

MEDIA FACTSHEET

Springleaf Nature Park

Springleaf Nature Park was formerly part of the Chan Chu Kang village - named after the headman Chan Ah Lak who acquired 18 hectares in 1850 to cultivate gambier. The village was located in the 'kangkar' of Seletar River, meaning the land around the riverbank in Teochew. There were over 10 other villages in the surrounding area, including Kampong Telok Soo, Kampong Jalan Kula Simpang and Sembawang village.

The forests near Chan Chu Kang were also favoured for the collection of botanical and zoological specimens. Prominent collectors, including Henry Nicholas Ridley (the first director of the Singapore Botanic Gardens) made the first collections of native plant species from the area. Plant specimens collected by Ridley include the *Kopsia singaporensis*, *Bhesa paniculata* and *Neesia malayana*. These specimens were stored in the Singapore Botanic Gardens Herbarium, and they can still be found there today.

[Picture Caption: 1951 aerial photograph over Springleaf Nature Park Area showing the boundary of the former Chan Chu Kang Village (excluding the area occupied by the plantation)]



[Picture Credit: Aerial photographs by the British Royal Air Force between 1940 to 1968, from a collection held by the National Archives of Singapore. ©Crown copyright]

Brief History:


- In 1850, Chan Ah Lak acquired 18 hectares of land in the 'kangkar' of Seletar River to cultivate gambier and pepper.
- In 1912, Lim Nee Soon set up the Thong Aik rubber factory in the 'kangkar'. Later, Chan Chu Kang was renamed Nee Soon village after Lim's contributions to the rubber industry.
- In 1976, the Yishun New Town project was initiated by the government. Residents of Nee Soon village were relocated before the construction of the New Town began in 1977.

As Singapore developed and villagers were relocated to public housing, the Nee Soon village and nearby plantations, left to rest, became secondary forests. They now act as nature corridors between the Central Catchment Nature Reserve and surrounding green areas. Springleaf Nature Park buffers the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, and helps to reduce visitorship pressure on the Reserve by providing an alternative venue for nature-related activities.

Due to its close proximity to the Reserve, Springleaf Nature Park is rich in biodiversity, and is home for more than 80 species of resident and migratory birds. These include the White-throated Kingfisher, Blue-tailed Bee-eater and Long-tailed Parakeet.

The six-hectare park includes amenities such as a rest shelter, toilets, carpark and a trail network with an observation deck for bird-watching activities.

Flora

1		<p>Pear Mangosteen (<i>Garcinia nervosa</i>)</p> <p>This is an evergreen mid-canopy rainforest tree that can grow up to 30m in height. When bruised, all parts of the plant will exude yellowish latex. Its flowers are pollinated by insects and the fruits are eaten by birds and small mammals. It is native to Singapore.</p>
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Singapore Kopsia
(*Kopsia singapurensis*)

This is a small evergreen tree that grows up to 12m in height. This species is endemic to lowland and freshwater swamp forests of Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia.

Other flora




1. Malayan Spindle Tree (*Bhesa paniculata*)


This is a common tree of the secondary forests and in the freshwater swamp forest. The leaves are arranged spirally and the flowers are on branched spikes and are pale-yellow in colour.

2. *Neesia malayana*

This tree has large, simple, oblong leaves usually notched at the top. New leaves emerge red and hairy and the preferred habitat is freshwater swamp forest. The fruits are large and 'durian like' splitting into five parts as they dry.

Fauna

1		<p>White-throated Kingfisher (<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>)</p> <p>This bird has a brown head and belly, with a distinct white throat and breast. It is the most common resident kingfisher in Peninsula Malaysia and Singapore.</p>
2		<p>Blue-tailed Bee-eater (<i>Merops philippinus</i>)</p> <p>This bird has a greenish plumage with a prominent orange-brown throat. This migratory bird usually arrives in August and stays until March.</p>
3		<p>Yellow-vented Bulbul (<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>)</p> <p>The Yellow-Vented Bulbul has a slight crest, white face and yellow under tail coverts. It sips nectar, nibbles on young shoots and snacks on insects.</p>

4		<p>Yellow-bellied Prinia (<i>Prinia flaviventris</i>)</p> <p>This small resident warbler stays within the long grass, hops from one grass stalk to another and frequently stands at the end of the tall stalks looking around or singing. It is also found at the back mangrove, roadside scrub and agricultural farmland.</p>
5		<p>Common Flameback (<i>Dinopium javanense</i>)</p> <p>This woodpecker has a golden-brown back and wings, and an orange-red rump – owing to its common name. It feeds on ants, termites and other insects on the bark of large trees. It is usually seen in pairs, often calling with loud, short rattles in flight.</p>

Other fauna

1. Long-tailed Parakeet
(*Psittacula longicauda*)

This bird has a slender build with long tail. It travels in parties of 20 birds or more, and its call notes have been variously described as a constantly repeated shrill squawk.