



It's In Our Nature

TO SHARE OUR PASSION

Nature can be an effective bridge for connecting people and a conducive platform for them to come together and explore shared interests. Over the past year, several initiatives were introduced to reach out to various groups within the community through nature. These included the underprivileged, students, educators, the arts fraternity, community gardeners, cyclists and our corporate partners.

In Nature Cares, corporations and children are matched with suitable community groups to engage in nature-related activities. Seen here are volunteers from Keppel Care Foundation and Queenstown Primary School working together with elderly residents of St Theresa's Home to pot plants.





01 - 02 Nature Cares was officially launched by President Tony Tan Keng Yam at St Theresa's Home. It connects corporations, schools and the community through nature-based activities such as guided walks at Sengkang Riverside Park (right).

Caring through Nature

A new community engagement programme has been introduced by NParks to create nature-related opportunities for students and corporations to volunteer their time with community groups such as the elderly and children with special needs. Nature Cares was officially launched on 30 October 2012, giving school children the opportunity to demonstrate care, kindness and empathy in line with the Ministry of Education's (MOE) focus on Character and Citizenship Education, and reinforcing these qualities with corporate volunteers providing positive role models.

Beneficiaries participating in Nature Cares include Lee Kong Chian Gardens School, which is working with students from Queenstown Secondary School and Credit Suisse; the Canossian School for the Hearing Impaired, with Canossa Convent Primary School and Bunge; St John's Home for the Elderly Persons, with Cedar Primary School and Singapore Power; St Theresa's Home, with Queenstown Primary School and Keppel Care Foundation; and Jamiyah Children's Home, with West Spring Secondary School and PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Children with special needs also had the opportunity to learn more about Singapore's biodiversity and natural heritage under the SUN Club, an NParks nature appreciation programme tailored to their needs. Over four days in May 2012, groups of children from MINDS Woodlands Garden School went on guided walks at Sungei Buloh Wetland

Reserve and took part in a specially-designed learning journey at Labrador Nature Reserve. Some 200 students benefitted from the programme. The SUN Club programme is a partnership between NParks, SPH Foundation and the Garden City Fund. Another collaborative project, Nature Nurtures by NParks and Shell, continued to reach out to youth through skills and confidence-building activities. In separate sessions over the past year, Nature Nurtures brought together volunteers from NParks, Shell and students from Northlight School to carry out activities such as building an installation art piece out of unused timber, conducting a coastal clean-up at the Kranji Nature Trail, mangrove salvaging at Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and being farmers for a day at HortPark.

Reaching out to Students

Seed-planting kits were distributed to more than 40 000 Primary 3 pupils from 187 schools in 2013 under the initiative "Every Child A Seed", which aims to inculcate an appreciation of greenery among the young. The kit included a pot, potting mix, seeds of kangkong, roselle or sunflower, instructions on planting and caring for the plant, and an activity booklet for them to record their observations. Organised by NParks and supported by the Garden City Fund, the initiative was one of the many activities rolled out to commemorate 50 Years of Greening Singapore.

A photograph of Mrs Grace Chua, the Principal of Queenstown Primary School, smiling warmly at a young boy. She is wearing a red top with a pattern of small white dots. The boy is wearing a purple shirt. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and other people.

Nature Cares gives
our pupils opportunities to
show care and concern for
others, the community and
the environment.

Mrs Grace Chua
Principal
Queenstown Primary School



- 01 Primary 3 pupils from Rosyth School received their free seed-planting kits under the Every Child A Seed initiative.
- 02 Under NParks' Kids for Nature initiative, organised in conjunction with MOE's PAL programme, Primary 1 and 2 pupils get to explore nature and learn new skills through trips to parks and gardens such as Jacob Ballas Children's Garden and HortPark.
- 03 The Pitter Patter Potter Garden was recently set up in HortPark to enable young learners to study plants and their life cycles, explore seed dispersal methods and discover the relationship between plants and animals.
- 04 "Lost in a Garden City" highlights how Singapore has progressed to become a City in a Garden despite numerous challenges. More than 30 000 pupils have seen the play during assembly since it made its rounds to primary schools in 2011.

