



Green Culture Singapore Feature Article for July 2008

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Above: The whole of Suntec Convention Center was all dressed up for the Singapore Garden Festival.

The Singapore Garden Festival (SGF) returned for its second season at the Suntec Convention Center from 25 July to 1 August 2008 and Green Culture Singapore (GCS) was part of the Festival.

The GCS Booth

As at the previous SGF, we were given a booth to showcase our gardening interest group. What was different this year was that our booth was situated in the Associations and Societies section of the Festival, situated in one corner on Level 4 and was separate from the Marketplace.

With the creative input from Phillipe Noor, one of our very talented members from the GCS discussion forum, our booth was tastefully dressed up to welcome the visitors to the SGF. All was done using a very tight budget and the booth's décor was all done in-house, mostly by Phillipe, with additional help from a handful of GCS members. Conceptualisation and preparation work commenced a couple months before the SGF.



Above: This was how our booth looked like near its completion.

Besides having the staple information about the GCS website and discussion forum, our booth in this year's SGF featured edible plants originating from around the region that have largely been taken for granted or even forgotten. Many of the plant specimens featured were those that can be planted in our gardens for their ornamental value. We also took the opportunity to introduce to the public some uncommon local vegetables and herbs.



Left: The Chinese Key (*Boesenbergia rotunda*) was one of the edible plants featured at the GCS booth during the SGF that attracted a lot of attention from the public.

Our booth was designed to be a learning corner where visitors could get to know more about these useful edible plants by reading the information that was written about them. Fresh plant materials, live plant specimens, as well as, plant portraits that Phillipe had painted were also used to include an interactive element where visitors could see, feel, and even smell these plants.

We did the Balcony Garden at the Community in Bloom exhibition area!

We were also involved in putting up a balcony garden at the Community in Bloom (CIB) exhibition area. Phillipe, Richmond, Teresa and I gathered two days before the actual opening of the Festival to select suitable plants and then arranged them in a mock-up ground floor condominium balcony. There, we also got to talk to the CIB team as well as fellow community gardeners.



Right: Phillipe, Richmond and Teresa busy arranging the plants in a mock-up balcony garden at the CIB exhibition area.



Left: The completed balcony garden landscaped by GCS at the CIB exhibition area.

Community in Bloom Awards Presentation Ceremony & Gardening Talks

The CIB Awards Presentation Ceremony was held during the SGF and quite a handful of GCS members are winners for this year's Awards. Congratulations to those of you who won!



Left: Wilson receiving the award on behalf of his Residents' Committee from NParks CEO, Mr Ng Lang.

Below is a list of GCS member's gardens that won:

Platinum Award & Best New Community Garden - Public Housing Estates Category

wilson – Serangoon Zone 6 Residents' Committee

Gold - Public Housing Estates Category

Velvetine - Punggol Coral Garden

Gold - Private Housing Estates Category

Quick - D'marine Apartment

First Prize - Private Housing Estates Category

Mao

Merit - Balcony Gardens Category

Valentine

During the SGF, GCS, together with CIB and the National Library Board organized two gardening talks, namely, "Afternoon Tea with Community in Bloom Awards 2008 Winners" and "*Phalaenopsis* Orchids, anyone?", for the public that were held at the National Library.



Right: Albert's first gardening talk was very well received.

Albert's talk on growing the moth orchid was so popular that there weren't enough seats and some of the audience had to stand!

Back at Radio 1003 for a SGF Radio Talk Show

Wilson Ng, the Radio 1003 host for the programme “It is Sunday”, paid visit to the SGF on its third day. I volunteered to be his guide and brought him on a tour around the Festival.

After the tour, we made our way back to the Radio 1003 studio that is located at the Singapore Press Holdings Building to do a ‘live’ radio show in Mandarin where we shared with listeners our thoughts on the SGF.



Above: Wilson Ng (right) posing for a picture with me at the Green Culture Singapore booth at the SGF.

Our Favourite Gardens on Level 6...

The most popular exhibit among GCS members on Level 6 of the Suntec Convention Center was perhaps the Fantasy Garden named “Season of Mist” done by Borneo Exotics (BE) from Sri Lanka. Many of our carnivorous plant enthusiasts who saw the exhibit had their eyes fixated on the giant black *Nepenthes truncata* on display.

Another popular landscape garden was “Painting with Nature: An Everchanging Landscape” by Drimitri Xenakis and Maro Avrabou from France that featured different coloured portraits of flowering plants. Herb enthusiasts from the GCS forum would have taken notice of the lavender that was planted in one of the planter boxes.

Right: The *Nepenthes truncata* at the Borneo Exotics' Fantasy Garden that was a crowd-puller.



Airplant and bromeliad growers would have seen the *Vriesea* hybrids that were used in “Island Journeys”, a fantasy garden created by Kelvin Chua from New Zealand and the huge amount of Spanish moss in Netherlander Nico Wissing’s landscape garden work entitled “Touching the Tulip”.



Left: The landscape garden by Dimitri Xenakis and Maro Avrabou from France featured the lavender.



Right: Nico Wissing's landscape garden work employed a huge amount of Spanish moss.

The SGF Market Place

The Market Place at the SGF was probably one place that all gardening enthusiasts from GCS rushed towards first. Some of our members lamented about Tropiflora's absence in this year's Festival as well as the lack of stalls that sold other varieties of plants. Most of the plant stalls at the Festival sold orchids.



Left: Borneo Exotics – one of the haunts of GCS members at the SGF Market Place.

I saw many of our members going on a shopping spree, sweeping up plants that were put on sale by Purificacion Orchids from the Philippines, various Malaysian and Taiwanese orchid and plant nursery stalls and Borneo Exotics.

The SGF Thank You Party & GCS Members' Gathering

Right: GCS members posing for a photograph while enjoying a sumptuous dinner at the SGF Appreciation Party.



On the last day of the SGF, all of us were invited for a sumptuous dinner at the Appreciation Party that was organised by the National Parks Board (NParks) at the Hospitality Pavillion on Level 6. After the Appreciation Party, all of us headed back to Level 4 for a mini-gathering session that was held at the GCS booth. Teresa was the one who helped to organize it and members who came, brought along and shared snacks and homemade pastries. At 10 pm, the SGF officially ended and we were glad to have received help from members who stayed on to help to dismantle the exhibits in the booth.



Left: GCS members enjoying themselves at a mini-gathering held at the booth on the last day of the SGF.

A Big Thank You!

For the entire duration of the SGF, two GCS members, namely, Richmond and Teresa volunteered their time where they took turns to be at the GCS booth to talk to the people who visited our booth. Lily, Phillipe, Chong Ren, Eng Ong, Xuan Hong and Lynnette also came to lend a hand at the GCS booth on some of the days whenever they could squeeze some time from their busy schedules.

My special thanks go to Phillipe who came forward to help dress up the GCS booth at the SGF I am sure a lot of visitors were attracted and impressed by your creativity that was showcased over the entire Festival's duration.

It was a pleasant and memorable experience to have worked with the current team of members who volunteered their time at the GCS booth this SGF. This occasion enabled friendships to be forged between members who have very different gardening interests. We got to know each other better via the time we spent at the exhibition venue, as well as on the numerous occasions that we had late dinners after the SGF closed each day.

Acknowledgements

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Feedback for this Article

Please post your thoughts or feedback for this article via the following topic in the Green Culture Singapore discussion forum.

<http://www.greenculturesg.com/forum/index.php?showtopic=13648>

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