

# GREEN COLLAR



I would like to praise those taking care of the greenery along East Coast Parkway. Whenever I drive by, I am amazed by raintrees and blooming bougainvillea. They must have put their heart and soul into the job.

**Mr Edwin Wu**

(The Straits Times, 10 June 2008)



**Sherlyn Ong**  
General Manager of Swee Bee Contractor Pte Ltd  
(NParks' maintenance contractor for East Coast Parkway)



**Ong Huah Bee**  
Landscape Supervisor for  
East Coast Parkway

More than  
**21,000**  
 employed in the  
 landscape industry

### Training Institute for the Landscape Industry

The landscape industry took a big leap forward with the establishment of the Centre for Urban Greenery and Ecology (CUGE) in April 2007.

In 2008, CUGE was appointed a National Continuing Education and Training (CET) Institute by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA). As a CET Institute for the landscape industry, CUGE is the lead training provider for all levels of the landscaping workforce. It also serves as a platform for sharing and exchanging expertise and best practices. The Seminar Series, Professional Workshop Series and Professional Speakers Series organised by CUGE have attracted more than 450 participants of which close to 15% are overseas participants.



#### Singapore's Success

**Zhang De Primary School:**  
 Sandy Toh, Patricia Lim,  
 Chee Jia Yi, Teo Jing Yi

Singapore has developed from a fishing village to a country sprouting with high-rise buildings. Nevertheless we have not forgotten nature and are known as a green city, setting a good example to the rest of the world.



#### The Drowned World

**Catholic High School:**  
 Kenneth Teng

If global warming persists, massive amounts of ice from the polar caps will melt. Our world, as we know it, would be submerged in water. As the heat and water promote vegetation growth, plants would inhabit these cities. Mother Nature always has her way of regaining what's hers.

## Climbing the 'Corporate Ladder'

The Certified Arborist programme is accredited with the International Society of Arboriculture to equip our tree care professionals with the necessary skills to manage Singapore's thriving tree population. To date, most of the arborists within NParks have been certified and future intakes will be aimed at officers from other government agencies like Town Councils and the landscape industry.

We are also implementing other professional certification programmes, like 'Certified Practising Horticulturist' accredited with the Australian Institute of Horticulture and 'Certified Playground Safety Inspector' accredited with the National Recreation and Park Authority USA and the International Playground Safety Institute USA.



Participants of the tree climbing competition at Green Thumbs 2007.



The Master PICUS Class Certification Programme offered by CUJE keeps tree care practitioners up-to-date on the latest technology.

## New Jobs & Jobs Made New

With a structured career pathway and a professional skills training and development system in place, NParks facilitates job placement programmes to encourage more locals to join the industry.

Working closely with WDA and the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), we also champion job redesign initiatives to enhance efficiency and industry value. These include introducing new machinery and technology to enhance the productivity and efficiency of work practices.



The eight Living Walls in HortPark showcase the potential and possibilities of vertical greenery

## Industry R&D

We continue to use research and technology to advance the industry and enhance its image as one that is progressive and knowledge-based.

Focusing on the application of greenery in city settings, we are developing new frontiers in urban greenery and ecology. One such initiative is the Living Walls, which assesses the efficacy of different vertical greening systems and the benefits they bring to buildings and the environment. This is a joint project with the Building and Construction Authority and National University of Singapore as part of our ongoing effort to promote skyrise greenery.

## Showcasing the Industry

Green Thumbs 2007 was jointly organised in September by NParks, NTUC, WDA and the Singapore Landscape Industry Council at Dhoby Ghaut to showcase recent advancements in the industry and demonstrate the skills of the workforce.

Another success was GardenTech 2007, a biennial gardening carnival held, for the first time, in HortPark. Some 110 local and overseas exhibitors showcased the latest in plants, planting media, gardening, landscaping, waterscapes and garden furniture. Over five days in December, visitors were treated to activities like talks, workshops and guided tours.



The air-conditioned lawn mower was one of the new machineries showcased at Green Thumbs 2007.

## NParks Campus

Singapore Botanic Gardens is transforming into a knowledge hub for botany, horticulture and environment. With NParks and CUGE located on its premises and facilities like the Herbarium, Library of Botany and Horticulture, and the Orchid Breeding and Micropropagation Laboratory, it has become a place where botanists, horticulturists, environmentalists, landscape industry players and NParks staff come together to network and exchange ideas.

Activities like the Regional Arboriculture Seminar and Biodiversity of Singapore Symposium have been organised here. The Gardens will also play host to upcoming events like the 8<sup>th</sup> International Flora Malesiana Symposium in 2010 and the 20<sup>th</sup> World Orchid Conference in 2011.

Even NGOs like the Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Orchid Society of Southeast Asia, and Singapore Environment Council have set up office here, underlining the importance of the Gardens as a learning base for Singapore and the region.



The Botanic Gardens is well-positioned to play a leading role in research, conservation, education and training.

The advantage of being located in the Botanic Gardens is having a wealth of environmental resources and facilities at your doorstep.

**Howard Shaw**  
Executive Director  
Singapore Environment Council



**The Smoke From The Factory**  
Zhang De Primary School:  
Sandy Toh, Patricia Lim,  
Chee Jia Yi, Teo Jing Yi

A factory emitting poisonous gas results in acid rain that destroys life. This painting was created to raise awareness of the bad effects of air pollution. The sunflower is lucky to have shelter from danger but not the rest of the world.



**The Ugly Truth**  
Catholic High School:  
Shi Cheng Zi Jing, Kenneth Teng, Liew Wai Yinn, Terence Szeto

The healthy tree by the river is dead in its reflection. Our environment is dying. The many wonderful sights of nature are just the minority. Much of nature on Earth is facing a crisis and we need to do something about it.

## Budding Talents

Within NParks, we have aligned our human resource practices to efforts to promote the landscape industry and meet its growing needs.

We have accelerated our scholarship and sponsorship programmes, increasing our offering from one per year to more than 10. NParks scholarships are given out to outstanding candidates to pursue degrees in botany, horticulture, landscape architecture and environmental management in overseas universities. For the first time, in collaboration with WDA, we are offering the Landscape Industry Scholarship Awards for successful candidates to pursue a Masters of Landscape Architecture in the National University of Singapore.

We also initiated the NParks Cadetship Programme – a six-month internship at the Singapore Botanic Gardens to impart hands-on horticultural skills to tertiary students.

# 12

**scholarships  
and awards  
given out by  
NParks in 2007**



NParks Dragonboat Team

## A Great Workplace

We want to create a workplace that brings out the best in our people and encourages learning and innovation.

Newly recruited operations officers undergo a month-long Landscape WSQ course where they are certified in seven key skills. Non-operations staff also receive an orientation in basic landscaping to better understand NParks' core work.

Activities organised by our Healthy Lifestyle, Kindness, and Social and Recreational Sub-Committees reflect our holistic approach to staff development and well-being.

A 2008 Employee Climate Survey showed strong overall engagement levels, with a significantly-higher-than-norm percentage of staff indicating that they were proud to work in NParks.

Our efforts to transform the organisation through people excellence have not gone unnoticed. We were conferred the Distinguished Public Service Award for Organisational Excellence 2007 and clinched the coveted corporate award at The Singapore HR Awards 2008.