

A Guide to Pulau Ubin Tree Trail

This walking trail provides an “off the beaten track” experience across Pulau Ubin, a tiny island off the northeastern coast of Singapore and a delightful retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life. This island is home to Singapore’s last villages (or *kampungs*) as well as Chek Jawa Wetlands, a unique nature area housing some of Singapore’s richest coastal and intertidal ecosystems.

Experience Pulau Ubin’s rustic atmosphere and get a good insight of village life as you embark on this well-shaded trail. This trail, which starts in front of the Ubin-HSBC Volunteer Hub, takes you to old coconut and rubber plantations, the house of the late village head of Pulau Ubin and several interesting trees.

This walking trail ends at the viewing jetty outside House No.1 (Chek Jawa Visitor Centre), a charming Tudor-style cottage with a fireplace that has been restored and designated a Conservation Building. From the jetty, view Singapore’s only two mangrove trees listed in the Heritage Tree Register of Singapore. Turn around to get a picturesque view of House No.1. Linger at the jetty for a glimpse of Pulau Sekudu (Frog Island) and sweeping views of the sea.

Trees of our Garden City: Enhancing Singapore’s Liveability

Trees play an important role in our Garden City. Apart from softening and beautifying our cityscape, they provide numerous environmental benefits. Not only do they offer a welcome respite from the tropical heat and glare, they help alleviate the heat island effect by removing excess carbon and air pollutants. They also prevent soil erosion and reduce storm water run-off. Trees also serve a variety of ecological functions including being a natural habitat and source of food for wildlife. To a large extent, trees improve our emotional well-being by helping us feel more connected to nature and the city we live in.



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Outward Bound Singapore

How to get to Pulau Ubin

Take a bumboat from Changi Point Ferry Terminal (\$2.50 one-way and an extra \$2 if you have a bicycle with you). Boats will leave when there are 12 passengers but you can also opt to pay the difference for the boat to leave immediately. Bumboats run from sunrise to sunset.



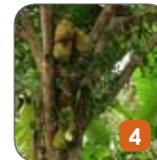
1 Malayan Banyan



2 Candlenut



3 Cocoa



4 Jackfruit



5 Banana



6 Durian



7 Village Head's House



8 Oil Palm



9 Malay House



10 Rubber Plantation



11 Jambu bol



12 Attap Palm



13 Common Pulai



14 Perepat

A Guide to Pulau Ubin Tree Trail



→ 1

Malayan Banyan (*Ficus microcarpa*)

The Malayan Banyan is an evergreen tree and its figs provide a valuable source of food for birds. It is also a good choice for a bonsai plant as it can thrive in a wide range of conditions. As a testament to this, it is no wonder that you can often spot them growing from small crevices in drains or walls of old buildings.

This Malayan Banyan provides a prominent landmark for where Jalan Ubin meets Jalan Jelutong.

→ 2

Candlenut, Buah keras (*Aleurites moluccana*)

This handsome evergreen tree can grow to about 20m and has a round, spreading crown that provides excellent shade. It is easily recognised for its silvery-white appearance when new foliage appears, which makes this tree a good choice for ornamental planting. In fact, the scientific name *Aleurites* means 'floury' in Greek, referring to the dusty-white appearance of young leaves and buds.

This is a tree that is often planted in *kampung*s. Almost all parts of the tree has a use; the fruits, leaves, bark, sap, wood and roots are used as medicine, oil for illumination, food, dyes and construction.

→ 3

Cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*)

This small tree (6 to 9m tall) is native to the central and western Amazon region but is now cultivated throughout the humid tropics. The fruits grow on the trunk and contain seeds

that are the source of commercial cocoa and cocoa butter. While cocoa is grown primarily for chocolate production, the edible pulp is often consumed in the tropics.

This tree was planted by villagers living on the island.

→ 4

Jackfruit (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*)

A large tree that can grow up to 30m, the Jackfruit bears the largest tree-borne fruit in the world. The average fruit size is around 30 to 60cm long and about 20 to 30cm wide.

This tree is native to Peninsular Malaysia and is commonly found growing in *kampung*s. It is grown for its fruits that have green, knobby skin with several seeds containing yellow, banana-flavoured flesh. The fruit has a unique taste and emits a pungent smell when ripe. The other name for Jackfruit is *Nangka*. The unripe jackfruit can also be cooked as a culinary dish in coconut cream called "*lemak nangka*".

→ 5

Banana (*Musa spp.*)

The Banana is commonly found throughout the tropics; it is planted for its fleshy finger-like fruit, which has been a staple of human diet for centuries.

