



# PHA TAD KE

*Botanical Garden*

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**The First Botanical Garden in Laos Opening November**

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Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden is opening to the public on November 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. Founded by curator and publisher, Rik Gadella, Pha Tad Ke is located in Luang Prabang and is the first garden of its kind in Laos. It has taken seven years of developing botanical collections, scientific research, landscaping, and employee capacity building to create this unique botanical garden with a deep focus on ethno-botany.

Showing the Flora of Laos, a verdant oasis of gingers, orchids, ferns, bamboos, and palms is clustered around the base of the stunning rocky Pha Tad Ke cliff looming over the Mekong River. So peaceful that it could be deep in the wilds of Lao, it is only 15 minutes on the Pha Tad Ke boat from our downtown reception in World-heritage listed Luang Prabang, with its picturesque temples and colourful markets.

The centrepiece of Pha Tad Ke is a series of ethno-botanic gardens. Focusing on the relationship between Lao people and their plants, these gardens showcase plants used in medicine, handicraft, spiritual ceremonies as well as medicinal plants for elephants. The potential of this collection, much of which is yet unstudied, is immense. Although the traditional knowledge of the ethnic minorities about the plants in rural Laos is extensive, it is passed down orally, making it vulnerable to the pressures of development and very much in need of conservation and further in-depth study.

Pha Tad Ke is setting new standards in sustainable and environmentally responsible tourism, giving back to Lao communities, preserving local culture and the environment. The garden provides jobs to local villagers and creates a nurturing platform for young talent to develop new skills from gardening to science, education and hospitality. Publications and manuals in Lao language have been written by the staff and provide learning opportunities for Lao communities through workshops and student trainings.

The Pha Tad Ke café overlooks lush lotus ponds and features lounging couches, poetry books, and delectable teas. In collaboration with Lao chef, Seng Luangrath from Thip Khao restaurant in Washington DC the team has developed a menu that pushes the limits of traditional Lao food to full flavour capacity and visual appeal with seasonally changing, creative and healthy Asian dishes. The shop presents locally sourced handicrafts, as well as Lao food products, herbal teas and beauty products.

In collaboration with international botanical partner gardens such as the Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden in Chiang Mai, the Singapore Botanic Garden and the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, solid inroads into research, education and conservation programs have been made. With the opening to the public of the first phase of the gardens this November, Pha Tad Ke will offer the public a great opportunity to learn more about the vital importance of biodiversity and ecological conservation in Laos.

Please join us for serene, leisurely enjoyable and educational half and full day tours through our scientific nurseries and beautifully presented gardens, or just come to relax and enjoy a delicious meal in our café.