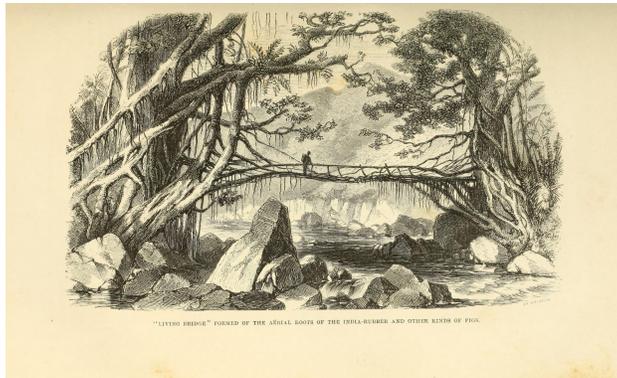


The first Rubber Tree was brought to Bermuda by Lady Turner, the Governor's wife, in 1826. This huge Rubber Tree is grown around the world as a tiny ornamental house plant. It thrives in Bermuda. Outside it can grow up to 40m (131') and its stout trunk can be over 6' in diameter!

The name 'rubber' tree comes from the rubbery white sap that oozes out of the any part of the tree if it is cut or scratched. The latex sap from *Ficus Elastica* was first used to make rubber until it was found that the sap of a different rubber tree, called *Hevea brazilleinsis*, produced better results.

It is an excellent houseplant because it cleans the air and as it has a high transpiration rate, it increases the humidity of the room in which it lives!



The roots extend much further than the branches. Due to the soil conditions where this tree is growing in the Botanical Gardens, many of the roots are exposed well above the soil surface. *Ficus Elastica* occasionally produces aerial and buttressing roots to help support heavy branches. In parts of India, the roots were used to make a 'living bridge'.

# Tree Tales: Rubber Tree

Introduced



You may have scars where you've been injured. Trees have them, too! When a branch is cut off, the tree closes its wound by changing the chemistry of the exposed area making it inhospitable to organisms that may make it decay. Then the tree creates a barrier zone around the wound called a 'callus', which covers and seals it. The callus cells on the edges grow to form rolls. This is called a tree scar.

**Work out the circumference of this Rubber tree.** Use your arms to measure the circumference of the trunk. (Your arms outstretched are about the same length as your height.) Send your answer with your name, age and contact info to: [bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com) Win a membership. Correct answer will be published in our newsletter.