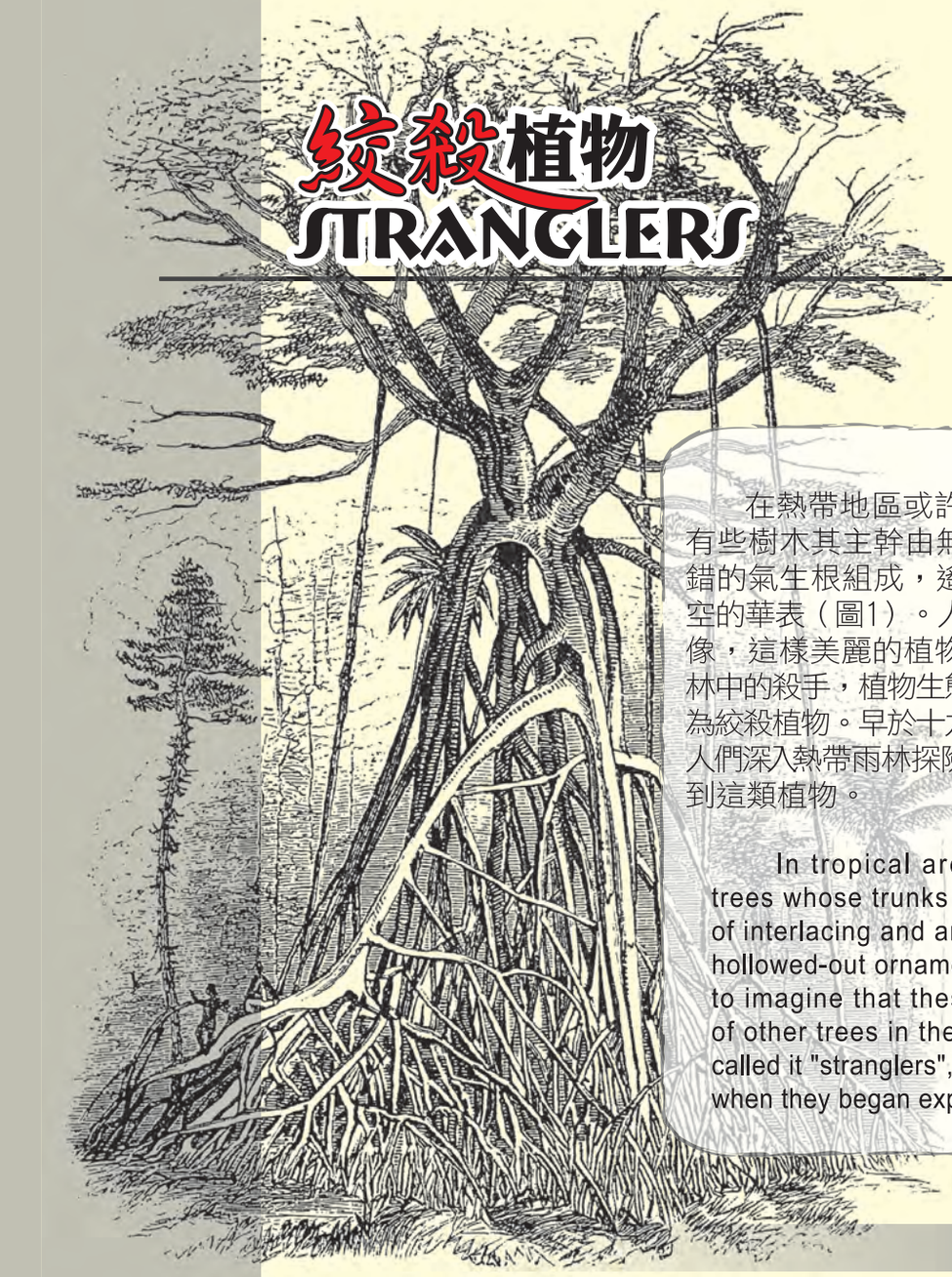
漁農自然護理署
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

絞殺植物 STRANGLERS



在熱帶地區或許你曾見過有些樹木其主幹由無數網狀交錯的氣生根組成，遙望猶如鏤空的華表（圖1）。人們很難想像，這樣美麗的植物竟然是森林中的殺手，植物生態學家稱之為絞殺植物。早於十九世紀，當人們深入熱帶雨林探險，已觀察到這類植物。


1

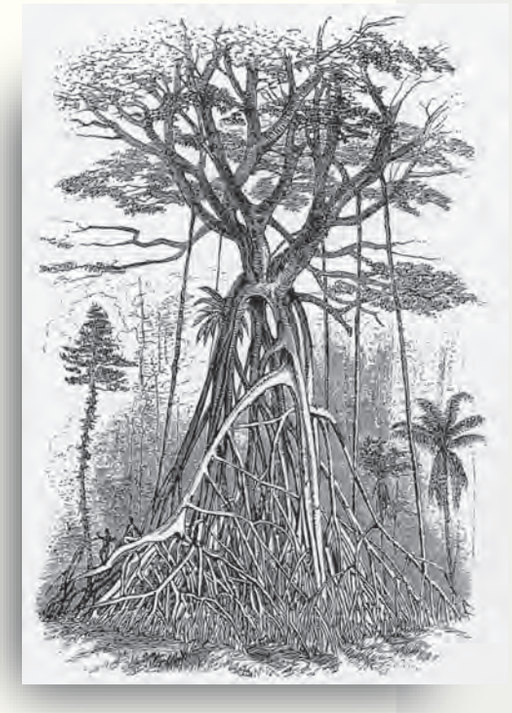
In tropical areas you may have seen some trees whose trunks are composed of a basket work of interlacing and anastomosing roots; it looks like a hollowed-out ornamental column (fig. 1). It is difficult to imagine that these beautiful trees are the killers of other trees in the tropical forest. Plant ecologists called it "stranglers", ever since the nineteenth century when they began exploring tropical rain forests.

