

Event Recap | Future Architecture: Growing Houses Out of Trees

On August 31, 2025, the "Bay Area TEA Talk | Future Architecture: Growing Houses Out of Trees" was successfully co-hosted by the Enterprise Service Center of Bao'an District, Shenzhen, and the Bay Area International Exchange Service Center.



The event featured Felix E. Klee — a “tree hacker” with academic backgrounds in architecture and physics, and founder of the Hyperboloid Banyan Project — as guest speaker. He shared his innovative practice and reflections in the field of "living plant architecture".

Using the Hyperboloid Banyan Pavilion he built in Yangshuo of Guilin, one of China's top tourist destinations for its breathtaking landscape, as a case study, Felix showed a video that vividly demonstrated this unique architectural form. The footage documented the entire growth process: from the initial metal frame and planting of 30 banyan trees, to the gradual rusting of the metal and the fusion of the trees into one organic structure.



To enhance the audience's understanding, Felix also brought a physical model of the pavilion for a live demonstration.

He emphasized that this type of architecture does not destroy nature — it regenerates ecosystems, offering a clear contrast to conventional “destructive” construction. He also shared global examples of living architecture, such as the living root bridges in Meghalaya, India, and the tree-grown bridge in Foshan, China.



Felix pointed out that the core challenges include using trees as load-bearing materials and addressing long-term maintenance, irrigation, and structural simulation. He mentioned that a research team in Munich, Germany, is currently using 3D scanning and machine learning to simulate tree growth patterns to improve the design of living structures.

During the Q&A session, the audience engaged Felix in lively discussions on fire safety, species selection, and structural stability. Felix noted that living architecture is still in the exploratory stage but holds great potential, especially in responding to climate change and promoting sustainability. He encouraged more researchers and architects to join the field to explore the possibility of "growing architecture from nature".



This TEA Talk not only introduced cutting-edge concepts to professionals but also offered the public a window into future architecture.

Frank Chen, Executive Director of the Bay Area International Exchange Service Center and creator & host of Bay Area TEA Talk, remarked, “Although architecture may not be the trendiest industry today, it is the art that makes our homes more comfortable and our cities more livable. We will never give up on any art that makes the world more beautiful.”