

DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER NOTES

RECORDS OF INTERESTING EXOTIC TREES IN THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS, PERADENIYA

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IT has often been remarked that the beauty of the Gardens at Peradeniya lies in its magnificent tree specimens. This is doubtless true since we have many such specimens, but other factors assist in this respect and chiefly in the ideal site with its many but mild undulations selected for the establishment of the Botanic Gardens by Alexander Moon in 1821, combined with the policy throughout the years of maintaining open spaces whereby such tree specimens can be set off to advantage.

This is however but one aspect of these Gardens. The more important as the designation implies, is in the botanic and economic nature of its contents whereby it has attained and maintains an historical interest in the tropical world. By means of much investigation, patience and diligence the early Directors of the Gardens acquired in the years a variety of plants, many subsequently of much fame, that might under our conditions assist in the improvement and expansion of the Island's agricultural and horticultural resources. To the services of the three Directors, Mr. George Gardner (1844 to 1849), Dr. G.H.K. Thwaites (1849 to 1880) and Dr. Henry Trimen (1880 to 1896) whose combined supervision of these Gardens extended over a period of 52 years, the Gardens and this Island is much indebted. It was from 1850 to 1890 that the introduction and acclimatisation sphere of garden work was carried on with its maximum vigour and with many successes. among other things then introduced may be mentioned rubber, cacao, cinchona, vanilla, a large number of plants of minor importance, new varieties of fruits, vegetable and flowers, many shade and timber trees, &c., while the spread of the cultivation of tea, cloves, nutmeg and many other things has also been largely helped by the introduction of good kinds through these Gardens.

Among the exotic trees at Peradeniya there are still a good many of interest and of which the original introductions still survive and it is the object of these notes to recall their introduction and record progress of those that have at date attained a life of 60 years, that is plants whose introduction date is 1884 and earlier.

The Gardens were established at Peradeniya in 1821, and it can be stated with a fair amount of confidence that our giant Mango on the River Drive in Arboretum with height of approximately 120 and girth of 18 feet was existent at the opening of the Gardens.

The oldest tree now in existence of which we have definite records of introduction is that of *Ficus elastica* the "Assam" or "Rambong Rubber"

introduced to Ceylon in 1835. An avenue of the trees was originally planted and formed a striking landmark on the left hand side of entrance to Gardens on the site now occupied with conifers, and two others were planted at top of the present Flower Garden. Their enormous buttressed roots spreading over the surface of the ground were for many years a source of interest to visitors. Owing to too close planting however those along frontage began to crumble away about 1905, and by 1914, all had been removed. One of the two trees planted at Flower Garden just failed to reach its centenary and collapsed and was removed in 1933. This tree had a circumference of 35 feet and the spread of surface roots was just over 100 feet. The remaining tree still survives having now lost all traces of its buttressed roots and greater part of its main stem. The latex of this tree was reputed as one of the early sources of a crude rubber but was superseded with the introduction of Para, Ceara and Panama rubbers.

On the left of the Main Drive stands a fine old specimen of *Hura crepitans* the "Sand box" tree and introduced from Tropical South America in 1848. It is an ornamental tree mainly, but is noted for its explosive capsules, the fruits when treated being used as paper weights and, when wired together were used as sand boxes before the era of blotting paper. A poisonous milky juice is also obtained from the bark. Little use has however been made locally of this introduction.

In section *G* on right of road to Botanist's Office is a huge specimen of *Durio zibethinus*, the "Durian", introduced here from the Malay Islands in 1850. This specimen must be fully 120 feet in height and has a circumference at base of over 15 feet. This and the large tree in section *P* are therefore the parents of the trees now seen about the country, the fruit of which is despised by some but by many others (and the Malayese in particular) is held in the highest relish if demands for the fruit in its season here is a criterion.

