

Your Guide to the **Heritage Trees of Chinatown Walking Trail**



This trail guide introduces you to seven Heritage Trees that can be found in Chinatown.

Mature trees are part of our natural heritage and serve as important green landmarks of our City in Nature. The Heritage Tree Scheme started in 2001, advocating the conservation of Singapore's mature trees. There are over 250 Heritage Trees significant for their size, botanical, social, historical, cultural and/or aesthetical value, setting them apart from other trees in Singapore. These trees take decades to mature gracefully and beautify our landscape, helping us to identify with and stay rooted to the place we call home.

Trees play an important role in our City in Nature, offering many environmental benefits such as respite from the tropical heat and sun, minimising soil erosion and reducing stormwater run-off. They also offer ecological benefits by providing shelter and a source of food for wildlife like birds, bees and butterflies. Being around trees and natural surroundings also improves our emotional and mental well-being, helping us feel more connected to nature and the city we live in.



Tips for a safe and enjoyable trip:

- Dress comfortably and wear suitable footwear.
- Wear a hat, put on sunglasses and apply sunscreen to shield yourself from the sun.
- Spray on insect repellent if you are prone to insect bites.
- Drink ample fluids to stay hydrated.
- Walk along the designated paths to protect the natural environment.
- Dispose of rubbish at the nearest bin.
- Activities such as poaching, releasing and feeding of animals, damaging and removing of plants, and those that cause pollution are strictly prohibited.





Legend



MRT Station



Carpark



Bus Stop



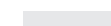
Overhead Bridge



Heritage Trees



Recommended Route



Road

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Heritage Trees at

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Bodhi Tree



Leaves

Bodhi Tree (*Ficus religiosa*)
HT 2003-69 | HT 2001-18

① Duxton Plain Park, near Neil Road

⑦ Pearl's Hill City Park hilltop, near Service Reservoir gate

Hindus and Buddhists regard the Bodhi tree as sacred. According to tradition, the Hindu god Vishnu was born under its shade, and Buddha achieved enlightenment while seated beneath this tree. The Bodhi tree is often planted in temples and other places of worship.

Reaching 25 to 35 m in height, the Bodhi tree is a large deciduous species. It features a wide-spreading crown of heart-shaped leaves. The stems and leaves of *Ficus* trees, like the Bodhi tree, produce white latex when broken.

The Bodhi has a broad distribution, including Pakistan, southern China, northern Thailand and Vietnam. When left undisturbed, its seedlings grow very fast. The saplings often develop on the branches of old trees, neglected buildings, crevices of walls, roadside kerbs, etc. Some Bodhi trees grow for several centuries due to their ability to produce secondary trunks continually from new shoots.



Indian Rubber Tree



Leaves

Indian Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica*)
HT 2012-203

② Duxton Plain Park, near Pinnacle block 1D

The Indian Rubber Tree is a fast-growing species found in moist tropical forests. Reaching up to 30 m in height, it develops numerous descending aerial roots. This fig tree can easily be distinguished from other fig trees by its young leaves which are enclosed in a red sheath.

Known for its latex, the Indian Rubber Tree was once an economically important plant in this region. Its latex was tapped and processed into a type of rubber known as *gutta rambong*. However, the cultivation of Indian Rubber for its latex was slowly phased out after the Pará Rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) was introduced to this region. Pará Rubber produces higher quality latex and at a faster rate, making it the preferred choice.

This particular Indian Rubber Tree has stood here since at least 1955. It can be identified in old photographs dating back to that year.



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Rain Tree

Rain Tree (*Samanea saman*)
HT 2005-145 | HT 2003-107

③ ④ Top of the slope at junction of Spottiswoode Park Road and Everton Road

The Rain Tree gets its name from how its leaflets close during the day when the sky is overcast. It is also referred to as Pukul Lima, meaning '5 o'clock', by the Malays because its leaflets also fold up in the evenings.

Reaching up to 30 m in height, the Rain Tree has an umbrella-shaped crown, spreading almost 20 to 30 m across. It has dark brown bark that becomes rough and flaky in mature specimens. Epiphytes like ferns and orchids tend to perch on old Rain Trees.

This species is native to tropical America, and was introduced to Singapore in 1876. By the mid-1900s, due to its provision of excellent shade it had been planted extensively in coffee and nutmeg plantations as well as along roadsides. Cattle, goats, horses, pigs and even children relish the taste of its sweet fruit pulp.



Binjai



Flowers



Fruits

Binjai (*Mangifera caesia*)

HT 2003-89

- 5 Spottiswoode Park Road, opposite Spottiswoode Apartments

The Binjai is part of the Mango family (Anacardiaceae). Reaching up to 45 m in height, the Binjai is a large tree with a densely packed dome-shaped crown. Its greyish bark exudes irritant white sap. Along with clusters of flowers in shades of violet to lilac, the Binjai also features fleshy pear-shaped fruit which contain a single pink seed enclosed in a hard endocarp.

This species is not commonly found in Singapore, and is classified as Critically Endangered locally in the wild. This particular Binjai tree is likely to have been planted back in the 1840s, when Spottiswoode Park was a plantation. The residents or estate managers may have planted this tree for its sourish-sweet fruit.



Angsana



Fruits



Flowers

Angsana (*Pterocarpus indicus*)

HT 2003-101

- 6 National Cancer Centre, at Hospital Drive and Second Hospital Ave roundabout

Native to the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, the Angsana is a cultivated species in Singapore. It is a large deciduous tree that reaches up to 40 m in height. It has a dome-shaped and drooping crown with dense, pinnately compound leaves. Its fruit resemble flat, disc-like pods with papery wings that are easily dispersed by the wind.

The Angsana's floral buds develop high up on its crown, and wait until the right stimulus triggers them to bloom in yellow simultaneously. This brilliant display of colour lasts only for a day, after which the tree lays a soft carpet of yellow flowers on the ground beneath it.

Back in 2014, a few construction workers discovered what appeared to be a heart-shaped tree stump, nestled within a crevice of this particular Angsana tree. In a shocking turn of events, it was later identified to be a World War II hand grenade. This tree has, thus, probably stood here since the 1940s at least.

We hope you enjoyed this trail! Find more Heritage Tree guides at go.gov.sg/heritage-trees