
Trees in Singapore

In 2017 GRAHAM BAKER visited Singapore; the following are his notes on some of the trees he admired there.

A city in a garden

In June 1963, Lee Quan Yew planted a Mempat tree (*Cratoxylum formosum*), a pink flowering, medium-sized, native tree, marking the start of his initiative to transform Singapore into a garden city. Since then, so many trees have been planted that his dream has become a reality. High rise condominiums, hotels and offices are enveloped in a green forest comprised principally of two species: the magnificent Angsana (*Pterocarpus indicus*) a tall, awe inspiring tower of green, billowing elm-like at the top, a southeast Asia species; and the spreading South American rain tree (*Samanea saman*) festooned in a clothing of epiphytes.

A variety of other species complete the 'forest' including Singapore's native favourite, the Tembusu (*Fagraea fragrans*). This tall, neat tree flowers in spring and late autumn (although there are no seasons in Singapore!) with small-ish, cream, highly scented flowers. Yellow flame (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*) is here too: a tall, spreading, southeast Asian tree, with pinnate leaves and yellow flowers.

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Tropical trees, to flower spectacularly, need a spell of dry weather which Singapore doesn't have. So flowering is sporadic, a branch here, a tree there, at random times. So flowering was sparse when I visited: some yellow flame trees had a partly yellow crown, whilst tropical shrubs coloured the pavements, particularly the lovely red *Caesalpinia pulcherrima* (from tropical America) and yellow *Cassia* species.

To see avenues of rain trees arching over the highway is a magnificent sight. These trees have been slowly replacing Angsana as the latter has suffered a disease.

Singapore Botanic Gardens

This is undoubtedly the highlight of botanical Singapore. Most of it is a World Heritage Site. So professionally and immaculately kept, scientifically linked to Kew, a superb collection of the significant trees of the tropical world in a landscaped garden of tropical shrubs and flowers.

I bought a book listing all the plants in the garden, but I will briefly list some that catch the eye. There is a concept in the island of Heritage Trees. These are trees which qualify in any of the following categories: large size; age; of historical importance to the island; predate the founding of the garden; of economic importance; rarity.

There are well over 200 Heritage Trees in the island, of which a fifth are in the Botanic Gardens. The many tall ones have lightning conductors fitted as Singapore has one of the highest strike rates in the world. All Heritage Trees

photograph © Graham Baker



Angsana (*Pterocarpus indicus*), a member of the pea family, towers its awe inspiring plume of billowing foliage above the traffic in Singapore.

are listed and described on the internet.

The bird's nest ferns (*Asplenium nidus*) and other epiphytes clothe so many of the great limbs of the big trees and spike-moss (*Selaginella* sp.) is used effectively as a ground cover for many shrubs and flowers. The Pacific Islands pines (*Araucaria* sp.) compose a background.

The gardens include six hectares of primary rain forest in which I saw *Gnetum latifolium* (*Gnetum gnemon* is grown as a street tree). This interesting, native small tree is a conifer although it has broad leaves and looks conventional.

Other trees that caught my eye include: Malayan Kauri (*Agathis borneensis*) grown, like so many displays, in groups of three. Cuban pine (*Pinus caribaea*) and Merkus pine (*Pinus merkusii*) are good examples of tropical pines. Mountain teak (*Podocarpus nerifolius*), from southeast Asia, is a fine, spreading Heritage Tree. *Alangium ridleyi* is a lovely, native, Heritage Tree, now extinct in the wild, named after its discoverer, the first director, Henry Ridley. There are many mango species in the fruit garden and the Indian Asoka trees (*Polyalthia* sp.) make effective groups with their regular arrow shapes.

That beautiful family, the Apocynaceae, is well represented with shrubby allamandas from tropical America: *Alstonia angustifolia*, *A. angustiloba*, *A. pneumatophora*, and *A. scholaris* are giant, buttressed, native, Heritage Trees with high, lacy crowns.

