



the nature of appreciation

The greening of Singapore requires close involvement and support of the community. NParks builds community ownership by enhancing lifestyle experiences in parks, promoting appreciation of greenery and nurturing a culture of gardening. It is only when our community holds our verdant greenery and natural heritage close to their hearts that the Garden City has a life, and a soul.

Enhancing Lifestyle Experiences

During the year under review, NParks saw a record turnout of over 21 million visits for our line-up of some 3,000 activities. These included perennial favourites such as “Ballet under the Stars” and WOMAD 2005 at Fort Canning Park and the SPH Gift of Music Series at the Singapore Botanic Gardens as well as mega events such as the Singapore River Hongbao and the Singapore International Water Festival. Other thematic events which made an encore appearance this year included the “PLAYing in the Park” series which involves adapting fairytale characters into children’s musicals and “Acapella Attack!” which features home-grown talents showcasing a wide repertoire of music.

The year also saw the launch of new themed activities such as Story Caravan and Dance @ Park. Story Caravan was staged at West Coast Park where park visitors saw themselves playing characters during interactive story-telling sessions of folklore from around the world. Dance @ Park is an interactive dance experience featuring various mainstream dance styles at various parks each month.

Growing Outwards to Touch and Engage

NParks initiates many programmes to reach out to minds and hearts of the public, always emphasising the importance of maintaining and enhancing their natural environment. Within the year in review, many ongoing programmes have been furthered, and new programmes have been launched to encourage the appreciation and love for our trees and greenery.

May 2005 saw the launch of the “Community in Bloom” programme. This programme seeks to build a gardening culture amongst people in Singapore. It creates awareness and organises activities that involve the community in gardening projects to enhance their natural surroundings. The launch of the inaugural “Community in Bloom” Awards 2005 was well-received with the community of gardeners (private housing estates, public housing estates, schools, other organisations) getting together to do their bit to enhance the Garden City – literally in their own backyards. The Awards attracted 107 entries in all and the winners were recognised in November 2005 at the Clean and Green Week Carnival at the Bedok Reservoir Park.

Top Left

The tale of Peter Pan came to life for visitors at West Coast Park.

Top Right

Students of “Community in Bloom” participant Shuqun Secondary School tending to their garden after school.

Bottom

Promoting good neighbourliness through gardening.





Top

"TreeTop Trail @ MacRitchie" allows visitors to conduct "do-it-yourself" guided walks along the trail.

Bottom Left

The Marine Fish Programme involves students from participating schools conducting guided walks.

Bottom Right

Into its second year, the "Stay On Track" programme engages volunteers as safety ambassadors.

Singapore's parks are the focal point of many of NParks' initiatives and projects. The June school holidays in 2005 saw some 3,000 park users receiving safety tips on skating and cycling from safety ambassadors during the "Stay On Track" Campaign at East Coast Park. The month-long campaign, organised in partnership with Skateline and Singapore Amateur Cycling Association, is aimed at promoting responsible and safe park usage.

Participants of NParks' Adopt-A-Park Scheme and Park Watch Scheme also had a fruitful year with the 154 adopters embarking on community projects such as producing park brochures, holding guided walks in addition to landscaping projects in the various adopted parks. Meanwhile, some 500 volunteers of the Park Watch Scheme have been working in partnership with NParks to organise community activities such as Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations and conducting guided walks during Clean and Green Week.

Over at the nature reserves, our programme of outreach activities included a joint exercise with the Public Utilities Board (PUB) and our volunteers to advise the public not to release animals into the nature reserves and reservoirs. NParks and PUB also worked in partnership with Raffles Girls School to bring together students and teachers from 17 primary schools to participate in a nature camp. Held at Lower Peirce Reservoir, the highly interactive programme covered scientific concepts, skills in the outdoors as well as the flora and fauna of the nature reserves.

The year in review also saw the launch of "Forest Trees of Bukit Timah" by Mr Lim Swee Say⁵, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office. The book is focused on results from a long-term research project by Centre for Tropical Forest Science of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, National Institute of Education and NParks. It shares interesting findings which show that despite a high turnover rate of old trees, there has been a healthy higher replacement rate at this nature reserve as compared with most other forests studied in the region. This continuing research programme will help NParks understand how this, as well as other forest fragments in Singapore, can be monitored and managed in the future.

⁵Then Second Minister for National Development

"As part of our corporate social responsibility, Singapore Petroleum Company Limited is committed to the well-being of the community in which we operate. Our partnership with NParks has provided us with an important platform to reach out to the community as well as contribute to sustaining our Garden City."

Mr Koh Ban Heng,
Chief Executive Officer,
Singapore Petroleum Company Limited

Marking the first anniversary of the launch of the HSBC TreeTop Walk, NParks and HSBC launched the Care-For-Nature TreeTop Walk Stamp Series and the TreeTop Trail Guidebook. Since its launch in November 2004, the treetop walk has proven to be popular, attracting over 290,000 visitors as at March 2006. The treetop walk has also been invaluable in helping to facilitate surveys and assisting in plant identification work.

