

Location: Central Catchment Nature Reserve, MacRitchie

Reaching Out, Reaching In

Reaching out and helping others
to reach in to the heart of nature.
Life is richer for the ability to love the
natural beauty that surrounds us!

In NParks, we believe that conservation and the preservation of the Garden City are not just about infrastructure. People must believe in what we conserve and recognise the worth of our shared greenery. To that end, we invest for the future, on the premise that every contribution matters and no one is too young to start appreciating the bounties of nature.

Specifically, NParks works closely with our many volunteers, sponsors, schools, corporate partners and non-government organisations in a myriad of ways. We have established programmes and continually initiate new activities in the expectation that these will encourage not only appreciation for nature, but also civic-mindedness, care and compassion.

Conserving Our Natural Heritage

As Singapore's Garden City matures, the trees planted in the past mature gracefully with it. Some, like the famous Tembusu in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, have developed into icons for the landscape, cherished by public and tourists alike. These trees, spread across the island like jewels on an emerald chain, act as important landmarks and provide a sense of permanence and identity to our home.

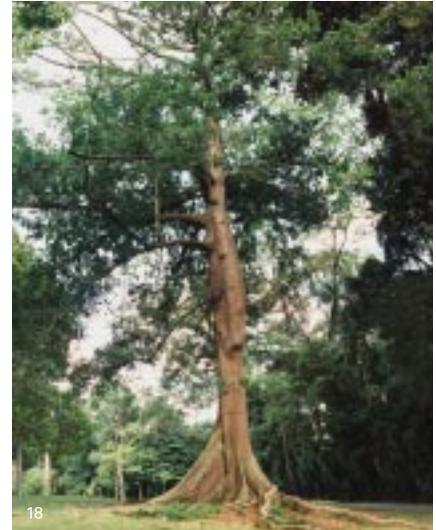
It was to conserve and protect such maturing trees that NParks launched the Heritage Trees Scheme in September 2002 with our Minister of State for National Development and Trade and Industry, Dr Vivian Balakrishnan. In addition, with the intention to engage the community in the growing of the scheme, a Heritage Trees Nomination Scheme was also launched. This initiative has received enthusiastic responses from the community, with more than 270 nominations island-wide received. The Heritage Trees Panel is processing the nominations and will announce the next list of Heritage Trees soon.

A list of 55 Heritage Roads has also been designated. These are thoroughfares lined with mature trees that give a special

ambience to the roads. For roads such as Mount Pleasant Road and South Buona Vista Road, legislative amendments are being reviewed to facilitate the conservation and management of the green buffers of natural vegetation along the roads.

In north-west of Singapore, Sungei Buloh Nature Park was renamed Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR) in April 2002 to better reflect its new status as a gazetted nature reserve. Its new status grants it more protection and will help ensure that it remains a valuable education and leisure experience for its thousands of users. In addition, SBWR was recognised as an internationally important site for migratory shorebirds by Wetlands International and accepted as a member of the East Asian Australasian Shorebird Site Network.

At the Singapore Botanic Gardens, orchid conservation was given a boost when the garden's Orchid Breeding and Micro-propagation Branch reintroduced the Tiger Orchid (*Grammatophyllum speciosum*) on trees along various roads in Singapore.

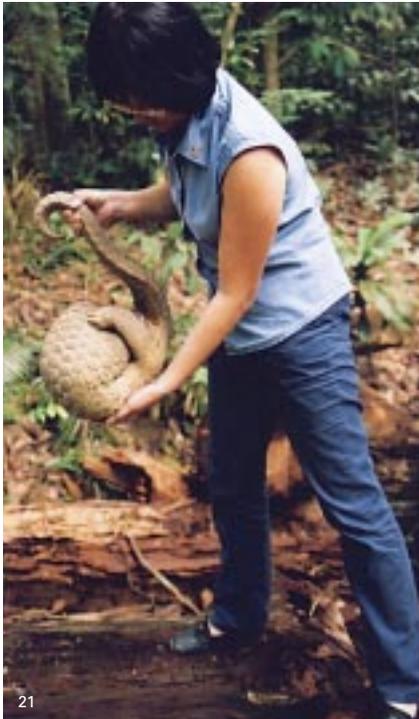


18. The 70-year-old Kapok Tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) at the Singapore Botanic Gardens has been conserved as a Heritage Tree for future generations.

19. Sungei Buloh is home to many species of birds, reptiles... and several otters!

20. This luxuriant tree-lined road in Upper Thomson is one of the 55 roads conserved under the Heritage Road Scheme.





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As the scientific authority for nature conservation, NParks was Singapore's representative for many international conventions and conferences during the year. Representatives from NParks attended the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held at The Hague. The participants engaged in interesting discussions ranging from Access and Benefit-sharing, Forest Biodiversity to Invasive Alien Species.

On the regional front, NParks also showcased the Garden City's ambience and shared some of the policies and mechanisms that had made it a success at the IFPRA Asia-Pacific Congress 2002 in October 2002. The Guest of Honour was Minister for National Development Mr Mah Bow Tan. One of the highlights of the conference was NParks' CEO Dr Tan Wee Kiat's keynote speech, which was warmly received by more than 200 participants from 18 countries.



