

Species of the Month 11/2017 || White Fig

28 December 2017 || TO NUS Community

NUS Students Against Violation of the Earth (SAVE) and the Office of Environmental Sustainability present "Campus in a Tropical Rainforest", an initiative that aims to create awareness of the biodiversity that surrounds us in NUS. In each monthly issue, we will be featuring a species that can be spotted or found in NUS to help us get to know them better. So, if you happen to be travelling around campus between classes, remember to stop and look around your surroundings, for you may be surprised to come across some of the other inhabitants of NUS.

NUS SAVE Presents: CAMPUS IN A TROPICAL RAINFOREST

Species of the Month Issue #23: December 2017



Photo by: Ng Shu Tian

White Fig

Species: *Ficus vasculosa* Wall. ex Miq.
Family: Moraceae

Appearance

- *Ficus vasculosa* is a small evergreen tree that can grow up to 45 m
- Its leaves, which are usually oval with short rounded tips, are spirally arranged and have distinct light coloured mid-veins. Mature phase leaves have entire leaf blades while juvenile phase leaves are lobed.

Habitat & Distribution

- Native to South Asia, Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore, Borneo, and Java, the white fig grows in primary and secondary forests
- In NUS, you can find a couple of white figs along Engineering Drive 1

Fun Facts

- In Singapore, it is a nationally endangered fig species - there are an estimated 50 - 250 mature individuals locally
- It is the only Singapore fig tree with stalked, smooth, drop-shaped, red figs
- Each species of fig has a corresponding specialized species of wasp that fertilizes it. For *Ficus vasculosa*, its fig wasp pollinator is *Dolichoris vasculosae*.
- Fruits are pear-shaped, apricot-yellow to deep rose-red when ripe and develop singly or in pairs on bare portions of leafy twigs
- In Xishuangbanna, Southwest China, the young leaves of the white fig are boiled in soups and eaten - the leaves give a chicken soup-like taste, hence its name "Pak de gai" in the local Dai language

Initiative by:



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Check out other sightings of NUS biodiversity on the Campus Creatures Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/campuscreatures/>

You can also join the community in spotting the flora and fauna in NUS by sharing your sightings with pictures on the Campus Creatures Facebook page and Instagram the photos with #NUSCiTR and #NUSbiodiversity.