

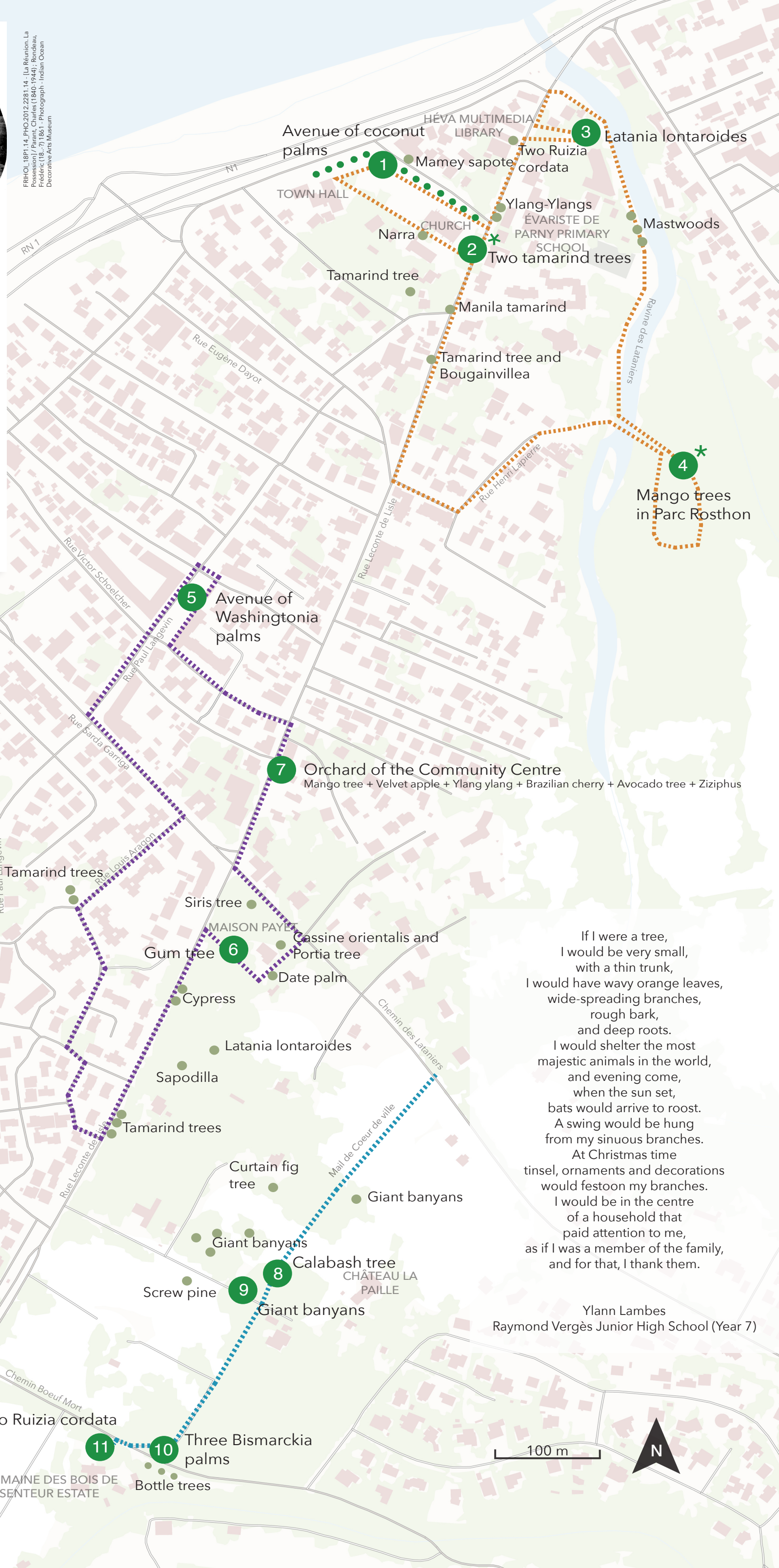
Church of La Possession seen from Ravine des Lataniers

Tree trails:

