

## S'pore nears 40% mark in goal to plant 1m more trees by 2030

Nisha Rahim

Almost 400,000 trees have been planted in Singapore under a national initiative aimed at planting one million more trees islandwide by 2030.

The trees have been planted in places such as schools and residential and industrial estates with the help of more than 61,000 community members, said National Development Minister Desmond Lee yesterday during a tree-planting session at Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Giving an update on the OneMillionTrees movement, Mr Lee said the initiative is a key component of efforts to transform Singapore into a City in Nature – where more greenery is infused into the cityscape.

The movement was launched in April 2020 by the National Parks Board (NParks) to improve the nation's urban environment and enhance resilience towards climate change.

To contribute to the target, NTU teachers and students planted 100 rare native trees around the university campus in Nanyang Avenue during the event yesterday.

Mr Lee said: "Planting these trees in the vicinity of NTU will also provide habitats and food for our native wildlife and enhance the ecological connectivity within the West Coast green corridor, which links the Western Water Catchment with Labrador Nature Reserve in the south and the Central Catchment Nature Reserve, which is in the heart of our city."

NTU said planting more trees will help provide better habitats for more than 370 species of wild animals in the area, such as the critically endangered Sunda pangolin and the straw-headed bulbul, a songbird.

Eight species of trees were selected for the planting by NParks together with NTU, including the critically endangered *Palaequium gutta* tree, better known locally as gutta-percha, which is



Teachers and students working to plant 100 rare native trees at Nanyang Technological University yesterday. The event was part of the OneMillionTrees movement launched by the National Parks Board in April 2020 to improve the nation's urban environment and enhance resilience towards climate change. PHOTO: LIANHE ZHAOBAO

tapped for its latex.

Professor Ling San, deputy president and provost at NTU, said the planting of trees will also improve the air quality and shade on campus, thus creating a greener and more conducive environment for students.

"As the climate continues to

warm, forests and greenery help mitigate the urban heat island effect and improve our physical and mental well-being," he said.

"I am sure everyone studying, working and living in NTU and our neighbouring areas will appreciate a cooler campus."

The university's tree-planting

initiative is spearheaded by Earthlink NTU, a student-led environmental club with more than 200 members.

NTU said it has plans to plant more trees around the campus over the next seven years.

nisharahim@sph.com.sg

400k

Approximate number of trees that have been planted under the OneMillionTrees movement.

61k

Number of community members who have been involved in the planting.