

## **The Amazing Banyan Tree – Another Miracle of Nature!©**

*by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida*

The Banyan Tree is a type of fig tree that is native to Asia and is commonly found in India, Burma, Thailand, Southern China, and Malaysia. I have also personally seen this incredibly-unique tree in Australia, Nassau, Bahamas, on Useppa Island in Florida, and in Hawaii.

These enormously-sized trees sprout roots that produce secondary trunks to support their expansive limbs. These trunks in turn send out more roots and produce more trunks and this growth continues over the years until the “mother trunk” is overwhelmed and dies. Some averaged-sized older banyan trees and their roots can reach 200 meters (656 feet) in diameter and a height of 30 meters (98 feet).

The Banyan tree is the national tree of India and is considered to be sacred in the Hindu religion; as such, the sites where these trees grow serve as gathering places for numerous special religious and other ceremonies and business gatherings.



**One Species of a Banyan as Seen in India (photo from a web site)**



**Another “Stand” of a Banyan as Seen in Mumbai, India (from my photo collection)**



**The “Great Banyan” In a Botanical Garden near Calcutta (photo from a web site)**

The “Great Banyan” (in the previous photo) is so named because it is believed to be the largest single tree on earth! It is about 24 meters (80 feet) high and is estimated to have over 4000 “prop roots”; it covers an area of about 14,500 square meters (156,000 square feet = 3.5 acres). The Great Banyan is thought to be over 250 years old and is indeed an Indian treasure to behold!



**Banyan Tree on Useppa Island in Florida (from my photo collection)**

Useppa is a private resort island located in the Gulf of Mexico off the Florida coast near Ft. Meyers; although the island is private, it is accessible for short-term tourist visits. During 2017 Sadhana and I were staying at the nearby Sanibel Island resort and took a half-day boat trip to Useppa. I found the sight of this Banyan tree to be rather awe inspiring!

Considering that Banyan trees grow throughout Asian countries, it should be of no big surprise that they also grow in Australia. Following is a photo taken by my wife Sadhana of a Banyan tree (and me too!) while we temporarily resided in the Perth area during 2005. Yet another spectacular specimen!



When writing this article, I had almost forgotten about yet another sighting of Banyan trees! This actually occurred during a short-term temporary business assignment in Honolulu during 2006! The Honolulu tree photo is the first shown on the following page. The Banyan tree shown in the second photo on the following page is located on the Hawaiian island of Maui and is the largest Banyan tree in the United States!. It was a gift given by missionaries from India and was planted in 1873. It covers 1.94 acres.



**Honolulu Banyan Tree (From my photo collection)**



**Maui Banyan Tree (Photo from a web site)**

The very last time I set eyes on a Banyan was when Sadhana and I were on a cruise to Nassau, Bahamas during 2016. Following is a photo, as taken by Sadhana, of the tree we saw.



Banyan trees are yet another of nature's many miracles and are truly profound in their appearance! If you have not seen one of these "gems", I hope that the opportunity will present itself to you some time during your life's journey!

