

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE TREES CONSERVATION FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN TAIPING LAKE GARDEN, MALAYSIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Lack of awareness on the environmental benefits and services offered by urban heritage trees among the decision makers and society has endangered these urban heritage trees, thus they are not recognized as an important asset. Heritage trees are important in giving historical identity and cultural symbolic to the landscape of the cities. Rapid development of urban areas in Malaysia has changed the land use of natural environment to into built environment. This situation causes a lot of urban heritage trees to be felled to make way for urban development. The main objective of this paper is to identify and analyze the benefits of heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden based on tourists respond. This research has applied a contingent valuation survey questionnaire in collecting the data. A total of 400 tourists were randomly interviewed in Taiping Lake Garden. The study was also focused on the importance of preserving the non-use value and inducing public awareness on conservation of heritage trees as part of landscape roles to create culture and historical value in cities. Analyzing benefits of heritage tree through a participatory process that involves the tourists could help to promote the sustainability of the Urban Heritage Trees conservation efforts in Taiping Lake Garden.*

**Keywords:** : Natural environment; Non-use value; Public awareness; Trees conservation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, trees generally have their own space relatively in gardens and parks, a luxury that is becoming increasingly difficult to justify in subdivision mentality of the modern planning environment. As larger plots are redeveloped into smaller units, trees and people are being squeezed together, creating conflicts that were never an issue in the past. Above ground, dense crowns close to buildings and recreational areas can reduce light to intolerable levels. Large, spreading crowns can interfere with buildings and access, creating hazards and obstructions. Below ground, roots can disrupt services, foundations and surfacing, causing serious damage and inconvenience. The closer trees get to people, the more problems there seem to be, with one inevitable conclusion. In a straight fight, trees lose every time. The traditional approach of trees having their own space is no longer realistic and certainly not working in our modern world.

Conservation of heritage trees is a concern worldwide. Therefore, many countries have taken the initiative to raise awareness to the public about the importance of heritage trees and enact laws or declared policies to authorize the conservation of heritage trees as part of the culture of the city. Heritage tree might look the same as ordinary tree that provides benefits and aesthetic value to the urban community. In fact, it has the same ecological-landscaping roles such as the interception of rainfall and reducing water pressure into surface, reducing air pollution and increasing property values in an area. Though, in Malaysia's context heritage tree is considered as a new term.

The conservation efforts towards this valuable heritage protection are deeply needed in law or policies and public awareness. Heritage trees can adapt in urban stress environment while others are sensitive to various ecosystems.

Due to population increase most urban trees including which having the potential to be gazetted as heritage trees, are felled or neglected to give way to development resulting in the decrease in carbon sink. The deforestation of urban trees has significant impacts to the ecology causing environmental problems such as flash flood and increased carbon emitted due to the increase of fuel and energy consumption for transportation, buildings component such as the Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning System (HV AC System) which induces the Urban Heat Island (UHI) phenomenon. Moreover, the value of urban trees are undervalued by the decision makers and society, thus very little consideration is given to the urban trees.

Normally, community will relate to heritage trees as bestowed by their religion, spiritual or other symbolic values (Read, 2000). A century ago, *Pterocarpus indicus* (angsana) was recorded as the earliest urban tree in Malaysia. It was planted in 1778 in Malacca (Koenig, 1894) and in Penang (Burkill, 1966). Because of the impact of its wide diameter of canopy and fast in germination, *Pterocarpus indicus* had been chosen as a popular tree for urban planting and remained in Malaysia and Singapore in 1990s (Philip, 1999). However, in 1935 these trees were reported to be affected by unknown plant disease that spread rapidly in Malacca, Penang and Singapore (Furtado, 1935). In order of prevent the disease from spreading to all trees, certain affected trees were removed by cutting down the trees. This situation could have been avoided if it was put through a regular tree inspection and correct maintenance technique. The Malaysia's management of urban heritage trees protection was poor, lacking of knowledge about the maintenance, with the aspect of public security being underestimated (Sreetheran, Philip, Adnan & Siti Zakiah, 2006). Therefore, the protection of heritage planting becomes worst because there is no action to handle the problem (Zamil, 2012).