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Our commitments towards the ASEAN regional initiatives included participating and contributing at the annual meetings of the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation & Biodiversity ASEANET and ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation. This year, NParks had several visitors from our

ASEAN partners and discussed the sustainability of the Centre; possible future work plans for the National Biodiversity Reference Units and co-operation among ASEAN Member Countries.

A significant milestone in biodiversity conservation was reached when the Singapore Green Plan 2012 was launched in 2002. NParks was the Secretariat for the Conserving Nature Committee of the Singapore Green Plan 2012. This committee, comprising representatives from the public, the non-governmental organisations, the private sector and the relevant government agencies, works towards the implementation of action programmes that would promote biodiversity conservation.

NParks also continued its efforts to survey natural areas with the aim of collating baseline biodiversity data. In the past year, in addition to *ad hoc* and short-term biodiversity studies, we carried out a detailed inventory survey of Pulau Tekong. The survey recorded interesting findings such as the Pangolin, Lesser False Vampire Bat, Kulh's Flying Gecko, Black-naped Monarch, and Blue-eared Kingfisher, to name just a few animal species. Several rare plant species, rarely seen or found on mainland Singapore were also discovered during this survey.

"This is a beautiful place! It is unspoilt and provides easy access to wildlife. I spotted 10 different species of birds, four species of reptiles and a squirrel. The conservational and management efforts are evident from the wildlife and fauna I spotted. I'll definitely come back again for the migratory birds season."

Stephen Anich,
The 38-year-old Australian visitor to Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve spent three hours exploring the place.

21. Biodiversity studies conducted at Pulau Tekong unveiled interesting findings, including Pangolins.

22. Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan at the IFPRA Asia-Pacific Congress 2002.

Educating For The Future

Public education is an important component of NParks' conservation strategy. Over the years, NParks' programmes for promoting nature appreciation have grown in popularity and extent. One example is the Adopt-A-Park Scheme. Since its launch in 1997, NParks has worked with 139 organisations to care for greenery in the plots they have adopted. One of the events held last year was an Adopters' Gathering at Fort Canning Park in September 2002 to encourage networking and sharing of experiences among the adopters.

In addition, NParks broke new ground in engaging the community when it launched the Park Watch Scheme in September 2002. This scheme aims to encourage community involvement through volunteerism in the management of public parks. Volunteers will advise park users on the appropriate usage of park facilities,

channel feedback to park managers and assist in introducing interesting programmes and activities in the parks. The scheme will be launched in five other parks by end of 2003 under the pilot phase.

As with previous years, outreach and education on environmental awareness was the main theme during Clean and Green Week (CGW) 2002 launched by Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Tony Tan. As a joint organiser of the CGW, NParks initiated over 140 activities and events during the week to promote nature appreciation and environmental awareness. These events include Adopt-A-Park activities, guided nature walks, reforestation, beach cleansing and park performances. More than 52 guided walks were organised in various locations on the island and were very well received by the community. In particular, an overwhelming 300 enthusiastic

"I love sports and outdoor activities, especially in the parks. The beautiful surrounding environment adds a sense of serenity when exercising. I visit Ang Mo Kio Town Garden West at least twice a week. My friends and I are very glad that NParks has set up this Park Watch Scheme, as it creates awareness of how we can care for our parks. With this Scheme, we are able to organise more community activities!"

Catherine Soh,
35-year-old Park Watch Scheme volunteer.

23. The Park Watch Scheme at Ang Mo Kio Garden West is one of the six to be launched by year 2003.



members of the public attended the guided walk at the Tree Conservation Area at Changi, learning about some of the interesting native trees in Singapore. In addition, to mark Tree Planting Day, residents in a total of 79 constituencies were led by their Advisors in the planting of more than 617 trees island-wide during the week.

Another noteworthy event occurred during Earth Day in April 2002. Over 150 volunteers from The Timberland Company's customers, staff and friends and staff of the Ministry of Community Development and Sports came together to help conserve and replant trees in the Mandai Nature Reserve. Over 120 young trees were planted. In addition, the volunteers also cleaned up the area among the trees and removed weeds that would otherwise hinder the growth of the trees.



“Uncle Lee* taught us how to weed the plants. I like using the fork to dig the soil. There were roots and even a worm. Yuck! Uncle Lee said worms help plants grow. I had lots of fun. Gardening is fun!”

Sean Lim,
6-year-old with NTUC Childcare Kim Keat Centre,
an adopter of Pasir Ris Park.

*Uncle Lee is an NParks staff.

24. The guided walk at Changi Tree Conservation Area Trail was one of the 52 guided nature walks conducted during the Clean and Green Week 2002 to promote nature awareness.

NParks also started the Central Nature Reserve Branch Volunteer Programme. Volunteers were taught basic guiding techniques and received practical training on plant identification and plant knowledge. To date, a total of 33 nature lovers have been trained as NParks volunteers and they have been helping to promote nature awareness through activities like reforestation, guided walks and writing feature articles.

