

A Guide to Bukit Batok Nature Park Walking Trail

Introduction

This 36-hectare park offers a trail that meanders through a well-established secondary forest. As you walk through the forest, look out for interesting trees highlighted in this guide. This park holds some historical significance. It was once mined for granite; the quarry has since become a large reflecting pool. As you embark on the ascent to the top of the hill, stop at the lookout points that offer vantage views of the quarry pool. This trail also takes you to a war memorial at the top of the hill, and to the quarry pool at its foot.

How to get there

- Bus services 61, 66, 157, 178, 852 and 985 will take you to Bukit Batok East Ave 6.
- The park is also accessible via the entrance at Lorong Sesuai and from Hillview Park Connector.
- If you are driving, you can park at the car park along Bukit Batok East Ave 2.

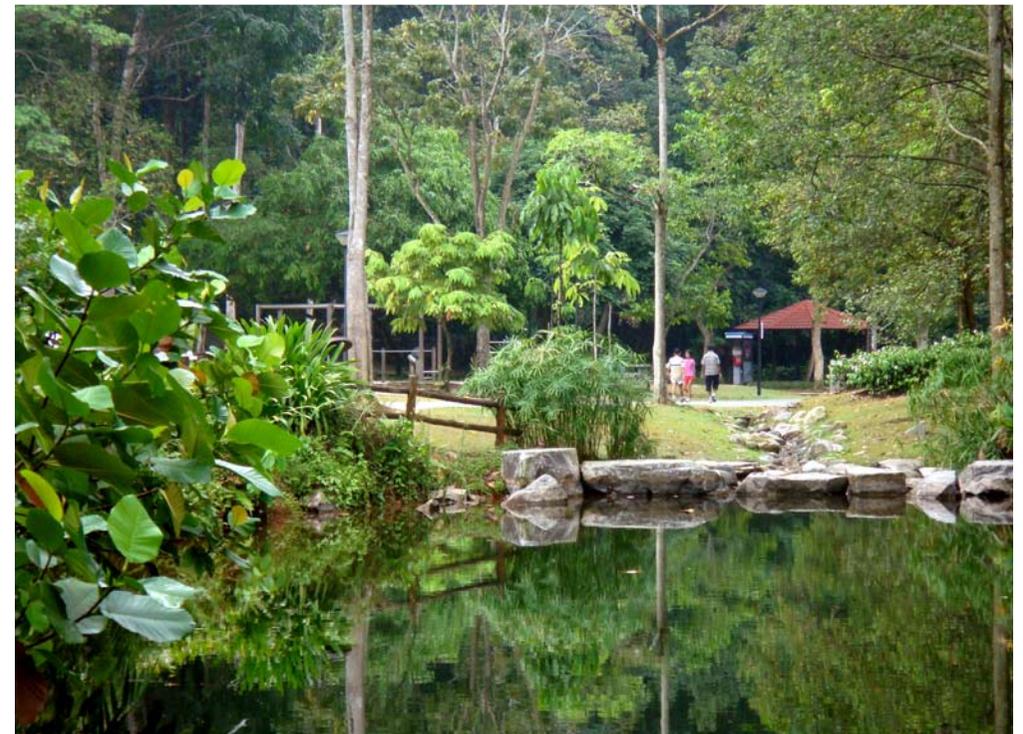
Park Etiquette

- Please don't pluck any flowers or leaves as this may damage the plants.
- There is enough food in the forests for monkeys, so please don't feed them as this disrupts their natural behaviour.
- Please help keep the park clean by not littering.
- If you are quiet, you will see more wildlife. When they appear, stand quietly and observe them until they pass by.
- Please don't release animals into the forest or pool as this disrupts the delicate balance of the natural environment.

Walking Time : 1–2 hrs

Difficulty level : Easy to moderate

Terrain: Undulating. Some areas are not wheelchair-friendly due to stairs and steep slopes.



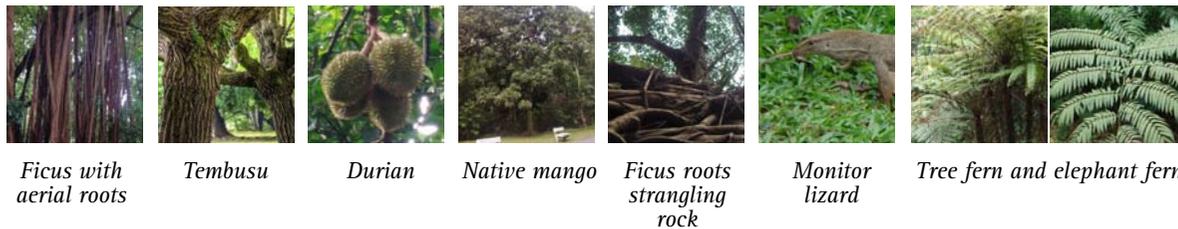
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Highlights

- Walking along the forest tracks through lush secondary forest
- Looking at interesting species of trees and shrubs with their fruits and flowers
- Enjoying vantage views of the quarry pool from lookout points
- Bird-watching along the trail and at the bank of the quarry pool
- Observing fauna such as squirrels, monkeys, monitor lizards, birds, dragonflies, butterflies and fish.
- Visiting a World War II memorial site.