Dyera costulata, the Jelutong, are enormous trees—un-buttressed, with a smooth, massive, trunk. There are good ones in the rainforest.

From tropical America, they are lovely, white flowered bushes, *Tabernaemontana divaricata* from southeast Asia.

The umbrellas of red flowers of *Schefflera actinophylla* rise above the foliage.

The Bignoniaceae include a few jacarandas with parts of branches in flower; a fine snake tree (*Stereospermum fimbriatum*) a Heritage Tree from southeast Asia; and tropical American tabebuias, not in flower.

The lipstick tree from tropical America, (*Bixa orellana*) is a small tree with clusters of red capsules.

A monstrous, buttressed, spreading silk cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) from tropical America; this is a Heritage Tree and is common in Africa too, where it is said to be Africa's tallest tree. I remember the red flowers of *Cordia* bushes from tropical America.

Various species of *Canarium* surround a lake; these are big trees with large, pinnate leaves, perhaps the most impressive being the tropical African, *Canarium schweinfurtii*.

The terminalias are tall, handsome trees of the tropics. *Terminalia subspatulata* is a native, Heritage Tree and the tallest tree in the garden at more than 50 m. I also admired *Dillenia* sp. trees of southeast Asia with large, very prominently-veined leaves.

The most important timber trees of southeast Asia, the Dipterocarps, are well represented. Many *Shorea* species, including Heritage Trees such as

Shorea roxburghii, and, in the rain forest, *S. gratissima*, a rare native, soaring up above the canopy. There are many hopeas, one, *Hopea odorata*, a native, is planted as a street tree.

Dryobalanops aromatica, the Kapur, is a very tall Heritage Tree.

One of the most beautiful sub-tropical Australian trees is the Quandong (*Elaeocarpus angustifolius*), majestically tall with handsome, shiny leaves, some of them red.

Acalypha bushes with red tassels, are southeast Asia Euphorbiaceae; the most well-known of this family is the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) for which the gardens are famous in that they disseminated plants from Kew throughout Malaya, creating the world's largest source of natural rubber. The Malay gooseberry (*Phyllanthus acidus*) is a very attractive small plant with whirls of pinnate leaves and gooseberry-like fruits.

It's strange to see an oak tree in the tropics, but *Quercus argentata*, with long, narrow evergreen leaves is a true southeast Asian native.

A widespread southeast Asian coastal tree, *Barringtonia asiatica* has large leaves and attractive mauve/white powderpuff-type flowers. In the same family Lecythidaceae, but from tropical south America, are the Brazil nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*) and the cannonball tree (*Couroupita guianensis*)—the latter being very popular for its waxy flowers and heavy fruit growing directly from the trunk. Again, a cousin of the above, is the monkey pot tree (*Lecythis pisonis*) a handsome-leaved, medium-sized Heritage Tree from tropical south America.

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Legumes Perhaps the largest tropical tree family, the Fabaceae, have many fine specimens in the garden, including: *Adenanthera malayana*; *Albizia lebbekoides*, a Heritage Tree reaching 46 m; *Amherstia nobilis*, a few small trees, with long leaves, new ones limp and pale; unfortunately, not in flower; *Bauhinia*, small with distinctive butterfly leaves; *Brownea* species from tropical south America resembling amherstias, with big, red balls of flowers; *Butea monosperma*, not in flower; leopard tree (*Caesalpinia ferrea*), these are Brazillian trees with the most beautiful bark, mottled yellow, grey and white; *Caesalpinia pulcherrima*, lovely red-flowered shrubs from the Caribbean; *Callerya atropurpurea*, the purple milletia Heritage Tree is a tall, imposing, native; *Cassia fistula* drooped over Symphony Lake, unfortunately, not in flower; *Poinciana*, or Fame of the Forest (*Delonix regia*) sported a few red flowers; a huge tree from tropical America is the West Indian locust (*Hymenaea courbaril*) with almost joined butterfly leaves.

