

A Guide to Trees of the Fort Walking Trail



This walking trail takes you to 25 beautiful trees at Fort Canning Park amidst a backdrop of lush greenery and rich history. Fort Canning Hill, on which the park sits, once housed a Malay Kingdom in the 14th century. It was also the place of residence for several governors and was even transformed into a fort in the 1860s.

The trees on this trail are selected for their interesting features that set them apart from other trees in the park. The Kapok, for instance, stands out due to its sheer size and thorny bark. The Malayan Banyan is a majestic sight with its aerial roots hanging down. One of the Madras Thorns you get to see here is Singapore's largest to date. If you wonder how a tree looks like upside-down, the Baobab is the tree to visit.

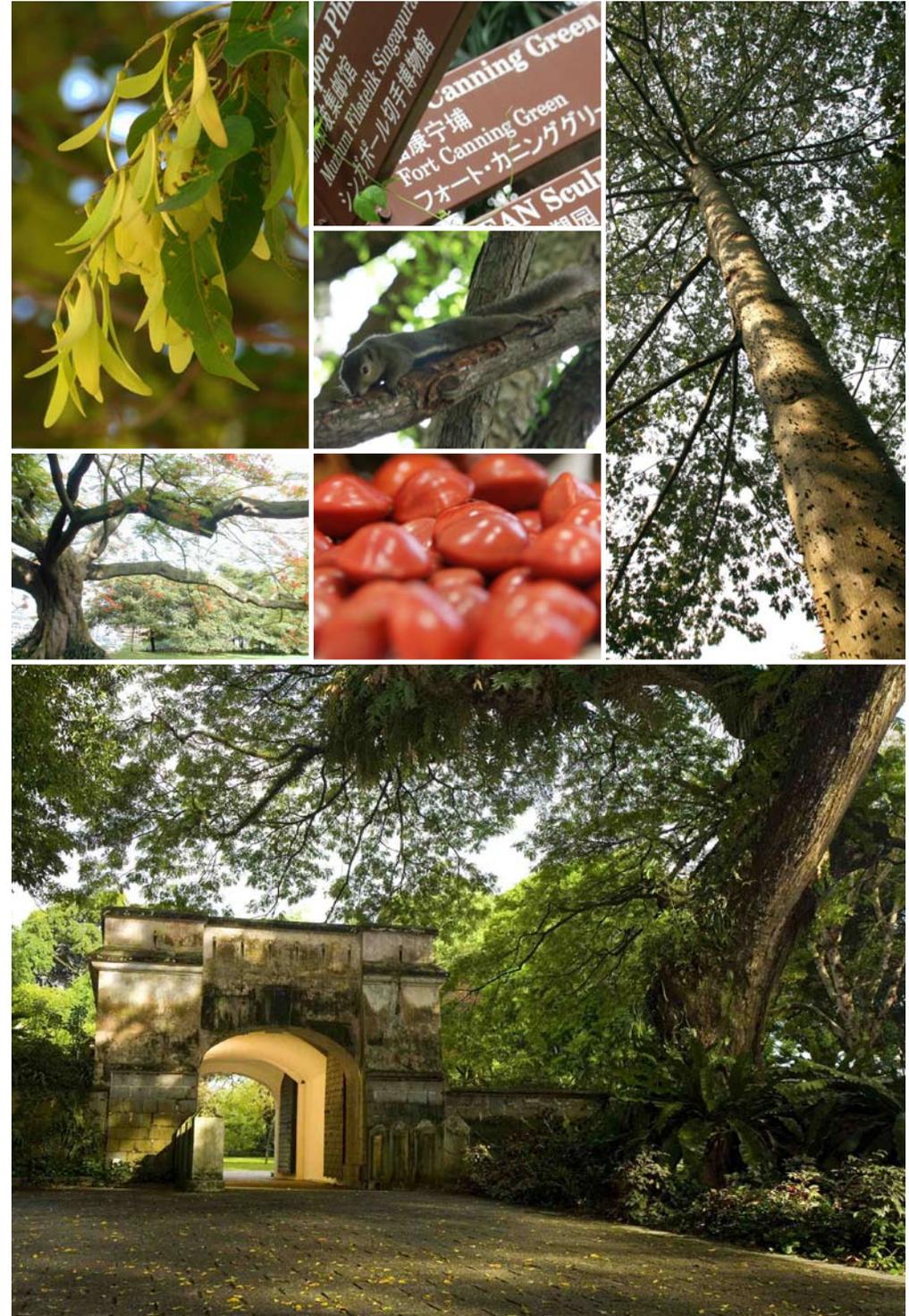
As part of our efforts to conserve mature trees in Singapore, several trees have been given the Heritage Tree status under the Singapore's Heritage Tree Scheme. There are currently about 178 listed Heritage Trees in Singapore, of which nine can be found in Fort Canning Park. Six of them can be seen along this walking trail.



