

Two More Therapeutic Gardens Open to Improve Mental Well-Being

With Singapore's ageing population, the number of dementia-at-risk seniors and persons with dementia is expected to increase. The National Parks Board (NParks) has developed therapeutic gardens in public parks that are not only designed with elderly-friendly features, but also alleviate the onset of dementia through therapeutic horticulture.



Seniors enjoying Therapeutic Garden @ Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park

On 19 September, NParks opened two new therapeutic gardens in Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park and Tiong Bahru Park. Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong, who was the guest-of-honour, officiated the opening of the two new therapeutic gardens at an event in Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park, together with Mr Desmond Lee, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development.



Mr Kenneth Er, CEO of NParks, introducing Therapeutic Garden @ Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park to Minister Gan Kim Yong and Minister Desmond Lee



Minister Gan Kim Yong and Minister Desmond Lee touring Therapeutic Garden @ Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park

Woh Hup (Private) Limited, one of Singapore's largest private construction groups, donated \$500,000 through the Garden City Fund for the development of the Therapeutic Garden @ Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park and its programmes. NParks will continue to partner with the community to develop a network of therapeutic gardens in parks across Singapore. This includes an upcoming garden in Choa Chu Kang Park which will be completed in 2018.

In addition, NParks has developed customised therapeutic horticulture programmes, and will work with eldercare and senior activity centres to conduct these programmes in the therapeutic gardens. The programmes are designed to increase social interaction among participants and enable them to enjoy the benefits of nature.



Minister Gan Kim Yong joining participants from Lions Befrienders in a planting activity

NParks has also conducted research projects to quantify the benefits greenery bring to Singaporeans and to enhance the design of green spaces and therapeutic horticulture programmes. For example, a new study by NParks and National University Health System (NUHS), *Effects of Therapeutic Horticulture on Elderly at Risk of Cognitive Decline*, will provide important data on the efficacy of therapeutic horticulture in the prevention of dementia.

Since the launch of the first Therapeutic Garden @ HortPark, interest in developing these gardens has been growing. In response, NParks has produced a set of design guidelines on the key characteristics of therapeutic gardens to serve as a useful resource for organisations seeking to incorporate such environments into their facilities. In addition, NParks' Centre for Urban Greenery and Ecology (CUGE) will start offering a Certificate in Therapeutic Horticulture in December 2017.

For more information on NParks' therapeutic gardens, please visit <https://www.nparks.gov.sg/gardens-parks-and-nature/therapeutic-gardens>.