The giant rain forest tree, Kempas, (*Koompassia excelsa*) has smooth, grey bark. Fine Angsana trees (*Pterocarpus indicus*) line some routes. A huge, spreading, Heritage Tree, the rain tree (*Samanea saman*) stands near the Nassim Gate; some smaller ones, surrounding the bandstand have yellow leaves. *Saraca cauliflora*, is a medium-sized tree with fragrant bunches of yellow flowers growing out of the trunk and branches. There is the famous



Variegated Madagascar almond (*Terminalia mantaly* 'Tricolor') is a popular amenity tree.

Indian Tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*). All of the legumes are from south or southeast Asia unless otherwise stated.

A large, spreading tree with a wide distribution on tropical coasts is *Calophyllum inophyllum*. Native also to Singapore, this is a Heritage Tree with heavy, spreading limbs, covered in thick, glossy leaves and epiphytes. Native *Cratoxylum* species have attractive, patterned bark. Sri Lanka's national tree, the Ceylon ironwood (*Mesua ferrea*) sports new, limp leaves of a pinkish hue. The Lauraceae are represented by various genera, including *Cinnamomum*, and *Litsea*.

Common on tropical sea coasts is the sea hibiscus, (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*); the



Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*) is a tall timber tree with a massive unbuttressed trunk.

Malvaceae now include the old family Bombacaceae, which have been mentioned earlier (Baobab, Ceiba, etc.)

Andiroba (*Carapa guianensis*) is a Heritage Tree, a member of the Meliaceae, so once considered for timber, from tropical south America. An African mahogany, *Khaya senegalensis*, was planted by Lee Kuan Yew in 1980 as a 12 ft sapling; now, less than 40 years later, it is a huge, buttressed, Heritage Tree. There are many true tropical American mahoganies (*Swietenia macrophylla* and *Swietenia mahagoni*) in the garden.

Similarly, there are many species of breadfruit trees *Artocarpus* sp.; all from south and southeast Asia, many with large, deeply cut leaves. Of course, there are many large fig trees in the garden; *Ficus kurzii* from Burma is a massive

Heritage Tree; *F. kerkhovenii*, a rare native, is also a Heritage Tree; *F. variegata* has a reddish stem covered in woody protruberances.

There are many trees of the nutmeg family, as the garden experimented in the spice and medicinal trade with plants such as *Myristica* and *Horsfieldia*.

The familiar native, the Tembusu, (*Fagraea fragrans*) has a Heritage Tree status and there are many specimens in the garden. A medium to tall tree with thin, shiny leaves set in pairs, it flowers in, roughly, May/June and again, sometimes, in Oct/Nov. I noticed some little, berry-like fruits on one tree and some early, very fragrant, small cream-coloured flowers on another.

There are many crepe myrtle trees (*Lagerstroemia*), the best known is *L. indica*, which is medium-sized, but there taller ones. All are from south and southeast Asia. None was noticeably flowering.

The Myrtaceae are well represented with, amongst others, *Callistemon* and very many species of the southeast Asian *Syzygium*, particularly *S. grande*, the sea apple and jambos, the rose apple. There are some young *Tristaniaopsis* with attractive bark. Small *Leptospermum* trees weep over orchids in the Orchid Garden.

Tropical African *Mussaenda erythrophylla* bushes are striking with large, pink bracts and small, yellow flowers.

The Sapindaceae is strong in the tropical fruit section including *Dimocarpus longan*, a small tree with long leaves and with popular little sweet fruits; it also includes the fern tree (*Filicium decipiens*), a medium tree from south Asia with attractive fern-like foliage.

Similarly the Sapotaceae with the star apple (*Chrysophyllum cainito*) and southeast Asian Gutta Pecha (*Palaquium* sp.) has cup-shaped flushes of bronzy, new leaves. Very many trees in the garden are sprouting vigorous new growth, as, although it is technically autumn Singapore is seasonless.

