

# Discover the Learning Forest at the Singapore Botanic Gardens!

On 31 March, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong officially opened the Learning Forest at the Singapore Botanic Gardens. This extensive restoration of the lowland forest and wetland habitats that used to surround the Gardens will help to strengthen the conservation of Singapore's flora and fauna. It will also serve as an important reference for any ongoing research into restoration ecology.



*Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Minister for National Development Mr Lawrence Wong unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the Singapore Botanic Gardens Learning Forest.*

Located at the Gardens' Tanglin-Gallop Core, the 10-hectare Learning Forest is integrated with the existing rainforest within the Gardens. Together, they form an enlarged forest habitat which is now home to more than 100 species of birds, 20 species of amphibians and reptiles, 19 species of butterflies, 7 species of mammals, and more than 500 species of plants.

PM Lee and Minister for National Development and Second Minister for Finance Mr Lawrence Wong planted trees to mark the occasion. They were joined by Mayor of North West District Dr Teo Ho Pin, Chairman of Keppel Corporation and Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) Dr Lee Boon Yang, the Advisers for Holland-Bukit Timah GRC and Tanjong Pagar GRC, and other corporate partners, students, and volunteers.

The Keppel Discovery Wetlands are a highlight of the Learning Forest. Supported by a \$2.08 million donation from Keppel Corporation through the Garden City Fund (GCF), they comprise a variety of freshwater forest wetland habitats created through ecological design and a curated collection of more than 200 plant species.



*Visitors to the Keppel Discovery Wetlands can explore different freshwater forest wetland habitats through boardwalks and walking trails.*

The Keppel Discovery Wetlands also pay tribute to historic discoveries made by the staff of the Singapore Botanic Gardens, and include plants named after some of the Gardens' botanists. Visitors can explore the wetlands easily via a series of boardwalks and walking trails to enjoy a captivating and interesting outdoor learning experience.

Another highlight of the Learning Forest is the SPH Walk of Giants. This elevated boardwalk, co-funded by SPH with a \$1.2 million donation through GCF, showcases some of the tallest trees in Southeast Asia. Most of the trees here can grow up to at least 60 metres in height (about 20 storeys). The 260-metre boardwalk takes visitors from ground level to a height of at least 8 metres, allowing them to get close to existing mature trees and young forest emergent species. It also features a Canopy Web that gives visitors the unique experience of being up in a tree.



*The boardwalk at SPH Walk of Giants, which is 260 metres long and up to 8 metres high, lets visitors get up close to some of the tallest tree species in Southeast Asia.*



*The Canopy Web at the SPH Walk of Giants*

The Learning Forest also features 30 species of bamboo found in Asia; more than 50 species of wild fruit trees such as those from the soursop and jackfruit families; and trees with interesting forms and barks.

The Learning Forest is opened from 5am to 12 midnight daily (please note that the SPH Walk of Giants and Keppel Discovery Wetlands will be closed from 7pm to 7am to maintain a conducive habitat for wildlife). There is a free guided tour every Saturday at 9am. Just register with Visitor Services at the Tyersall Gate 15 minutes before the tour begins!