- Road/Track
- Building/Plaza
- Park Connector
- Forest Track
- Lawn Area
- Stream
- ||||| Staircase
- 🚻 Toilets
- 🏃 Fitness Corner
- 🚰 Drinking Fountain
- 👣 Foot Reflexology Path/Area
- 📖 WWII Memorial Site
- 👁️ Lookout Point
- 🛖 Shelter
- ☎️ Public Phone
- 🚗 Carpark
- 🚌 Bus Stop
- 👦 Playground



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Trail

Begin your journey from the side entrance of the park behind the car park. An interpretative sign on the left side of the entrance illustrates the species of birds that you can see at the park. Try to recognise these and see if you can find them in the park.

Take the uphill path immediately on your left. At the junction, turn right and you will find yourself standing in front of a tree with many brown cords hanging down from its canopy. This tree is known as curtain fig (*Ficus microcarpa*), one of the several species found in the park; the brown cords are its aerial roots **1**. Figs are a botanical oddity and their survival is entirely dependent on a tiny wasp for pollination. Some species of figs, especially the ones that are trees or stranglers, are considered keystone species as they provide a precious food resource during lean periods in the forest.

Follow this tarmac path to Shelter C. On your left are tall shrubs with large leaves and bright yellow flowers commonly known in Malay as *Simpoh Air* **2**. A thriving secondary forest species, it can be seen on several parts of the trail. Black harmless carpenter bees buzz amongst the flowers of the *Simpoh Air* as they help in the pollination process.

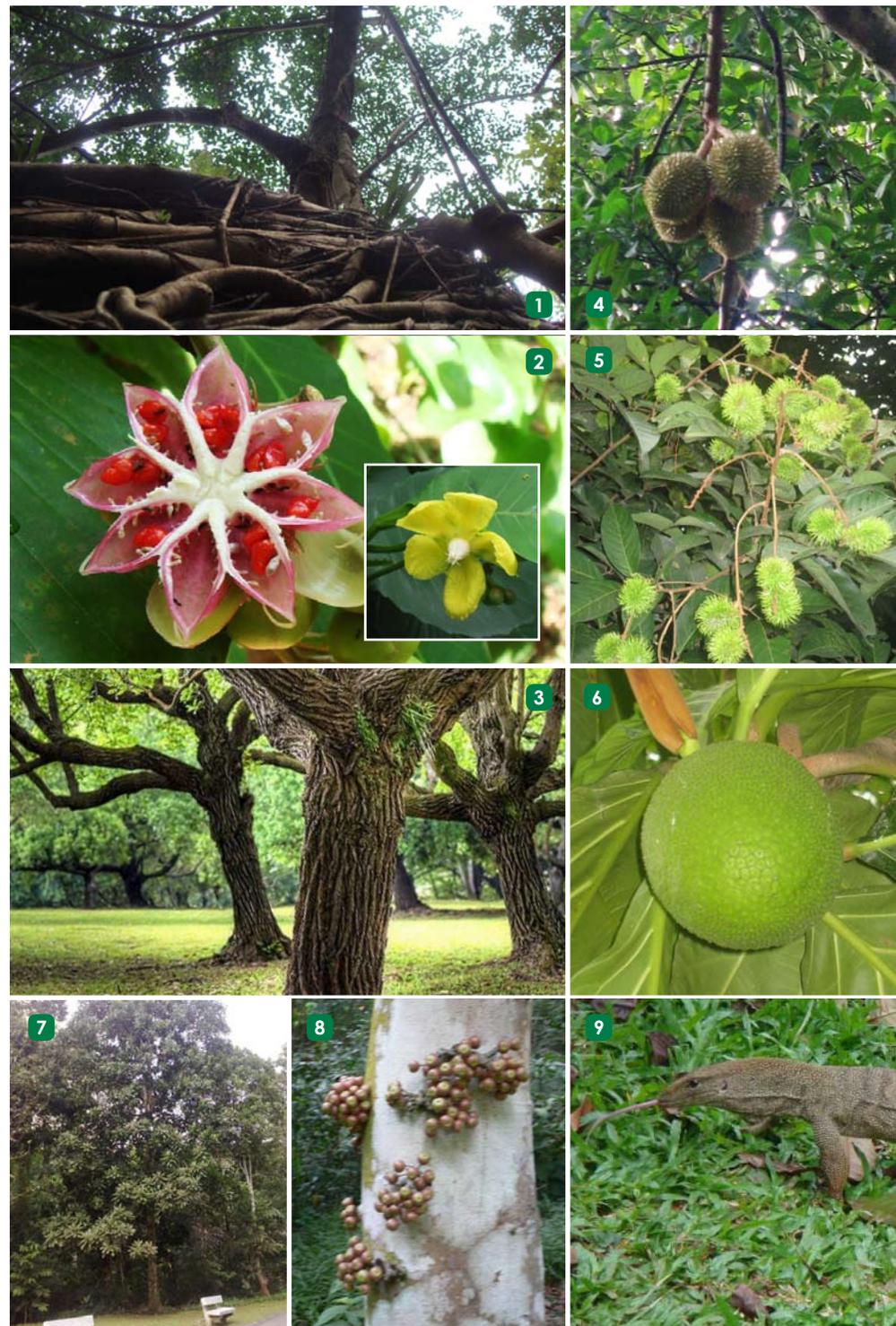
The plot of land surrounding shelter C is a site where the National Parks Board carries out reforestation efforts [see information on reforestation]. Continue along the tarmac road, and as you pass the junction, look out for a distinguished looking *Tembusu* tree towering over you **3**. Easily recognized by its heavily fissured dark brown bark and low branching points, the *Tembusu* is native to Singapore and blooms in May and November with creamy, sweet-scented flowers.