I haven't mentioned the reds and yellows of the various species of ginger, or the calliandra's red powder-puff flowers, or the similar colours of the heliconias, or the drifts of colourful orchids painting the garden.

Another tree (not mentioned in the official book listing all the plants in the gardens) is the tall, slim, golden chain tree (*Lophanthera lactescens*) from South America; I saw a row of these trees, with long chains of small yellow flowers beside Swan Lake, which is the first lake you reach after entering the gardens.

I was pondering over a young native tree, *Bhesa robusta*, with very large, long leaves—pondering because it is usually known for its impressive size.

A large depression in the garden is known as Palm Valley—set in immaculately cut grass, and, randomly, set in other parts of the garden, are 248 different species of palms. Perhaps the most memorable is the native sealing wax palm, with its bright scarlet leaf sheaths (*Cyrtostachys renda*).

There is a giant cola tree (*Cola gigantea*) from tropical west Africa, planted by Nelson Mandela some years ago; now it is massive, with huge heart-shaped leaves and has Heritage Tree status. *Heritiera elata* is a tall, native tree

with oval-shaped leaves that are erratically deciduous, lasting, sometimes for two years; it is a Heritage Tree. At the entrance to the garden, stand two tall, handsome, *Pterygota alata* trees, very symmetrical with regular, columnar branching and large leaves, from south and southeast Asia.

So many listed trees and shrubs I did not specifically notice, either because they had no obvious peculiarities or they were in areas of the garden I somehow missed.

Sentosa

A causeway connects the mainland with this island in the south. I crossed, and immediately stumbled into a theme park. However, around Imbiah Hill in the east, some secondary rainforest remains. Leading to this is a very professional and informative learning centre explaining the forest and how it works.

A walkway cuts through this nature reserve in which the most memorable plants are vast clumps of the native Nibong palm (*Oncosperma tigillarium*), tall weeping palms with a clothing of sharp spines to about a third of the way up the trunk.

The island has the following species of Heritage Trees, some with two or three representatives: *Litsea elliptica*, *Alstonia angustiloba*, *A. scholaris*, *Artocarpus integer*, *Syzygium lineatum*, *S. grande*, *Bhesa robusta*, *Draceana maingayi*, *Ficus vasculosa*, *F. kerkhovenii*, *Garcinia hombroniana*, *Fagraea fragrans*, *Parkia speciosa* all native; *Pterocarpus indicus* and *Vitex pubescens* from southeast Asia; *Ficus religiosa* and *Mimusops elengi* from south Asia; and, *Swietenia macrophylla* from tropical America.

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Gardens by the Bay

This massive development project comprises architectural extravaganzas and extensive planting. Two enormous domed glasshouses provide environments for cloud forest, African and Mediterranean plantings. By far the best component of the development is the external planting which was obviously influenced by, if not directed by the Botanic Gardens (however the labelling is substandard). Planting design, with grouping, groves, and themed gardens, is good and I mention below things which caught my eye (the trees, of course, are fairly young).

- A circle of *Pachira aquatica* enclosing a large lawn. These are very attractive trees with their digitate leaves of five or six leaflets. Some were flowering with sprays of long, reddish/ white stamens.
- The themed British Colonial garden contained rubber, nutmeg and cocoa trees and coffee bushes.
- The new leaves on the litchi trees (*Litchi chinensis*) were emerging pure white!
- At the four corners of a square enclosing a substantial tree (species forgotten) stood four smallish *Amherstia nobilis*, sadly not in flower,



Sealing wax palm (*Cyrtostachys renda*) at the Kranji War Memorial.

with drooping leaves and brown, long, limp, new leaves.

- Standing alone, a large native Sepetir (*Sindora wallichii*), planted in memory of Lee Quan Yew. One such tree, a very old, tall specimen, stood at Changi in the east; known as the Changi Tree, it was featured on pre-war navigation charts and was destroyed by British forces in 1942 as the Japanese used it as a marker to aim their guns.
- There are well thought out plantings of *Ceiba*, *Plumeria*, *Ficus*, *Baobab*, *Albizia*, *Shorea* and many more genera; as a bonus, a *Cassia fistula* was wearing its tresses of yellow flowers.

Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve

Near to the north west of Kranji, this reserve provides trails and board-walks along the banks of the Straits of Johore. The attraction is the visiting sea birds, there are hides along the trails, and the mangroves through which the board-walk winds.

The trees are waterside dwellers, the iconic one being *Terminalia catappa*, an unmistakable tall tree with its tiered branching system, rising pagoda-like carrying large leaves. *Barringtonia asiatica* is common too, a medium-sized large-leaved tree with attractive flower sprays of long red/white stamens. Another waterside tree is *Calophyllum inophyllum* similar, though not so big, as the one in the Botanical Gardens. The ubiquitous waterside tropical tree, *Hibiscus*

photograph © Graham Baker



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Pulai Basong (*Alstonia pneumatophora*), a member of the Apocynaceae is a giant, buttressed native with a high, lacy crown.

tiliaceus has familiar heart-shaped leaves.

There are many species of mangrove, perhaps the most common being *Avicennia alba*; *Sonneratia alba*; *Xylocarpus granatum*; *Ceriops tagal* and *Heritiera littoralis*. Crocodiles drowse beneath the mangroves and long-tailed macaques weave through the trees. A timid mother macaque and child tried to share my lunch.

Changi

Next to the notorious jail is a museum containing the story of the suffering of the people of Singapore during the occupation by the Japanese. The story includes the role of the jail in that suffering.

Nearby is suburban Singapore; no high-rise condominiums as in downtown, but individual bungalows and houses, well gardened with fine trees and trimmed lawns. The street trees are familiar *Angsana* and its Asian colleagues.

Suburbs, as they do in the West, end up against small natural woods. Changi is in the far east of the island.

Bukit Timah

This is a nature reserve in the centre of the island where a large proportion of the remaining three percent of Singapore's primary and secondary rain forest is treasured.

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Bukit means 'hill' and the hill is clothed by the forest with an access road running to the top. The highest point is 164 metres with a latitude of 1.21 degrees north of the Equator. Tree labelling is fairly good, backed up by a very instructive visitor centre. I note below some of the trees which caught my attention:

- *Parastemon urophyllus*, a very tall secondary forest species.
- *Shorea curtisii*, many of them; tall, red/brown trunks, soaring clean of branches, straight, unbuttressed, topped by a narrow crown. Known in the timber trade as *Seraya*. These were the type species fixing the species name in 1938.
- *Litsea firma*, blue laurel.
- *Pertusadina eurhyncha*, a tall lattice-like trunk and attractive elliptic leaves.
- *Pellacalix saccardianus*, although a member of the Rhizophoraceae, it is not a mangrove. A tree with many long, narrow leaflets.
- *Gluta wallichii*, a very tall tree with long leaves in whorls. Borneo rosewood, or *Rengas* (*Gluta reinghas*) was introduced to Singapore from Malaya in 1890 for timber production.
- *Garcinia parvifolia*, a tall tree related to the mangosteen (*G. × mangostana*).
- *Calophyllum ferrugineum*, a medium-sized tree with the pretty white flowers with yellow stamens of the family.
- *Syzygium antisepticum*, next to the visitor centre are four or five small/medium trees with beautiful, red flaky bark and smallish, elliptical,

opposite leaves. These trees are not labelled and remained a mystery to me until I found one at the Botanic Gardens.