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

There are several studies in the literature about the importance of protecting the heritage trees due to its special characteristics. The studies by Loeb (1992) showed that many trees in urban cities have declined and died prematurely due to urban stress ecosystem. It is unusual to find old trees that manage to soldier on despite the heavy odds. These heritage trees are treasured by the community. Special attention and care has been given to this heritage tree because it is showing a status of cultural heritage. According to Cloke and Pawson (2008), trees can be marked as histories of the lives that lived around

them and also be marked by the changing of cultural settings in histories. Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention has been use since 1992. Any significant interactions between people and the natural environment are recognized as cultural landscapes and considered as "natural heritage" (UNESCO, 2013). Heritage commonly refers as 'something' that has been passing on to the generations of people on the present day. Various dimensions of heritage have been looked and discussed either by local or foreign countries and this includes inheritance, tradition and culture, legacy and beliefs. Basically, three key entities consolidated and was referred to heritage; material culture, natural environment and built environment (Nur Hijrah et al., 2015).

### 2.1 Urban Heritage Tree

Trees that have lived for a long time or are associated with culture are often highly valued in different societies. As the pride of local communities, they are commonly included in tourist guides (Lai et al, 2019). Urban heritage trees can be the backbone of the cultural landscape and society because they have particular natural or cultural characteristics and, therefore, demand an effective protection policy (Mid, 2012). The urban heritage tree can be recognized and qualified by the following criteria; 1) large size in relation to biological potential dimension of the species, 2) outstanding tree form, 3) unusual or rare species, 4) aged preferably over 100 years and 5) have cultural, historical, commemorative or ecological significance (Jim & Zhang, 2013). Urban Heritage trees are also variously labeled as ancient, beautiful, big, champion, elite, exceptional, famous, heritage, historic, landmark, old, outstanding, remarkable, specimen, veteran trees, ancient, and old-valuable (Read, 2000; Browne, 2001; Meyer, 2001; Jim, 2005; Jim & Zhang, 2013). In the cities they are characterized as significant natural-cum-cultural resources of cities that give broad expanse of biological, historical and cultural values to the urban community (Fay, 2002; Green, 2002, Jim and Zhang, 2013). According to Oregon municipal, age, size, species, quality, landmark importance, and its retention not unreasonably interfering with the use of the property upon which it is located are the criteria that should be viewed to be classified as a heritage tree. Moreover, the criteria such as public access, tree health and historic element play important roles in whether or not a tree or grove qualifies. Among the criteria to qualify a tree to be entitled as a Heritage tree include: a girth of more than 5 meters, unique species and historical significance as proposed by National Parks for Singapore Botanical Garden in the Heritage Trees Scheme. Many studies of heritage trees in Asia focused in compact cities such as Guangzhou (Jim, 2004), Bangkok (Thaiutsa et al., 2008) and Hong Kong (Jim & Zhang, 2013). The old, heritage or valuable trees are concentrated in temple grounds, roadsides and urban parks with different modes of urban development and fabric (Lai et al., 2019).

## 2.2 Heritage trees enforcement

Local Planning Authorities in Malaysia was given the order that each construction must follow the rules of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) that is legally enforceable to protect trees impunity to be cut down to preserve cultural value and historical elements in the interests of public amenity. In 1995, Tree Preservation Order (TPOs) was introduced in Malaysia in an amendment to Town and Country Planning Act (Act 172) that inserted Part VA in respect of TPOs into the act (Akta Perancangan Bandar dan Desa (Pindaan) Akta 1995). Section 5A beginning Subsection 35A to 35H Act 172 Akta Perancangan Bandar dan Desa (Pindaan) Akta 1995 relates the whole provision about tree preservation. Section 35A stated that local authority has a power to give out a tree preservation order to control regarding the felling of trees that is endangered or with special value (Table 1) while in Section 35H it is stated that all matured trees with diameter of 0.8 meters will get a special protection not to be felled unless given permission by the local authority.

Table 1: User trees to be preserved and protected

	The threat of extinction Custom	
<b>Trees that have special value</b>	Custom Value	Species that have natural beauty or the local value or aesthetic contribution to the landscape, or as an adverse opinion or the future development and historical value.
	Value Of History	Tree species planted more than 30 years ago and has to do with the history of the area where it is planted.
	Eminent Crops	The trees planted by the leaders and dignitaries during a ceremony of national interest.
<b>Trees that are threatened with extinction</b>	Rare	Rare tree species. However, the number is still much more to be categorized into the group threatened.
	Endemic	Tree species that only grows in certain places that have the appropriate climate, local ecology, the earth and the composition of suitable land with trees.
	Endangered	Rare tree species and the numbers a bit and if not protected, chances are the trees of this species will become extinct.

