolling out promotional menus and organising programmes in celebration of the Gardens' rich heritage, featuring some of the edible plants. For a full list of activities during the Singapore Botanic Gardens Heritage Festival, please refer to the Annex.

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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 biophilic City in a Garden.

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

Annex

The annual Singapore Botanic Gardens Heritage Festival will be held from 30 June to 8 July 2018 to celebrate the rich heritage of Singapore's first UNESCO World Heritage Site. All activities are free.

Location, Date and Time	Activity	Description
National Orchid Garden 30 June, 1, 7 & 8 July 8.30am – 7.00pm	Orchid Display	A stunning showcase of the Gardens' collection of prized orchids in themed displays. Free entry to the National Orchid Garden.
Orchid Plaza 30 June, 1, 7 & 8 July 9.00am – 7.30pm	Carnival and Plant Bazaar	A wide range of stalls will be offering local culinary favourites as well as merchandise. On sale will be a myriad of plant, gardening and landscape related products. Fringe entertainment for children.
Nassim & Bukit Timah gate 30 June, 1, 7 & 8 July 9.00am – 5.00pm	Roving Performances	A variety of performances such as angklung and story-telling at the mini Bamboo House.
Eco Garden 1 July 7.00am – 9.00am	Mass Yoga	A mass yoga session led by Adam Fazlur, senior yoga instructor and avid yoga practitioner since 2002.
Various locations 30 June, 1, 7 & 8 July 9.00am – 6.00pm	Tours in the Singapore Botanic Gardens	A variety of guided tours to the Learning Forest, Rainforest, Healing Garden and Ethnobotany Garden.

Location, Date and Time	Activity	Description
Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage 30 June 5.15pm – 6.30pm	Performances	A series of musical performances held in celebration of Maris Stella's 60 th anniversary. The school's Symphonic Band, Chinese Orchestra and the String Ensemble will be performing different genres of music such as rock-and-roll, pop and xinyao.
Eco Garden 30 June 7.30pm – 10.00pm	Movie Screening	"Jimami Tofu" is a movie about love, food and family through the art of Okinawan food and Southeast Asian cuisine. Winner of the Audience Choice Award at its world premiere, this movie was sold out during its Singapore premiere earlier this year.
Centre for Ethnobotany 30 June, 1, 7 & 8 July 9.00 am – 6.00pm	Exhibition	An exhibition showcasing a unique collection of wooden printing blocks bearing botanical inspirations. Woodblock printing is an art form that unites nature and cultural expression. Blank wooden blocks are painstakingly carved with images and then used to create identical imprints on paper.
Centre for Ethnobotany 30 June, 1, 7 & 8 July 9.00am – 6.00pm	Exhibition	An educational exhibition about fragrances inspired by plants and flowers in the Ethnobotany Garden, supported by Givaudan.
Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage 1 July 5.00pm – 6.30pm	Performances	NAC: ExxonMobil Concert in the park is a multi-cultural series of performances featuring musical instruments from around the world with performances by Straits Ensemble, Raghajazz and ZingO Festival Drum Group.
Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage 7 July 6.00pm – 7.00pm	Performances	Jazz Annual is a jazz performance by Jazz Association Singapore Orchestra (JASSO), led by music director Jeremy Monteiro. Music offerings include songs from ASEAN to commemorate Singapore's Chairmanship of ASEAN 2018 as well as internal jazz standards.

Location, Date and Time	Activity	Description
Eco Garden 7 July 7.30pm – 9.30pm	Movie Screening	“When I Turned Nine”, is a drama about a nine-year-old who lived in 1970s Korea and his first love.
Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage 8 July 6.00pm – 7.00pm	Performances	A series of rhythmic dances with classical composers performed by 80 young violinists and cellists ranging from 3 years old to 14 years old. Includes pieces from Vivaldi’s Four Seasons to Tchaikovsky’s Famous Serenade.
Eco Garden 8 July 7.30pm – 8.30pm 8.30pm – 9.30pm (second screening)	Movie Screening	“The Shower” is a coming-of-age romance about a countryside boy and a city girl and their friendship.

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