- *Palaquium microphyllum*, a very tall tree with glossy, elliptic leaves.
- *Strombosia javanica*, again, very tall with alternate, glossy elliptic leaves.
- *Parishia insignis*, this is a massive Heritage Tree with a dark, buttressed trunk and large, pinnate leaves.
- *Timonius wallichianus*, an attractive small tree with the elliptic leaves having a silvery underside.
- *Pometia pinnata*, another very tall tree with whirls of large pinnate leaves, some of them red (presumably new).
- *Hopea mengarawan*, a large dipterocarp.
- *Syzygium polyanthum*, a medium-sized tree known as the Indian bay leaf.
- *Streblus elongatus*, a big, rounded tree of the fig family.
- *Vernonia arborea*, a medium-sized tree with daisy-like flowers.
- *Shorea leprosula*, a very tall, buttressed timber tree with bark similar to *S. curtisii* though more grey. Many in the reserve; known as Meranti.
- *Dyera costulata*, this is the tall timber tree known as Jelutong with a massive, unbuttressed trunk and attractive, digitate leaves.
- *Ficus variegata*, the red-stemmed fig with peg-like protrusions on the trunk.
- *Cycas rumphii*, a small cycad tree in the middle of giant timbers!
- *Santiria laevigata*, a big tree with bright green elliptic leaves, a tree with potential to become a dominant.
- *Lithocarpus cantleyanus*, cousin of the oaks, this is a very tall tree with glossy, elliptic leaves.
- *Bertholletia excelsa*: adjacent to the Reserve is Hindhede Park, containing a massive, lake-filled quarry. A Heritage Tree in the park is a huge Brazil nut.
- *Alstonia angustiloba*, also in the park, is a fine Pulai tree which has Heritage status in the Botanic Gardens.

Fort Canning Hill

This hill features in downtown Singapore and was the site of the early colonial administrative buildings. The hill is large enough to contain a substantial area of parkland (presumably cleared rain forest) where extensive amenity tree planting was done. Many of these trees have now grown to maturity and are enormous. Among those that caught my eye are as follows:

- *Cratoxylum cochinchinense*, an attractive small/medium-sized tree with pale grey/ brown flaking bark and cascades of smallish, pale green, opposite elliptic leaves.
- *Peltophorum pterocarpum*, yellow flame (big).
- *Ficus variegata*, red stem fig (big).
- *Filicium decipiens*, attractive medium tree with fern-like leaves.
- *Fagraea fragrans*, Tembusu, many fine trees.
- *Cinnamomum iners*, Kayu Manis. A small/medium tree with reddish/

pink young leaves.

- *Ceiba pentandra*, two huge silk cotton Heritage Trees, one has lost its top.
- *Pithecellobium dulce*, five Heritage Trees, big trees with small leaves on untidy branches. From tropical America, naturalised in southeast Asia.
- *Melaleuca cajuputi*, quite a big tree, from the Myrtaceae.
- *Aleurites moluccanus*, candlenut tree. Two quite big with variable leaves, large and some maple-like.
- *Artocarpus elasticus*, two magnificent, very big, Heritage Trees (Terap) with large leaves, sometimes oval, sometimes deeply cut.
- *Sterculia parviflora*, a young specimen of a medium tree, popular for its shape and yellow / pinkish flowers.
- *Ficus auriculata*, a lovely small wide tree with huge, light green, heart-shaped leaves, new ones emerging brown / red.
- *Samanea saman*, many huge Heritage rain trees, covered in epiphytes.
- *Phyllanthus emblica*, Indian gooseberry tree; a small, very useful tree.
- *Dalbergia oliveri*, this medium specimen will get tall and is known as Burmese Rosewood. Long, arching pinnate leaves made up of numerous, small leaflets. Another specimen in the Park (which I didn't see) has Heritage Tree status.
- *Pangium edule*, a big tree with large, ovate leaves. A native of the mangrove swamps of southeast Asia, it bears large, poisonous fruits. There is a big Heritage Tree in the Botanic Gardens.
- *Syzygium malaccense*; *Cananga odorata*, Ylang Ylang, not in flower; and *Libidibia ferrea*, leopard tree, a big one! All good specimens.
- *Eurycoma longifolia*, this is a lovely small tree with a pattern of long, dense, pinnate leaves radiating in circles.
- *Averrhoa carambola*, starfruit is a small tree with nice pinnate leaves and the prettiest mauve / pink flowers (which develop into edible, star-shaped fruit) growing directly out of the trunk.
- *Flacourtia jangomas*, Indian cherry is an attractive small tree with red berry-like edible fruits.
- *Phyllanthus acidus*, lovely radiating pinnate leaves on this small tree from tropical South America, unlike the other gooseberry tree *P. emblica*, which is from south and southeast Asia.
- *Cola nitida*, unlike *C. gigantea*, this attractive, medium tree, the kola nut has smaller, elliptic leaves and produces the kola nuts of commerce. Again from tropical Africa.
- *Enterolobium cyclocarpum*, the elephant's ear tree from tropical south America. There are three of these massive trees in the same vicinity, with Heritage Tree status.
- *Garcinia atroviridis*, a medium / tall tree from Assam with a lace-like pattern of pinnate leaves when seen from below.
- *Gnetum gnemon*; *Cinnamomum verum*, cinnamon; *Myristica fragrans*,

