

NUS launches event to promote environmental sustainability



A National University of Singapore Environmental Research Institute team is presenting an approach to turn food waste into a soil supplement called NUSoil. ST PHOTO: JOSE HONG

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SINGAPORE - The National University of Singapore (NUS) took new steps in the name of being green on Tuesday (Aug 29).

It organised the first sustainABLE NUS Showcase, a two-day exhibition and carnival at NUS University Town.

With its 28 booths, the event aims to present the university's initiatives to transform itself into a greener campus - achieving sustainability in its operations, its research and education, its community engagement and through partnerships with outside organisations.

The event also tries to showcase how NUS' research and teaching tackle the sustainability challenges of today and the future.

For example, a booth showed off technology that would make solar power measurements at least 50 per cent more precise than what is currently available on the market.

Presented by Dr Martin Reed from the Solar Energy Research Institute of Singapore (Seris), it uses drones to scan buildings in Singapore and then recreates three-dimensional models of them. The technology then uses local weather data to calculate how much sunshine - and hence solar power - each specific surface of the building would get.

Dr Reed said that this would allow building owners to accurately know where to place what type of solar panels to maximise the solar power generated and the energy saved.

His team is already looking for clients to sell this service to. "I'm excited about the use of this technology as it is scalable to solve solar power problems at the national level, and I enjoy working hands on in the development and implementation of such solutions that will benefit Singapore," he said.

Another booth at the event showcased a NUS Environmental Research Institute team is presenting an approach to turn food waste into soil called NUsoil.

Visiting the Seris exhibitions was first-year mechanical engineering student Lee Dongyu. He said he came down because he was interested in the clean energy sector.

"I want to find out about the depth of research they're doing here in the field of solar energy research," said Mr Lee, 21.

He said he found the exhibits he visited quite good and interactive, and he appreciated the opportunities to find out more about the areas he is interested in outside of his curriculum.

NUS president, Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, said in his opening address that the sustainABLE NUS Showcase was one of the ways the institution could show support for the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint, which outlines the Republic's plans to become more liveable and sustainable.

Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Masagos Zulkifli was the guest of honour at the event.