Every Child A Seed aims to get children to appreciate the hard work that goes into building their City in a Garden through planting seeds and caring for plants.

NParks also saw increased participation in its Kids for Nature initiative, which was organised under MOE's Programme for Active Learning (PAL). Some 5600 Primary 1 and 2 pupils from 14 schools took part this year, compared with 4200 in 2011. There was also good response to a new education initiative, Ecolife by the Riverplains, which was aimed at encouraging students to explore the flora and fauna at Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park. The programme, which was introduced to lower primary and secondary schools in February 2013, attracted over 700 students from five schools within two months of its launch.

Reaching out to an even younger cohort, NParks piloted the new heART for Nature Programme at two pre-schools, Learning Vision and PCF Hougang, to introduce pupils to the different aspects of rainforests in Singapore. A teachers' workshop was subsequently conducted for 15 teachers from seven pre-schools.

Collaborating with Tertiary Institutions

NParks continued to collaborate with tertiary institutions on various initiatives ranging from education to ecological studies to conservation. In April 2012, it signed a Letter of Understanding with Temasek Polytechnic, to encourage more activities by its students and staff at Bedok Reservoir Park. In a separate programme, students from the polytechnic took part in a plant propagation exercise led by the National Biodiversity Centre. Over two sessions in April, the students were briefed on plant conservation and helped plant cuttings and other propagated materials.

NParks also renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with Ngee Ann Polytechnic to facilitate training for its Landscape Design and Horticulture students at Clementi Woods Park and Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Students from Singapore Polytechnic were also involved in efforts to record Singapore's biodiversity, as they helped conduct twice-yearly fish and bird surveys at West Coast Park. Their findings provided a useful source of data for monitoring the fauna at West Coast Park.



In collaboration with NParks, Ngee Ann Polytechnic launched its outdoor classroom, Greenhub, at Clementi Woods Park.

For the second year running, all 500 Primary 5 pupils from the Gifted Education Programme were brought on learning journeys to Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Kent Ridge Park, Labrador Nature Reserve, Southern Ridges and HortPark.



Playsets of Yesteryears

Swings, see-saws and a merry-go-round gave park visitors and office workers a chance to relive childhood memories of playgrounds when NParks unveiled "Playsets of Yesteryears" at Raffles Place Park on 18 March 2013. The tentage for the event was sponsored by Goh Seng Lai Company Pte Ltd and the merry-go-round by CT-Art Creation Pte Ltd. From Raffles Place Park, "Playsets of Yesteryears" made its way to East Coast Park, Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park and Singapore Botanic Gardens.



Heritage Tree FlashPay Card

A limited edition Heritage Tree FlashPay card was produced in collaboration with NETS and offers special discounts to cardholders from March to December 2013.



For information on other partnerships, please visit www.nparks.gov.sg/50years.



Guided tours at various nature areas are regularly conducted for educators so that they are equipped to use these places as outdoor learning classrooms.

Engaging Educators

As part of its ongoing engagement with educators, NParks provided 44 Master Teachers and educators in Science and Geography with insights into outdoor learning opportunities offered by the parks. Visits to various parks and gardens were accompanied by talks about biodiversity in Singapore and NParks' efforts in the conservation of birds, butterflies and dragonflies in urban settings.

NParks also participated in major conferences organised by the MOE to highlight Singapore's rich biodiversity and the opportunities that nature reserves and parks present for teaching and learning. It reached out to over 3000 educators through events such as the Social Studies Coordinators Conference, Humanities Educators Conference, Kindergarten Conference and the Outdoor Learning Symposium.

We are pleased to support Nature Cares through Keppel Care Foundation and Keppel Volunteers as it is very much aligned with our goals to foster community spirit and promote awareness and appreciation of the environment.

