

Letters to David: Right at Home

Dear David,

Thank you for asking me along on the fauna survey last week. I learnt many things!

The most amazing thing happened this week! I noticed a Yellow-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus goiavier*) "hanging out" at my balcony for a while now and yesterday, I discovered that it and its partner had built a nest in one of my houseplants! I did some reading and found out that the local Bulbuls have become so used to humans that they sometimes build their nests in heavily populated areas, including the balconies of flats! I remember you telling me during the survey that the Yellow-vented Bulbul is fond of fruits and berries but also eats nectar and insects so I have been leaving out small bits of fruit for it.

I did a sketch of them. I can't wait to see the baby birds when they hatch!

Your friend,
Keng

Colour me!



Dear Keng,

Congratulations, Granddad Bulbul! It was a pleasure having you on the fauna survey.

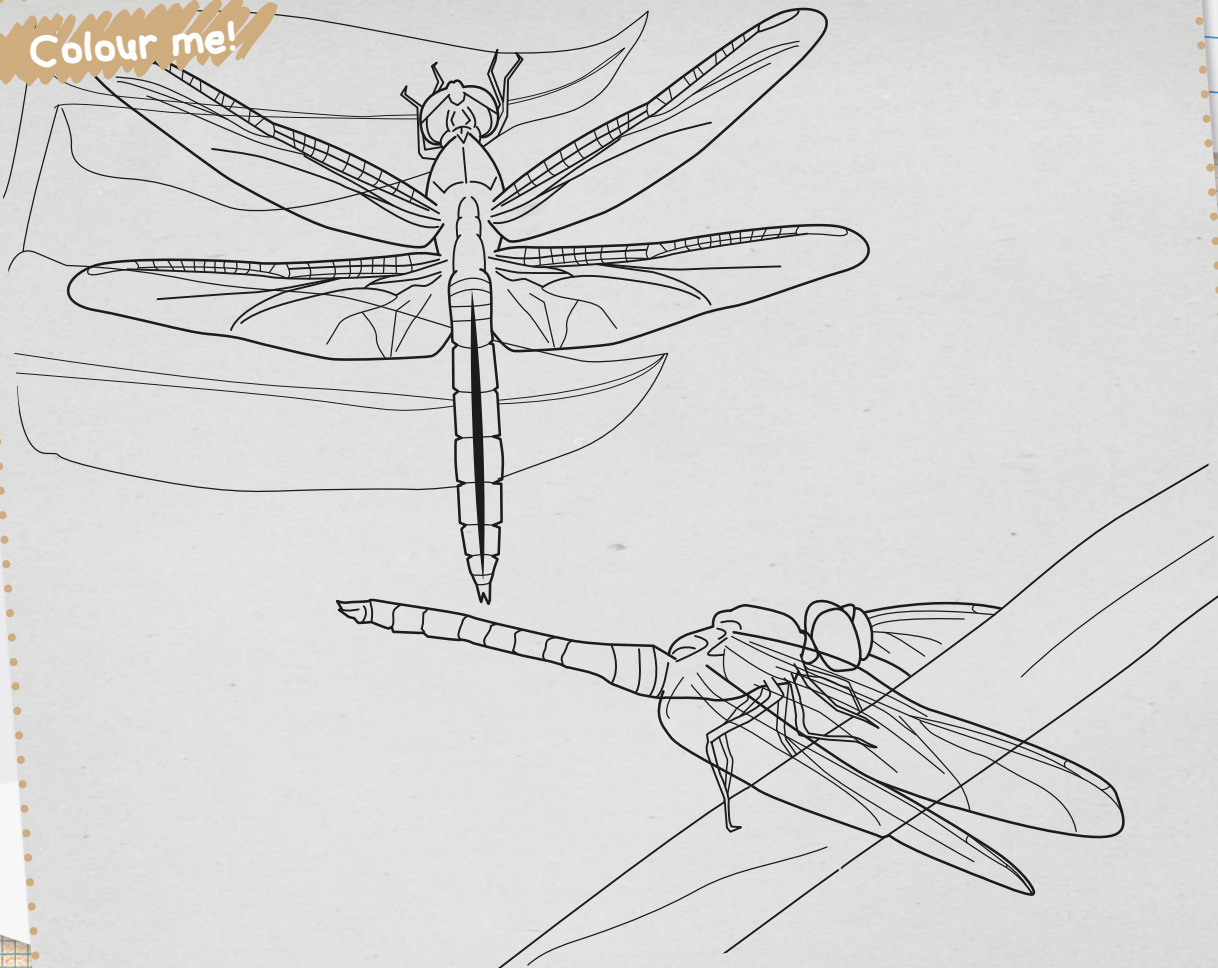
You asked me about the **Common Scarlet** (*Crocothemis servilia*) that day and I told you how the Gardens by the Bay logo was inspired by this dragonfly. Native to Southeast Asia, the Common Scarlet is often spotted around the Dragonfly Lake, especially around the area of the Dragonfly Bridge. Did you know that despite its name, only the male Common Scarlet is red? The female is actually bright yellow!

We weren't able to see the dragonfly up close that day, so I am sending you a drawing of it.

We're having another survey next month. Join us if you can!

Warmest regards,
David

Colour me!



Dear David,

How have you been? Was just at the Gardens last week but I didn't manage to catch you. Hope you are well.

The Outdoor Gardens are really coming along very nicely! I am so glad to see that your Orchids are doing well! We've been trying to re-introduce more native Orchids to our surroundings by planting them at suitable locations, such as our roadside trees, in parks and nature areas.

One of them is the Tiger Orchid (*Grammatophyllum speciosum*) and it is the largest orchid in the world. A single plant can weigh up to 1 tonne! They don't often bloom but when they do, the flowering stems can grow up to 2.5 metres long! So, I was quite excited when I saw them at your Supertree Grove and other parts of the Outdoor Gardens! I even made a sketch of it here.

I would love to get regular updates from you about the progress of the Gardens!

Your friend,
Tim

Colour me!



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Dear Tim,

I have been busy but well. Yes, our Tiger Orchids are doing well! We've even had a flowering recently!

Our Tiger Orchids are not the only large epiphytes that are flourishing here. You should take a look at our **Staghorn Ferns** (*Platycerium* sp.)! We have at least three species growing at our Supertree Grove alone. Named for their elk horn-shaped leaves, I like how this fern has 2 different types of leaves (or fronds); one for trapping nutrients and the other for carrying the spores that allow the fern to reproduce.

Here's a sketch too.

Epiphytes are so fascinating, don't you agree? They grow on other plants and get their moisture and nutrients from the air around them but not from the plants on which they grow ... how clever!

We really should meet up soon and trade notes! How about next Tuesday? Till then, take care!

Warm regards,
David

Colour me!

