

A photograph of a modern building with a prominent green wall. The building has multiple floors with large glass windows and a flat roof. In the foreground, there is a large, thick tree trunk on the left and various green plants and ferns. The sky is clear and blue. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

It's In Our Nature

# TO GROW OUR CAPABILITIES

To boost productivity in the landscape sector and build up its manpower pool, NParks worked closely with industry partners to deliver training, certification and accreditation programmes and to embark on joint recruitment efforts. Within NParks, formal and informal knowledge sharing kept officers abreast of the latest developments in their field.



In land-scarce Singapore, skyrise greenery is an important way to help replace ground-level greenery and contribute towards Singapore's vision of a City in a Garden. Seen here are vertical walls at the Singapore Management University, a recipient of NParks' Skyrise Greenery Incentive Scheme.



## Bringing the Industry onboard for the Landscape Productivity Roadmap

NParks partnered the landscape industry to achieve significant progress under the Landscape Productivity Roadmap. As of 31 March 2013, 18 nurseries from 14 companies were accredited under the Nursery Accreditation Scheme, which aims to help nurseries deliver quality products and reduce operating costs through better resource management and improved work processes and layout.

NParks' new Machinery Training and Hire Facility began operations in May 2012, allowing companies to use affordable machinery to improve productivity. The equipment available included stump grinders, wood chippers, skid steers loaders, soil mixers and potting machines. To learn to operate the machinery, landscape workers from 10 companies attended the inaugural specialised landscape machinery operator training session conducted by NParks' Centre for Urban Greenery and Ecology (CUGE) in April.

The Landscape Apprenticeship Programme, another initiative under the Landscape Productivity Roadmap, had its first intake in January 2013, with apprenticeship places offered by six companies. The programme was developed in consultation with the Landscape Industry Association (Singapore) (LIAS) and the Singapore Arboriculture Society, and supported by the Workforce Development Agency.



## Reaching Out to Raise Competency Standards

Between April 2012 and March 2013, CUGE organised more than 40 short courses, workshops and seminars which were attended by over 2600 participants from NParks and the industry. A total of 139 industry practitioners completed professional certification programmes to become Certified Arborists, Certified Park Managers, Certified Practising Horticulturists and Certified Playground Safety Inspectors.

In July 2012, NParks signed a Memorandum of Co-operation to renew its partnership with the Australian Institute of Horticulture, which provides international accreditation for NParks' Certified Practising Horticulturist programme.

NParks also invited an international panel of speakers from United States, Canada, Holland and Singapore to present at its Playgrounds seminar in April 2012. The event attracted nearly 60 participants from NParks, town councils, play equipment suppliers and contractors, and property management companies as well as delegates from New Zealand and Hong Kong.

01 At Green Thumbs 2012, Acting Minister for Manpower and Senior Minister of State for National Development, Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, tried his hand at the excavator, one of the various landscape mechanisation technologies showcased at the event. Green Thumbs was started in 2006 by CUGE to celebrate the development of the landscape industry.

02 The Machinery Hire Training Facility programme was set up to encourage more companies to use machines. Landscape workers were trained to operate equipment, such as the stump grinder, at the inaugural landscape machinery operator training session conducted by CUGE.



Prince's Landscape & Construction employs people with disabilities to address local manpower needs in the landscape industry.

Their (people with disabilities) capabilities, skills and talents shouldn't be hindered by limitations. By engaging them, we embrace their individuality in a different light.

**Alson Tan**

Director  
Prince's Landscape & Construction Pte Ltd

## The new 24-month Landscape Apprenticeship Programme aims to train a new generation of highly-skilled landscape specialists and project managers.

### Working with the Industry to Address Recruitment Needs

To build up the manpower pool in the landscape industry, the CUGE Career Centre organised and participated in 24 career fairs, talks and job placement exercises in collaboration with industry and partner agencies. Through these efforts, more than 160 individuals were successfully placed into the landscape industry.

For example, CUGE represented the landscape industry at the South East Community Development Council's Themed Job Fair on 21 March 2013. It also organised its first Turf Career Fair on 24 June 2012 in collaboration with Keppel Club, Tanah Merah Country Club, Sentosa Golf Club and Orchid Country Club. The aim of the fair was to facilitate job placements and twin them with WSQ training programmes to equip new entrants with relevant certified skills.

### Extending Collaboration on Skyrise Greenery

Introduced in 2008, the Skyrise Greenery Awards was a joint initiative by NParks and the Singapore Institute of Architects (SIA) to showcase outstanding greenery-integrated architecture in Singapore. In recognition of the close collaboration, NParks was conferred the title "Friend of Architecture" by the SIA Council in May 2012.

Going forward, NParks has widened its network of participating organisations for the awards to also include the Urban Redevelopment Authority, Building and Construction Authority, Singapore Green Building Council, SIA and LIAS. Submissions for Skyrise Greenery Awards 2013 were opened in April.

As a young person, landscaping work gives me a long-term career. I strongly believe that this industry is growing fast and will become important in the future.

