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Media Release



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News Editor

GREEN SPACES ABLOOM IN THE COMMUNITY

- **Ten years of nurturing greenery and community ties culminates in milestone celebration of one million native plants seeded in the South West District**
- **With a 120% increase in the number of community gardens to improve the quality of life and environment in the South West District**
- **More than 1,000,000 native plants seeded across 152 gardens by more than 3,000 community gardeners, with an estimated 15,200 garden activities through the 10-year programme**
- **New programme to transform green spaces that will offer more to the community: Life, Learning and Love**

Nestled in Bukit Batok Zone 2 is a trio of gardens popular with residents for their lush landscaping, biodiversity and educational value. Young and old gather there to enjoy the scenery and learn about flora and fauna, and even to rest their feet after a busy day. Happy to see residents enjoy the gardens are 62-year-old garden leader Mdm May Lee and her team of 20-odd gardeners, who have dedicated much of the past decade to developing the gardens.

2 More than eight years ago, Mdm Lee fell ill with a severe bout of meningitis. To boost her recuperation, she took up gardening activities at her neighbourhood

community garden. “Gardening helped me regain my health. I had lost bone density from taking the steroid medications, and the doctor recommended me to go out in the sun more for my body to build Vitamin D. Gardening then blossomed into a passion project for me, and I picked up cultivation skills and gardening techniques from the Internet and other gardeners,” she shares. “We plant more exotic crops such as asparagus, bread fruit trees and Brazilian grape trees, and our Cosy Garden has koi ponds, turtle ponds and budgies which are very popular with the children. Couples and young families like to visit the garden, and we hold many activities to engage and spread cheer to the community. I get a sense of satisfaction, knowing that the gardens enrich the lives of other residents, just like gardening has enriched mine.”

Fruits of labour: 10 years of sowing a green community comes to fruition

3 Community gardens like Mdm Lee’s are the heart and hub of activity, where people volunteer, stay active, and bond over common interests. These are the fruits borne of **1,000,000 Native Plants @ South West**, a ten-year-long initiative by the South West Community Development Council (CDC) and National Parks Board (NParks) to promote community and environmental ownership as well as neighbourly ties.

4 To date, there are over 1,000,000 native plants in more than 150 community gardens across all 17 divisions, tended to by more than 3,000 active and passionate community gardeners. Over the years, community gardens have evolved into a burgeoning variety: crop gardens, herb gardens, vertical gardens, show gardens, educational gardens in school compounds, and more.



Example of a crop garden: Sky Garden @ Jurong Central, at Jurong Central Zone D RC



Example of a show garden: Cosy Garden at Bukit Batok Zone 2 RC



Example of a school garden: Commonwealth Secondary School Garden by Eco Club

5 The community will be coming together to celebrate the successful conclusion of the programme at Jurong Spring in a Garden (JSiG) this Sunday morning with a farmers' market. An inclusive and interactive approach to community gardening, JSiG is a division-wide gardening movement to cater to all members of the community, and is accessible to wheelchair users and people with physical disabilities. The event will also mark the opening of a new community garden under JSiG in conjunction with Jurong Spring Tree Planting Day and the 1,000,000 Native Plants @ South West celebration.

Fresh green vision: Launching Green Spaces @ South West

6 Gardens are a breath of fresh air in Singapore's cityscape, a place where residents gravitate to for respite and social activities. South West's community gardens play host to an estimated 1,520 activities each year to bond the community, which is equivalent to more than 4 activities a day. In support of the movement to create a City in a Garden for Singaporeans, 1,000,000 Native Plants @ South West upon its conclusion will be rebranded as **Green Spaces @ South West**, to be launched at the event.

7 Green Spaces @ South West will promote an inclusive, caring and active community through the transformation of community gardens into green spaces for Life, Learning and Love:

- (i) **Life:** Inclusive, aesthetic and productive gardens that are open to all. The green spaces will engage different pockets of the community and bring people together through gardening. New and unconventional programmes, such as therapeutic activities, and new funding available will be brought to the gardens.
- (ii) **Learning:** Relevant and new knowledge. For community garden leaders to be better equipped with the necessary knowledge, to help them enhance the experience at the gardens which would appeal to a wider community.

