



Retiree Patrick Prakash (bottom, left) engaging in rock balancing therapy by stacking rocks at the newly opened therapeutic garden in Bedok Reservoir Park on Monday. The garden is the first to be built over a former sand quarry. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG

New therapeutic gardens open in Pasir Ris and Bedok Reservoir

Lok Bing Hong

The National Parks Board (NParks) opened two new therapeutic gardens in Pasir Ris Park and Bedok Reservoir Park on Monday.

The Pasir Ris Park site is the first such garden by the sea, offering visitors a view of some of the keelongs in the area.

Meanwhile, the Bedok Reservoir amenity is the first to be built over a former sand quarry and has novel elements such as an interactive rock feature, aimed at instilling mindfulness through rock bal-

ancing therapy.

Therapeutic gardens are designed to encourage visitors to interact with nature and thus improve their well-being. Colourful, aromatic herbs, as well as flowers and plants that attract fauna, are used to rouse the senses of visitors.

Standing planters and looped pathways make the gardens accessible to all, including wheelchair users and the elderly.

Ms Kalthom Latiff, parks director at NParks, said: "We want Singaporeans to feel that they are connected to nature, to have benefited from being immersed in nature in a way that contributes to

their health and well-being, such as helping them to destress.

"The gardens are very important as an avenue to help people with their mental resilience, especially during this pandemic."

NParks said four studies it had conducted with research partners found that urban nature contributes positively to the health and well-being of residents.

They are among the first few studies in the world to show the impact of gardening on mental resilience and the relative importance of different types of urban nature during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The research was done in collab-

oration with the department of psychological medicine at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS' Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, and the National University Health System's Mind Science Centre.

Retiree Patrick Prakash, 76, who visited the Bedok Reservoir therapeutic garden on Monday, was pleased with the new amenity, calling it "a fantastic idea".

The two new therapeutic gardens – the first in the east – bring the total number of therapeutic gardens in Singapore to nine.

The first therapeutic garden was set up in HortPark in 2016. Last year, Singapore's largest therapeutic garden opened at Jurong Lake Gardens.

NParks aims to have 30 therapeutic gardens by 2030 as part of Singapore's City in Nature vision.

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