Chee Jin Kiong

Chief Executive Officer
Keppel Care Foundation and
Director (Group Human Resources),
Keppel Corporation

Chee Jin Kiong (standing) is participating in a Nature Cares activity with Mrs Grace Chua, Principal, Queenstown Primary School (extreme left), an elderly resident from St Theresa's Home and a Keppel Volunteer.



- 01 Singaporean Damian Tang's fairy-tale-inspired creation "Garden of Tales" won the Gold and Best of Show awards in the Fantasy category at the Singapore Garden Festival 2012.
- 02 Senior Parliamentary Secretary for National Development, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, was among the many visitors who admired the Gardeners' Cup gardens, set up by 30 CLB groups at the Singapore Garden Festival 2012.

In other collaborations, NParks worked with the MOE to share information on flora and fauna to be included in school textbooks and assessment books, and helped conduct field-based training to equip teachers with the know-how to use parks and gardens for social studies lessons. NParks also participated in about 50 roadshows, exhibitions and school assembly talks over the past year, reaching out to more than 37 000 students and educators



Working with Public Sector Partners

A record number of award-winning garden and flower displays were showcased at Singapore Garden Festival 2012, which was organised by NParks in collaboration with the Agri-food & Veterinary Authority, the Orchid Society of Southeast Asia, Singapore Gardening Society and Singapore Tourism Board (STB). The biennial event, which took place from 7-15 July at the Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre, featured 15 Fantasy and Landscape Show Gardens, 15 Floral Windows to the World, and seven Balcony Garden displays. Thirty-nine designers from 19 countries across four continents were involved in putting them together.

Among the highlights of the festival was the Singapore Orchid Show 2012, which featured an "Orchid Wonderland" complete with a 6m-tall ferris wheel, a carousel and booths designed to look like carnival game stalls.

NParks also worked with National Environment Agency, PUB and Community Development Council to organise the annual community initiative Clean and Green Singapore 2013. Some 20 000 people attended the event at The Meadow, Gardens by the Bay.

In conjunction with the campaign, NParks organised free tours for the public to appreciate Singapore's Heritage Roads and Heritage Trees. More than 300 people signed up for the learning journeys on 10 and 11 November, which brought participants to Mandai Road and eight Heritage Trees in the Seletar and Upper Serangoon areas.



During the Clean & Green Singapore campaign, Singapore leaders plant trees in various parks and constituencies as part of the tree-planting tradition. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Deputy Prime Ministers Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Teo Chee Hean were among those who participated in the annual tradition in 2012.



NParks' CIB programme continued to receive widespread support, with more than 100 new CIB gardens created in 2012 and 600 active gardening groups in both public and private residential estates, educational institutions and organisations.

Mobilising the Green Brigade

Forty-seven community gardens were presented with the platinum award – the highest achievement band – at the Community in Bloom (CIB) Awards 2012 which took place during the Singapore Garden Festival in July. The biennial competition was introduced in 2005 to recognise and reward gardening efforts by the community. More than 250 entries were received in that year's competition.

The gardeners were also out in force for the inaugural Sentosa in Bloom, co-organised by CIB and Sentosa Leisure Group as they presented a segment of Sentosa Flowers, a flower exhibition held during the Chinese New Year. After three months of planning, the garden displays

at Palawan Beach were opened to the public from 9 – 17 February 2013.

To further stoke interest in gardening, NParks organised a wide range of activities throughout the year, catering to different levels of expertise. These ranged from "Gardening Made Easy", a series of talks and workshops aimed at beginners, to the Hort Colloquium, a platform for the sharing of horticultural and field observations, experiences and knowledge.

The quarterly Gardeners' Day Out at HortPark drew an average of 4500 visitors per event with interactive and fun-filled activities ranging from talks and demos to workshops and garden tours. A major crowd puller was the Gardening Bazaar, with its plant bargains and offers.