The double Coconut palm or "Coco-de-mer" of the Seychelles *Lodoicea callipyge* (*Sechellarum*) was first introduced into this Island in 1850, and a fine specimen of a male tree stands in section *P* but though approaching its centenary is not yet full grown. There is no female tree in the Gardens but there may be such among the younger palms planted in 1904, which have yet to fruit. In 1884 other plants were received from the Seychelles and planted at Heneratgoda, one of which is a female plant. This tree flowered first in 1911 and after fertilization with pollen from the male plant at Peradeniya (sent down by post) set fruits in the same year and has since borne fruit profusely.

A fruit tree introduced, though it has never come to the fore, is that of *Sandoricum indicum* the "Santol" of Malaya first received here in 1852, and the original of which still stands in the old fruit plot in section *L*. Though a fruit tree, it is, like the durian, obviously no orchard tree since it towers to roughly 100 feet and has a girth at base of over 12 feet. It is however a very ornamental and handsome tree and fruits freely. The tree produces large clusters of yellow globular fruits, suggesting small oranges. The soft white arils of the seed have, like the rambuttan, a sweetish acid taste and is reported excellent for jellies. It is seen in cultivation in the country but not extensively so.

Another introduction of the year 1852 is that of *Duabanga moluccana* obtained from the Moluccas. This tree attains huge dimensions and is very handsome with its loosely drooping branches. Its timber value when tested was poor, the wood being very brittle but the tree forms a striking feature on the Great Lawn, section *G* and in the Arboretum.

Many travellers in Ceylon must at times have appreciated the shelter of that fine roadside tree "Inga" or *Enterolobium Saman*. It was first introduced here in 1851 by seed from Tropical South America and the seedlings put out in their present site in sections *E* and *M* in 1853. The specimen in section *E* is a magnificent one over 100 feet in height with a fine canopy of branches and over 17 feet in stem diameter at base. The tree is called the "Rain tree", accountable probably to the fact that the small pinnate leaves which form a canopy of shade when fully extended on sunny days, practically close up on dull days, and fully so at night, enabling a green sward of grass to be maintained beneath the tree in times of drought whilst the surrounding ground is parched and brown. The seed pods contain a sugary pulp which cattle seem to relish. The timber is recognized elsewhere as good but little use has so far been made of it in Ceylon though it is distributed over a very wide area in this country and further East.

Next on the list is the Giant Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus giganteus*) and it needs no exhaustive description here as to its many merits. In the Gardens it is largely grown and utilized for pots, for plant barriers, for grass cutting swords and numerous other purposes. It was originally introduced here in 1856, by means of a vegetative shoot sent from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Calcutta. Our introduction has in its time been propagated vegetatively and distributed widely, and itself now constitutes a huge clump growing in the South Garden in vicinity of the Lake. When last measured in 1942, it had a girth measurement of 193 feet, and 406 stems, the largest of which was 9½ inches at its greatest diameter and well over 100 feet in height. The rate of growth of stem in the months of June-July exceed 12 inches per day. It seeds occasionally but only a small percentage of the seed (much like grains of wheat) is viable.

Another introduction of 1856 is a little known but ornamental tree *Lafoensia vandelliana* of Brazil. It is a medium sized tree with small ever-green leaves and branches so shaped to form a very handsome appearance. Its suitability as a roadside tree where roads are too narrow for the normal roadside tree and root restriction is imposed, has not been overlooked as it is so employed in Colombo and Kandy and in other parts. The parent tree is in section *G*, near Herbarium, but not enough has yet been made of this species.