絞殺植物大多屬於桑科的榕屬（*Ficus*），五加科的鵝掌柴屬（*Schefflera*）和山竹子科的*Clusia*屬。在香港的山林中人們也可偶然見到絞殺榕樹生長。（圖2）

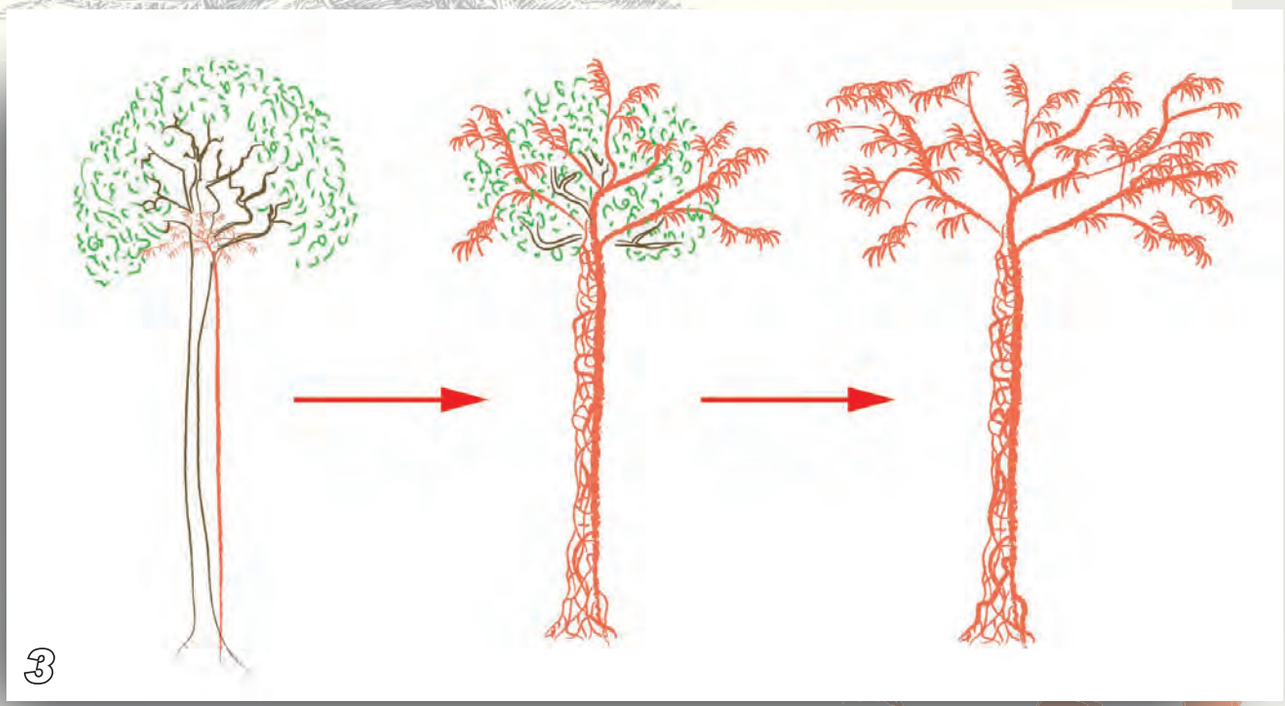
Most strangler plants belong to the genera *Ficus* (Moraceae), *Schefflera* (Araliaceae) and *Clusia* (Clusiaceae). Occasionally we can see a strangling fig-tree in the woodlands of Hong Kong. (fig. 2)


2

絞殺植物是熱帶森林中的一種特有的生活型。它開始附生於其他樹木之上，然後向下伸出氣生根直至土壤，並將支撐其生長的樹木殺死而成為一獨立的植株，這一過程可長達數十年至百年之久。鳥類、松鼠和猿猴覓食絞殺植物的果實，將種子散落在林中樹木的叉丫間發芽生長，初期呈灌木狀附生於枝幹上，發出支柱根和氣生根，牢固環繞樹幹向下延伸，同時發出許多側根互相交織、癒合，形成一個完整的網套，包裹樹幹，逐漸將其擠壓致死；與此同時，絞殺植物的枝葉也迅速生長，吞沒支撐樹的樹冠。最後支撐樹死亡，樹幹腐爛，而在原地留下一空心但獨立生長的絞殺植物（圖3）。



The stranglers are a special life form of plants in tropical rain forests. A strangler begins its life as an epiphyte and later sends down roots to the soil, becoming an independent plant and killing the tree by which it was originally supported. Birds, squirrels and monkeys, consuming the fruits of the stranglers, drop the seeds on the branches of forest-trees, where they grow into epiphytic bushes that hold on by strong roots encircling the branches. From thence their roots spread down the trunk of the supporting tree to the ground, and grow vigorously. Meanwhile, the side-roots encircle the trunk, joining up with other side-roots where they touch. Gradually, the supporting trunk becomes enveloped in a basket of roots which slowly squeeze the trunk to death. On the other hand, the branches of the strangler begin to spread widely and overwhelm the crown of its support. Eventually the supporting tree usually dies and rots away, leaving the strangler as a hollow, but quite independent tree in its place (fig. 3).



3

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