

Nature encounters for kids



Learn about photosynthesis at Jacob Ballas Children's Garden

In celebration of Clean and Green month, Nithia Devan discovers family-friendly eco-educational activities, ideal for teaching kids how to respect the environment.

In a land-scarce country like Singapore, you might imagine interacting with nature in the raw is virtually impossible. But you'd be pleasantly surprised at the number of areas – ranging from unspoiled rainforests and green parks – where you can escape from the concrete cityscape.

Nature and the environment is the two-pronged focus of November's *Clean and Green* month. And what better way to start, than to educate children about the beauty and wonder of nature? Learn the importance of issues such as recycling and protecting the environment, while enjoying opportunities for communal eco-friendly activities and family bonding. Start planning your family's next eco-adventure and encourage your kids to "go green"!

Free talks & walks

Visit www.wildsingapore.com for details of free educational walks and information on Singapore's various mangrove swamps, coral reefs and nature reserves – including the wetlands of Sungei Buloh. You'll also find a comprehensive listing on children's activities in the Lion City and beyond.

Who was Jacob Ballas?

The son of poor immigrant Jews, who found their way to Singapore after World War I, Jacob Ballas was the first Asian to head the Stock Exchange of Singapore and Malaysia. His philanthropy is legendary and the Jacob Ballas Estate now continues his good work.

Clean and Green events

Don't miss these activities on November 18...

From 9:30am to 6pm, the **Jacob Ballas Children's Garden** hosts the *Children's Garden Carnival*.

Enjoy a day out with the family at this fundraising carnival, featuring a host of child-centric activities and games for the young and young-at-heart.

Tel: 6471 7138/6471 7361, www.sbg.org.sg.

From 8am to 11am **Republic Polytechnic** is hosting Singapore's first-ever *ECO-picnic*. Discover what you and your family can do to conserve the environment and find out why recycling is so important – and how to go about it. Picnic-goers are encouraged to go green by minimising the use of disposable items and using eco-friendly picnic utensils. The most eco-friendly picnic goers stand a chance of winning prizes worth \$500! *Admiralty Park (beside Republic Polytechnic, 9 Woodlands Avenue 9)*. Tel: 31001537, www.rp.sg/ecopicnic



Join the Sky High Club

For a sky high experience, don't miss the **aerial tree top walk** – a 250 metre-long suspension bridge which spans the secondary rainforest from Bukit Peirce to Bukit Kajang – the two highest points of MacRitchie Reservoir. And best of all, it's free! www.nparks.gov.sg

Singapore's Secret Garden

The Jacob Ballas Children's Garden opened in October and is a unique and interactive nature space at the *Singapore Botanic Gardens*. Enter *NUS Bukit Timah Campus* to discover this natural haven where children up to 12 years of age can learn more about the wonder of plants and how they support life on earth, captured in the theme for the garden – All Life On Earth Depends on Plants. This new addition to the *Botanic Gardens* features a host of fun activities. The *Fantastic Forest* is an adventure playground where kids learn about the tropical rainforest, there's a maze to navigate and a garden where children are introduced to plants providing coffee, tea and chocolate. Entry is free and

the garden also runs ongoing programmes and activities for schools at on-site learning centres. *Just before NUS Bukit Timah Campus, Kheam Hock Road, off Bukit Timah*. Tel: 6471 7138/6471 7361, www.sbg.org.sg. **F**

Monkey magic

For the more adventurous, have a go at being Tarzan and swing through the trees at **Forest Adventure**. Built by a leading French designer of tree-top courses, this aerial labyrinth of ladders, bridges, swings, nets, trapezes and slides is suspended amid the rainforest, five metres above the ground, at Bedok Reservoir Park. As safety is of paramount concern, participants must be at least 1.10 metres tall and are fully-equipped with harnesses and safety lines. Qualified instructors provide assistance and you're encouraged to use the trees for support. By touching and feeling the rainforest around you, you can fully immerse yourself in the surrounding nature to learn more about the rainforest close up.



The kids' course comprises of one 67-metre zip line and is divided into 16 stages. Children, as young as five years, can enjoy two loops of seven activities, from a central platform. Parents needn't worry, as each child is connected to a continuous safety line at the start of the course and is not disconnected until they've reached the end. **Forest Adventure** also hosts private events such as corporate get-togethers and kids' birthday parties – making a change from the usual birthday cake, party games and magic tricks at home! **825 Bedok Reservoir Road**. Tel: 8100 7420/21, www.forestadventure.com.sg, Email: info@forestadventure.com.sg. Tickets: **Grand Course: Adults \$25, 16-18 years \$20, kids (from five years of age) \$18.**

Do you have a Singapore Secret you'd like to share? Send details (700 words) plus images to mjones-white@acpmagazines.com.sg and you could be published in an upcoming issue of *The Finder!*