

NIE to Undertake Research and Development Project on Anthuriums

On 22 July 1991, NIE signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Jurong Bird Park and Ngee Ann Polytechnic to undertake a joint research and development project on Anthuriums. The scope of the project will include introducing different varieties of Anthuriums from overseas, testing them in Singapore to select those that can adapt to our climatic conditions and investigating effective methods of cloning and cultivating these varieties.

The need for this project was spelt out by Professor Gloria Lim, the Director of NIE, in her speech during the signing ceremony, "There is a growing international market for Anthuriums. In 1986, Anthurium cut-flowers worth about \$20.3 million were traded at the Dutch Auction markets. In Hawaii, which is one of the major producers of Anthurium, flowers worth about \$21.5 million were produced in 1986. With the proposed establishment of the International Floriculture Centre in Singapore in 1993, Anthuriums will certainly complement tropical orchids in supporting the activities of this Centre. If the growing of Anthuriums on a commercial scale can be further encouraged in Singapore through the development of more effective propagation and growing methods, then we may be able to capture



Prof Lim, Dr Kwa und Mr Tan signing the memoraridum of understanding

part of the international market for Anthuriums."

Prof Lim further added that the implementation of this joint project on Anthuriums is a timely one as it complements the effort put in by the Primary Production Department in promoting floriculture industries in Singapore. It also reflects the intention in the Biological Sciences at NIE

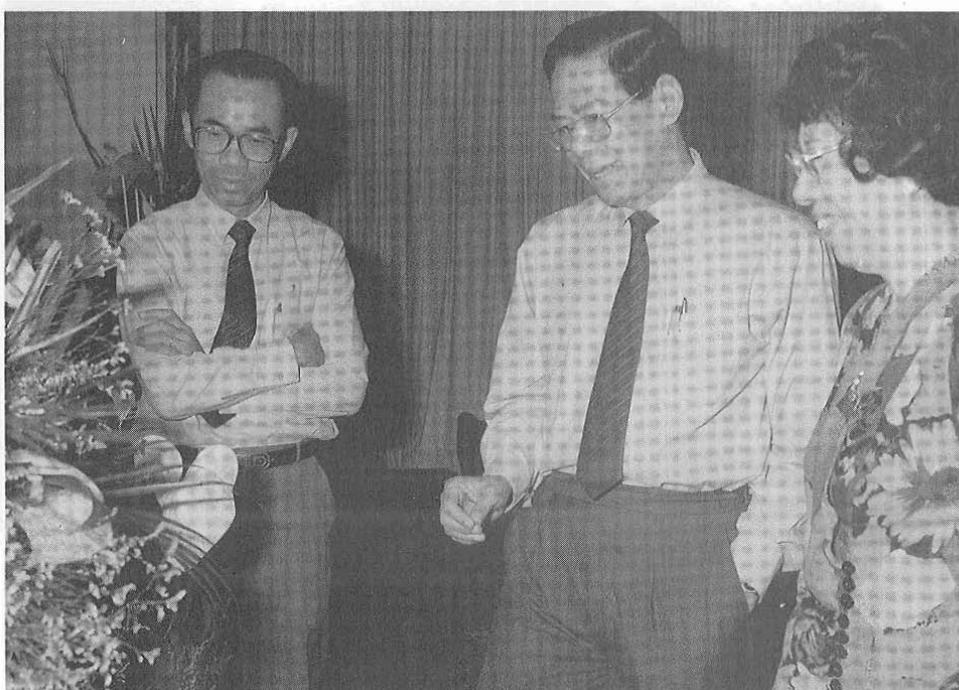
to focus on research in Agrotechnology.

How then is the Jurong Bird Park, which excels in Bird exhibits, involved in a project related to plants? Dr S. B. Kwa the Chairman and Managing Director explained that it is his vision to create a park-like environment which is filled with lush tropical greenery and unique tropical flowering plants. He further added: "Anthuriums are unique to Singapore and if the whole Park is filled with masses of these plants, it will be a landscape which few visitors can forget."

Much of the research work will be done using facilities at the Biotechnology Laboratories at the Ngee Ann Polytechnic. Mr. Tan Gee Paw, Principal of Ngee Ann Polytechnic said that the Polytechnic is willing to share their facilities to undertake such collaborative projects.

The joint project will take 3 years to complete. It will be undertaken by a Project Team comprising members from the three respective organisations and led by Dr Lee Sing Kong from the School of Science, NIE.

Professor Lim concluded on a high note that this is just a start of our research in Agrotechnology. NIE, as part of NTU, will collaborate with other parties in the agricultural/floricultural industries or similar projects in future.



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