- Parc Rosthon trail: 1.8 km (40 min)
- Schoolchildren's trail: 1.6 km (35 min)
- Mail Coeur de ville trail: 0.5 km (15 min)

- 1 Location of tree on the trail
- Avenue
- * Tree on the Reunion Island remarkable tree list (managed by the CAUE)
- Other interesting tree

FRIJOL 1891, 14, P.HO.2012.2281.14 - La Réunion, La Possession / Parant, Charles (1840-1944) - Bondeau, Frédéric (18...-?) 1861 - Photograph - Indian Ocean Decorative Arts Museum



If I were a tree,
 I would be very small,
 with a thin trunk,
 I would have wavy orange leaves,
 wide-spreading branches,
 rough bark,
 and deep roots.
 I would shelter the most
 majestic animals in the world,
 and evening come,
 when the sun set,
 bats would arrive to roost.
 A swing would be hung
 from my sinuous branches.
 At Christmas time
 tinsel, ornaments and decorations
 would festoon my branches.
 I would be in the centre
 of a household that
 paid attention to me,
 as if I was a member of the family,
 and for that, I thank them.

Yann Lambes
Raymond Vergès Junior High School (Year 7)



You can use this leaflet to guide you as you walk about and discover the most interesting trees and shrubs in and around La Possession.
 Pupils from three school classes in La Possession took part in its creation:
 - Year 4 & 5 pupils from Henri Lapiere Primary School and their teacher Frédérique Marie-Françoise
 - Year 7 pupils from Raymond Vergès Junior High School, school nurse Ms Hoellinger and teachers Ms Treichel, Ms Lechat and Ms Brennan
 - Pupils studying for a qualification in logistics at Moulin Joli High School and their Applied Arts teacher, Sophie Martal.
 Workshops were run by landscapers Clément Aquilina and Tom Sénécal from the CAUE (the Architecture, Urban Planning and Environment Council), photographer François-Louis Athénas, and author Joëlle Ecomier.
 An exhibition of photographs and texts was organised to mark the occasion.
 We would like to thank Fabris Thémyr of the Municipality of La Possession, botanist Christophe Lavigne, and Gilberte Labache, a documentalist at the CAUE, for their participation in the project.
 At the time of printing some of these trees are listed on the Architecture, Urban Planning and Environment Council's catalogue of remarkable trees of Reunion Island. Others are sure to join them in the near future...
 For more information:
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1 Avenue of coconut palms - *Coco nucifera L.*

Town Hall car park

This right-angled line of 62 coconut palms borders the church and Town Hall car park. It's undoubtedly the longest alley of coconut palms in all of La Possession. They are lined up as if to welcome newly-weds who leave the church.

Although their leaves catch the wind, their slender but flexible stipes (trunks) enable them to stay upright even during cyclones.



2* Two Tamarind trees - *Tamarindus indica L.*
Church

This pair of tamarind trees are like two brothers joined in the air by their branches and in the ground by their roots (which are undoubtedly huge but invisible). One of the trunks has been filled in with rubble by the town council, because rubbish thrown into the hollow had been set on fire. Such vandalism could have destroyed the century-old tree in a few hours. Because of their name, Tamarind trees – native to Africa – are sometimes confused with Highland Tamarinds (*Acacia heterophylla Willd.*), which are endemic to the island (i.e. native to Reunion).



3 Latanier palm - *Latania lontaroides (Gaertn.) H.E. Moore*

Corner of Héva Multimedia Library car park

In the past these were found in large numbers at the gully Ravine des Lataniers, however today they are all but gone. Although this particular species is endemic (i.e. native to) Reunion Island, it is now considered very rare in the wild.

Jewellery can be made from the ivory-like substance of the tree's small fruit, and their flesh can be used as an ingredient in achars (pickled, spiced vegetables).



4* Mango trees, Parc Rosthon - *Mangifera indica L.*

Parc Elizabeth Rosthon

Parc Rosthon is La Possession's largest orchard of mango trees and is home to many different varieties such as José, Auguste, Léonard, or Américaine.

