



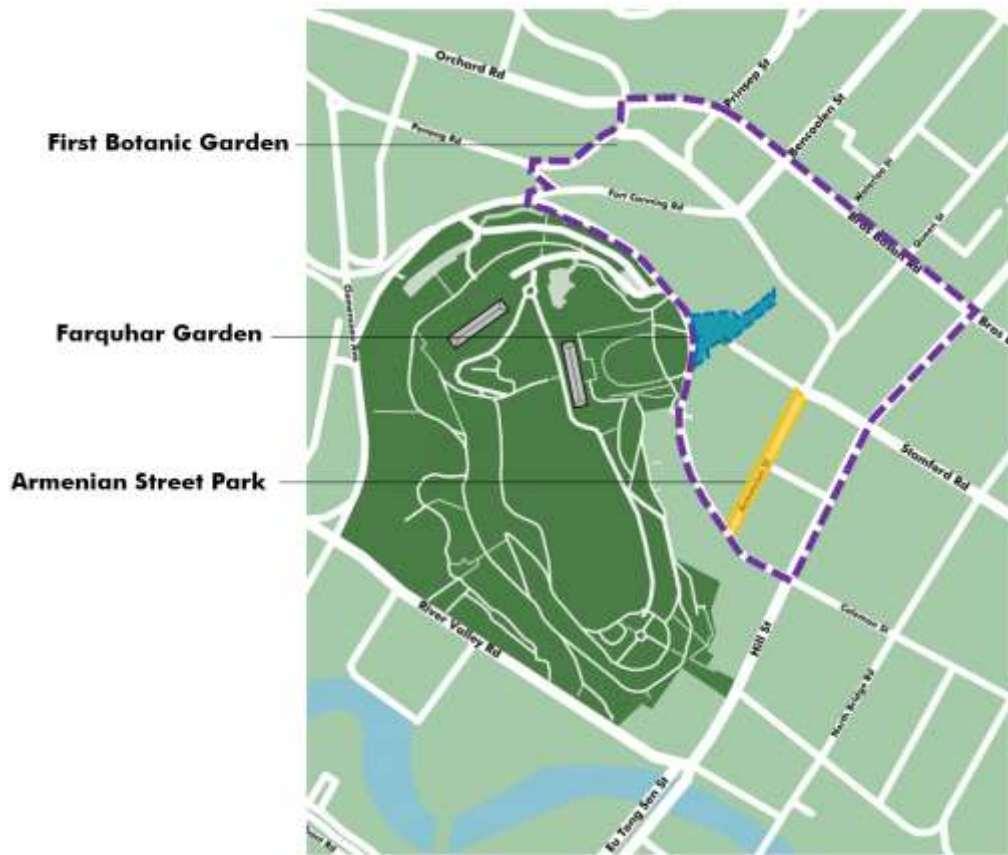
MEDIA FACTSHEET D – Re-creating the First Botanic Garden

The First Botanic Garden will extend from Fort Canning Park onto streetscapes of roads in the vicinity and will become the world's first Botanic Garden on urban streets. The historical landscapes of the First Botanic Garden will be restored with species introduced to Singapore between the 1820s and 1840s and that were grown in the first botanical and experimental garden, and species in historical records of Singapore and the region from the 1800s.

In the 1820s, the garden was primarily planted with nutmeg and clove species, alongside a few other experimental crops like coffee, tea and Pernambuco cotton. When the Agricultural and Horticultural Society took over management of the land in the 1830s, its use was expanded to the cultivation of fragrant ornamental trees like the Kedah Gardenia (*Gardenia carinata* Wall.), and Champaca (*Michelia champaca* L.), as well as medicinal species like Purging Croton (*Croton tiglium* L.). Some of these trees such as the Kapur (*Dryobalanops aromatica*) were also widely used as timber. Later, the society's members wanted to convert this land into a lucrative nutmeg estate when the price of nutmegs spiked after 1835, and thus only grew nutmeg species in the garden. However, both the plot and the society became defunct by the late 1840s when the "nutmeg canker" disease infected many of the nutmeg crops.

The planting within the re-created First Botanic Garden will fall under four broad themes, namely economic spices, ornamental plants, medicinal plants and plants that are native to the region. These plantings will be curated into a trail for visitors to learn about the history of Fort Canning Park through a naturalist's lens. The trail will begin at Fort Canning Centre, which will house exhibitions on the history of the hill, and meander through avenues of plants that have historically been associated with Singapore. NParks is also working with developments within the boundaries of the First Botanic Garden, such as the Singapore Management University and Park Mall, to incorporate the planting palette within their compounds so as to create a more seamless experience for visitors.