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.

Walking Time: 1-2 hrs



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How to get to Fort Canning Park

By MRT:

Nearest MRT stations are: City Hall, Dhoby Ghaut and Bras Basah. It is about 8-10mins walk from each station

By Car:

Drive along Coleman Street, keep left and drive through Canning Rise. Make a left at the next turn into Percival Road.

You can also drive along Fort Canning Road and turn left into Canning Rise.

The nearest carparks are Carparks A & B which are located along Percival Road. You can also park at Carpark C (Canning Walk), at the carpark beside Registry of Marriages and at The Legends Fort Canning Park.



												
Brazilian Ironwood	Cannonball Tree	Sepetir	Petai Kerayong	Common Red Stem Fig	Kapok	Malayan Banyan	Baobab	Paperbark Tree	Candlenut	Madras Thorn	Flame of the Forest	Terap
												
Sankawang	Saga	Rain Tree	Petai	White Chempaka & Orange Chempaka	Elephant Apple	White Gum	Common Pulai	Jelutong	Chengal Pasir	Teak	Sea Beam	

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→ **1**
Brazilian Ironwood, Leopard Tree
(Caesalpinia ferrea)
 (Located in front of Fort Canning Centre)

Brazilian Ironwood is usually grown as an ornamental tree for its beautiful bark and fine lacy crown. This grove of Brazilian Ironwood trees is a welcome sight for Fort Canning visitors.

The wood of this tree is extremely dense and heavy, hence its common name as well as its scientific name *ferrea* ('iron' in Latin). Its other common name, Leopard Tree, is obtained from its interesting smooth, peeling bark. As the bark ages, it peels off to reveal colours ranging from light grey to whitish yellow.

→ **2**
Cannonball Tree *(Couroupita guianensis)*

Walk up the steps to the green lawn (on your right) to reach this tree.

This unusual looking tree is so named for its large round woody fruits that stick out from the trunk. Before the fruits are formed, large yellow flowers with red inner sides grow directly from the trunk, instead of from new shoot. Trees that exhibit this flowering habit are said to be 'cauliflory' in nature. This helps such trees to be pollinated by animals that cannot climb or fly high.

The flowers of this tree are fragrant and are sometimes used for worship or as offerings in Buddhist temples.

→ **3**
Sepetir *(Sindora wallichii)*
 (Located beside Sally Port)

Sepetir is a large deciduous tree with a massive crown. It can grow to a height of more than 30m. A distinguishing feature of the tree is its flat, oval and spiny pods.

