



## P R E S S   I N F O R M A T I O N

### **100 trees for 100 students – Singaporean companies and institutions give out ‘Made-in-Singapore’ trees to schools**

**Under the theme “Together We Grow”, a group of five companies and institutions is giving out 100 special ‘Made-in-Singapore’ trees to various national and international schools from all over Singapore. In line with an educational objective, the event will take place in the afternoon of May 18<sup>th</sup>, at Republic Polytechnic (RP). This event is jointly organized by Merck Pte Ltd, Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory (TLL), Bioforest Pte Ltd, Singapore Environment Council (SEC), and RP. The organizers expect more than 150 participants from 30 schools.**

From lab to land – these 100 multi-purpose forest tree seedlings of the species ‘White teak’ (*Gmelina arborea*) are provided in concordance with United Nation’s 2011 theme: International Year of Forests. The interesting fact about these trees is that they are created in Singapore, using proprietary technology developed by TLL and hence, the trees are named “Made-in-Singapore”. Bioforest Pte. Ltd., a pin-off company of TLL has provided tissue cultured seedlings of these trees to its partners in various regional countries like Laos PDR and Indonesia. These fast growing tropical trees are tolerant to hot and dry climate and can grow in wastelands which make them a good candidate for reforestation and for sustainable timber plantation. For the schools, these trees will have a triple-functions: In addition to absorbing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and providing shade and beautifying the environment, the ‘Made-in-Singapore’ trees also serve as a distinctive educational



## P R E S S   I N F O R M A T I O N

tool by putting science and environmental protection closer together than any other tool. The unique developmental history of the trees will provide an extra sense of belonging and motivation to the students to take care of the trees. That's where the theme 'Together We Grow' is getting its meaning from.

For the organizers, the word 'together' has an additional meaning. This campaign marks the first time that these 5 organizations are working together. Initiated by Merck through the event-series Merck CO2 Challenge, this event represents a unique confluence of various sectors- industry, social, education and R&D. Republic Polytechnic's School of Applied Sciences through many such avenues is constantly engaging secondary school students in scientific endeavors. The SEC has a strong pool of volunteers who translate awareness into action. "Together We Grow" brings together progresses in research and development with environmental awareness, to benefit students in Singapore and to help make a lasting impact on the future of Singapore.

For many schools the distribution of the trees also fulfils another purpose. As part of a global campaign to plant a billion trees the students will be planting a tree in their schools on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, which is designated as the International Day for Biological Diversity, and thus creating a figurative 'Green Wave' across the planet.

## P R E S S   I N F O R M A T I O N

### **About The ‘Made-in-Singapore’ trees at Bioforest**

‘White Teak’ is a multi-purpose tree whose wood is used for furniture, construction, sports equipment, musical instruments, artificial limbs and paper-making. Leaves being high in protein are used as cattle feed as well as for eri-silkworm to produce silk. Flowers, fruits, root and bark are used in the treatment of leprosy, blood diseases, abdominal ailments, and in the improvement of brain function, hair growth and lactation (according to traditional Indian medicine ‘Ayurveda’). Using a unique tissue culture technique and proprietary master-mix formulation, different ‘Super Trees’ are cloned and regenerated under controlled aseptic conditions in the laboratory. The highly efficient protocols are capable of producing 1 million plants from a single plant within a year, thus creating a forest in the laboratory. DNA profile is created for each tree to serve as a quality control as well as to give a unique identity to each tree. TLL has used this technology for the preservation of bio-diversity, and the propagation of endangered species and heritage trees of Singapore. More information at: [www.bio-forest.com](http://www.bio-forest.com).

### **About the Green Wave**

*The Green Wave* is a global biodiversity campaign to educate children and youth about biodiversity. Each year, *The Green Wave* will contribute to worldwide celebrations of the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB). It also supports other national, international and global tree planting initiatives such as the UNEP-led Billion Tree Campaign. More information at: <http://greenwave.cbd.int/en/home>



## P R E S S   I N F O R M A T I O N

### **About Merck**

Merck is a global pharmaceutical and chemical company with total revenues of € 9.3 billion in 2010, a history that began in 1668, and a future shaped by approximately 40,000 employees in 67 countries. Merck Pte Ltd Singapore was established 1995. More than 200 employees are handling sales, marketing, relationship management and logistics for the Singaporean customers of the four departments: Merck Millipore, Performance Materials, Merck Serono, and Consumer Healthcare. More information under [www.merck.com.sg](http://www.merck.com.sg).

### **About Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory**

Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory (TLL) is a beneficiary of the Temasek Trust and was established in 2002 to undertake cutting-edge research in molecular biology and genetics utilizing a broad range of model organisms. Our vision is to create an environment which can attract the brightest young minds worldwide, support their research and challenge them to be leaders in their own fields. Since our inception, we have extensive collaboration with local and international institutions. TLL is affiliated to the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and is located within the campus of NUS, alongside other research institutes and academic departments of the university. More information at [www.tll.org.sg](http://www.tll.org.sg).

### **About Singapore Environment Council**

Established in 1995, the Singapore Environment Council (SEC) is an independently managed, non-profit, non-government organization, and



## P R E S S   I N F O R M A T I O N

institution of public character that nurtures, facilitates and co-ordinates environmental causes in Singapore. Some of SEC's more prominent programmes include the Singapore Environmental Achievement Awards, Climate Change Awareness Programme, Project Eco-Office, Schools' Green Audit Awards and Green Transport Week. In addition, SEC also boasts a strong pool of volunteers who translate awareness into action. More information at [www.sec.org.sg](http://www.sec.org.sg)

### **About Republic Polytechnic**

The Republic Polytechnic was set up on 1 August 2002 through the passage of The Republic Polytechnic Act 2002 by Parliament. The Polytechnic received its first intake of over 800 students in July 2003 at its Tanglin Campus. It has moved to its permanent campus in Woodlands since March 2006 and supports 13,000 students.

The first educational institution in Singapore to adopt the Problem-Based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic (RP) has six schools and one centre offering thirty-four courses in Information and Communications Technology, Engineering, Applied Science, Technology for the Arts, Sports, Health & Leisure, Events and Hospitality, and Culture and Communication.

Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving process skills and a life-long learning attitude.



## P R E S S   I N F O R M A T I O N

Its holistic, broad-based curriculum, covering culture, enterprise development and cognitive processes, prepares students for an active and meaningful role in society. Republic Polytechnic strives for excellence by achieving various international and national accreditations, including ISO9001, ISO14001, OHSAS 18001, Singapore Quality Class STAR, People Developer, Singapore Innovation Class and Singapore Service Class. More information can be found at [www.rp.sg](http://www.rp.sg).