

More going green; hygiene still lax: Poll

LAST year, more Singaporeans adopted energy-saving habits, but hygiene standards in public spaces remained lax, a survey by the National Environment Agency (NEA) revealed.

Of the 1,546 respondents surveyed, 87.2 per cent said they would adopt more environmentally friendly practices, up from 85.5 per cent in the 2007 survey.

The survey, which tracks consumers' knowledge of environmental issues, registered a particularly sharp rise – 8.5 per cent – in people adopting energy-saving habits at home. For example, more than three in four respondents said they have switched to energy-efficient refrigerators and air-conditioners.

The awareness of breeding spots for dengue-carrying mosquitos also increased.

Said NEA chief executive Andrew Tan of the findings: "The overall survey results do show more awareness of the environment and how that translates into practice."

But hygiene standards in public toilets and littering were still a problem, he added.

The NEA is conducting a study to investigate the behaviour of litterbugs, which it will use to develop more targeted programmes in housing estates and some public areas, said its spokesman.

"There are still areas of high human traffic where littering remains a concern."

Mr Jack Sim, founder of the World Toilet Organisation, noted that the perennial problem of dirty toilets at hawkercentres continues to go against Singapore's push to be a liveable and sustainable city.

The survey results precede the start of the Clean and Green Campaign later this month, which will trace Singapore's environmental development over the last four decades.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will launch the campaign on Oct 30 at HortPark.

The NEA will also partner the National Parks Board, the 2010 Youth Olympic Games organising committee, and the five community development councils to organise activities related to the campaign.

AMRESH GUNASINGHAM