**James Yeo**  
Landscape Technician,  
Swee Bee Contractor Pte Ltd

James is undergoing apprenticeship under the Landscape Apprenticeship Programme.



## Training and Knowledge Sharing at NParks

NParks continued to invest in staff professional training and certification both locally and with accredited overseas practitioner institutions. Examples of training programmes for NParks officers included the Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course; a customised programme on Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills for Green Space Managers; and a foundation course on NParks Legislation and Enforcement Management. Four staff also went on professional exchange programmes to Kew Gardens, Longwood Gardens and Parks Victoria.

Informal channels for knowledge sharing were provided by the NParks Hort Champs (horticulture champions). In April 2012, a Native Plant Squad was formed to foster greater ownership and understanding of the work that goes into protecting Singapore's endangered plant species. Other initiatives organised by Hort Champs included the seminar series Hort Colloquium; road

shows to introduce operations staff to the use of Plant Matrices; a wildflower survey at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park; a Visual Tree Assessment and Tree Identification workshop; a Turf Improvement Workshop and a vertical greenery trip. Four plant sourcing trips were also organised to West Malaysia during the year.



The Plant Health and Pest Management workshop is one of many training programmes conducted by CUGE to enhance skills in the industry.

## Partnering to Build Up Knowledge

To address the challenges in providing unobstructed spaces for growing roadside trees, CUGE has partnered the Land Transport Authority to conduct a five-year study into the use of Strata Cell modules and structural soil. These are used under roads and paved areas to help support tree growth while accommodating traffic load.

In another research project, CUGE collaborated with the National University of Singapore and Ngee Ann Polytechnic to develop a hybrid treatment system at Admiralty Park, using suitable plants to remove pollutants collected at a pond during storms.

NParks also worked closely with the University of Florida and Commonwealth Secondary School to design and run an eco-literacy workshop called the "Floating Wetlands at West Coast Park" project. Students examined how floating wetlands could improve the pond's environmental quality for both humans and wildlife.



- 01 CUGE worked with students from Commonwealth Secondary School to explore assembling their own floating wetlands at the West Coast Park pond.
- 02 Lim Jin Hong, a parks manager at HortPark, went on an exchange programme to the United States' Longwood Gardens as part of her professional training in NParks.



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From left: Shee Zhi Qiang, Ada Tan, Justine Tay, Muhamad Shahrizal Sihab. Zhi Qiang and Justine were recipients of NParks' Undergraduate Scholarship and pursued their studies at the United States' University of California, Berkeley and Cornell University respectively. Ada and Shahrizal were recipients of NParks' Overseas Merit Award and studied at University of Queensland.

Through my work,  
I hope to inspire people  
around me to develop  
a passion for plants.

**Ada Tan**

Manager, Horticulture  
Singapore Botanic Gardens



## Attracting New Talent

NParks continued to build up its talent pool through its Scholarship, Overseas Merit Award and Cadetship programmes. In 2012, four Undergraduate Scholarships, two Overseas Merit Awards and four Postgraduate Scholarships (including two PhDs) were awarded.

A total of eight students from Singapore Polytechnic's Diploma in Landscape Architecture course and 15 from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Diploma in Horticulture and Landscape Management (now known as Diploma in Landscape Design and Horticulture) course graduated from the NParks Cadetship Programme during the year.

## Promoting Community and Lifestyle Activities

The NParks Family Day carnival was held at Labrador Park on 2 March 2013. Organised by the Social and Recreation Committee, the event saw senior management taking to the stage to perform song-and-dance routines in the name of charity. Donations collected from the performances and proceeds from a charity sale were presented to NParks' adopted charity, the Handicaps Welfare Association.

NParks' officers also bonded over other activities such as Kindness Active Day, where underprivileged children were invited for a day of games and team challenges; the Rail Adventure Ride 2013, a cycling trip along the Rail Corridor; as well as blood donation drives and healthy lifestyle talks.



NParks Family Day and Kindness Active Day are among many activities organised in the year to enable officers to bond as well as contribute to the community.



### Promotional Discounts on Food, Beverage and Activities

Many partners showed their support in commemorating 50 years of greening Singapore by offering discounts on food and beverage and organising special activities in our parks and gardens.

### Signature Dishes

New signature dishes were also specially created and served for a limited period by food outlets at several parks and gardens.



### "Living in a Garden"

The book "Living in a Garden" documents the experiences of people who contributed to transforming Singapore into a city-state filled with extensive greenery. It was published with the support of Dairy Farm Singapore, EnGro Corporation Limited, Far East Organization, Temasek Holdings, Tuas Power Ltd and Woh Hup (Private) Limited.

### Art of Greening at Scotts Square

An art installation comprising more than 1500 origami works of flora and fauna and 12 000 hand-painted bamboo sticks was displayed from 2-19 May 2013 at the atrium of Scotts Square in Orchard Road. This celebration of Singapore's colourful flora and fauna was a collaboration between Wheelock Properties and Lasalle College of the Arts.



For information on other partnerships, please visit [www.nparks.gov.sg/50years](http://www.nparks.gov.sg/50years).