

Residents want their say before trees get felled

REPRESENTATIVES from residents associations (RAs) and Kawasan Rukun Tetangga (KRT) want proper engagement with Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) before the authority fells trees in neighbourhoods.

They say some perfectly healthy trees in Kuala Lumpur were chopped down recently without proper consultation with local communities.

Many more trees have been tagged for either pruning or felling.

Taman Desa Residents Association (TDRA) chairman Wong Chan Choy reported receiving numerous complaints after DBKL contractors felled a 40-year-old Khaya tree at Jalan 2/109e, Taman Desa, near Wisma Miramas on Saturday.

"The tree was old but healthy and looked sturdy. They should have trimmed it instead of chopping it down," he said.

Wong approached the foreign contractors who said they were merely following DBKL's orders.

"TDRA is a very proactive RA, and we have a good relationship with DBKL. We would appreciate it if officers could inform us or consult with us before proceeding with tree-cutting activities," he said.

On the flip side another Taman Desa resident, who wished to remain anonymous, said it took almost a year for DBKL to cut down an old tree that was on the verge of toppling near her house.

"They only came when things got bad, and they did a poor job, leaving a huge stump with roots intact, which is now damaging the drains," she said.

Another resident, Jaclyn Chin, suggested DBKL mark old and brittle trees with a red tag and ensure the area was off-limits to parking and stalls.

"They should not have knee-jerk reactions when something happens," Chin said.

Taman Seputeh KRT chairman Cynthia Hor said DBKL had been ignoring its own guidelines.

"A section in Kuala Lumpur Local Plan 2040 (KLLP2040) states that the city's goal to go green includes planting 19 species of tall trees (see graphic).

"However, when I met with DBKL's Bukit Bintang branch officer responsible for landscaping, he said they lacked cranes that could reach 30m to



TDRA wants DBKL to look at preserving and not cutting down trees in the neighbourhood. — Photos: YAP CHEE HONG/The Star



Taman Desa RA members showing the huge stump of a felled tree which they say is wreaking havoc on drains.

maintain these trees," said Hor. "Of the 19 species listed, many can grow over 30m. Do you see the problem?"

Hor said DBKL must develop a tree maintenance culture to achieve its green city targets.

"Some trees are brittle or have crowns dangerously close to buildings or electrical cables.

"DBKL should conduct assessments and communicate with community representatives.

"In some areas, they don't post notices on the trees, inform the KRT or RA, or engage with residents when they are going to cut or prune the trees," she added.

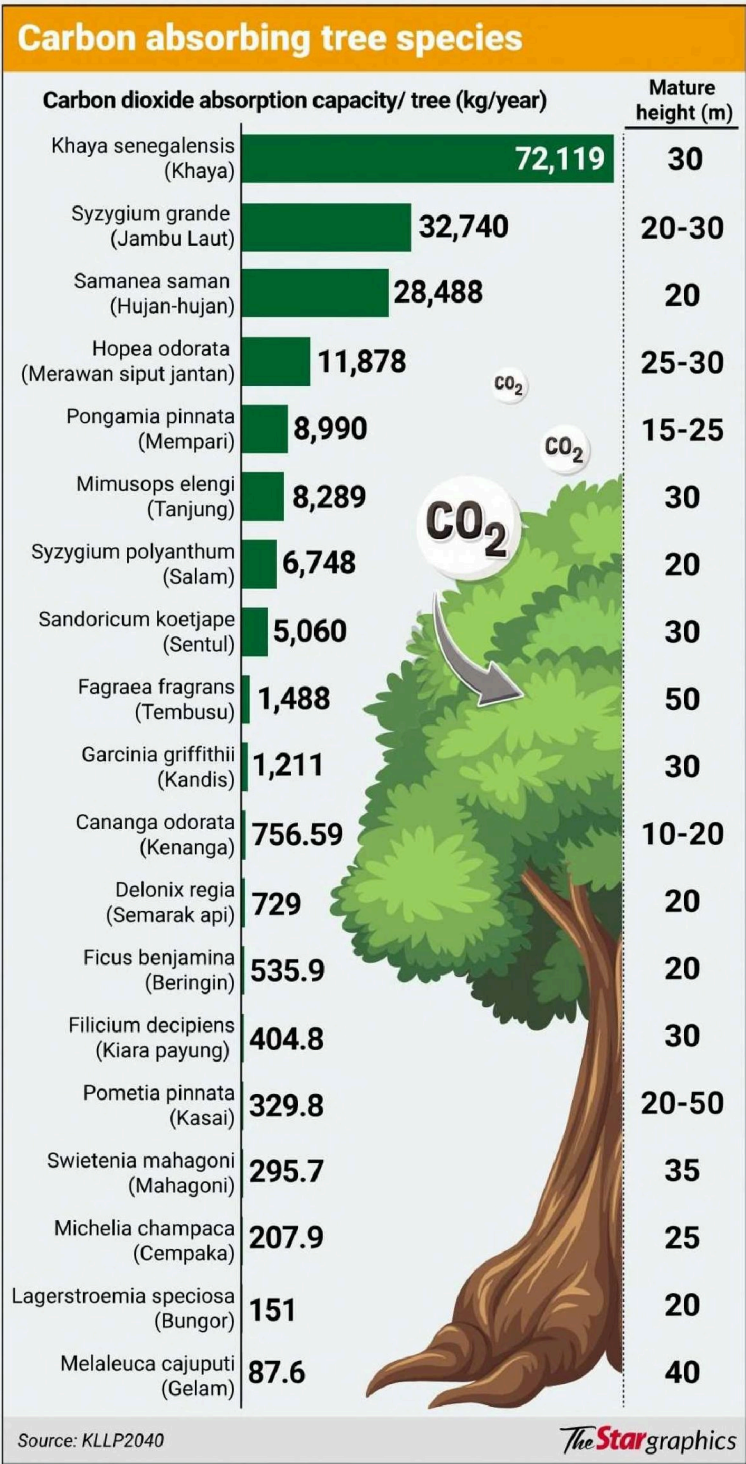
Hor pointed out that trees were essential as they absorbed carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and helped reduce



Hor says DBKL needs more communication with residents.

greenhouse gases besides mitigating climate change.

"Trees also filter pollutants from the air, improving overall air quality and public health, and they provide shade and



release moisture through transpiration, cooling the city and reducing the urban heat island effect."

Realtor S. Shamini added that green spaces enhanced the visual appeal of urban areas and contributed to residents' well-being by reducing stress and promoting mental health.

"In my experience of selling houses for over 10 years, neighbourhoods with a lot of greenery tend to sell easily, so integrating carbon-absorbing

trees into urban planning can significantly improve the value of the property in a township as well as the quality of life and environmental health in cities," Shamini said.

On May 13, a huge tree fell on Jalan Pinang, damaging several vehicles. This incident occurred just 600m from Jalan Sultan Ismail, where another large tree had fallen the previous week, killing a motorist and injuring two others. — By BAVANI M