Following the sequence of introductions come the "Doum" palm, *Hyphaene thebaica* from the Sudan and Upper Egypt in 1863. Palms generally have straight single stems but this fan palm is one of the very few with a branching habit and a rare occurrence. The specimen is a fine one though now old and reaches a height of 40 feet or so. It bears yellow orange coloured fruits which are reputed to be edible but as grown here are of poor flavour. Botanically this is an interesting specimen owing to the changes the plant has undergone on changed environment. Blatter in "Palms of British India" quotes Haechel in this respect as follows: "Adaptation to perfectly different conditions of existence have made the Doum palm of

Egypt quite another tree in Ceylon. The trunk is developed to at least double the thickness, much larger than in its native land ; the forked branches are more numerous but shorter and more closely grown ; the enormous fan-leaves are much larger, more abundant and more solid ; and even the flowers and fruit, so far as my memory served me, seemed to be finer and more abundant. At any rate, the whole habit of the tree had so greatly changed in the hothouse climate of Ceylon that the inherited physiognomy of the tree had lost many of its most characteristic features. And all this was the result of a change of external conditions and consequent adaptation, more particularly of the greater supply of moisture which had been brought to bear, from its earliest youth, on a plant accustomed to the dry desert climate of North Africa. These splendid trees at Peradeniya had been raised from Egyptian seed, and in twenty years had grown to a height of thirty feet." Haechel visited Peradeniya in 1888, and refers to the present specimens in the South Garden.

A stately, if sombre and giant tree of which the Gardens have several specimens is the "Kauri" pine of Queensland, *Agathis robusta*, introduced here in 1865. A second introduction was made somewhere about 1888 also. The earlier introductions are of vast size, the specimen in section *E* towering up with a very clean straight stem which measures over 16 feet at base and the tree is yet young as age goes for such conifers. Of the double stemmed specimens one exceeds 20 feet girth at base, and girth measurements taken annually show regular increases. In Australia the timber of this tree has many uses but no test has yet been made of Ceylon specimens principally because no specimen has yet reached maturity. Though the tree bears cones frequently it rarely sets fertile seeds so that its distribution in any quantity is yet a problem.

Another striking conifer introduction of 1865 is the "Cooks" pine "*Araucaria Cookii*" from New Caledonia, and named after the celebrated explorer, Captain Cook. It is a very tall tree, conical in shape with short horizontal branches and at Peradeniya is the tallest of any of its trees and probably of any in the Island. The specimen in Monument Drive had attained a height of 170 feet when measured a few years ago but in its nature habitat it is reported to attain 200 feet, the timber making very straight and imposing shafts. A tree felled some years ago was tested for timber value and found to be soft, fairly coarse and not unlike the English Deal and could doubtless be used for similar purposes. It rarely seeds, however, but the young seedlings make very ornamental pot plants not unlike the Norfolk Island pine so commonly grown for pot purposes in European countries.

Though the Tea plant proper, *Camellia sinensis*, was introduced in the Island as early as 1824 and 1839, and elsewhere than Peradeniya, the introduction by these Gardens in 1867 of the "Assam hybrid", considered to be a natural hybrid between the Assam and the China varieties, paved the way for its commercial cultivation in the Island. There still survives, in section *E* some original plants of this introduction but Hakgala Gardens possess the bulk of this introduction still represented by some very fine bushes. This subject needs no further details here since it is grown on such a scale and is one of the principal exports having risen from 73 lb. in 1873 to well over 200 million lb. at the present time.

In section *P*, just inside gate entrance on left stands the "Upas" tree, *Antiaris toxicaria* introduced from Java in 1869. It is a tree of many legends among the local population since there is a Ceylon species of similar characteristics. The "Upas" tree is the celebrated "Ordeal" tree of Java at one time supposed to give off poisonous fumes fatal to animal life. The sap (or latex) of the tree certainly contains a violent poison used effectively in old days for poisoning darts and arrows, its effects resembling that of strychnine. It has also been reported that the pollen which bursts freely in miniature explosions in the dry months, causes Asthma. The Ceylon form, the "Riti", has not these poisonous characteristics but the inner bark is particularly tough and stringy and which is beaten into shape and affords a sacking.

