

NParks introduces enhanced Landscape Excellence Assessment Framework certification scheme with new Parks category and criteria for biophilic design to support City in Nature

5 May 2021 – A total of 27 parks and developments were awarded the Landscape Excellence Assessment Framework (LEAF) certification by the National Parks Board (NParks) in the assessment for 2020. Together with the introduction of a new category for assessment of parks, the 2020 LEAF certification scheme features an enhanced and more balanced framework with greater emphasis placed on ecology, biophilic design and park management.

Launched in 2013, LEAF is a certification scheme to celebrate good landscape design, construction and management of parks and development projects. This is achieved through recognising excellence in efforts of developers, landscape architects, architects, contractors and maintenance agents in creating high quality urban landscapes. Fifty-eight public and private developments in Singapore have since been certified.

Greater emphasis on ecology and biophilic design and introduction of Parks category

As Singapore transforms into a City in Nature, NParks will continue to encourage the integration of greenery in design to strengthen our distinctiveness as a highly liveable city while mitigating the impacts of urbanisation and climate change. Singaporeans will be able to enjoy a high-quality living environment that will have cleaner air and water, cooler urban temperatures, and benefits to health and well-being.

In 2019, a review of the scheme was conducted together through consultations with stakeholders in the landscape and design industry, including the Landscape Industry Association Singapore and Singapore Institute of Landscape Architects. The criteria were amended to better encourage ecologically, climatically and socially resilient parks and developments in Singapore. This includes new criteria such as habitat creation to support native biodiversity and implementation of biodiversity-friendly design elements in the management of glass facades and lighting.

As part of the review, a new Parks category was introduced in recognition of the importance of sustainability, ecology and biophilic design in park development and management. Parks were assessed based on six broad criteria – design and landscaping, accessibility, community wellbeing and engagement, environmental sustainability, conservation and biodiversity, and maintenance strategies.

Notable winners

In the Developments category, Yale-NUS College has clinched the Gold re-certification with a Special Mention for Community Well-being & Engagement. The College conducted frequent reviews and utilised different strategies for building maintenance to achieve objectives of community engagement. This includes working

with students to convert a decorative rooftop planter area to a community garden and establish a dragonfly habitat area at the Campus Green pond.

“We are extremely pleased to be awarded the Gold re-certification and to receive the Special Mention for Community Well-Being and Engagement. Our full residential programme provides an immersive living and learning experience where students, faculty and staff are able to jointly work on initiatives that meet the existing challenges of today. Our community rooftop garden project has staff working with faculty and students to introduce a regenerative process into the maintenance of landscape. Through planting, growing and harvesting vegetables, we aim to produce 10 per cent of the College’s daily vegetable consumption within three years. The produce will be sold to our dining operator and food waste will undergo composting and be used as fertilisers. Our long-term aim is to increase production through high-tech farming to ensure greater self-sufficiency in some essential items, which is aligned with the Singapore government’s initiatives to increase Singapore’s food security,” said Mr Dennis Aw, Director, Infrastructure, Safety and Security, Yale-NUS College.

Three of the wildlife parks operated by Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) – Singapore Zoo, Night Safari and River Safari – were certified Platinum under the new Parks category. The parks take proactive steps to enhance the living spaces for the animals under their care which also provides diverse habitats and connectivity for native wildlife. In a move to digitalise and increase efficiency, WRS developed a mobile app that allows for better tracking of horticulture waste generated across its three parks. The app also monitors the amount of waste that is eventually recycled or reused as substrate for animal bedding and mulching material. Applying data analytics help to identify opportunities to improve operational planning and strengthen WRS’ sustainability efforts.

Dr Cheng Wen-Haur, Deputy CEO, Wildlife Reserves Singapore said, “As an organisation dedicated to the protection of wildlife and their habitats, reducing our impact on the environment is integral to our operations. Hence, sustainability best practices are embedded in our everyday work and operations. We are pushing ahead in our aspirations to be climate positive and enable positive environmental outcomes beyond our wildlife precinct, by optimising resources with innovation solutions and through conscious designs that integrate with the natural environment. Achieving the LEAF Platinum award is affirmation that our efforts are contributing to Singapore’s growth as a City in Nature.”

Other parks certified Platinum include Jurong Lake Gardens, Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park, and The Learning Forest by NParks, while other developments certified Gold include EDEN, a residential development, and NUS University Town.

Application for LEAF 2021 Certification

The LEAF certification is a mark of landscape excellence and helps inform the public of the quality of landscapes and design of the certified development. Certified developments and parks may utilise the LEAF logo for marketing purposes for a period of five years from date of certification. Parks and developments may apply for a reassessment to renew the LEAF certification.

Applications for LEAF certification in 2021 are open from today, 12pm till 30 July 2021, 12pm. Private and Public developers and maintenance agents of existing and new developments may apply. More information available on www.go.gov.sg/LEAF.