

# A Guide to Heritage Trees of Singapore Botanic Gardens Walking Trail



This short walking trail takes you to seven magnificent mature trees in Singapore Botanic Gardens. These trees 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.

Singapore's first botanical and experimental garden was established by Sir Stamford Raffles (founder of Singapore) on Government Hill (now Fort Canning Hill) in 1822. At that time, he aimed to introduce the cultivation of economic crops such as cocoa and nutmeg. Since then, the Singapore Botanic Gardens, at its present site since 1859, has evolved into a tropical botanical institution of international renown, a key tourist destination and a flagship park. It offers tourists and locals a green sanctuary for rest and relaxation, and an excellent environment in which to learn about plants and nature.

Take a leisurely walk amidst the lush, verdant grounds of the Gardens and appreciate the beauty of these Heritage Trees, all living legacies of Singapore's green heritage and hosts to a diverse range of other flora and fauna.

There are currently about 178 listed Heritage Trees of various species in Singapore, of which 14 can be found right here in the Gardens. This walking trail brings you to see seven of the more easily accessible Heritage Trees.



## 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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## How to get to Singapore Botanic Gardens

### By Foot:

Entrance to the Gardens is easy through the Gardens' major entrances: Tanglin Gate, Nassim Gate and Cluny Park Gate

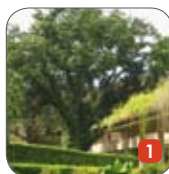
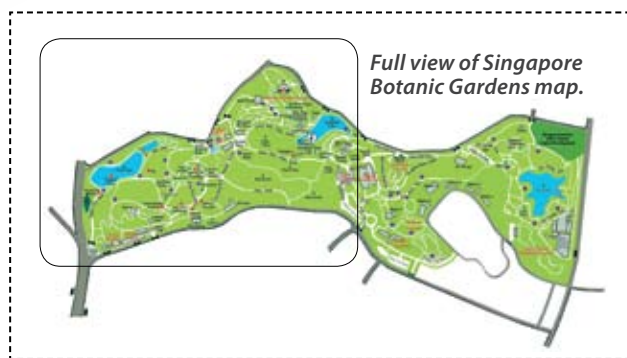
### By Car:

Car parking facilities are available at the Botany Centre, Visitor Centre, Bukit Timah Core, Jacob Ballas Children's Garden and along Tyersall Avenue.

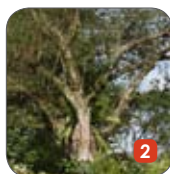
### By Bus:

Via Holland Road  
SBS Transit 7, 105, 123, 174  
SMRT 75, 77, 106

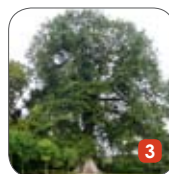
Via Bukit Timah Road  
SBS Transit 48, 66, 151, 153, 154, 156, 170, 186  
SMRT 67, 171



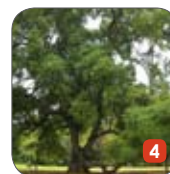
Penaga Laut



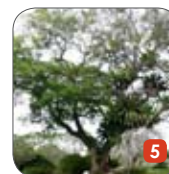
Rubber Tree



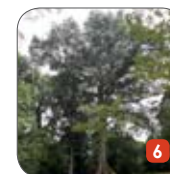
Kapok Tree



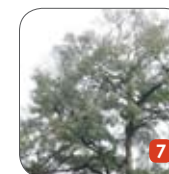
Tembusu



Saga Tree



Kapok Tree



Jelawi



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## → 1

**Penaga Laut** (*Calophyllum inophyllum*)  
(Located next to the Botany Centre Function Hall)

A coastal evergreen that is slow-growing, the Penaga Laut has a large, spreading dense crown. *Calophyllum* means “beautiful leaf” in Greek – the tree’s beautiful leathery leaves, with numerous slender veins, are its most recognisable feature. Its rugged, greyish brown bark is fissured and cracked.

The Penaga Laut is a tree of many uses. The oil from the seeds is used to heal a multitude of skin ailments. Its leaves and roots can also be used for a variety of medicinal purposes.