In 1871 three useful ornamental and timber trees were introduced and have developed into fine specimens. These are, *Pahudia javanica* of the Malay Isles and *Hardwickia pinnata* of South India, both still represented in the South Garden collection, and a very fine specimen off the Great Circle of *Casuarina rumphiana* from Amboyna. *Pahudia* and *Hardwickia* have a reputation of very good and sound timbers, whilst *Casuarina*, a relative of the Australian "Beefwood" or "She-oak", is not only a valuable timber but is also a very fine tree for landscape effect. The Garden specimen of this species is a large one well over 100 feet in height and with a girth of 13½ feet at base. No great use has however been made of any of these trees to date.

The year 1876 was notorious for its introduction of the parent trees of our present rubber industry. This was another of the industrial enterprises undertaken by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, on behalf of Eastern countries, and the following extract from that year's report of Dr. Hooker, the Kew Director is interesting. He states: "On the 14th of June, 1875, Mr. H. A. Wickham, a resident in the Amazons, who had been commissioned by the India Office to collect seeds of the *Hevea brasiliensis*, arrived in England with 70,000, obtained on the River Tapajos. In consequence of their retaining vitality for but a very short period they were all sown the day after arrival and, though not contained in pans, covered a space of over 300 square feet, closely packed together. About 3¾ per cent. germinated and upwards of 1,000 plants were transmitted on August 12, in 38 Wardian cases, made specially to accommodate the rapid growth of the seedlings, to Ceylon, under charge of a gardener. Of the whole consignment 90 per cent. of the plants reached Dr. Thwaites in excellent condition. From Ceylon the Para rubber plants were distributed to those parts of our Eastern possessions where they were likely to be successfully established. Both in Ceylon and elsewhere they have grown into large trees, and have produced seed abundantly." The trees of the original introduction survive and are looking well in the South Garden section but the bulk of the consignment received in 1876 were planted at Heneratgoda (now Gampaha) for which purpose these Gardens were in the same year acquired and opened. The famous No. 2 tree in the original plantation at Heneratgoda is still a very healthy tree and a source of attraction, and is the parent of much of the seedling rubber in the Island.

Near the Talipot avenue in South Garden is a clump of small trees of the "Kola-nut" (*Cola acuminata*) the seed of which was introduced here in 1879. The tree is native of West Tropical Africa, where it is reputed to rank next to the Oil palm in order of importance. It is naturalized and

cultivated in the West Indies also as a minor crop but in Ceylon its value has yet to be fully appreciated though it is grown and a small quantity occasionally exported. The nuts containing much caffeine, have stimulating and sustaining properties when chewed and are a staple diet of the West Africans. The nuts are skinned after keeping for a few days and packed between leaves to keep them damp if required for domestic use, but dried and put in strong bags when required for export. The trees seed fairly freely at Peradeniya.

In the moist deep and alluvial soil of the Gardens river bank below the ornamental nursery is a clump of the "Sago" palm (*Metroxylon Sagu*) introduced to the Gardens in 1880 from Malaya. By cultivation of its root suckers or shoots as the older stems die down, the original clump has been maintained. This palm is the source of commercial Sago. The palm stem is cut down when the flower spike appears, which occurs when the stem reaches from 15 to 20 years and about 25 to 30 feet in height. The rhizomes at base continue the life of the plant so that stems are available for use at regular intervals. The Sago is obtained from the pith of the mature stem by crushing and washing. It is one of the few plants that like wet feet, being found in nature usually in fresh water swamps. It rarely produces seed but is easily propagated by root division and the thornless variety is considered to be the most profitable in yield of Sago. Something might yet be made of this in low country inland swamp areas, and if given the necessary attention in the early days they cater for themselves from thence onwards.