(Source: Department of Town & Regional Planning, 2005)

## 2.3 Benefits of Heritage Tree

The multiple benefits of trees in enhancing the livability of cities have been well documented (Roy, Byrne, & Pickering, 2012), but they face acute growth challenges especially in compact cities. Few urban trees can continue to thrive in the urban fabric for over a century (Zhang, Lai & Jim, 2017). The notable remnant trees are often respected as heritage trees, which have been referred to as ancient, champion, historical, legacy, old, precious, outstanding, valuable, or veteran trees (Jim, 2005a). Heritage trees play

pertinent ecological-landscaping roles in cities, yet only a few known studies are mainly descriptive or have resource inventories (Jim, 2005b). Trees can have a high amenity value and can make an important contribution to social benefits such as improvements in building energy conservation, air and water quality, cooler air temperatures, and reductions in ultraviolet radiation (Jim, 2004). Heritage trees have lasting values that teach us about our culture by providing a context for community identity, growth, and contrast in our modern world. Trees, like buildings, are an essential part of the fabric of where we live, making a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of our communities and the wider environment (Ali et al, 2016; Historic Preservation Guidelines City of Elberton, 2009). Heritage trees also reflect the patterns and processes that have shaped our natural and urban environments over time. Heritage trees may represent the last vestiges of former natural or cultural landscapes – symbols of our environmental, social and economic histories (Godefroid, 2001).

Different cultures have cultivated urban trees for their multiple benefits and functions and city greeneries often reflect the history of urban development and associated environmental changes. They form a heterogeneous group, including spontaneous or cultivated tree and native or exotic species. These outstanding remnant specimens are widely respected as landmarks or heritage trees by urban dwellers (Jim, 2004). Heritage trees are non-renewable and irreplaceable living heritage, with great preservation value in the urban city (Meyer, 2001). Trees that hold significance for their notable and historic heritage contribute to the community's well-being and environment in many ways. These resources also provide continuity between the past, present and the future. Godefroid (2001) stated that significant trees are inextricably linked to the quality and identity of a 'place'. Heritage trees can be symbols of great spiritual power. Heritage trees may have associations with individual and communities or tell stories of other times and places or the historic development of a place.

## 2.4 Conservation of Heritage Trees

In developed economies, the government and people are or they should be more aware of their historic legacy, and they are more willing to devote resources for its conservation. Like many historical buildings, heritage trees have matured alongside the community to link the past with the present (Lai et al., 2019). Heritage tree offer a common strand to construct an important part of the society's collective memory. It is appalling that 100-year heritage buildings were conserved while 100-year heritage trees were just ignored. For heritage trees conservation, it is very important to do the survey, inventory and analysis of heritage trees condition and value before the decision for

treatment or cutting down is made. Thus, heritage trees are not simply cut down without the reasons. Heritage trees are an integral and valuable part of our natural and cultural landscape and are often among the oldest living objects in the country. They are found in our native woodlands, historic parklands and estates, in association with human settlement, along roadsides and in hedgerows, agricultural fields and occasionally as isolated specimens in the middle of housing estates or development sites. Heritage trees are often all that remains as a legacy of some of our most historic landscapes (Society of Irish Foresters, 2014). They survive today because of their historical connections, aesthetic appeal, their ecological or botanical significance or simply because they are hidden away. The valuable heritage trees demand protection and preservation for the future generations. Unfortunately, threats from natural hazards, human activities, disease, pest and parasitic plants are continually damaging these living treasures. Fortunately, most of the threats could be avoided or minimized by better tree monitoring and care, such as regular tree inspection, setting up protective regulations and enhancing public education. Well-protected and managed urban trees could increase the number, species and distribution of heritage trees over the city after decades of effective efforts (Zhang, Lai & Jim, 2017).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study applied single case study as a research approach. Taiping Lake Garden has been chosen as a case study because it has heritage trees that aged more than 130 years planted during the British ruling in Malaysia. One set of questionnaire was designed for tourists in Taiping Lake Garden to identify and analyzes the benefits of heritage trees based on tourists respond. In context of this research, stakeholders groups (tourist) were considered as the main stakeholders in heritage tourism and heritage value assessment (Nicholas et al., 2009). A total of 400 tourists (domestic and foreign) who have paid a visit to Taiping Lake Garden were randomly selected as respondents. The respondents were at least 18 years old. The questionnaires were developed based on the contingent valuation methodology to elicit the benefits of heritage trees of the individual respondent (Khee et al., 2009) to urban heritage trees conservation. The structured contingent valuation questionnaire aided by photo images was applied in this survey. Photos of heritage trees in a pleasant and poor state were taken for use in show cards to summarize the idea of the valuation scenario (imaginary situation) delivered to the respondents.

