NTU to ban free plastic bags from Oct 1

From Oct 1, the retailers on campus, including Prime and Giant, will charge $0.20 per bag. PHOTO: ST FILE
SINGAPORE - Plastic bags will not be given out for free on Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) premises from Oct 1, a move that could save nearly 10 million plastic bags a year.

As part of the university’s five-year growth plan, which has a strong focus on environmental consciousness, NTU president Subra Suresh announced the ban on issuing plastic bags at campus events, as well as at retail and food outlets, on Monday (August 27).

An NTU spokesman later told The Straits Times that to encourage people to bring their own shopping bags, free plastic bags will be given out only upon request from Sept 3.

From Oct 1, the retailers on campus, including Prime and Giant, will charge $0.20 per bag.

"The proceeds from the sale of these bags will go towards NTU’s student assistance funding. This is NTU walking the talk on sustainability," said the spokesman.

"Beyond sustainability research and smart buildings, this is the behavioural aspect of sustainability that can involve the entire community, which is just as important as advancements in technology."

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According to a recent study commissioned by the Singapore Environment Council, shoppers in Singapore take 820 million plastic bags from supermarkets every year. The council estimated that 820 million bags would cover an area 126 times the size of Gardens by the Bay.

NTU students welcomed the move to ban free plastic bags.

Undergraduate Belinda Yeow, 22, praised the initiative, saying that charging for plastic bags would discourage their use.

Another undergraduate Abigail Chia, 22, said: "It would be a good example for Singapore in general."