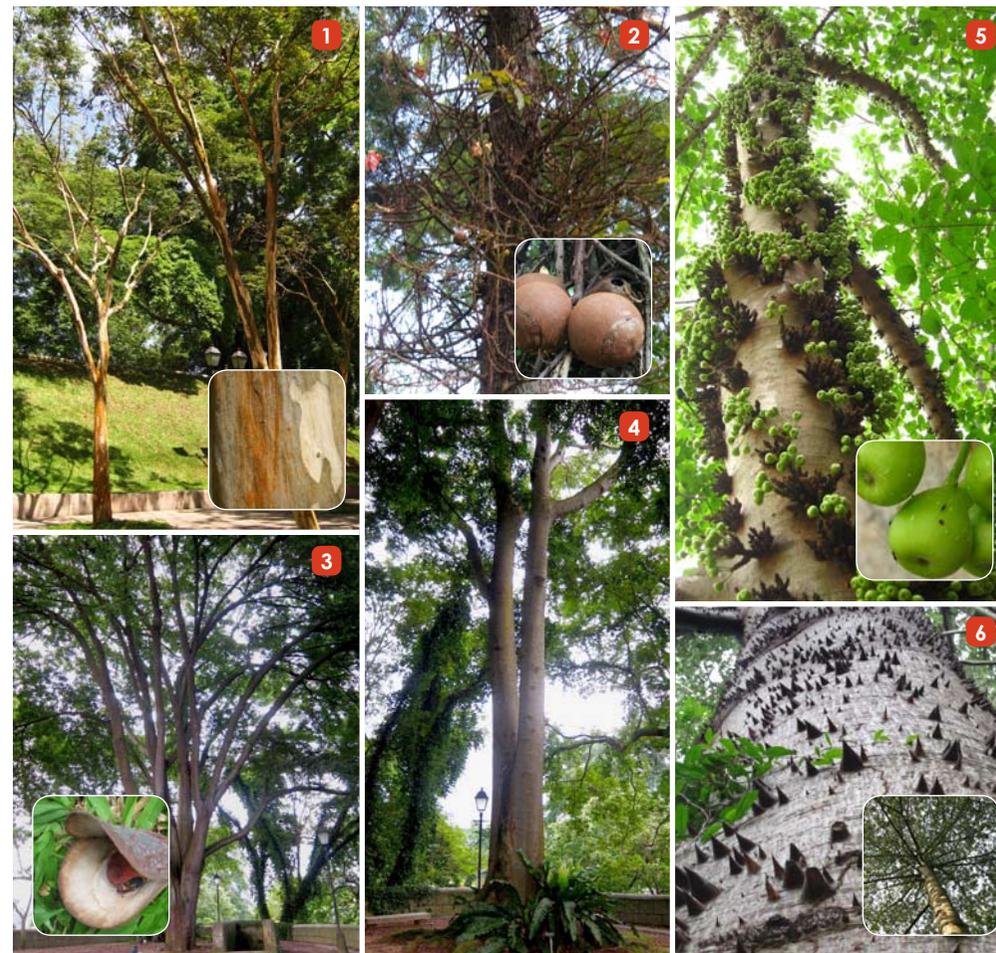
It has been said that during the Second World War, there was a Sepetir of more than 50m tall located in Changi. It was called the 'Changi Tree' due to its prominence. Unfortunately it was felled by the British to prevent the Japanese from using it as a marker to aim their guns at Singapore.

→ **4**
Petai Kerayong, Kedawong *(Parkia timoriana)*

Look out for a tall tree with fine feathery leaves, just behind the Sepetir. This Petai Kerayong tree can grow up to 40m tall. At maturity, it has an umbrella-shaped crown that provides excellent shade. Its flowers are pollinated by bats and the unpollinated flowering heads fall to the ground. The seeds, young leaves, immature pods and flowers are edible, eaten raw or toasted. The seeds taste bitter, with a lingering smell of garlic.

→ **5**
Common Red Stem Fig *(Ficus variegata)*

Walk across the lawn towards the Sculpture Pavilion next to Fort Gate. These glass structures are made from recycled shipping containers and are used by artists from the Sculpture Society (Singapore). This tree is located between these 2 containers.



This medium to large deciduous tree grows up to 30m in height. It can be recognised immediately as its trunk and branches are plastered with figs. The leaves are thin, and tender young leaves are said to be edible.

The fig "fruit" that you see is actually an enclosed structure (synconium) for the fig flowers. Figs have a complex pollination system relying solely on fig wasps.

→ **6**
Kapok *(Ceiba pentandra)*

You are now walking along the perimeter of the Fort Canning Service Reservoir. This Kapok stands out from other trees due to its sheer size, broad

trunk, horizontal main branches, and distinctive thorny bark.

The Kapok is a fast growing tree and can reach 50m in height. Look closely at the light green lines on the trunk and buttresses. These are growth lines that appear as the tree grows larger.

The cream-coloured flowers emit a milky smell. The flowers give way to large hanging seed pods that split open and release white cottony floss (*kapok* means 'floss' in Malay). Attached to this floss are numerous black seeds that are dispersed by wind. The soft and waterproof floss is traditionally used to stuff pillows, mattresses and life buoys.

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→ 7

Malayan Banyan (*Ficus microcarpa*)

The Malayan Banyan standing on the lower slope just behind the Kapok is a majestic sight. This evergreen tree can grow up to 20m in height and has a wide spreading crown with aerial roots hanging down. When these aerial roots take root in the ground, they become woodier, almost like a tree trunk, to provide additional support.

Many Fig species, including this Malayan Banyan, are classified as "stranglers". Once the sapling has established itself on the host plant, it will send its roots down until it eventually strangles the host as it grows larger. The pinkish red figs provide food for birds and other forest animals. Look out for this tree again and admire its beauty from a different angle as you walk on the lower paths along this trail.

→ 8

Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*)

This Baobab is located next to the Kapok. It can be easily recognised from its squat, cylindrical trunk that gives rise to thick tapering branches. This often makes the tree look like it is upside down, hence it is also commonly being referred to as the "upside-down tree".

