

Lesser dog-faced fruit bats making tent on ornamental plant

Subjects: Lesser dog-faced fruit bat, *Cynopterus brachyotis* (Mammalia: Chiroptera: Pteropodidae).
Dragon blood tree, *Dracaena cochinchinensis* (Magnoliopsida: Asparagales: Asparagaceae).

Subjects identified by: Contributor & Kelvin K. P. Lim.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Thomson Road; 11 November 2016; 1715 hrs.

Habitat: Urban. Planter box at the entrance to the basement car-park of a concrete condominium building.

Observer: Contributor.

Observation: Two bats, one shielding a pup (Fig. 1), were roosting under a crown of foliage at the top of an ornamental plant, tentatively identified as a dragon blood tree (Fig. 2). The veins on the underside of each leaf have been chewed through, as evidenced by scars, causing each leaf to fold downwards and forming a dark, dry space beneath.

Remarks: The lesser dog-faced fruit bat often roosts in small harem groups in tents constructed by the male. In Malaysia, this species mainly makes umbrella tents out of broad-leaf palms, although other types are also made from other plants (Tan et al., 1997). Of the eight architectural types of bat tents recognised by Kunz et al. (1994), the one featured here may be categorised as a conical tent.

References:

- Kunz, T. H., M. S. Fujita, A. P. Brooke & G. F. McCracken, 1994. Convergence in tent architecture and tent-making behavior among neotropical and paleotropical bats. *Journal of Mammalian Evolution*. 2 (1): 57-78.
Tan K. H., A. Zubaïd & T. H. Kunz, 1997. Tent construction and social organization in *Cynopterus brachyotis* (Müller) (Chiroptera: Pteropodidae) in Peninsular Malaysia. *Journal of Natural History*. 31: 1605-1621.



Fig. 1. Two bats roosting in the tent. The one on the right is shielding a pup. Note the scars at the base of each leaf.



Fig. 2. The drooping leaves at the top of the plant form a bat tent.

Photographs by Nick Baker

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