#### 3.1 Case Study: Taiping Lake Gardens.

The name Taiping is made up of two Chinese characters (tai – ‘great’) and (ping – ‘peace’). Taiping town is located in Larut, Matang and Selama District, Perak, Malaysia. Taiping also receives some limelight for being the wettest town in Peninsular Malaysia. The average annual rainfall is about 4,000mm in Taiping while the peninsula’s average is 2,000mm - 2,500mm. Its unusual rainfall has also led to a fertile collection of flora and century-old rain trees in the Taiping Lake Gardens. The British made Taiping the administrative center for the state of Perak in 1875. The town served this function until 1937 when the state capital was moved to Ipoh. Before the arrival of the British, the district (known in its earlier days as the The Larut Settlement) was governed by the Minister of Larut, Dato’ Long Jaafar (and later by his son Ngah Ibrahim) who was empowered by the Sultan of Perak at that time, to govern that territory. Due to the booming tin-mining industry in the 19th century and its previous position as capital of Perak, Taiping is the pioneer in many fields achieving many ‘firsts’ in the country. The list given by Taiping Municipal Council records a total of 40 firsts in the country under Taiping’s belt. Dated as early as 1844, these firsts are either in monuments or events.

During the British ruling in Malaysia, Taiping Lake Gardens was established as the first public garden in 1880 that is originally a mining ground. The garden area is 64 hectares and located near Bukit Larut. Colonel Robert Sandilands Frowd Walker gave the idea and Charles Compton Reade developed the garden (1880 -1933). There are ten scenic lakes and ponds, which give emphasized value to the gardens. The focus of this study was more to Rain Tree, *Samanea saman* because it was the first planted tree in Taiping Lake Garden during the era of Mr. R. Denny, the officer in charge of Government park in 1898. *Samanea saman*, lining the streets of Taiping Lake Garden with branches stretching from one end of the road into the waters across, has become an icon of Taiping. Map 1 shows the boundaries of study area and the orange lines are location of *Samanea saman* trees in Taiping Lake Garden. The total quantity of urban heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden was 118 trees. Six species of trees were found including *Samanea saman* (91), *Adenanthera pavonina* (20), *Vitex pubescens* (3), *Artocarpus elasticus* (1), *Bertholletia excels* (1), and *Pterocarpus indicus* (1).



Figure 1: Location of *Samanea saman* trees in Taiping Lake Garden  
(Source: JPBD, Majlis Perbandaran Taiping)

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were 400 respondents who participated in the interview. The interview was sampled on the tourists (domestic and foreign) in Taiping Lake Garden. This sampling size represents 10% of the overall sample data collection.

