

SPOTLIGHT ON NL COLLECTIONS

Singapore Botanic Gardens

The Singapore Botanic Gardens is the oldest public garden in Singapore. Established in 1859, it is one of the region's top centres for plant and biodiversity research, apart from being a popular recreational attraction. On 4 July 2015, the 74-hectare Botanic Gardens was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, scoring a first for Singapore. Interestingly, the gardens is one of only three in the world that enjoy World Heritage Site status, the others being the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, England, and the Orto Botanico in Padua, Italy.

Here is a selection of publications available for reference at level 11 of the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library at the National Library Building. ♦

(On the background) The Bandstand is one of the oldest landmarks in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, and was used for military band performances for many years. It remains a perennial favourite photo spot for wedding couples due to the many majestic rain trees (*Samanea saman*) surrounding it. *Courtesy of the Singapore Botanic Gardens.*



Title	Description
Singapore Agri-Horticultural Society. (1866). <i>Report of the Singapore Agri-Horticultural Society for 1866</i> . Singapore: Straits Times Press. Microfilm no.: NL 5721	The present Botanic Gardens was founded by the Singapore Agri-Horticultural Society in 1859. Lawrence Niven was recruited as its first superintendent (1859–75). According to this 1866 report, Niven was inspired by the English garden style, which is clearly seen in the many distinctive features that remain today, including the interconnecting curving pathways and promenades, the Bandstand, Swan Lake and the ornamental planting.
Botanic Gardens. (1891–1900). <i>Agricultural Bulletin of the Malay Peninsula</i> . Singapore: Government Printing Office. Microfilm no.: RCL05 630.5 SSGFDA	Published in 1891, this is the first periodical produced by the Botanic Gardens. In subsequent decades, the periodical was renamed <i>Agricultural Bulletin of the Straits and Federated Malay States</i> (1901–11), <i>Gardens' Bulletin, Straits Settlements</i> (1918–47) and finally <i>Gardens' Bulletin</i> from 1948. The periodical contains much of the research conducted by the garden's early botanists and directors.
Burkill, I. H. (1918). The establishment of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore. <i>Gardens' Bulletin, Straits Settlements</i> , 2(2), 55–72. Microfilm no.: NL 6574	In 1918, Isaac Henry Burkill, director of the Botanic Gardens from 1912 to 1925, wrote two articles in the <i>Gardens' Bulletin</i> on the history of the garden in preparation of its 60th anniversary in 1919. This article covers the early period of the gardens, highlighting the impact of the English garden style on the Botanic Gardens.
Burkill, I. H. (1918). The second phase in the history of the Botanic Gardens, Singapore. <i>Gardens' Bulletin, Straits Settlements</i> , 2(2), 93–108. Microfilm no.: NL 6574	In his second article on the history of the Botanic Gardens, Isaac Henry Burkill recounted how the gardens expanded under its pioneering Kew-trained directors, namely Henry James Murton (1875–80), Nathaniel Cantley (1880–88) and Henry Nicholas Ridley (1888–1912). During this period, the gardens assumed a more scientific role, and the region's first rubber seeds were planted there by Ridley.
Burkill, I. H. (1927). <i>The Botanic Gardens, Singapore: Illustrated Guide</i> . London: Waterlow & Sons Ltd. Call no.: RCL05 580.744 BUR; Microfilm no.: NL 15070	Isaac Henry Burkill continued to document the history of the Botanic Gardens long after he left. This compilation is one of the gardens' first photography books and contains close to 50 images of the gardens and its key landmarks. The book also includes an elaborate plan of the gardens.
Ridley, H. J. (1912). <i>The Story of the Rubber Industry</i> . London: Waterlow. Microfilm no.: NL 6510	Henry Nicholas Ridley, director of the Botanic Gardens (1888–1912), is regarded as the father of the rubber industry. Not only did he recognise the agricultural potential of rubber trees, he also spent years perfecting its cultivation, an endeavour that earned him the nickname "Mad Ridley". This 1912 title by Ridley recounts the economic impact of the rubber industry on Malaya.
Ridley, H. J. (1922). <i>The Flora of the Malay Peninsula</i> . London: L. Reeve & Co Ltd. Call no.: RCL05 581.9595 RID [5 volumes]	Besides introducing rubber, Henry Nicholas Ridley greatly expanded the gardens' collection by adding numerous indigenous plants he came across in his various expeditions in Malaya and Singapore. The descriptions of these plants were carefully recorded by Ridley in these five volumes.
Holttum, R. E. (1953). <i>A Revised Flora of Malaya</i> . Singapore: Government Printing Office. Call no.: RCL05 581.9595 HOL [5 volumes]	Published as a revision to Ridley's <i>The Flora of the Malay Peninsula</i> (1922), Richard Eric Holttum, director of the Botanic Gardens from 1925 to 1942 and from 1946 to 1949, built on the original publication by including plants cultivated in Malaya. In this book, Holttum provides detailed descriptions of the floriferous orchid-hybrids produced as a result of the gardens' orchid-breeding programme.
Tinsley, B. (1989). <i>Visions of Delight: The Singapore Botanic Gardens Through the Ages</i> . Singapore: The Gardens. Call no.: RSING 580.74459597 TIN	Published by the Singapore Botanic Gardens to celebrate its 130th anniversary, this book provides a comprehensive account of the gardens' history, from its origins to post-independence years. In 2009, the book was updated and given a new title, <i>Gardens of Perpetual Summer: The Singapore Botanic Gardens</i> .
Shee, Z. Q., et. al. (2014). <i>Tall Tales: Singapore Botanic Gardens Heritage Trees Trail Guide</i> . Singapore: National Parks Board. Call no.: RSING 582.16095957 SHE	The Singapore Botanic Gardens is more than just plants and flowers as this book by the National Parks Board will attest to. It is also home to 47 heritage trees, some of which are estimated to be over 200 years old. Many of these are located in a 22.4-hectare plot of virgin rainforest in the Tanglin Core area, the oldest portion of the gardens.