Soon you will see a sign stating "Beware of falling durians" **4**. The "King of Fruits" exists because of the pollination service performed by nectar bats. Would we still enjoy durians without bats?

Around this area, there is a wide variety of fruit trees. Can you spot the rambutan **5** and breadfruit **6** on the left of the trail, and a native mango tree **7** on the right?

As you walk further, you will come across a strange looking tree with figs on its trunk **8**. This tree is a common yellow stem fig (*Ficus fistulosa*). There are many such trees throughout the park, and you can easily see them throughout the year.

Soon you will see a small natural stream that flows from the top of the hill and through the park. Fresh water streams are a vital habitat for so many species such as fish, frogs and invertebrates. Monitor lizards are seen here too **9**.



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At Shelter F, look closely at some tree ferns **10** and elephant ferns **11**. These ferns are termed "living fossils" as they have evolved little since they first appeared many millions of years ago.

Take the path into the forest. Both sides are thick with rubber trees. Their trifoliolate leaves **12** make them easy to identify. The invasive nature of rubber can be seen by how successfully it has colonized the forest.

There are a few large trees left standing amongst the rubber, and these are native trees of the coast, commonly known as Sea Apple **13**. Insects pollinate their creamy "powderpuff"-looking flowers. It was once planted next to forest reserves to serve as a fire-break.

Once you exit the thick vegetation, you will reach an open lawn with Shelter E on the right and a single *rambutan* tree on the left. This tree is a favourite with the parks' resident troop of long-tailed macaques **14** during the fruiting season.

Behind Shelter E, a flight of stairs leads you up to the two scenic lookout points at Shelters G and H where you can enjoy vantage views of the quarry pool.

The thick vegetation and open sky above make this segment of the trail a good place to watch birds. The number of species of birds seen in this park has increased over the years. See if you can spot any of the birds shown in the guide.

The trail peaks at the base of a long staircase. This

used to lead to the *Syonan Chureito*, a memorial built by the Japanese to commemorate those who died during a fierce battle that took place there during World War II. It has since been destroyed, and in its place the Mediacorp Transmission Centre was built. All that is left of the original shrine are the steps and two short pillars at the base. More details on the history behind the memorial are illustrated in the storyboard at the base of the long flight of steps **15**.

For the final leg of your journey, make your way back down the hill. At the bottom of the stairs by Shelter E, turn right and down towards the pond plaza. If you are still feeling energetic, try exercising at the fitness stations or enjoy the children's playground with your kids. If you feel like winding down, try the foot reflexology path or gaze at the beauty of the granite rock face above the reflecting pool.

Reforestation Efforts

Parts of the secondary forest have been cleared of invasive exotic species (such as rubber trees) and have been replanted with young saplings of native forest trees.

Methods such as these help improve the biodiversity of the forest habitat and conserve the genetic diversity. Native flora is essential for the regeneration and survival of native fauna.

A healthy native ecosystem is an asset to a country's quality of life and builds her natural heritage.



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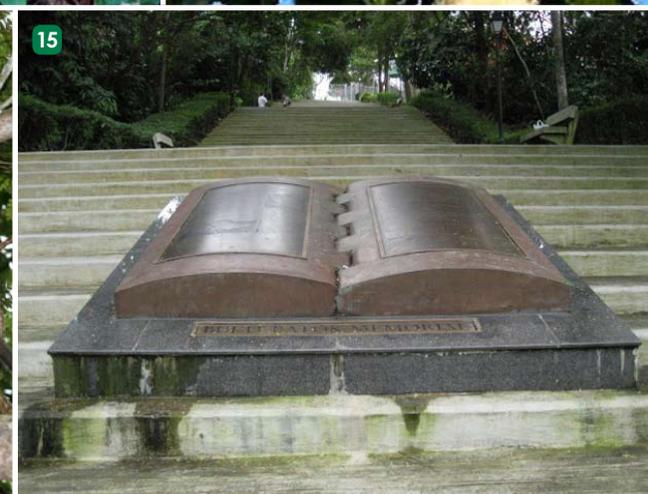
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