

Gardening (solution)

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Solvers should first solve the given clues, ignoring the ? ones, and find that the answers are alphabetically arranged in their given order. The number of non-? clues (35) matches the number of black nodes in the first tree diagram, while the number of ? clues (10) matches the number of green nodes, indicating that the clue answers should each map onto a node in the first tree diagram.

The clue for EDIT, as well as the fact that some of the answers are very similar to each other (e.g. SPRING/SPRANG, BANDIT/CREDIT, and PULAU/LUAU), are nudges towards the fact that the 45 clue answers should be mapped onto to nodes based on how they can be transformed to/from words at adjacent nodes. Moving from the left to the right in the tree diagram, a red triangle along a branch means that a letter is added or deleted, while a blue circle means that a letter is substituted with another letter. These transformations, along with the alphabetical ordering of the 45 clue answers, should help solvers figure out the 10 words that belong to the green nodes, all of which are actually common or colloquial names of plants that are native to Singapore.

No.	Clue	Answer
1	? (2 wds or hyph.)	API-API
2	Place to keep a certain type of flying animal (6)	APIARY
3	Place to keep a certain type of flying animal (6)	AVIARY
4	Outlaw (6)	BANDIT
5	Truthful and straightforward (6)	CANDID
6	Branching diagram showing relations between groups of organisms (9)	CLADOGRAM
7	Bivalve (4)	CLAM
8	Small group of trees growing closely together (5)	CLUMP
9	?	COCONUT
10	Petal-like structure found in some flowers, like the daffodil (6)	CORONA
11	Ornamental wreath worn around the head that is sometimes made of flowers (7)	CORONET
12	Acknowledge one's contributions (6)	CREDIT
13	__ distance (4)	EDIT
14	Son of Chaos (6)	EREBUS
15	Jelly-like food ingredient (7)	GELATIN
16	?	JELUTONG
17	Japanese writing system (5)	KANJI
18	?	KRANJI
19	Beach feast (4)	LUAU
20	Recollection of the Buddha (8)	NEMBUTSU
21	Type of cloud (6)	NIMBUS
22	Something you might do to a flower bud (3)	NIP
23	?	NIPA

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24	Botanically, acorns are examples of these (but not almonds) (4)	NUTS
25	Word that can follow lily or mouse (3)	PAD
26	Black-and-white animal (5)	PANDA
27	?	PANDAN
28	Black-and-white instrument (5)	PIANO
29	Word that can follow game or floor (4)	PLAN
30	Tree, e.g. (5)	PLANT
31	?	PULAI
32	Word in many Singaporean island names (5)	PULAU
33	Quantity of paper (4)	REAM
34	Mee ____ (5)	REBUS
35	?	RESAM
36	Wander (4)	ROAM
37	Origin (4)	ROOT
38	Greeting, in the military (8)	SALUTING
39	Calming (8)	SEDATING
40	Provincial capital on the island of Java (8)	SEMARANG
41	?	SEMBAWANG
42	Jumped up suddenly (6)	SPRANG
43	When many flowers bloom (6)	SPRING
44	?	TEMBUSU
45	Endpoint (3)	TIP

Solvers may have noticed that some of the red triangles and blue circles are numbered. With the first tree diagram filled in, these numbered symbols should be taken to represent certain transformations: numbered red triangles represent the letter that is added or deleted moving from left to right across the branch, while blue circles represent the letter that substitutes the old letter. In order from 1 to 8, these spell out the clue phrase USE APG IV, which provides an additional hint (on top of the clue for CLADOGRAM) for how the second tree diagram is used.

In this last step, solvers should arrange the 10 native plants based on their evolutionary similarity according to the APG IV system. It should be noted that some pairs of plants, like COCONUT and NIPA, cannot be uniquely assigned to a node without further disambiguation (e.g. “alphabetically earlier”), because they are the closest evolutionary relatives to each other compared with the other 8 plants. Using the numbers in parentheses to index into the plant names, and the numbers in green circles to order the extracted letters, solvers should get the answer, **ASIAN GRASS**.