The Baobab is regarded as the largest succulent in the world and has many uses. For instance, its leaves and fruits are said to be high in vitamin C and calcium.

→ 9

Paperbark Tree (*Melaleuca leucadendron*)

An evergreen tree of the swampy coastal areas of Malaysia, this tree grows to a height of 30m. Its bark is its most interesting feature as it is soft and peels off like layers of paper. Its leaves have an aromatic eucalyptus-like fragrance when crushed.

This tree has several uses - medicinal *cajeput* oil obtained from the leaves is used in cough syrup and ointments for bruises, sprains and aches. The "paper bark" look belies the hard durable timber that lies within. This timber can be used as firewood.

Interestingly, Kampong Glam, Singapore's Malay-Arab quarter in the old days, is named after this tree, as several Paperbark Trees used to be found there.

→ 10

Candlenut, Buah keras (*Aleurites moluccana*) (Located next to Paperbark Tree)

This tree is a cousin of the Macademia Nut tree. A large-leaved evergreen tree that can grow to a height of 15m, the Candlenut has a characteristic creamy-white appearance when viewed from a distance as the underside of the leaves are pale green in colour.

The kernel is rich in oil content and can be used to burn just like the candle, hence its common name. Its seeds are known as *buah keras* and are used as a common ingredient to thicken curries or gravies in Indonesian and Malay cuisine. The oil extracted from the seeds is used to make paint, varnish and wood preservatives.



→ 11

Madras Thorn (*Pithecellobium dulce*)

Look out for the Madras Thorn with the Heritage Tree plaque. This is the largest of the Madras Thorns that can be found in Fort Canning Park, of which four, including this one, have been given the Heritage Tree status. It has attained a girth of 7.4m and is Singapore's largest Madras Thorn on record so far. Its appearance is made even more impressive by the numerous bird's nest ferns and other epiphytes growing on its branches.

The twigs of this tree are thorny from the pairs of spine-like stipules, hence its common name. Its young leaves are pinkish brown, while flowers are greenish white and occur in clusters. The rose-red seeds are covered by a thick white edible pulp. This pulp is favoured by birds; it is through the birds that the seeds are dispersed.



→ 12

Flame of the Forest (*Delonix regia*)

The Flame of the Forest is a medium to large deciduous tree with a broad umbrella-shaped crown on delicate lacy foliage. This native of Madagascar gets its name from the scarlet flowers that cover the entire crown when they are in full bloom. The flowers give way to long, flat pods (up to 50cm long) that hang down from the branches.

This beautiful Heritage Tree has a girth of 3.4m and a height of 10m, and brings cheer to the Raffles Terrace when it is in bloom.

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→ 13

Terap (*Artocarpus elasticus*)

After Flame of the Forest, retrace your steps, make a left turn and walk down along the red brick path to this tree. Look out for the 14th Century Walk marker that will indicate you are continuing on the right path.

The Terap is a tall forest tree that can grow up to 45m tall and develops buttresses as it matures. It can be recognised from its huge and stiff leaves. The bark is tough and strips easily into big sheets. This was previously used by jungle-folk as clothing and for lining baskets and bins.

You are looking at not just one but a grove of Terap trees here.

→ 14

Sangkawang (*Shorea sumatrana*)

The saplings you see here are *Shorea*. A critically endangered group of trees, *Shorea* are hardly to be found these days due to deforestation (they provide quality timber for building material). Sangkawang is a slow-growing tree and is frequently found in low-lying swamps or riverbanks. Its fruits have 3 wings that aid in their dispersal by wind.

To identify the Sangkawang, look out for the distinctive deep and dark green veins on the leaves.

→ 15

Saga (*Adenanthera pavonina*)

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 straight

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.

The seeds are very attractive and are eagerly gathered by children for playing games.

→ 16

Rain Tree (*Samanea saman*)

The rain tree, a native of Central America, is planted in Singapore for its large, shady, umbrella-shaped crown. Its trunk and branches host beautiful ferns and orchids, and its leaves often fold up at dusk or before an impending rain, thus its common name.

You can also find another majestic Rain Tree in the Spice Garden near Keramat Iskandar Syah. That tree has been classified as a Heritage Tree under the Singapore's Heritage Tree scheme.

→ 17

Petai (*Parkia speciosa*)

Petai is a tall tree of up to 45m in height and is similar in appearance to *P. timoriana* (Petai Kerayong). The flowers are also clustered on heads set on the ends of stout green stalks. The flowers give way to long (40 to 50cm) pods that hang from the tree in small bunches. The fruit is edible and tastes strongly of garlic.

