



## QUOTE SHEET

**Co-Principal investigator Dr David Middleton, Coordinating Director at Singapore Botanic Gardens,** said, “Southeast Asia is a region of exceptionally rich species diversity. The Singapore Botanic Gardens has played a contributory role to the study of plant diversity in the region since its founding in 1859, as part of the Gardens’ core roles in research, conservation and education. The enormous genus *Syzygium*, the species of which are mainly understorey trees, has long been neglected in comparison to the iconic forest giants and plant groups of more immediate economic interest. However, their role in the diversity and functioning of our forests must be better understood if we are to succeed in our conservation goals. In partnership with our collaborators at home and abroad, we have begun to understand what drives such exceptional species diversity in tropical Southeast Asia and can make better informed decisions on how to conserve this diversity. This strengthens the science on conservation in the region and contributes towards Singapore’s City in Nature vision.”

**Co-Principal investigator Victor Albert, Empire Innovation Professor of Biological Sciences, the University at Buffalo, and former Visiting Professor at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore,** said, “As the world’s largest tree genus, and as a plant group of special interest for Southeast Asian forestry and ecology, *Syzygium* (the clove genus) presents a model system for studying bursts of evolutionary diversification into various forest habitats, including within Singapore’s famous Bukit Timah Nature Reserve, where *Syzygium* is among the most abundant genera with perhaps 30 or more species represented. Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, and the University at Buffalo were excited to collaborate closely with Singapore Botanic Gardens on this important project, one of the first broadly-sampled, genome-scale plant evolutionary studies on a single genus to be published.”

**Co-Principal investigator Dr Eve J Lucas, Research Leader at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** said: “Understanding *Syzygium* species diversity to better manage old-world tropical forests is truly one of the final frontiers of botany. RBG Kew’s taxonomic experience and global



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collections make us especially effective partners in addressing stubborn flowering plant groups that have never been properly understood.”

**Co-Principal investigator Professor David Burslem, Interdisciplinary Director for Environment and Biodiversity at the University of Aberdeen** said: “Tropical forests are under severe threat from conversion, industrial logging and climate change. The new results on the origins and biodiversity of *Syzygium*, an important group of tropical trees containing many species of commercial importance for timber and fruit production, provides the raw material for devising strategies for species conservation and restoration. This new paper will serve as a benchmark for future studies combining genomic analyses with extensive data-sets on species distributions and satellite-derived environmental sensing to finally understand the mechanisms that drive patterns of tropical forest biodiversity.”