

Garden Visit

Gardens by the Bay: A Tropical Dream in the Heart of Singapore

By Tomás Escribano

In February 2025, I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting one of Singapore's most iconic destinations: Gardens by the Bay. Tucked right next to Marina Bay, this futuristic nature park is a blend of cutting-edge architecture, horticultural artistry, and environmental innovation. But what truly stole my heart were its two botanical jewels: the Cloud Forest and the Flower Dome.

Let's start with the Cloud Forest. The moment I walked in, I was greeted by a cool mist and the thunderous sound of the world's tallest indoor waterfall. Towering at 35 meters, this waterfall is not just a spectacle—it's also part of the building's climate control system—helping regulate humidity and temperature. That's right, beauty and brains!

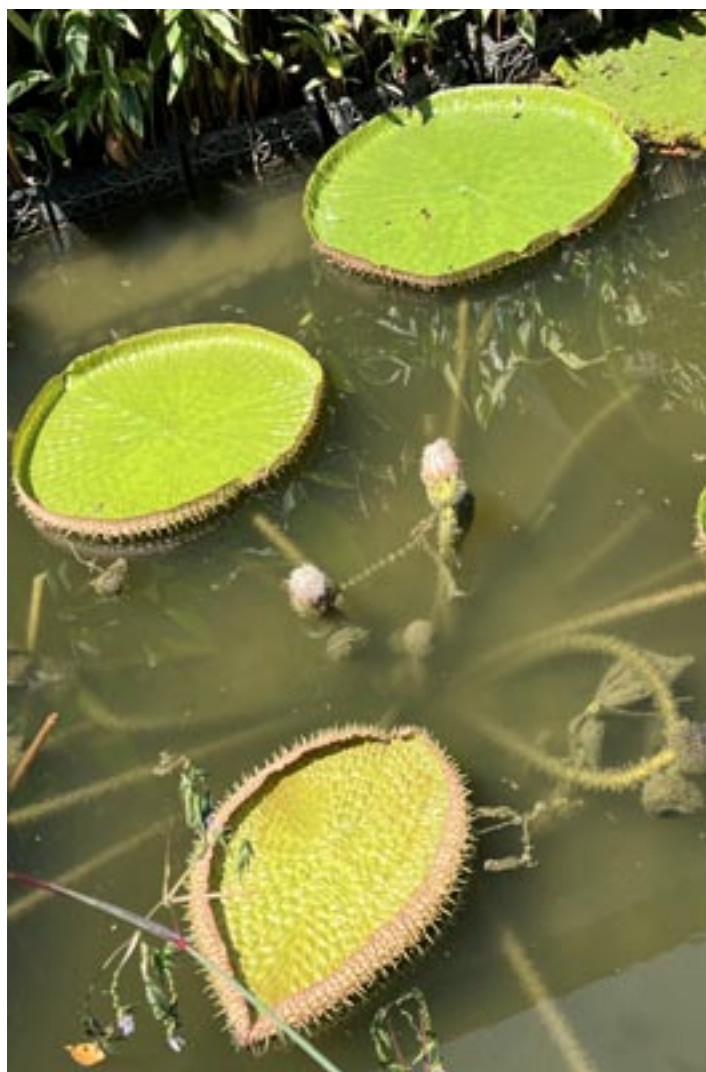


As I climbed the spiral walkway that winds around the “Cloud Mountain,” I felt like I was ascending through a living rainforest. The lush vegetation changes with altitude, mimicking tropical highland habitats from 1,000 to 3,000 meters above sea level. Among the ferns, orchids, and carnivorous pitcher plants, I found myself pausing often to marvel at the biodiversity and the care taken in recreating these unique ecosystems. I enjoyed watching some gardeners at work grooming those tall structures—seemingly without any fear of heights!

An unexpected highlight was the Secret Garden at the foot of the mountain—a cool and peaceful corner showcasing primitive plants like club mosses and cycads. It felt like stepping back in time to the age of the dinosaurs.

The Cloud Forest is not only stunning, it's also a hub of education. Interactive displays explain the importance of cloud forests in regulating Earth's climate and highlight the urgent need for conservation. This was a gentle, yet powerful, reminder of the fragility of our planet.





Next up was the Flower Dome—the world’s largest glass greenhouse, according to the Guinness World Records. Unlike the Cloud Forest’s misty embrace, the Flower Dome welcomes visitors with warm, dry air and a kaleidoscope of colors. Here, the climate is modeled after the Mediterranean and semi-arid regions of the world.

Each section of the Flower Dome is dedicated to a different part of the globe: South Africa, USA/California, Australia, and, of course, the Mediterranean basin. From ancient olive trees to towering baobabs and cheerful daisies, the variety of flora was simply breathtaking. During my visit, the seasonal floral display was themed around Lunar New Year, with vibrant red and gold blooms symbolizing prosperity and good fortune.

For lovers of aquatic plants (like myself!), Gardens by the Bay doesn’t disappoint. Outside the cooled conservatories, the Dragonfly, Kingfisher, and Symphony Lakes are teeming with life.

With tropical weather all year long, you’ll find majestic tropical waterlilies surrounding the Shaw Foundation Symphony Stage at Singapore Botanic Gardens, with elegant lotuses, big *Victoria amazonica*, and other aquatic flora dancing on the water’s surface.

These lakes aren’t just for show—they play a vital role in the park’s eco-engineering efforts, helping to filter and clean water naturally while providing habitat for wildlife. The Symphony Lake creates a tranquil setting for open-air concerts and blends harmoniously with lush greenery.

One of the things that impressed me most about Gardens by the Bay was its commitment to sustainability. The entire complex is a marvel of green technology. The Supertrees, those iconic vertical gardens, are equipped with solar panels and serve as exhaust systems for the conservatories. Meanwhile, the cooled conservatories themselves use an innovative energy-efficient system, drawing on biomass from horticultural waste to generate energy.

Gardens by the Bay is a place where nature meets innovation—a reminder that with a little creativity and a lot of care, we can build a sustainable future. My visit left me not only with beautiful photos and cherished memories, but also with a renewed sense of awe for our planet and a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving its botanical wonders.

Whether you’re a seasoned plant lover or just someone in search of a little beauty and inspiration, Gardens by the Bay is a must-visit. And, if you ever find yourself wandering between misty ferns or marvelling at thousand-year-old trees under a glass dome, take a moment to appreciate the harmony between nature, design, and sustainability. It’s truly one of Singapore’s greenest treasures.

For more information about visiting Gardens by the Bay, go to: <https://www.gardensbythebay.com.sg/>.

About the Author

Tomás Escribano was born and raised in Barcelona, Spain. At the age of 16 he moved to Madrid, where he lives now. He has always been passionate about nature. Not finishing his biology degree hasn’t kept him from learning about all kinds of plants. His former occupation as a flight attendant gave Tomás the opportunity to travel around the world and meet great friends in the waterlily industry. For the last 10 years he has been a volunteer at Caracas, Cali, Cuba, Bogotá and Madrid’s Botanical Garden and he has a big waterlily collection in his private garden and also displayed at Desert City (Madrid). He is on the IWGS Board and is one of the contributors to the IWGS database. On Instagram, he is @Tomyescribano.