Visitors can also see noni, sweetsop and jackfruit trees, and it's an ideal place to picnic in the shade near the town centre of La Possession. Participants in the annual Grand Raid ultramarathon can briefly make the most of its leafy coolness before reaching the aid station at Évariste de Parry Primary School.

Green mangoes are used in Reunionesse cooking to make mango rougail (a spicy, chutney-like relish), which is the perfect condiment to go with the local staple dish of carri.



5 Avenue of Washingtonia palms - *Washingtonia robusta H. Wendl*

Place Gabriel Véloupoulé

The botanist Hermann Wendland named this palm tree in 1879, in honour of the 1st American President, George Washington.

The hairy, brown stipe (trunk) of these palms looks like the leg of a mammoth.

They are easily confused with their close cousins, *Washingtonia filifera*, but can be told apart because *Washingtonia robusta* are armed with brown 'teeth' evenly distributed over the entire petiole (stalk that attaches the palm leaf to the trunk).



6 Gum tree - *Eucalyptus sp.*

Maison Payet

The genus *Eucalyptus* currently includes more than 800 known species, all native to Australia. Gum trees are widely grown in arid, tropical regions due to their rapid growth and solid wood. An essential oil with healing properties can be extracted from them. The bark of the gum tree at Maison Payet looks like an abstract painting. Tree bark, with its variety of patterns and colours, can be fascinating, and the French photographer Cédric Pollet devoted an exhibition and a book to barks of the world.



7 Velvet apple - *Diospyros blancoi A. DC*
Ylang Ylang - *Cananga odorata (Lam.) Hook. f. & Thomson*

Maison des Associations

Brazilian cherry - *Eugenia uniflora L.*

Avocado tree - *Persea americana*

Ziziphus - *Ziziphus mauritiana Lam.*

Maison des Associations

The community centre Maison des Associations is surrounded by a beautiful collection of fruit-bearing and ornamental trees. The rarest specimen is probably the Velvet apple, native to the Philippines. In Reunion it's known as 'cat poo' because its edible fruit, when ripe, is foul-smelling.

A slow-growing member of the ebony family, its brown-black hardwood is prized by woodworkers.



Velvet apple to the right of the Royal poinciana



A nearly horizontal Ziziphus behind the Maison Des Associations

8 Calabash tree - *Crescentia cujete L.*

Playground, Mail Coeur de ville

Calabash trees are native to Africa and grow no higher than 10m. They were introduced to the island as an ornamental plant, and for their fruit, the calabash, which can be up to 40cm long. These gourds grow on all the above-ground parts of the tree, both trunk and branches. If dried they can be used to make containers, utensils, and even musical instruments. A vine with the same name, calabash, produces a fruit that is eaten locally in a stew.



9 Giant banyans - *Ficus benghalensis L.*

Playground, Mail de Coeur de ville

With their enormous size and aerial prop roots hanging down from the branches, these Banyan trees are very impressive. Despite their fragile appearance their roots are very strong and can be swung from. Once they reach the ground they become trunks themselves, and a single tree can end up looking like a whole forest.

The playground has been conveniently positioned in the shade of these giants.

Banyan trees are sacred to Hindus, as they represent the god Shiva who, like Banyans, has a multitude of 'arms'.



10 Three Bismarck palms - *Bismarckia nobilis Hildebr. et H. Wendl.*

Far end of Mail de Coeur de ville

The Bismarck palm, which can grow up to 25m high, is endemic to Madagascar and, with its silver-blue foliage, it is highly appreciated as an ornamental tree. This small line of Bismarck palms is a local landmark and helps show pedestrians where the footpath is located.



11 Two Ruizia cordata - *Ruizia cordata Cav.*

Entrance to the Domaine des Bois de Senteur estate

This species almost disappeared, and in the 1970s you could count the number of *Ruizia cordata* on the fingers of one hand. They were artificially reproduced to avoid extinction, because being endemic to Reunion their disappearance from the island would have meant their disappearance from the whole planet.

Ruizia cordata has the peculiarity of being heterophyllous, in other words it naturally produces leaves of two different shapes. It also benefits from being seen positively, as it is considered a lucky tree.

