

Species of the Month 02/2018 || Senduduk

26 February 2018 || 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

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Photo by: Cherry Goh

Senduduk

Species: *Melastoma malabathricum*

Family: Melastomaceae

Appearance

- Senduduk is commonly seen as a shrub around 1-3m tall, though it can grow into a small tree if left alone
- Its leaves are narrow and pointy at both ends with 3-5 distinct longitudinal veins
- Its stem has red colouration and is lined with rough scales
- Its flowers are bright purplish-pink, usually observed to be growing at the end of branches
- Its fruits are globular and split open rather irregularly when ripened, exposing the interior's dark blue pulp and orange seeds

Habitat and Distribution

- This plant is native to the Southern Pacific region, China, Taiwan, South Asia, and Southeast Asia including Singapore
- It can grow up to an altitude of 3,000 m in open sites and lowlands
- Senduduk is planted around NUS and can also be found in the forested area along Kent Ridge Road

Fun Facts

- The bright flowers of this plant only bloom for one day, starting from around 8am and closing up by late afternoon; the petals fall off a few days later
- This plant has a wide range of medicinal uses. Its bark is used to treat dysentery, indigestion, stomach pains and insect stings, its leaves used to be applied to wounds and bruises to reduce swelling, and its roots are ground up and used as mouthwash to treat toothaches
- Though tasteless, the pulp of this plant's fruits will stain one's tongue blue-black if consumed

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.