

# Species of the Month 09/2018 || Seashore Spider Lily

28 September 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: Spencer Yau

### Seashore Spider Lily

Species: *Crinum asiaticum*  
Family: Amaryllidaceae



#### Appearance

- Rather than having a central stalk, the Seashore Spider Lily possesses a rosette of long leaves that spawns from an underground bulb. The 'stem' is actually stacked layers of leaves, with the youngest above and the oldest below.
- Undoubtedly the most prominent feature of this plant, the flowers grow in groups from a narrow stalk and bloom at different times. The thin, white petals hanging down resembles a spider, hence giving this spectacular plant its name.
- At night, the flowers become fragrant and they look almost supernatural like in the photo.



#### Habitat

- It's very widely distributed from Southern China and Southeast Asia, to Australia and the Southwest Pacific islands. However, it has been introduced in Florida and Madagascar.
- Unless it's in frigid temperatures, the Seashore Spider Lily is very robust and can be found in a wide array of tropical habitats such as riverbanks, urban gardens, freshwater swamps, coastal forests, sandy shores and even mangroves!
- Its exquisite appearance and adaptability in warm climates makes it a very popular ornamental plants.
- In Singapore, wild specimens are rare but ornamental plants are abundant. In NUS, they can be found near the bus stop at UTown, opposite UHC and many more places.



#### Fun Facts

- The Seashore Spider Lily is poisonous to eat directly and the sap can cause skin irritation as the entire plant contains alkaloids. Yet, it has antitumor and antibacterial properties that could be medically useful!
- The leaves has been used in a poultice by Malays to treat headaches, sprains, fevers, closed fractures, swelling and contusions. Mixed with honey, it can be applied to abscesses and open injuries.
- Known to accumulate selenium, it could potentially serve as a filter for polluted substrates.

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.