nutmeg; *Syzygium aromaticum*, clove; and *Averrhoa bilimbi*. All good specimens.

- *Parkia speciosa*, the Petai is a tall tree with a spreading crown of finely pinnate leaves and bunches of green, edible seed pods.
- *Sindora wallichii*, the Sepitir is a big tree with a huge unbuttressed trunk, spreading with oval, glossy, pinnate leaves. There is one at Changi with Heritage Tree status.
- *Parkia timoriana*, a big timber tree with leaves like *Albizia*. It differs from *P. speciosa* in small botanical details; *P. speciosa* is classed as vulnerable.
- *Terminalia mantaly* 'Tricolor', this is a lovely variegated version of the small/medium Madagascar almond. With the usual tiered branching system of the genus, *T. 'Tricolor'* has masses of smallish whitey/greeny/pinky leaves. It is a popular amenity tree.
- *Delonix regia*, a few specimens of this universal favourite. At least one is a Heritage tree.
- *Barringtonia racemosa*, a small mangrove tree of Africa's east coast, coastal Asia and southeast Asia with lovely pinky/white powder-puff flowers.
- *Diospyros blancoi*, a group of medium trees with shiny, darkish green elliptical leaves.
- *Hura crepitans*, the sand box tree; a very tall, spreading, tropical American tree with nice, smallish, heart-shaped leaves.
- *Hopea odorata*; *Tectona grandis* and *Swietenia macrophylla*. Tall, good specimens of these timber trees.
- *Artocarpus camansi*, the breadnut; a line of medium trees with quite deeply cut leaves.
- *Hibiscus tiliaceus*, familiar small coastal trees.
- *Artocarpus altilis*, the breadfruit; a big tree with cut leaves similar to *A. camansi*.
- *Casuarina* sp.; *Dillenia indica* (nice leaves); and *Dyera costulata* (Jelutong). All good specimens.

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People

I often felt a closeness to and the presence of some of the people who gave Singapore this tree heritage: Henry Ridley, Director, Botanic Gardens, 1888 to 1912, introduced *Hevea brasiliensis* (rubber) to Malaya. Wrote *The Flora of Singapore*, 1900. Identified *Alangium ridleyi* in 1892 and *Heritiera elata* in ca. 1900.

E. J. H. Corner, Assistant Director, Botanic Gardens, 1929 to 1945. Wrote *Wayside Trees of Malaya*, 1988. Introduced *Dryobalanops aromatica*, 1942 from Malayan forests that have now disappeared.

Lady Yuen-Peng McNeice, ardent supporter of conservation in Singapore—the tallest tree in the Botanical Gardens, *Terminalia subspatulata* is dedicated to her.

Lee Quan Yew, founder of modern Singapore who had a vision of a city in a garden; work which he started and has since been achieved.

So many more people were/are involved, of course, and a current task is to guard what has been achieved against the further spread of development concrete.