(iii) **Love:** Care and share for the less privileged. For community gardens to be areas where giving and spreading cheer take place, for example through the sharing of garden harvest.

8 As an enhancement to its predecessor, Green Spaces @ South West will support new and existing community gardens with more robust seed funding and activity grants, as well as new programmes¹ such as Train-the-Trainer @ South West and Adopt-A-Garden @ South West.

9 Mayor of South West District, Ms Low Yen Ling says, “Our community gardens have grown from an initial target of 100,000, to having over 1,000,000 native plants today - making the South West a vibrant green lung in our city state. Much credit goes to our dedicated community gardeners, who poured out precious time and sweat into transforming the green spaces into beautiful places for residents to enjoy. These areas have become the community’s favourite spots to gather, relax, bond and form friendships and neighbourly ties. We hope that the new Green Spaces @ South West programme will continue to expand our green lung by inclusively engaging residents from all walks of life, nurturing our community garden leaders, as well as making our community gardens places of cheer and harvest for residents and the underprivileged.”

10 "At Jurong Spring, we are making community gardening truly inclusive. For example, the garden we opened this morning is intended to be multi-ability, multi-generational, and multi-ethnic. Therefore, the garden has barrier-free access, with wheelchair-friendly planting areas. We also have planter boxes that are built to chest level, so elderly gardeners don't have to bend down at the waist to tend to their plants. And right beside these, we have children-friendly planter boxes. At the same time, by focusing on edible plants, we encourage our gardeners to share their harvest with neighbours. In this way, through thoughtful design and programming, we hope the community gardens in Jurong Spring will bring even more residents together, to forge stronger bonds," shares Mr Xie Yao Quan, Jurong Spring CCC Vice-Chairman.

¹ Please refer to the programme factsheet for details.

11 At JSiG on Sunday morning, residents will be able to take part in vibrant and various green activities at the South West District's Farmers' Market. There will be showcases of gardening techniques by community gardeners, live demonstrations of recipes and tasting of freshly harvested crops from the garden. There will also be distribution of crops such as lettuce, *cai xin* and *kang kong* to the residents and vulnerable.

12 Details of the event are as follows:

Event: **Launch of Green Spaces @ South West**
Date: Sunday, 30 December 2018
Time: 8.55 am – 10.30 am **(Media is invited at 8.40 am)**
Venue: Jurong Spring Zone B Community Garden
Blk 458 Jurong West St 41
Singapore 640458
Guest of: Mr Desmond Lee
Honour Adviser to Jurong GRC Grassroots Organisations
Minister for Social and Family Development &
Second Minister for National Development
Special: Ms Low Yen Ling
Guest Mayor of South West District

13 We would like to invite your reporter and photographer/TV crew to the **Launch of Green Spaces @ South West**. Interviews can be arranged upon request. Please contact our media liaison officer for queries. We look forward to receiving you and your crew/photographer.

Media Liaison Officers

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PROGRAMME

Time	Programme
8.55 am	Arrival of Special Guest Ms Low Yen Ling Mayor of South West District
9.00 am	Arrival of GOH Mr Desmond Lee Adviser to Jurong GRC Grassroots Organisations Minister for Social and Family Development & Second Minister for National Development
9.05 am	Opening Remarks by Mayor Low
9.15 am	Speech by Minister Lee
9.25 am	Celebration of 1,000,000 Native Plants @ South West & Launch of Green Spaces @ South West
9.30 am	Presentation of Appreciation Plaques & Certificates to Jurong Spring in a Garden Volunteers
9.40 am	Tour of Green Spaces @ South West Showcase: (i) Jurong Spring in a Garden (ii) South West District's Farmers' Market <i>*Media interview will be arranged, if any</i>
10.30 am	Departure of GOH and Mayor

About the South West Community Development Council (CDC)

The South West Community Development Council (CDC) was formed on 24 November 2001, with the mission to Assist the Needy, Bond the People and Connect the Community.

Through local help programmes, the South West CDC provides assistance to help the less fortunate in our community. The South West CDC also organises projects and programmes to promote community bonding and social cohesion. The South West CDC adopts the "Many Helping Hands" approach to encourage community ownership among residents, community partners and corporations to realise its vision of "Owning Your Community".