A nature’s paradise: Seethawaka Wet Zone Botanical Gardens

Posted on



Visitors can enjoy boat rides while immersing in the beauty of the tranquil environment.

In the close vicinity of the island’s commercial capital, Colombo, is a nature reserve: Seethawaka Wet Zone Botanical Gardens. Lush and green, the Gardens are a treasure trove of nature’s beautiful delights.

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Photographs Menaka Aravinda.

The 50-kilometer drive from Colombo towards Avissawella to reach the Seethawaka Botanical Gardens is not without merits. The scenery changes fast from the network of roads and high-rise buildings, as the roadway morphs into shades of green with small stalls dotting the view. The fresh air will complement your experience if you choose to stop by and have a cup of tangy tea.

Leaving Colombo behind, we arrived at the alluring Seethawaka Botanical Gardens in the late morning, the climate pleasant enough for a lovely stroll.

A vast lake, the centerpiece of the Garden, welcomed us. The blue-grey sky was reflected in the clear waters, its stillness rippling out in small waves as fish darted close to the surface. Watching fish, small and large, coursing through the lake was therapeutic, but the greens were beckoning; we set off on the paved path.

Once a tea plantation and a rubber plantation side by side, the Seethawaka Wet Zone Botanical Gardens was recently developed and opened to the public as a reserve of rare and endemic flora. The garden comprises a fernery, an arboretum, a herbal garden and a rose plot at the summit. We strolled around the lake, the tea estate on our left and vibrant tropical blooms flanking the bank on our right. The path led us past the fernery, towards the Japanese-style Garden, which was immaculately maintained. Hedges of neatly trimmed bushes and plots of miniature flowers accompanied us over a wooden bridge, which offered an expansive view of the Gardens. Tall Kumbuk trees (Terminalia arjuna) rose above our line of sight, their amber yellow barks, a beautiful contrast to the green foliage. Swan-shaped pedal boats glided smoothly on the water, the only movement in an otherwise quiet moment.

We made our way towards the Summit Garden a little out of breath. The climb was not challenging, but it masked the steep elevation of the land. We lingered at the Herbal Garden, which was home to many herbal plants and headed towards the roses, the highlight of the Summit Garden. Roses of every color imaginable gently swayed in the breeze, from the red velvets to hybrid varieties with creamy chocolate-colored petals. The well-maintained rose garden is said to have more than 75 varieties of hues.

The View-Point affords the most beautiful panorama of the Seethawaka Wet Zone Botanical Gardens. We made our way there with monkeys loping gracefully on

nearby branches, watching us.

The scenery was a picture out of a postcard. Green hills touched a blue sky in the distance, and the canopy of trees allowed glimpses of the grassy land. The lake reflected the swarming clouds, as they clustered together: a premonition of a heavy downpour. The world was hushed. It was as if we were many miles away from the hustle of Colombo, not within its easy reach. As rainy droplets rippled the lake surface, we let our eyes absorb the beauty and serenity of a haven close to home.







