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The 100-year-old raintree in Ipoh was relocated to make way for two new school blocks. Pic shows the chopped branches.

## Landmarks: Why large trees shouldn't be cut

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"Large trees are often landmarks of a town and should not be simply chopped down, they are our heritage as they signify the years the place has been through," he said.

He noted that Section 35A of the Town and Country Planning Act stated that the Tree Preservation Order that would give the local planning authority the power to prevent the felling of any tree or trees, but the clause was not used often enough.

He said local councils should take the lead in registering heritage trees and setting up a committee to protect them, but sadly, most cities in the country rather sacrificed precious huge trees due to lack of awareness.

Efforts by the authorities in Taiping, Kuala Kangsar, Penang and Melaka in preserving heritage trees should be emulated by other city administrations.

"Quite a number of local councils have a tree information system but, do they really put in the data?" he asked.

Both arborists reiterated the importance of maintaining these old trees professionally because they were often under high stress in the polluted urban setting.

They also suggested ways to educate the public on heritage trees, among them to work with tour guides to share about their wonders.

"Sometimes, people are too sensitive about trees thinking that they may topple easily but in fact, the trees will not be dangerous as long as the local authority

engages the right people to inspect and monitor," Adnan said.

"If City Hall just chops down trees whenever the public pressures them, their Kuala Lumpur will lose out a lot in the long run," he added.

The forest is a man-made wonder conceived under the British, way back in 1927. Who would have thought that the breathtaking green gem was once a barren, abandoned mining land.

Hence, it is only deserving that FRIM was nominated as a Unesco Heritage Site in July, alongside Royal Belum State Park in Perak and the Quartz Ridge of Gombak in Selangor.

It is said to be the biggest and oldest man-made tropical forest in the world.

FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohd initiated the push for world heritage status since 2008; the forest gained the National Heritage status in 2012.

Rosslan first highlighted an epic tree standing in front of Menara IMC. "This tree's economic value is estimated to be RM1.1mil," he said, adding that he was shown a photo of the tree taken in 1960s, but it could well be a century old.

"Even if we do not put it in dollars and cents, this tree can just take our breath away with its lush canopy and ample girth."

"So many tourists disembarking here for Concorde Hotel were in awe when they saw this tree!"

"This tree has the potential to become our Heritage Tree," he enthused.

Menara IMC's assistant building manager Raintgat Singh said the employees from the headquarters in Hong Kong were proud of the tree.

"Employees take it upon themselves to guard the tree from vandalism and littering, it is like a pillar of our company," he said.

The company footed the tree's maintenance costs and recently paid RM25,000 for the removal of dead branches and other health concerns.

There is something as imposing as the KL Tower within the compound of this national landmark - a Jelutong tree close to 100 years old.

It is learned that an extra RM430,000 was spent on the tower's construction in order to preserve this tree.

With the tower's position shifted to avoid it, extra reinforcing measures were used to protect it during construction.

Rosslan noted that the Jelutong produced white latex used for making chewing gum, and the drops of exudate on its trunk would be interesting sights for city dwellers.

While the Jelutong tree is next to the Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve that has kept trees as old, but it is extra unique because of its visibility and the efforts put in to conserve it, Rosslan explained.

The two lush rain trees standing among the country's historical landmarks must have been witness to so many significant events in history, sadly no written record or old photo of them is found yet.

"Not many would think of jotting down the date when they plant a tree, as the significance is only seen decades later," Rosslan said.

Nevertheless, these two trees with stunning crowns are easily over 90 years old, he said.

"Being situated amid national icons is another unique aspect of these two trees."

"They also show that trees are important elements in the whole tapestry of our city and should therefore be recognised, respected and handled with care," he added.



"There is something as imposing as the KL Tower within the compound of this national landmark - a Jelutong tree close to 100 years old." (pic: TianChad.com)