In the Singapore Botanic Gardens, the volunteer programme was enlarged considerably. Not only was the popular rainforest tour conducted by volunteers expanded to include mandarin commentary, a new tour of the National Orchid Garden was started in November 2002. New opportunities for volunteers to work in the Gardens were created in horticulture, plant records, visitor services and the herbarium, providing those with diverse skills and interests greater opportunities to contribute to the Gardens.

At Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, we partnered the Ministry of the Environment to celebrate World Environment Day in June 2002. More than 300 children were

involved, with students from Temasek Polytechnic staging two musical plays to highlight environmental issues and encourage environmental protection. With the ardent support of its volunteers, SBWR continued to engage the public and staged over 400 educational events on conservation.

In the east, at Pulau Ubin, more than 3,000 visitors have joined the public guided walks organised by NParks to learn more about Chek Jawa's rich biodiversity. The Chek Jawa Working Committee, comprising representatives from the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, Nature Society (Singapore) and NParks, finalised design plans for visitor amenities at Chek Jawa.

To better involve the community in nature education and conservation work, the Ubin Volunteer Programme was set up. About 70 volunteers have signed up with the programme and are assisting NParks in various activities, including guided walks, reforestation, plant salvage, weeding and field research. These volunteers have conducted over 100 guided walks.



25. In a bid to enhance environment awareness, NParks partners schools and organisations in reforestation efforts.

26. The Knobby Seastar (*Protoeaster nodosus*), one of the resident stars of Chek Jawa, awed many visitors to Pulau Ubin.





“At HSBC, caring for the environment is at the core of our view of corporate social responsibility. We are delighted to join hands with NParks to conduct a wide array of conservation and education projects such as the Young Naturalists Programme at the Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and the island-wide Heritage Trees Scheme to reach out to our young children and hopefully sow the seeds for an even greener generation. We are also very grateful to NParks for assisting us in our adoption of the Bukit Batok Nature Park and the development of a Green Volunteers Programme among our staff.”

Goh Kong Aik,
Head of Public Affairs
HSBC Singapore.

27. The Nature Learning Camp in Upper Seletar Reservoir Park is one of the many outreach activities for students.

NParks also played host to over 40,650 students from 343 schools last year as part of our outreach programme. The schools visited Pulau Ubin, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve, Singapore Botanic Gardens and the Bukit Timah Nature Reserve to learn about the flora and fauna in these parks through guided walks.

At the Singapore Botanic Gardens, outreach programmes to promote nature appreciation and recreational gardening for members of the public continued. Popular programmes include tours for school children such as Children's Treasure Hunt, "Looking at Plants" and "Plants & their Habitats" and gardening workshops for the public such as "Orchid Growing: the Basics", "Indoor Plant Care" and "Herbs & Spices". In FY 2002, some 8,450 children and adults attended the educational programmes at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Members of the public with green thumbs were also thrilled by GardenTech 2002. This hugely popular event drew 40,000 visitors, twice the attendance of the last event held in the 2000. The event catered to Singaporeans' interests in gardening and landscape by highlighting the latest products, services and technology in the landscape and horticultural industry. It attracted 130 participating firms.

To make it easier for the public to access information on plants, NParks also launched the "e-plant reference" during GardenTech 2002, comprising information on more than 1000 species of shrubs, trees and plants. The comprehensive pictorial plant database is hosted on the NParks website.

Over at the Singapore Herbarium, home to more than 650,000 plant specimens, the year also saw the completion of the computerisation and bar-coding of all 30,000 specimens collected from Singapore. This will enable easy retrieval of information for researchers as well as staff attending to queries from students and the public. As the custodian of one of the world's most significant collections of dried and liquid-preserved plants, the herbarium seeks to continually add to the collection by exchange and plant exploration.



28. Some 40,000 international and local visitors flocked to GardenTech 2002.

29. Bukit Timah Nature Reserve – another venue for students to learn about nature.



Promoting Skyrise Greening

Apart from disseminating the benefits of skyrise greening to professionals through publications such as the "Handbook on Skyrise Greenery in Singapore", NParks also reached out to the public via exhibitions.

To encourage skyrise greenery among the public, NParks participated in the 6th Spring Home Exhibition in March to April 2003 to reach out to homeowners who aspire to integrate skyrise greenery into their homes. Working with 18 partners in the horticultural and landscaping industry, NParks showcased six different types of skyrise gardens and gave talks on introducing skyrise greenery to homeowners on the practical aspects for small space gardening, choice of plants and planting media.

Setting Industry Standards

As part of efforts to raise horticultural and landscaping standards, NParks led the Landscaping/Horticultural Industry Skills Standards Committee to identify job competencies, establish work performance standards as well as to certify skills acquisition as part of a National Skills Recognition System (NSRS).

A total of ten Skills Standards were developed for the industry and 119 NParks employees were certified under the NSRS. In addition, NParks was endorsed by SPRING Singapore as an NSRS Approved Training Centre and Approved Assessment Centre.



30. Promoting Skyrise Greening – NParks staff, Mr Kong Yit San, engaging the public in a repotting demonstration during the 6th Spring Home Exhibition.

31. Reaching out to the young through gardening workshops.