NParks also held its first combined appreciation event for volunteers on 8 December, when awards were presented to 39 volunteers who had been serving for more than 10 years. In all, over 800 people, aged nine to over 80, volunteered with NParks on a regular basis over the past year, participating in conservation efforts, leading outreach and education programmes and conducting guided walks and tours.



- 01 Activities that took place in the parks included corporate team-building exercises and family outings at Castle Beach, East Coast Park.
- 02 Mohd Fairus Bin Abdul Manaf of Al Mukminin Mosque helped promote gardening among mosques within and outside of the South West district. He was one of six CIB ambassadors selected in 2012, to recognise individuals who helped foster the love of gardening amongst the community.



Connecting with the Public


The parks continued to host a wide range of activities that helped to enrich the visitor experience. For example, Sotheby's held its first exhibition of outdoor sculptures in Asia at the Singapore Botanic Gardens' Bukit Timah Core from 23 October 2012 to 24 February 2013, with the installation of 17 works by internationally-renowned artist Zadok Ben-David. Supported by NParks and STB, the exhibition was one of the first collaborations of this scale and nature in this part of the world.

Fort Canning Park was another favourite venue for exhibitions and workshops ranging from photography and print-making to sculpture, jewellery and installation works. During the Singapore Heritage Festival in July 2012, sketching tours, workshops and walks were also conducted at the park in collaboration with the National Heritage Board. Complementing these were heritage-related activities at other locations such as Ann Siang Park, Empress Place Park, Esplanade Park and War Memorial Park.

The Esplanade Park also saw a steady stream of arts and heritage activities such as the launch of Singapore Arts Festival 2012 and the day-long "My Monumental Playground" event organised in collaboration with the Preservation of Monuments Board.

NParks also continued to connect with the public through various social media channels. Its Facebook page, www.facebook.com/nparksbuzz, encourages people to share information, photos or stories of their park experiences. Similar online interactions are taking place on Singapore Botanic Gardens' new Facebook page, which was launched in March 2013. Complementing these is NParks' use of Twitter (www.twitter.com/nparksbuzz) to share information and engage with the connected community.

In addition, NParks introduced an "sParks App" for mobile phone users. Launched in February 2013, it gives users access to information on Singapore's parks and the Park Connector Network and the activities that are taking place there. The app was the result of a collaboration between NParks and iApps Pte Ltd and is available for download at www.sparks.sg.



I want to spread the word about wild places like Chek Jawa that still exist in Singapore, and convince people to take a greater interest in appreciating and protecting our natural places.

Choo Yi Feng

15-year-old volunteer guide at
Chek Jawa, Pulau Ubin

Hosting International Visitors

In an orchid-naming ceremony at Burkill Hall, NParks' Chief Executive Officer Poon Hong Yuen presented His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge and Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge with the *Vanda* William Catherine to mark their visit to the National Orchid Garden on 11 September 2012.

The royal couple also went on a short guided tour of the VIP Orchid Garden where they viewed the *Dendrobium* Queen Elizabeth II, named after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom during her visit to the Singapore Botanic Gardens in 1972, and *Dendrobium* Memoria Princess Diana, which was named in 1997 in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Other prominent visitors who had orchids named after them included then Australian Prime Minister Ms Julia Gillard (*Dendrobium* Julia Gillard); His Excellency Juan Manuel Santos Calderon, President of the Republic of Colombia (*Rhyncattleanthe* Juan Manuel Santos Calderon); and His Excellency Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (*Dendrobium* Jean-Claude Juncker).



01 - 03

Singapore has a longstanding tradition of naming orchids after important guests. Foreign dignitaries who had orchids named in conjunction with their visits to the Singapore Botanic Gardens included Mrs Maria Cavaco Silva, spouse of His Excellency Anibal Cavaco Silva, President of the Portuguese Republic; His Excellency José Maria Pereira Neves, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cape Verde; and His Excellency Nguyen Phu Trong, General-Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.



His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge and Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge visited the National Orchid Garden as the first stop in their Asia Pacific tour to commemorate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.