

Feelings about forests: Flourishing or frightening?

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Living near, recreating in, and feeling psychologically connected to nature are all associated with better overall mental health but for planning purposes it is also important to understand how people feel about different types of urban environments. We examined which types of green space elicit positive (Eudemonic) or negative (Apprehensive) affective responses. 288 adult residents of Singapore completed a survey that asked them to report affective states in response to images of 10 locally different environment types and to complete measures of childhood location, frequency of visit to natural/built environments, nature connectedness and dispositional anxiety, as well as demographic items for age and gender. The 10 green space environment types were mapped into an experiential state space representing feelings of Apprehension and Eudemonia in response to specific types of urban green space. In terms of a biophilic response, feelings of Eudemonia were no different in natural green spaces compared to built green spaces. However, higher frequency of experience in specific environments was associated with enhanced feelings of eudemonia in those environments. The findings indicate that people in Singapore can be apprehensive as much in natural green spaces as in built green spaces, and they can also find eudemonic experiences in built green spaces such as roof-top gardens or town parks.