A FRESH LOOK FOR NTU’S YUNNAN GARDEN

The revitalised Yunnan Garden acts as an all-inclusive site for leisure, education and heritage.

Alumni visiting the university are likely to notice a refreshing update to a familiar landscape within NTU Singapore — the rejuvenated Yunnan Garden, which officially opened on 13 February 2020.

With the just-completed revitalisation effort, Yunnan Garden is now seamlessly integrated with the Chinese Heritage Centre and an expanded Nanyang Lake. More than 1,000 new trees comprising over 80 species have been planted in the Garden, enriching its biodiversity.

Complementing the greenery are collections of new water and landscape features. A man-made waterfall feature has been combined with water cascades and artificial wetlands built with layers of differently-sized particles such as sand and gravel to filter the water in Nanyang Lake, removing sediments and pollutants. Other enrichments to the green haven include themed mini-gardens, a boardwalk, a new stormwater management system, and Wi-Fi connectivity throughout the Garden.

The result of the refresh is a 9-hectare heritage precinct — bigger than 12 soccer fields — that preserves Yunnan Garden’s historical significance as the birthplace of the Association of Nanyang University Alumni. Whilst the Garden did to himself and his fellow alumni. “With more green spaces and improvements like boardwalks, the space will become more vibrant and user-friendly for all to visit,” he said.

“We welcome all alumni to visit the new space and hold gatherings there to maintain their connection with the university community.”

Aside from celebrating its heritage, Yunnan Garden aims to be a vibrant recreational and gathering space that has something for everyone. Nature lovers can explore the Garden’s rich biodiversity of flora and fauna through its mini gardens and nature trails centred on themes such as orchids, national flowers from Southeast Asia, and herbs. The Garden also caters to health-conscious visitors, who can exercise at the outdoor fitness stations alongside Nanyang Lake, and then rehydrate by way of the water coolers in the Garden.

“Yunnan Garden as an icon harks back to the days of Nanyang University. Whilst we embrace our heritage, the campus cannot stand still and be frozen in time,” said NTU Board of Trustees Chairman Mr Koh Boon Hwee. He further noted that the new features in the Garden come with the aim of transforming Yunnan Garden into an inclusive attraction that is in sync with the times and relevant to today’s NTU community, while also offering the larger Singapore community an attractive green lung in our urban city.

NTU Students’ Union President Bryan Michael Chew Sen, a second-year Public Policy and Global Affairs student from the School of Social Sciences, shared that the new amenities in the Yunnan Garden will serve to enhance campus life for current students.

With the rejuvenation, the Garden is now an invigorating break away from the classroom, and an attractive spot for students to have gatherings. The spruced-up greenery makes it good for deep conversations and long strolls, which I’m certain will be beneficial for students’ mental well-being,” he said.

Designed around sustainability principles, the Yunnan Garden also offers visitors opportunities to learn about plants and the environment. Integrating these lessons into the Yunnan Garden experience is part of NTU’s commitment to raising awareness about environmental sustainability.

“As a university, we strive to incorporate a sense of discovery and curiosity into everything we do, so that even a walk in the park could inspire you and spark new ideas,” said Prof Suresh. “Aside from its historical significance, the Garden also boasts a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna, small ecological communities and thoughtfully-designed water features that show our commitment to sustainability. This is yet another example of how NTU walks the sustainability talk.

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