NParks works in partnership with our community to initiate a diverse range of outreach programmes aimed at encouraging an appreciation for nature.

Meanwhile, over at the Botanic Gardens, some 21,000 participants benefitted from 280 programme runs comprising thematic nature tours for children as well as workshops such as “Home Gardening” and “Orchid Growing: the Basics”. The Gardens’ Education Unit also reached out to schools through assembly talks provided at the school premises.

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve (SBWR) also had a busy year with a diverse line-up of educational programmes and activities such as the Marine Fish Programme and the Art for the Environment Workshop. The Marine Fish Programme was developed in partnership with Underwater World Singapore and involves the participation of some 60 students. The year-long programme includes free guided walks, talks on marine fish as well as educational posters to allow visitors to conduct self-guided walks. The Art for the Environment Workshop, sponsored by the Singapore Press Holdings Foundation, brought together students from six schools to express their appreciation of nature through the art of collage making. The art pieces created in this workshop were subsequently exhibited at SBWR.

To provide school children with a taste of a classroom in the great outdoors, SBWR joined hands with Toyota Motor Corporation on the Outdoor Classroom project at the Reserve. The joint venture created a Freshwater Pond activity for 40 children between the ages of eight and 12. Among the many activities, the children embarked on educational and craft projects with the natural splendour of SBWR as their inspiration.

“I joined community gardening because I love nature and wanted to learn more about plants and the skills in looking after them but I realised that the benefits are more than what I have expected. It has taught me patience. I learn how to be more nurturing and caring and above all I have learned to appreciate the community spirit in us. It is great to see all my friends from different races coming together for a common interest.”

Mohd Hanafi,
Student,
Shuqun Secondary School





Top Left

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong planting *Verbena x tenera* at Lentor Vale.

Bottom Left

Minister Mah Bow Tan viewing a "Community in Bloom" display during Clean and Green Week.

Right

Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew planting a *Bucida buceras* at Strathmore Avenue.

Clean & Green Week 2005 was celebrated islandwide with four different carnivals on 12 and 13 November 2005. Each carnival had its own unique attractions – but all of them still characteristically focused on greening and gardening interests. The carnival at Bedok Reservoir Park featured the "Community in Bloom" Awards 2005 and the launch of the Green Fingers Project in addition to garden displays, and mass sporting and planting activities held along the coast-to-coast park connectors. Over at the West Coast Park, the carnival highlighted a "graffiti art" competition, pony rides, mass planting and floral displays. At Zheng Hua Park, the carnival included planting of 300 trees by residents of 13 constituencies, an organised walk and a 20-km cyclathon. The carnival at Bishan boasted mass potting of plants by residents (who brought the greenery back to beautify their homes), garden and vegetable plot displays, and a 2-km morning walk by 1,000 residents.

Making My Garden City Greener

The Garden City Fund (GCF) was launched in December 2003 to encourage public and corporate ownership of the Garden City movement. Funds donated by Singapore residents and corporations are channelled towards enhancing the Garden City. This year, the GCF initiated two key projects: the Green Fingers Project and also the development of the Tanjong Pagar Ricoh Park.

The Green Fingers Project is a community outreach initiative to raise awareness of our Garden City and its future goals, and to encourage the public to take ownership of, and to participate in, sustaining our Garden City. Launched by the Minister for National Development, Mr Mah Bow Tan, in November 2005, Green Fingers seeks to engage the public, help them to understand and appreciate NParks' vision for a City in a Garden and to feel a sense of ownership as we all move towards the realisation of this goal.

Another project made possible through the GCF this year was the Tanjong Pagar Ricoh Park. This pocket park was custom-designed to function as a green refuge for urban office workers and visitors to enjoy, relax and de-stress, and interact with one another. The Park is a joint initiative of GCF, NParks and Ricoh Asia Pacific Pte Ltd. More than 18 new partners (individuals and corporations) have supported GCF for the year in review. They include NTUC Income and Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance (Singapore) Pte Ltd.

Building a Databank of Biodiversity

As the Scientific Authority in Nature Conservation, NParks is the National Focal Point for the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD). Aside from representing Singapore at biodiversity conferences and assuming a range of international responsibilities, NParks also facilitates Singapore's contribution with regards to regional and international obligations on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. To this end, NParks has been facilitating research work on our flora and fauna. Some noteworthy discoveries include the recording of 150 new species of long-legged flies by Dr Patrick Grootaert, Curator of flies at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences.

During the year, NParks also carried out a survey to collect information from some of Singapore's marine and terrestrial sites. The surveys, which help to locate and record rare plants and animals, will also contribute to the effective formulation of management plans for individual sites on the island.