The Gardens contain many trees yielding "Gutta percha" which at the present time is a very valuable product, and unfortunately the world supplies are obtained chiefly and in bulk from Malaya and Java. The "Gutta percha" proper, *Palaquium (Dichopsis) Gutta* was introduced here as early as 1869 and the "Gutta sundeh" *Payena Leerii* was introduced here in 1880; the "Gutta taban simpoo" *Palaquium (Dichopsis) Maingayi* in 1882, and the "Gutta taban putip" *Palaquium oxeleyanum (syn. Dichopsis pustulata)* in 1882, all from Malaya. The "Bully tree" or "Balata", *Mimusops globosa* another gutta yielding type of tree from Central America and the West Indies was introduced here in 1884. All are very slow growing trees, the best gutta being obtained from the *Palaquium* species. The latex can be obtained from incisions of the bark but the general means of obtaining the gutta is by extraction from the leaves and twigs by solvents. The gutta is mainly used for insulation of deep sea-cables, goloshes, soles of boots and shoes, golf balls and many other purposes. Most of our specimens are in the South Garden but a fine specimen of *Dichopsis Maingayi* can be seen at entrance to Economic nursery.

In 1880 was introduced also a very ornamental conifer, *Podocarpus cupressina* of Fiji, Burma and Java of which some fine specimens stand on the summit of South Garden hill. Like all conifers it is particularly ornamental and has reputed timber value and can be clipped to any desirable shape for garden ornamental purposes. Normally the tree is pyramid-shaped and in its natural habitat is a striking handsome tree.

The year 1881 saw a large number of useful acquisitions among which were many ornamentals. The "Cannon ball" tree (*Couroupita guianensis*) from Tropical America is typical and fine specimens are grown here both in South Garden and near Nursery. It has a very attractive flower, fleshy,

pink and white in colour, crowded along the stem of tree from the base upwards, and a very curious fruit from which it derives its name, the fruit being six to eight inches in diameter but with an offensive odour when ripe. Other introductions in the same year were the "Chaulmoogra oil" plant, *Gynocardia odorata* from Burma now superseded in oil value by the more recent introduction of *Taraktogenus* and *Hydnocarpus*. There is a large tree in the South Garden with others in their order in the Arboretum. The oil was in early days used in the treatment of leprosy.

Among useful timbers introduced in 1881 were the "Mora" tree of Guiana, *Dimorphandra Mora* a very large tree of the greenheart type affording a hard durable wood used for sleepers, paving and the like. The "Crabwood" of Guiana, *Carapa guianensis* another large tree giving excellent timber of mahogany grade used for buildings and for timber, *Canarium bengalense* from Silhet, a very large tree, our specimen measuring 14 feet 3 inches in circumference at base, which gives a light white wood used for packing chests, shingles, &c., and which is resinous. In this year also was introduced the fine flowering and timber tree *Buckinghamia celsissima* from Queensland, a mono-typic genus of which a fine specimen stands in the South Garden, together with a tree brought to public notice of late, the "Tonka bean" tree (*Dipteryx odorata*) of Brazil and Guiana. The seeds or beans of this tree are used for flavouring, a "tincture of Tonka" being occasionally employed as a substitute for Vanilla. Its chief use however is in perfumery, the seed having the odour of new mown hay due to the presence of Coumarin and is in good demand as a sachet powder and for scenting soaps, tobacco, snuff, &c. The seeds are subjected to a crystallisation process being soaked in alcohol for 24 hours and dried slowly. With the last crop from our tree the seed was thus treated and found a ready demand in the Colombo market at five cents per seed. The tree usually fruits once in every three years and gives a very high yield.

The notable introductions of 1882 were the very fine flowering tree *Lysidice rhodostegia* of Southern China and the "Lignum vitae" (*Guaiacum officinale*) of West Indies and Venezuela. The former is only now coming to the fore among our many flowering trees and is well worthy of cultivation. The parent tree stands in the South Garden section near the lake and many of its progeny are in other parts of the Gardens. It likes the low-country wet zones best and each January and February produces masses of rose purple flowers with pale pink scale-like leaves or bracts. As these leaves or bracts remain on the tree for a considerable time the tree is a valuable asset among the flowering tree selection.

