



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

PM Lee Hsien Loong officially opens Singapore Botanic Gardens Learning Forest

Singapore, 31 March 2017 – Today, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong officially opened the Learning Forest, a new conservation core of the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Visitors can now access a network of boardwalks and elevated walkways to explore wetland and rainforest habitats. Highlights of the Learning Forest include the Keppel Discovery Wetlands – the first project in Southeast Asia to recreate a freshwater swamp forest, the SPH Walk of Giants – a collection of some of the region’s tallest tree species, a bambusetum, as well as a showcase of wild fruit trees.

To mark the occasion, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, together with Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong, planted trees alongside Advisers for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC and Tanjong Pagar GRC, Mayor of North West District Dr Teo Ho Pin, Chairman of Keppel Corporation and Singapore Press Holdings Dr Lee Boon Yang, as well as corporate partners, students and volunteers.

Located in the Tyersall-Gallop Core, the 10-hectare Learning Forest is an extensive restoration project of the lowland forest and wetland habitats that used to surround the Singapore Botanic Gardens. Detailed site surveys were conducted and reference was taken from early 19th century maps to restore these former habitats. The Learning Forest was designed to integrate with the Gardens’ existing 6-hectare Rain Forest to form an enlarged forest habitat that will help strengthen the conservation of native flora and fauna. It will form a buffer against the urban development surrounding Singapore’s first UNESCO World Heritage Site, and serve as an important reference for the ongoing research work of restoration ecology around the region. The Learning Forest is next to the 8-hectare Gallop extension, which will be opened to the public by 2018.

To help the National Parks Board (NParks) monitor the long-term ecological health of the Gardens, the community would soon be able to participate in a Citizen Science programme for the Singapore Botanic Gardens. For instance, a habitat enhancement programme with schools would see students participate in reforestation activities and biodiversity surveys at the Learning Forest. *For more information about the Learning Forest, please refer to [Annex A](#).*

Keppel Discovery Wetlands

The Learning Forest pays tribute to historic discoveries made by its staff. For example, the 1.8-hectare Keppel Discovery Wetlands was recreated after the environments travelled through by EJH Corner – a former assistant director of the Gardens, who extensively documented the wetland forests of Johor and Singapore. The Wetlands features a carefully curated plant collection of over 200 species, including plants named after some the Gardens’ botanists such as Nathaniel Cantley, Henry Ridley and EJH Corner. The Wetlands, connected



by trails and boardwalks, provides an opportunity for the public to access and experience a freshwater swamp habitat in the heart of the city. The restoration effort was supported by a \$2.08 million donation from Keppel Corporation through the Garden City Fund (GCF). *For more information about Keppel Discovery Wetlands, please refer to [Annex B](#).*

SPH Walk of Giants

The SPH Walk of Giants is an elevated boardwalk in the forest which showcases a collection of “giant” trees – most of which, in time, can grow up to at least 60 metres in height (or about 20 storeys high). It is one of several thematic walks in the Learning Forest.

SPH donated S\$1.2 million, through the GCF, to co-fund the construction of the elevated boardwalk. The SPH Walk of Giants will take visitors from ground level up to a height of 8 metres and offer them an unobstructed view of the forest floor, mid-forest level and canopy. *For more information about SPH Walk of Giants, please refer to [Annex C](#).*

Visitor information

Opening Hours: 5am – 12 midnight daily (the SPH Walk of Giants and Keppel Discovery Wetlands will be closed from 7pm to 7am to maintain a conducive habitat for wildlife)
Free admission

Getting here

By Train: Alight at Botanic Gardens MRT Station (Circle Line); 20-min walk to Learning Forest

By Bus: SBS Transit 7, 105, 123, 174, 174e; SMRT 75, 77, 106, NR8. Alight at Napier/Holland Road (Tanglin Gate) 10-min walk to Learning Forest & Tyersall Gate (via Tyersall Avenue).

By Car: Parking is available at Botany Centre, Tanglin Gate (via junction of Holland/Napier Road); 5–7-min walk to Learning Forest & Tyersall Gate (via Tyersall Avenue).

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For more information, please contact:

Kimberley Wang
Communications Manager, NParks
DID: 6471 7265
Mobile: 9436 8939
Email: Kimberley_Wang@nparks.gov.sg



About Singapore Botanic Gardens (SBG)

Established in 1859, the Singapore Botanic Gardens played an important historical role in the introduction and promotion of many plants of economic value to Southeast Asia, including the Para rubber tree. Over the years, the Gardens has continued to introduce and rejuvenate its horticultural attractions while continuing its mission of connecting plants and people.

Today, the 82-hectare Gardens is a key civic and community space, and an international tourist destination. Attracting an annual visitorship of more than 4.5 million, it is also an important institution for tropical botanical and horticultural research, education and conservation.

The Gardens showcases the best and most spectacular of tropical flora, including more than 10,000 types of plants and the region's most significant living collection of documented palms, orchids, cycads and gingers. Its historic 19th century garden landscape is well preserved and includes the earliest ornamental designed lake in Singapore. Home to numerous heritage trees and a tract of primary rainforest, the Gardens is less than a 10-minute walk from the shopping belt in Orchard Road. The Gardens was inscribed as Singapore's first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015.

The Gardens was ranked the number one park in Asia in TripAdvisor's Travellers' Choice Awards for attractions in 2014. In 2012, it clinched the inaugural Garden of the Year Award by the Canadian Garden Tourism Council. In 2008, it was awarded the Michelin three-star rating and selected by Time Magazine as Asia's Best Urban Jungle.

The Singapore Botanic Gardens is managed by the National Parks Board. For more information, visit www.sbg.org.sg and www.facebook.com/singaporebotanicgardens.

About National Parks Board (NParks)

National Parks Board (NParks) is responsible for providing and enhancing the greenery of our City in a Garden. Beyond building green infrastructure, NParks is actively engaging the community to enhance the quality of our living environment.

NParks manages 350 parks and 300 km of park connectors, 3,347 hectares of nature reserves and the Singapore Botanic Gardens. We also manage Pulau Ubin and the Sisters' Islands Marine Park. Adding to this is the extensive streetscape, or roadside greenery, that forms the backbone of our City in a Garden. The island-wide Park Connector Network is also being developed to link major parks, nature areas and residential estates.

As the lead agency on biodiversity conservation, NParks has developed an urban biodiversity conservation model, which aims to conserve representative eco-systems in land-scarce Singapore. NParks also monitors and coordinates measures to enhance the presence of biodiversity in our urban landscape.

NParks is working closely with partners in the landscape and horticulture industry to increase productivity, and provide training for all levels of the workforce. Enhancing competencies of the industry will support Singapore's vision of being a City in a Garden.

For more information, visit www.nparks.gov.sg and www.facebook.com/nparksbuzz