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Themes

1. Economic spices

A variety of spices will be grown in the garden, including nutmeg and cloves which were cultivated in the first botanical and experimental garden. A number of these spices, like pepper, were also key to the Spice Trade that flourished in the 1800s. The garden will also showcase other economic crops that were cultivated in the first botanical and experimental garden, such as coffee and cotton.

2. Ornamental plants

Complementing fragrant ornamental trees like the Yellow Bauhinia (*Bauhinia tomentosa* L.), there will be gardenia and jasmine flowers that have been cultivated through centuries for their fragrance and ornamental value.

3. Medicinal plants

The Agri-horticultural society explored the various uses of medicinal plants, among which were the locally-grown Purging Croton (*Croton tiglium* L.) and Gelam tree (*Melaleuca cajuputi*).

4. Plants native to the Southeast Asian region

Sir Stamford Raffles and William Farquhar's collections of natural history drawings serve as records for the biodiversity in Southeast Asia during the 1800s. Species featured in these collections will be a part of the landscaping. Examples include forest fruits like rambutans, coastal and back mangrove plants like Rose Myrtle (*Rhodomyrtus tomentosa*) and Singapore Rhododendron (*Melastoma malabathicum*), which were recorded in Farquhar's collection.

Reflecting the nature of the experimental purpose of the first botanical and experimental garden, the landscaping will also include species of economic value from the Southeast Asian region that have been experimented on. For example, the *Palaquium gutta*, which produces a gum resin commonly known as Gutta Percha. This material was experimented on then and was found to have good electrical insulation properties, leading to its once widespread use for domestic, medical and industrial purposes.



Artist's impression of the landscaping along Prinsep Street which will include species from the region that were experimented on in the 1800s (Courtesy of NParks)

Farquhar Garden – a node within the First Botanic Garden

The Farquhar Garden within the First Botanic Garden will enhance the experience for visitors to Fort Canning Park. The former Stamford Green site will be restyled into a series of green spaces featuring plants originally grown by Major William Farquhar as part of the experimental planting in the first botanical and experimental garden. It will also feature plants and economic crops native to the region documented in the William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings, which consists of 477 botanical drawings of the flora and fauna of Singapore and Malacca from 1819 to 1823.

There will be giant frames scattered throughout the garden to showcase various plant collections alongside the paintings from the William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings. Examples of plants that will be grown in the Farquhar Garden are wild nutmegs, gingers and rattans that can be found in the surrounding forests. There will also be areas for visitors to sit and rest as well as open spaces for families and friends to gather to enjoy the beautiful displays.



Artist's impression of one of many giant frames scattered throughout the garden (Courtesy of NParks)

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Examples of species to be planted

Farquhar's Nutmeg

(*Gymnacranthera farquhariana* var. *farquhariana*)

This is one of the species of wild nutmegs which was first collected and described by Nathaniel Wallich in Singapore. It was also probably one of the wild nutmeg species which was experimented on at the first botanical and experimental garden at the foot of Fort Canning Hill.

It was named to commemorate Major William Farquhar (1770–1839), who served in the British army and was the first resident of Singapore.



Photo Credit: Jessica Teo, NParks Flora&FaunaWeb

Nutmeg

(*Myristica fragrans*)

In 1819, Sir Stamford Raffles had initiated the idea of an experimental garden when he sent a shipment of nutmeg and clove seeds and seedlings from Bencoolen to Singapore. The shipment included the Nutmeg tree (*Myristica fragrans*) species, kicking off the cultivation of the species in Singapore.

This is the most popular species of nutmeg worldwide that is cultivated for economic purposes, and produces the spice that is commonly enjoyed in various cuisines. The fruits are processed into preserved fruits, jellies, culinary spice and used as scent for soaps, lotions toothpaste and cigarettes.



Photo Credit: Boo Chih Min, NParks Flora&FaunaWeb

Armenian Street Park – a node within the First Botanic Garden

Part of Armenian Street will be pedestrianised and turned into a park as a key node for the First Botanic Garden. This area will showcase plants with strong associations to the first botanical and experimental garden or have rich heritage value. For example, spices, economic crops, culinary plants such as those used in Peranakan cuisine, and orchids, including Singapore's National Flower, *Papilionanthe* 'Miss Joaquim', which will be featured as a tribute to Miss Agnes Joaquim, after whom the orchid hybrid was named.



Artist's impressions of the Armenian Street Park in the First Botanic Garden (Courtesy of NParks)