The beans, or *petai*, are used in a local dish, *sambal petai*. Apart from being a tasty dish, the beans are known to help in treating depression, premenstrual syndrome, blood pressure, diabetes, obesity and constipation.



→ 18

White Chempaka and Orange Chempaka (*Michelia X alba* and *Michelia champaca*)

Can you smell a fragrance in the air as you walk on this path? It comes from the flowers of the White and Orange Chempaka.

These ornamental trees are usually planted for their beautiful flowers. They are generally medium to tall tree growing up to 20m. As its name suggests, White Chempaka has creamy white flowers about 4-5cm in size and are extremely fragrant especially after dark. The Orange Chempaka has smaller orange coloured flowers.

→ 19

Elephant Apple (*Dillenia indica*)

The Elephant Apple is a small to medium deciduous tree that is frequently found on the banks of rivers and streams. It has a shady spreading crown made up of large oblong-shaped leaves.

The tree's large, solitary flowers (over 20cm in diameter) give way to large fleshy green fruits. These are said to be eaten by elephants, hence its common name.

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→ 20

White Gum (*Eucalyptus alba*)

There are two White Gum trees here, easily identified by their pale, peeling bark. The White Gum is a fast growing, evergreen tree native to northern Australia. White Gum is a hardy tree that is able to grow in a wide range of soils and conditions. Its lush foliage and attractive peeling bark make this a good ornamental tree.

Eucalyptus oil comes from trees belonging to the *Eucalyptus* genus and is used widely as an antiseptic, insect repellent and fragrance. Eucalyptus wood is used to make the *didgeridoo* – a traditional Aboriginal musical instrument.

→ 21

Common Pulai (*Alstonia angustiloba*)

Have a fun time trying to identify the Common Pulai (there are quite a few) from the cluster of trees here.

The Common Pulai is a native forest tree, reaching up to 45m in height and more than 3m in girth. The crown of a young Pulai is pagoda-shaped but loses its distinctive shape as it matures. The leaves are oval with blunt short-tipped ends, and grow in whorls of 4-8 leaves. The upper sides of the leaves are dark glossy green while the undersides are pale green. When it blooms, the crown is covered in clusters of creamy white flowers that exude a sweet fragrance.

The lightweight timber of Pulai is used to make matches, pencils and packing boxes while its latex is traditionally used to treat skin ailments.

→ 22

Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*)

A native to Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo, this tree can grow up to 80m tall with a clear straight trunk height of 30m in its natural lowland forest environment. It also has very interesting branching, just like the Pulai.

Partly or wholly deciduous, the Jelutong rejuvenates its entire crown with new leaves during June to August, after a long dry spell. The clear straight trunk and its straight-grained wood makes the Jelutong a good choice of lumber in the timber and wood carving industry. Latex from the tree is also used for the manufacturing of chewing gum.

→ 23

Chengal Pasir (*Hopea odorata*)

Chengal Pasir is a tall evergreen that can grow up to 30m or more and is normally found growing near rivers, streams or in well-drained lowland forests.

The crown of this tree is conical with numerous small branches when young and opens up as the tree matures. The fruits are small brownish round nuts enclosed by a pair of short wings about 5.5cm long. These wings allow the fruits to spin away from the tree like shuttlecocks with the aid of wind. Its attractive brown timber is very hard and heavy, and is resistant to fungal and termite attack. As such, it is commonly used in general construction, boats and flooring.



→ 24

Teak (*Tectona grandis*)

Teak is a large deciduous tree with a wide spreading crown and is widely cultivated in Southeast Asia for its timber. Teak is valued worldwide for its distinct grain and its resistance to rot and termite attacks. Its hard timber is used to make furniture, musical instruments, carvings, and paneling and railway sleepers.

The tree can be distinguished by the large heart-shaped leaves that have scurfy undersides.

→ 25

Sea Beam (*Maranthes corymbosa*)

The Sea Beam is a large native evergreen coastal tree with a heavy dark-green crown. It bears

small flowers in compact, upturned bunches, giving the crown a golden shimmering effect. The fruits resemble olives and its timber has been used for piling and wharf construction purposes.

There are two larger specimens that have been endorsed as Heritage Trees and they stand at the lower slopes of Fort Canning Hill along Fort Canning Rise, near the Armenian Road carpark.

We hope you have enjoyed your walk. To get up close and personal with more trees, embark on the Tree Trail At Pulau Ubin.