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Singapore

## More urban farms, rooftop gardens in Singapore with enhanced greenery scheme



Urban farms and communal rooftop food gardens might soon be a more common sight in Singapore, with the enhancement of an urban greenery scheme.

SINGAPORE: Urban farms and communal rooftop food gardens might soon be a more common sight in Singapore, with the enhancement of an urban greenery scheme.

This was announced by Second Minister for National Development Desmond Lee on Thursday (Nov 9), at the opening of greenery and landscape design event GreenUrbanScape Asia.

The Landscaping for Urban Spaces and High-Rises (LUSH) programme, which aims to replace greenery lost during a building's development or redevelopment, will be enhanced to improve both the quality and quantity of urban greenery, Mr Lee said.

First introduced in 2009, the scheme uses incentives and requirements to encourage developers to green their buildings, such as with community pavilions and ground gardens. Developers who green their buildings under this scheme might be granted gross floor area exemptions and bonuses, which could free up more space for communal areas.

The expanded scheme will encourage new greening trends, such as the housing of urban gardens and communal rooftop gardens on buildings, and increase landscaping on walls and roofs - which can also help lower ambient temperature.



The Tree House condominium in Bukit Panjang has green walls that are designed to reduce ambient temperature. (Photo: Finbarr Fallon)

"Such features have been gaining popularity in our urban landscape, as many Singaporeans have a keen interest in farming and gardening," said Mr Lee, who is also the Minister for Social and Family Development.

The enhanced LUSH programme will encourage more people to take up urban farming and gardening near their offices and homes, while allowing developers to better utilise rooftop space, he added.

One developer making use of the scheme for its upcoming residential development said that greener projects tend to be more attractive for both residents buying property and tenants renting office spaces.

"Most people are drawn to greenery and nature," said Mr Cheng Hsing Yao, managing director of GuocoLand in Singapore. "By providing more of these landscape areas, we're bringing nature closer to people living in a very urbanised city."

"It's a point of distinction for Singapore. We already have strong greenery on the ground level but if we can take it to different levels like skyparks, it can be a very attractive differentiation," he added.

#### GREENERY DENSITY FRAMEWORK INTRODUCED

A framework to assess the volume of greenery will also be introduced under the LUSH scheme, with the green plot ratio standards to outline the density of greenery required in a development.

“In this way, developers will be encouraged to consider not just the amount of landscaped area provided in their projects, but also how lush the greenery will be,” Mr Lee said.

The announcement comes as Singapore ramps up efforts to inject more greenery in spaces across the island, with a target of 200 hectares of rooftop greenery by 2030 set out in the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint. Currently, there are about 100 hectares of skyrise greenery across the country, or the equivalent of more than 100 football fields.



The Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum has planter boxes integrated into its facade.  
(Photo: Finbarr Fallon)

#### ROOF GARDENS HOME TO “DIVERSE RANGE OF WILDLIFE”

Mr Lee also highlighted a new study, which found 53 bird species and 57 butterfly species on roof gardens across the island, representing 13 and 18 per cent of the total number of bird and butterfly species in Singapore.

Jointly conducted by the National Parks Board and National University of Singapore at 30 rooftop gardens over 20 months, the study also found 24 species of rare or uncommon birds and butterflies. Khoo Teck Puat hospital was found to have the highest number of species recorded, with 61 birds and 37 butterfly species.

“This joint study suggests that with careful design planning, urban roof gardens can play host to a diverse range of wildlife, and help complement the equally important work of natural habitat conservation and enhancement,” Mr Lee said.

At the event, 26 developments were also recognised for their efforts in greening landscapes, 14 of which received the Skyrise Greenery Awards.

Launched in 2008, the biannual awards aim to recognise excellence in landscape architecture in Singapore.

Source: CNA/cy