Table 2: Tourists Demographic in Taiping Lake Garden

Demographic	Variable	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	39.3
	Female	60.8
Age	18-20	23.8
	21-30	33.0
	31-40	22.5
	41-50	9.8
	51-60	8.8
	>60	2.3
Race	Malay	92.0
	Chinese	3.5
	Indian	4.0
	Others	.5
Religion	Islam	92.5
	Buddhism	3.3
	Hinduism	3.5
	Christianity	.5
	Other	.3
Education level	No Formal Education	3.8
	UPSR	1.5
	SRP/PMR	5.3
	SPM	46.0
	Diploma Degree	23.8
	Bachelor Degree	16.8
	Other	3.0
Monthly income	No Income	28.8
	< RM500	2.5
	RM501-RM1000	10.8
	RM1001-RM1500	11.5
	RM1501-RM2000	19.3
	RM2001-RM3000	8.8
	RM3001-RM4000	11.3
	RM4001-RM5000	1.0
	RM5001-RM6000	3.5
	>RM6001	2.0
Other	.8	
Occupation	Civil Servant	23.0
	Non-Government Employee	22.0
	Businessmen	9.8
	Student	21.3
	Others	24.0
Malaysia Tourist	Johor	.8
	Kedah	10.0
	Kelantan	3.0
	Kuala Lumpur	.8
	Melaka	.3
	Pahang	2.3
	Perak	77.0
	Pulau Pinang	4.8
	Sabah	.5
Selangor	.3	
Foreigner Tourist	Indonesia	.5

Table 2 shows that Female (60.8%) dominated the interview of respondents consisting of visitors in Taiping Lake Garden. The highest range of age is 21 – 30 (33%). Most of the respondents are Malays (92%). The highest education level is SPM (46%). Most of the respondents monthly income are ‘no income’ (28.8%) like housewife or student. Second highest respondents income is RM1501-RM2000 (19.3%) as an average salary. The highest number of Malaysian tourist was from Perak (77%) because visitors surrounding Perak can reach Taiping Lake Garden easily distance wise. Meanwhile, only foreign tourists coming from Indonesia was found.

Table 3: Attitude of Tourists towards the heritage tree conservation and its benefits on Taiping

Attitude towards the heritage tree conservation and its benefits on Taiping	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Partially agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
	(% )					
1 The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden as an identity and landmark of Taiping	.8	2.0	10.5	41.5	45.3	4.29
2 The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden as a link to Taiping history	0	2.5	9.0	44.5	44.0	4.30
3 The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden provided habitat and food sources for urban wildlife	1.0	5.3	25.8	39.8	28.3	3.89
4 The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden has improved the economic performance of Taiping by increasing the attractiveness of business and tourism	.5	2.3	17.3	42.5	37.5	4.14
5 The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden has improved aesthetic value of Taiping	0	3.0	16.8	45.3	35.0	4.12
6 The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden has created a feeling of relaxation and well-being	0	.8	10.8	33.0	55.5	4.43

From table 3, the analysis of item 1 (The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden as an identity and landmark of Taiping) shows that most of the tourists strongly agreed (45.3%) followed by agreed (41.5%) and partially agreed (10.5%) that they recognized the benefits of heritage trees as an identity and landmark of Taiping. Most of the tourists can identify this heritage trees because the trees were lined straight along the corridor of the road approaching the lake that becomes an icon of Taiping in signage and handout to promote tourism in Taiping (Figure 2). Only 2.8 % of the tourists disagreed (2%) and strongly disagreed (0.8%) that heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden is an identity and landmark of Taiping.



Figure 2: Trees were lined straight along the corridor of the road approaching the lake that becomes an icon, identity and landmark of Taiping. Sources: Author, 2017

The analysis on item 2 (The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden as a link to Taiping history) found that most of the tourists agreed (44.5%) followed by strongly agreed (44%) and partially agreed (9%) that they recognized the benefits of heritage trees as a link to Taiping history. They know the fact that the heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden were planted during the British era. According to Taiping Municipal Council, the first planted tree in Taiping Lake Garden was the Rain Tree or Samanea saman in 1898 (Figure 3). The visitors can expect the age of this heritage trees from the physical size of the branches and canopy and physical appearance of the trees. Only 2.5 % of the tourists disagreed that heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden is a link to Taiping history.



Figure 3: The first planted tree in Taiping Lake Garden was the Rain Tree or Samanea saman in 1898 during the British era as a link to Taiping history. Sources: Author, 2017

Analysis on item 3 (The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden provided habitat and food sources for urban wildlife) shows that most of the tourists agreed (39.8%) followed by strongly agreed (28.3%) and partially agreed (25.8%) that heritage trees have increased the environmental benefit of urban wildlife because they can find a few species of bird and squirrel in Taiping Lake Garden (Figure 4). Only 6.3 % of the tourists disagreed (5.3%) and strongly disagreed (1%) that heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden provided habitat and food sources for urban wildlife.



