



Battle for Banyan

For some our *Banyan* beside the lower gate Squash courts and Bowling green hut is an ugly sight for sore eyes. For others it is a creative work of banyan architecture. For the few who have been working on its final fate and what it can teach the science of tree care before its removal, this sad, old Banyan offers much. I am one of the *few* who have been working on aspects of what old Banyan can teach us since October, 2020. During this period lots of good things have been possible. These include: * active research on the two inadequately researched pathogenic fungi that have invaded and infected Our Old Banyan (OOB) ** involvement of students from HKBU and HKPU in this hands on study opportunity; a perfect example of our Club social & community awareness in action *** sharing of this case study of what *bad* mushrooms can do to susceptible trees like OOB with Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Society of Biology and **** taking preventive steps to enhance existing tree management protocols within the Club.

What happens next? We are in October 2021 and a very important, novel experimental lime shock therapy aimed at curtailing Brown Root Rot (BRR, one of the two *bad* mushrooms) within OOB is underway. This will help science and, importantly, help decontaminate the soil associated with OOB. The final removal of the infected trunk (actually an integrated stem and root complex) roots and attached soil is not a simple matter. In anticipation of an unwanted Typhoon, some 50 % of the huge sail area of OOB was professionally removed during midsummer. This action was an essential first phase in making the tree less likely to be blown over and thus damage a main road and Club buildings.

A further report and OOB update will come in the near future. For those Club members who look upon OOB as an ugly sight for sore eyes that should go and for those who look upon this Banyan in other ways, I ask please *be patient*. Let's give OOB a chance to at least make its demise an act in the service of science. Im goi Sai, Gordon S. Maxwell, PhD, FLS, FRSB [2 October, 2021].

P.S. BTY, there are good *and* bad mushrooms: like many of us I like good mushrooms but only admire bad mushrooms and keep an open mind; this is a good idea too as one of the bad mushrooms (*Ganoderma*) that has hit OOB has "two faces"; *two* sides to its life style: one is that of a tree pathogen (*bad* side), the other an expensive, tried and trusted item in Chinese medicine (*good* side; treats cardiovascular problems and rejoices under the famous name, *Lingzhi*).

Testing on Control Ability of Lime on Sick Banyan Tree

Lime application

(Powder of calcium carbonate was applied on the root surface)



Position of sampling points



A - Control (no lime)



B - Control (no lime)



C - Control (no lime)



D - Applied lime



E - Applied lime



F - Applied lime