The "Lignum Vitae" is a valuable and rare tree, the original plant of which can be found near the South Garden Talipot avenue. The wood is one of the hardest and close grained wood on the market and thereby, as is the English Boxwood, used for particular purposes only, mainly propeller shaft linings, chisel handles and the like. It is also among the heaviest of woods, approximating 84 lb. to the cubic foot. Growth is remarkably slow for the plant which in 1914 was 8 feet in height is in 1944 only just over 20 feet in height, the circumference of the stem being under 24 inches at base. The tree in cubic capacity probably ranks as the most expensive on the market, and incidentally the tree yields a medicinal gum known as Guaiacum resin.

Another fine flowering tree, *Stenocarpus sinuatus* from Queensland and New South Wales was introduced here in 1883, the parent tree of which thrives at summit of the South Garden hill. It has a good range of elevation and thrives even at Hakgala Gardens. It bears very showy scarlet flowers whereby it is known in its habitat as the "Fire" tree or "Tulip" tree of Queensland, the flowers incidentally being of very curious construction typical of its natural order Proteaceae among which are the well known Grevilleas. As it fruits so sparsely and can be propagated only by shoots from the root its distribution is much retarded.

Among timber trees introduced in the same year was the little known but valuable "Iron wood" tree of Brazil (*Caesalpinia ferrea*) examples of originals of which can be seen in the South Garden and in the flower garden near Orchid House. Little seems to be known of this tree outside Brazil where it is appreciated for its very hard and valuable timber which is of similar quality to our local Iron wood (*Mesua ferrea*.)

Among minor fruits introduced at this time was the "Rambek" or "Rambai" of Malaya and Sumatra (*Baccaurea motleyana*) a good specimen of which can be seen near the garden stores and another in the Heneratgoda Gardens. The fruits are in clusters of large smooth yellow berries which have a very acid juicy flavour. It is cultivated to some extent in Malaya but is so far little known in Ceylon.

In the final year which this article proposes to cover, *i.e.*, 1884 or sixty years ago, a wide range of introductions were experienced. There is the giant *Eucalyptus alba*, known as the Australian "White Gum" various specimens of which can be seen in the Gardens and elsewhere. It is a fine timber and the tree has a very smooth white bark. It is one of the few Eucalypti adapted to low elevations in the tropics as well as medium elevations and it thrives quite well in dry and semi-dry regions. The trees still growing in the old Botanic Gardens at Anuradhapura (now the compound of Grand Hotel, Anuradhapura) are fine specimens, thrive well and fruit very freely.

Although the flowering trees *Brownea coccinea* and *Brownea grandiceps* were introduced earlier, a very useful specimen in *Brownea ariza* was introduced in 1884 from Tropical America and the original specimen can be seen in section P. This specimen has dense round clusters of scarlet flowers and the foliage habit is more of a drooping nature than the others. It seeds freely and has been well distributed in recent years.

Among economics, the Indian "Butter tree" *Madhoca* (*Bassia*) *butyracea* was also introduced, there being several original trees still in the Gardens. It is common to Central India where it grows from 1,000 feet to 5,000 feet. A syrup is prepared from the flowers and can be made into a sugar. From the seed is extracted by expression a thick oil or fat often used in India for burning and for use externally for rheumatism. The tree thrives well at Peradeniya but does not seed at all freely.

In section A of Arboretum is a large spreading buttress-rooted tree, the original "Cigar box cedar" (*Cedrela odorata*) introduced in 1884 from West Indies. All the *Cedrelas* furnish useful cedar wood but the wood of this species is particularly fragrant when cut and is universally used for cigar box making. It is sometimes known as the "Jamaica" or "Honduras cedar" also.

A rare tree to be found in flower garden section and probably the only specimen in the East is the "Fustic" tree of West Indies and Tropical America (*Chlorophora tinctoria*). It is a large tree the heartwood of which yields a yellow to orange dye. This dye was much used in the last war for dyeing khaki cloth, the supplies coming mostly from Jamaica, and Trinidad. The fruit is much like a small mulberry but at Peradeniya no fertile seed has yet been found in the fruits and propagation is therefore difficult. It is incidentally a very ornamental foliage tree also.