Figure 4: Spread over 64 hectares, the lake is surrounded with birds, insects and wildlife. Sources: Nur Hijrah et al., 2015.

The analysis on item 4 (The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden has improved the economic performance of Taiping by increasing the attractiveness of business and tourism) found that most of the tourists agreed (42.5%) followed by strongly agreed (37.5%) and partially agreed (17.3%) that the benefits of heritage trees have improved the economic performance of Taiping by increasing the attractiveness of business and tourism. This finding shows that tourists were very interested with the aesthetically pleasing environment created by the heritage tree in Taiping Lake Garden (Figure 5). Many tourists from different districts of Perak and states of Malaysia came to visit Taiping Lake Garden to feel the environment. Only 2.8 % of the tourists disagreed (2.3%) and strongly disagreed (0.5%) that heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden has improved the economic performance of Taiping by increasing the attractiveness of business and tourism.

For item 5 (The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden has improved aesthetic value of Taiping) it was found that most of the tourists agreed (42.5%) followed by strongly agreed (37.5%) and partially agreed (17.3%) that heritage trees have improved the aesthetic value of Taiping. The form of heritage tree that gives unique and aesthetic value to the Taiping Lake Garden has attracted tourists to pay a visit (Figure 6). Only 3 % of the tourists disagreed that heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden has improved the aesthetic value of Taiping.



Figure 5: Tourists were very interested with the aesthetically pleasing environment created by the heritage tree in Taiping Lake Garden has improved the economic performance of Taiping. Sources: Author, 2017.



Figure 6: The unique form of heritage tree in Taiping Lake Garden has improved aesthetic value of Taiping. Sources: Author, 2017

The analysis on item 6 (The Heritage Tree in Taiping Lake Garden has created a feeling of relaxation and well-being) found that most of the tourists strongly agreed (55.5%) followed by agreed (33%) and partially agreed (10.8%) that they recognized the environmental benefit contributing to health, relaxation and well-being of humans by creating a peaceful, aesthetically pleasing environment into urban settings. This result seems to indicate that many tourists came to Taiping lake garden to enjoy the environment and take pictures with the background of heritage tree for outdoor wedding photo-shoot, family gathering and leisure time with friends that would create memorable memories (Figure 7). Only 0.8 % of the tourists disagreed that heritage trees in Taiping Lake Garden has created a feeling of relaxation and well-being.



Figure 7: The environment in Taiping Lake Garden has created a feeling of relaxation and well-being to tourists. Sources: Author, 2017.

As shown in Table 3, the highest mean score of benefits of heritage tree is that the heritage tree in Taiping Lake Garden has created a feeling of relaxation and well-being (4.43). This shows that the visitors like to come to Taiping Lake Garden because they like to enjoy the peacefulness and aesthetically pleasing environment created by heritage trees. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score of benefits of heritage tree is that the heritage tree in Taiping Lake Garden provided habitat and food sources for urban wildlife (3.89).

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, urban heritage trees protection in Malaysia still needs to be improved by the law and policies implementation. The issues and challenges of urban heritage trees in Malaysia need solutions to upkeep appropriately in maintaining the overall setting of heritage site value. Due to the new development in cities, many heritage trees are unprotected. The knowledge about benefits offered by heritage trees is important on giving awareness to tourists to join and volunteer for the management and conservation of Taiping Heritage Tree Conservation. The willingness-to-pay value of Urban Heritage Trees in Taiping Lake Garden is a initiative for preservation, protection and conservation purpose in future formulation of state or federal policy. By conserving Urban Heritage Trees, the Federal Government of Malaysia together with the State Government of Taiping and also Local Authorities would be able promote sustainable development on urban areas without neglecting the environment which aligns with Malaysia's policy on Sustainable Development enunciated in the 7th Malaysian Plan (GOM 1996). Hence, by assigning the willingness-to-pay value on the trees, it would promote awareness to the decision makers and tourist to consider protecting our green assets in order to promote sustainable development in urban setting. The influences of the colonial era has a great impact to the planting scheme

in Malaysia where a significant planting scheme could clearly be noticed from Taiping Lake Garden together with Malacca, Singapore and Penang. Furthermore the public awareness protecting urban heritage trees need to be increased by actively promoting it through education and promotional programmes, greater public understanding and appreciation of heritage trees and an importance of protecting them.

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