Apart from its fruit, the Banana has many other uses. Banana flowers and the tender inner pith of the stem are eaten as a vegetable. Its leaves are used to flavour and wrap food, and the fibre is used in textiles.



From a botanical perspective, a banana is a giant herb and not a tree, as it does not produce wood. In fact, it is the largest flowering herbaceous plant in the world.

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→ 6

Durian (*Durio zibethinus*)

Durian is known as the "King of fruits" and some may find its smell overpowering.

Durian trees can grow up to more than 40m tall and can be recognised by its leaves that have coppery undersides. Young trees begin to fruit around seven years of age and the fruits take about three months to develop. The fruit will fall to the ground only when it is ripe. When left undisturbed, it will split open into five pieces. This gives animals easy access to the flesh and seeds. These animals then help disperse the seeds.

→ 7

Village Head's House

This quaint blue house (located opposite Belatok Hut) belongs to the late village head of Pulau Ubin, who lived to a ripe old age of 102 years. His son and family now live in this house. You can buy cold drinks here and view the many interesting old black and white photographs that hang on the outer wall of the house. Do stop by to say 'hello'!

→ 8

Oil Palm (*Elaeis guineensis*)

Oil Palms can grow up to 20m tall. Oil is extracted from the pulp of the fruit to produce edible palm oil. Oil is also extracted from the kernel of the fruit to produce palm kernel oil, which is used in the manufacturing of food and soap. The name *Elaeis* is derived from the Greek word for oil, *elaion*.

→ 9

Malay House

A traditional Malay *kampung* house is usually a timber-framed structure on stilts that rest on stone blocks. This house is situated in the low-lying area, so the stilts protect the house from floods. The floors and walls are made from wooden planks. The roof is thatched using palm leaves.

This house shows a more updated design that incorporates a zinc roof and an iron grille door, while still maintaining the wooden stilts and walls.

→ 10

Rubber Plantation

While resting at Murai Hut, look behind the hut and you will see remnants of an old rubber plantation.

A fast-growing tree that reaches a height of 40m in its native forest habitat, the Rubber Tree has a straight trunk with greyish-green bark. It has compound leaves with three leaflets that are dark green above and lighter green beneath.

Rubber trees are usually planted in neat rows to facilitate the easy movement of the rubber tappers, who would remove a thin layer of bark in a downward spiral along the trunk. Cups would be attached at the base of the cuts. Rubber trees will drip latex for about four hours until the latex coagulates naturally at the tapping cut.



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→ 11

Jambu bol (*Syzygium malaccense*)

A native to our region, Jambu bol can grow up to 20m in height and is recognised by bright red fruits with waxy skin. The crunchy fruits are edible and have a mildly sweet flavour.

→ 12

Attap Palm or Nipah Palm (*Nypa fruticans*)

The Attap Palm is one of the few palms that grow well in mangrove conditions. It is commonly found growing in dense clusters with their fronds growing out from the soft mud. The leaves are used for roof thatching in "attap houses".

While it may look trunkless, the trunk of the Attap Palm actually lies horizontally underground. The fruits group together to form a large brown ball and break off into individual fruits when ripe.

Attap Chee is the name given to the translucent flesh inside the fruit. It is processed and used in local desserts such as *ice kacang*.

→ 13

Common Pulai (*Alstonia angustiloba*)

The Common Pulai is a very tall tree (up to 40m tall) found in this region. It is easily recognisable from its pagoda-shaped branching pattern and simple leaves that are arranged in whorls. This tree belongs to the family of Apocynaceae, which are identified by the presence of white latex in the stems.

This Heritage Tree (35m height, 6.4m girth) is hard to miss as you walk along the trail. It stands out among the canopy and can be seen from a distance.

→ 14

Perepat (*Sonneratia alba*)

From House No.1, walk out to the jetty for a good view of these two large Perepat trees that are located on the farthest point of the mudflats.

To survive in the oxygen-poor mud, Perepat trees send out pneumatophores (breathing roots) that stick out of the mud, allowing the exchange of gases and helping the trees to 'breathe'. To combat the high saline conditions, excess salt is restored in old leaves, which are later shed. Depending on the tide, these two trees spend a fair amount of time half-submerged in seawater, a testament to the resilience of trees.

About 178 trees in Singapore have been given the Heritage Tree status under the Singapore's Heritage Tree Scheme, as part of efforts to promote the conservation of mature trees in Singapore. These two Perepat trees are the only two mangrove trees listed in the Heritage Tree Register of Singapore.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk. To get up close and personal with more trees, embark on the Trees of the Fort trail at Fort Canning Park.



The Common Pulai

Seashore nutmeg