

Know 10 Native Plants



About Community in Bloom

Community in Bloom (CIB) is a programme that was launched by the National Parks Board (NParks) in 2005. It aims to nurture a gardening culture among Singaporeans by encouraging and facilitating community gardening efforts. It is also an opportunity to build community bonds and strengthen social resilience in our City in Nature.



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In support of:



For more information, visit our website at www.nparks.gov.sg/cib or email us at CommunityInBloom@nparks.gov.sg

For more gardening resources and tips, visit go.gov.sg/gardening-resources

To learn more about our City in Nature, scan the QR code or visit www.nparks.gov.sg/about-us/city-in-nature



This brochure features 10 commonly cultivated native plants in Singapore. A native plant species is one that has occurred naturally in a place over a long time, and was not introduced from other places. Plant species that have been introduced from other geographical regions are termed “exotic”.

There are numerous varieties of native plants that can be grown in Singapore. We hope that this brochure will encourage you to try growing these plants in your own garden or in a community garden, and contribute to Singapore’s natural heritage and environment.

Why Grow Native Plants?

Native plants bring a host of benefits to any garden, including:

- Serving as a sustainable beginner planting palette as native plants require less fertilisers and pesticides, and are generally low maintenance
- Being excellent perimeter plants that add vibrancy and colour to your garden
- Providing food and habitats for native wildlife, including beneficial pollinators such as bees and butterflies
- Letting you learn more about their traditional and cultural uses, such as a source of dye or plant fibre
- Contributing to Singapore’s natural heritage and environment

Evaluating your environment

Every garden is unique, so assessing your garden’s conditions will help you in selecting the right plants. Choosing native plants that match your garden’s environment is a good way to have a thriving garden, and will also teach you about Singapore’s natural heritage. Keep an eye out in our coastal, forest and scrubland parks to see what thrives, and see if you can grow them in your garden too!

Environmental factors

Sunlight is the most important factor that determines what plants you can grow. Gardens with long hours of full sunlight are ideal for many flowering native plants, while shady gardens with less than 4 hours of direct sunlight are more suitable for shade-loving native understory plants.

Soil type will also help define your plant selections. The soil in Singapore is naturally clayey, which is hard, dense, sticky and holds a lot of moisture. Most native plants thrive in this adverse soil type.

Drainage refers to how quickly water leaves your garden and this is closely linked to soil type. Knowing how quickly your garden drains can help you choose plants that will require less maintenance. Coastal native plants for example thrive on well-draining soil, while native plants from swamps or along streams do well in waterlogged areas.

Soil types

Clayey soil is the most common soil type in Singapore. It is usually hard when dry and sticky when wet. Secondary forest edges, freshwater swamp areas and scrubland habitats in Singapore are typically composed of clayey soil. Plants from these environments are ideal for gardens that are newly built, or gardens that cannot have soil improvement done. Learn more about soil amendments in our NParksSG YouTube channel.

Sandy soil consists of small particles of gritty material like gravel, sand, stone and some organic matter. The coastal areas in Singapore have sandy soil and native coastal plants thrive in it.

Drainage

Slow draining areas typically take more than 2 hours to drain after a storm and are usually indicative of clayey soil. Planting native plants that thrive in clayey soil will help the area with waterlogged conditions.

Fast draining areas do not form puddles even after heavy storms and are usually indicative of sandy soils. Native plants from coastal areas will thrive in such conditions and will not require as much watering as other types of plants despite the dry conditions.

Adap-Adap



Scientific Name
Mussaenda glabra

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in most soil types.

Uses
As its flowers and leaves are covered with soft hairs, this plant is suitable for sensory therapeutic activities. Its flowers also attract butterflies. This plant is suitable as a sprawling or a climbing bush for biodiversity-attracting, ornamental and therapeutic gardens.

Bamboo Orchid



Scientific Name
Arundina graminifolia

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be grown by seed, division and aerial plantlet.

Uses
This is grown as an ornamental plant as it flowers throughout the year once established in optimal conditions. This plant can be grown in biodiversity-attracting and ornamental gardens.

Lipstick Plant



Scientific Name
Aeschynanthus pulcher

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in moist, well-draining media.

Uses
This plant does well in semi-shaded conditions, making it an ideal indoor plant in hanging baskets. It flowers all year round and its flowers attract birds. This plant can be grown in biodiversity-attracting and ornamental gardens.

Malayan Ixora



Scientific Name
Ixora congesta

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in moist, well-draining soil under semi-shaded conditions.

Uses
This native species does well in semi-shaded conditions, unlike the exotic cultivars. The flowers attract butterflies and it is a host plant for the Knight butterfly (*Lebadea martha parkeri*). This plant flowers all year round and can be grown as a hedge or shrub in biodiversity-attracting and ornamental gardens.

Maiden's Jealousy



Scientific Name
Tristellateia australasica

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in most soil types.

Uses
Its flowers are frequently visited by bees, butterflies, as well as sunbirds. This plant can be grown in biodiversity-attracting and ornamental gardens.

Mistletoe Fig



Scientific Name
Ficus deltoidea

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in sandy and well-draining soil conditions.

Uses
As its leaves are considered a symbol of good luck, this plant is more readily available in nurseries, being sold as an auspicious plant or indoor plant. Its fruits all year round and attracts birds. As such, this plant can be grown as a small shrub or border plant in biodiversity-attracting and ornamental gardens.

Red Leea



Scientific Name
Leea rubra

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in moist, well-draining soil in full sunlight.

Uses
This plant flowers all year round which makes it suitable as a decorative shrub in ornamental gardens and biodiversity-attracting gardens. Its flowers attract a wide range of bees and butterflies while its ripe fruits attract birds.

River Tarennia



Scientific Name
Tarennia fragrans

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in moist and water-logged soil under semi-shaded or full sunlight conditions.

Uses
When in season, it flowers profusely and the entire plant can be covered with fragrant flowers. This plant can be grown as a large shrub or small tree in therapeutic, fragrant and ornamental gardens.

Rose Myrtle



Scientific Name
Rhodomyrtus tomentosa

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be grown by seed. It grows well in sandy and well-draining soil conditions in full sunlight.

Uses
Its sweet edible fruits can be made into jams or tarts. It is a host plant for caterpillars of moths such as the Nolid moth (*Carea varipes*) and Rose Myrtle Lappet Moth (*Trabala vishnou*). Its flowers attract bees such as carpenter bees. This plant flowers all year round and can be grown as a hedge or shrub in biodiversity-attracting and edible gardens.

Singapore Rhododendron



Scientific Name
Melastoma malabathricum

Cultivation and Plant Care
It can be propagated by seed or stem cutting. It grows well in moist and water-logged soil in full sunlight.

Uses
The seeds of this plant can be used to make black dye while the roots can be used to make pink dye. The young leaves attract bees such as carpenter bees, while the fruits attract birds. This plant flowers all year round and can be grown as a hedge or shrub in biodiversity-attracting and edible gardens.