This tree is not just a tree. Look at its trunk – it plays host to several ferns, climbers, and wildlife. You can even see a Climbing Fig (bearing bright yellow fruit resembling kumquat) on the tree.

This Penaga Laut is more than 100 years old. The Botany Centre was designed and built around it, with the walkway next to the tree made narrower to accommodate the tree (an excellent example of efforts made to conserve mature trees in Singapore).

## → 2

**Rubber Tree**  
(*Hevea brasiliensis*)  
(Located behind the Green Pavilion)

Walk up the steps that run along the Green Pavilion to reach this tree. Planted in 1923, this tree was grafted from a second generation rubber tree (planted in the Gardens in 1884).

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 3 leaflets that are dark green on the surface and lighter green beneath. Its fruits are woody and split open with an explosive sound when ripe, scattering seeds a distance from the parent tree.



Rubber seeds



## → 3

**Kapok Tree or White Silk-cotton Tree**  
(*Ceiba pentandra*)  
(Located beside Holttum Hall)

Walk up the road leading to Holttum Hall to get to this tree. A gift from Bogor Botanical Garden, this tree was planted here in 1933.

The Kapok Tree (incidentally the national tree of Puerto Rico) is a fast-growing tree and can reach 50m in height. Its broad trunk, horizontal main



branches and buttress roots give it a distinctive shape recognisable from a distance. The buttress roots are nature’s way of providing more support to a very tall tree.

Look closely at the tree’s bark, which is distinctly thorny. The cream-coloured flowers are another interesting feature – they emit a milky smell.

You will see another Kapok Tree further up on this walking trail.



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## → 4

**Tembusu** (*Fagraea fragrans*)  
(Located at Lawn E)

This 30m tall Tembusu is probably as old as the Gardens.

Distinctive to Singapore (it is also featured on the back of our S\$5 note), the Tembusu is a long-living, evergreen tree that can grow up to 30m. It is recognisable by its stately form, deeply fissured bark and conical shape when young. During flowering, its creamy-white flowers open during sunset and give off a sweet perfume, hence the tree's name *fragrans*.

The lower branches of mature Tembusu, like this tree, are an interesting feature - when left untrimmed, they sag to the ground and turn up at the ends.

## → 5

**Saga or Red-bead Tree**  
(*Adenanthera pavonina*)  
(Located next to Lady on Hammock sculpture)

This tree is best known for its brilliant red seeds often collected by old and young alike for ornamental purposes.

A deciduous tree that grows up to 25m, this shady and ornamental tree has a spreading crown made up of fine feathery leaves and a trunk with smooth grayish bark. Its small creamy-yellow, inconspicuous star-shaped flowers give way to

dark brown fruits pods, which then twist and open to expel small, hard scarlet seeds. Across the Middle East and South East Asia, the seeds were traditionally used as standard weights for measuring out precious metals and jewellery (four seeds make up one gram).

## → 6

**Kapok Tree or White Silk-cotton Tree**  
(*Ceiba pentandra*)  
(Located along Lower Ring Road)

This is the second Kapok Tree on this walking trail. This 43m tall tree was received from the Gold Coast, Ghana in 1932 and planted in 1934.

The massive crown of this Kapok casts a large umbrella of shade for the thousands of visitors who walk down Lower Ring Road. When it flowers and fruits, matured seedpods will split to release hundreds of seeds that float on fluffy parachutes of white fibre. This water-resistant fibre, called *kapok* in Malay, was previously used to stuff pillows, mattresses and life-jackets.

## → 7

**Malayan Terminalia or Jelawi**  
(*Terminalia subspatulata*)  
(Located at the junction of Liane Road and Lower Ring Road)

At 47m, this tree is one of the tallest trees in the Gardens. A native of the rain forest in the Gardens, it has been standing here for more than 150 years.



The Jelawi Tree can grow up to 50m tall. This tree has large spreading buttress roots and a wide conical and flat-topped crown. Its bark is pale, ochre-brown and narrowly cracked. See if you can spot its fruits, which are small, flattened and doubly winged to aid dispersal by wind.

**We hope you have enjoyed your walk on this trail. To get up close and personal with more Heritage Trees, embark on the Heritage Trees trail at Changi.**