

# Green the colour of money where property is concerned?

**Rachel Au-Yong**  
Housing Correspondent

Live near a park or trees blooming with flowers? Your HDB flat might fetch up to 3 per cent more, a study has found.

Reviewing the resale prices of 15,962 HDB flats sold from April 2013 to April 2014, it found, on average, \$11,200 of a flat's price could be attributed to green spaces within 1.6km. This was after taking into account other aspects about the flat, including its size, proximity to good schools and age.

The study, released yesterday, did not cite any specific examples.

Mr Richard Belcher from the Future Cities Laboratory at Singapore-ETH Centre, and National University of Singapore biological scientist Ryan Chisholm estimated the presence of green spaces could account for \$179 million in value of all homes sold during that period.

This positive effect came almost entirely from managed vegetation such as public parks and trees surrounding the estate.

"These results vindicate Singapore's policy of providing extensive green spaces for residents' recreation, and could encourage the provision of more green spaces in tropical cities worldwide," said Assistant Professor Chisholm.

But the effect was varied for apartments near natural vegetation, such as forests, mangroves or marshes. Buyers seemed to value such properties only when there was relatively little managed vegetation nearby, the researchers said.

The lower value placed on the proximity of such "high conservation value forests" suggests the Garden City should educate citizens on the benefits of living close to natural ecosystems, said Mr Belcher. This includes lower surface and air temperatures, thanks to the forest's shade which, in turn, reduces the need for air-conditioning.

But property analysts downplay



A study has found that the presence of green spaces could have accounted for an estimated \$179 million in value of all homes sold during the period between April 2013 and April 2014. This positive effect came almost entirely from managed vegetation such as public parks and flowering trees surrounding the estate, the study's authors say. ST PHOTO: JAMIE KOH

the "green premium", saying that while it could add a little value, all things being equal, it would be so small as to be negligible.

Said ERA Realty key executive officer Eugene Lim: "The condition of

the flat is probably a more important factor. If parks and trees also enhance the living environment, then perhaps you can get a better price but it will not be significant."

International Property Advisor

chief executive Ku Swee Yong said a study tracking resale prices over several years would be more useful.

The researchers also recommended that new public towns be located away from areas identified

for conservation, and should continue to provide high quantities of managed vegetation.

HDB works with other agencies to integrate parks and waterways with the living environment, and

implements "greening solutions" such as on rooftops and vertical facades to reduce heat emissions from building surfaces.

rachelay@sph.com.sg