

## Singapore hits almost 40% of target to plant one million more trees by 2030

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NTU teachers and students planted a total of 100 rare native tree species around their campus. - The Straits Times/Asia News Network

SINGAPORE (The Straits Times/Asia News Network): Almost 400,000 trees have been planted in Singapore under an initiative that aims to plant 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 on Saturday during a tree-planting session at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Giving an update on the OneMillionTrees movement that was launched in April 2020, Lee said the national 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 by the National Parks Board (NParks) to improve the nation's urban environment and enhance resilience towards climate change.

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To contribute to the national target, NTU teachers and students planted a total of 100 rare native trees around their campus along Nanyang Avenue during the event on Saturday.

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 the Labrador Nature Reserve in the south, and 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 *Palaquium gutta* tree, better known locally as gutta-percha, which is tapped for its latex.

Professor Ling San, NTU deputy president and provost, 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.

He added: "As the climate continues to warm, forests and greenery help mitigate the urban heat island effect and improve our physical and mental well-being.

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

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

The university said it has plans to plant more trees in and around the campus over the next seven years.

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