**Mangroves – more than mud and mozzies**

Only about 5 per cent of mangrove swamps are left in Singapore, but this muddy land where salt water meets fresh is safe haven for a wealth of plants and animals, as highlighted in a new book here.

At first sight, the yellow-olive mudflats (Rhizophora apiculata) seem to be mistaken for the young of giant mudskippers. In its natural home comes the skittering motion it takes on the shore, as it takes to fly, hopping about before disappearing into the mud. The mudskippers’ remittances to their eggs with the help of the tides to compensate for their lack of a neck.

As fewer than 50 of these trees known in the wild, two of the Borneo Batae Blazers (Aegiceras corniculatum) were found standing by a local botanist just five years ago in Pulau Ubin, but only one is left. The other may have washed away by strong waves.

**Mangrove’s many uses**

**Sweet offerings**

The Neph Thong (crown) is the only mangrove palms in Singapore. The adobe如同 commonly from Thailand and Indonesia, make up 80 per cent of the mangrove flora in Singapore. Large apices reach huge heights, offering a cool shade to passers-by.

**Water purifier**

The Americium (cabinet) found in mangrove are able to absorb the water that they come in contact with salt crystals on their leaf surfaces that fall off in the town. Scientists hope the help from these deeper bags to be more effective.

**A sturdy presence**

An extremely sturdy wood, teak true timber, is one of the few solid trees in Singapore. It is valued for its durability, beauty and resistance to insect pests. Its rough texture makes it a good substrate for coral reefs and other marine life.

**Cluttering**

There are some species of mangrove tree that can grow up to 100 feet tall and have a diameter of up to 10 feet. These trees are known as coral trees and can be found in areas with high salinity levels.

**Sea food**

The Aden and Crass (nose), the main food source in Singapore, are found in the mangrove forests. They are rich in protein and minerals and can be used as food for humans and animals.

**Good news, bad news, ugly truth**

One of the challenges faced by the government is the erosion of coastal mangroves. The National University of Singapore (NUS) has been working on developing strategies to protect these vital ecosystems. The threat of rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather conditions is forcing scientists and policymakers to find solutions.

The good news is that despite the grave threat to mangroves, a large number of new discoveries have been made, including the cultivation of new species to boost the ecosystem.

The bad news is that the survival of mangroves is threatened by climate change and human activities. The government and international organizations are taking steps to protect these valuable ecosystems, but more needs to be done to ensure their survival.