Finally, there is the Chinese "Coffin tree" (*Persea nanmu*) a smallish tree of China, a specimen of which is growing on the South Garden hill. It is an ornamental tree conical in shape and evergreen. It is much planted around temples in China and the timber is noted for its durability and is used a good deal as its name implies, for coffins. Though not a scented wood it has much resemblance to the Camphor wood.

Introductions subsequent to 1884 are many but after 1900 the numbers begin to diminish, chiefly it can be presumed to the selection becoming to some extent exhausted. Those later introductions subsequent to 1884 contain many valuable trees which should be an interesting subject for future notes. They include a host of purely horticultural subjects and many useful economic plants of which the following are a few.

Aleurites montana—Tung oil.	Holarrhena antidysenterica—Coness bark.
Anona diversifolia—Ilama fruit.	Hydnocarpus anthelmintica—Leprosy oil.
Bactris minor—Peach palm.	Lecythis Zabucajo—Sapucaea nut.
Baikaea insignis—Flowering tree.	Maesopsis Birchemoides—Musisi timber of Uganda.
Brosimum Galactodendron—Cow tree.	Mascarenhasia elastica—Rubber.
Bursera delpechiana—Linaloa scent.	Monodora tenuifolia—Orchid flowering tree.
Butyrospermum Parkii—Shea butter.	Ochroma Lagopus—Balsa wood.
Byrsonima coriacea—Nance fruit.	Pentadesma butyracea—Butter tree.
Caryocar nuciferum—Souari nut.	Sapium Aucuparium—Rubber.
Caryocar butyrosum—Butter nut.	Swietenia macrophylla—Honduras mahogany.
Coffea stenophylla—Seirra Leone coffee.	Tabebuia Guayacan—Flowering tree.
Davidsonia pruriens—Queensland plum.	Taraktogenus Kurzii—Leprosy oil.
Diospyros mollis—Dye.	Terminalia Kernbachii—O'kari nut.
Erythrophleum guineense—Red water tree.	Theobroma pentagona—Alligator cacao.
Gustavia superba—Flowering tree.	
Hippomane Mancinella—Manchineel.	

This article it is noted refers to old and big trees which are exotic and of which we still have original specimens, but the Gardens contain many other fine specimens among the indigenous trees and of those exotic species which were introduced at a very early date, the original representations of which have ceased to exist and are now represented by their progeny. Among some of the largest is *Pterocarpus indicus* the "Padauk" off the Great Circle which has a fluted stem of 36 feet circumference, with *Ficus benghalensis* the

“ Banyan ” in section *B* of nearly the same size, many fine specimens of *Canarium commune*, the Java Almond, and on the triangular piece of land in front of main gate is a very fine specimen of *Swietenia Mahagoni* the West Indian “ Mahogany ” with a bole of over 17 feet in diameter at 3 feet from ground. The outstanding specimen is however a very fine tree of *Ficus Triment* in centre of Gardens off the road leading to the old Director’s bungalow and till recently occupied by the Botanist. This tree has a remarkable branch spread of over 200 feet.

Incidentally it is just 100 years ago, in May, 1844, that Dr. Gardner, a well known Brazilian traveller of that time was appointed as Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Peradeniya. Only about one quarter of the land was then in use as a Government Market garden. He proceeded to clear large areas and open new roads and began the introduction of many new plants some of which are mentioned in this article and trees of which the Gardens still possess. Again incidentally a new bungalow in centre of Gardens was erected in 1844 as a residence for the Director and this still stands on the mound above the present museum and herbarium. In addition to its use as a residence it has in its time been the head office of the Director of the Gardens, the head office of the new Department of Agriculture from 1912 to 1921, then that of the Superintendent of Botanic Gardens and finally the office of the Botanist.