



KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

# KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	SUNDAY STAR			
TARIKH	:	3/10/2021 (AHAD)	MUKA SURAT	:	8
JABATAN	:	JAB.PERHUTANAN NEGERI PULAU PINANG			

8 Nation SUNDAY STAR, SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER 2021

## Trail of destruction on Penang Hill

**Trees stripped of bark, left to slowly die**

By LO TERN CHERN  
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**GEORGE TOWN:** About 40 mature trees along the Penang Hill range were found to have been severely vandalised by unknown parties.

The trees along the hiking trail between Station 39 and Station 43, about a kilometre behind the Penang Turf Club and Ayer Itam's Rifle Range Flats, were found hacked with the use of sharp instruments to ensure their slow death, a method called girdling or ring-barking.

By removing a band or ring of bark around a tree, all the way to its hardwood core, the parts above the ring will die off as sugars produced by the leaves' photosynthesis cannot reach the roots.

Several of the 40 trees that were found to be girdled on the way to Bukit Cendana were already dead and were being fed on by termites while others bore fresh cuts, judging from the seeping sap on them.

Hike On Thursday (HOT) group coordinator S. Ravindran, 40, said they first found 10 trees girdled two weeks ago, and then another 30 recently.

"We don't know why. Maybe it is to make way for development," said Ravindran, who urged hikers who see such girdling being done to quickly alert the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) and relevant authorities.

Ravindran said these trees hold up hillslopes with their roots and without them, landslides could occur.

Meanwhile, Penang Botanic Gardens curator Dr Saw Leng Guan voiced disappointment over the girdling of so many trees.

"The trees will ultimately die. It will take a long time as the roots basically starve. When the bark containing cambium is removed, the top of the trees will still receive water from the xylem and produce food through photosynthesis.

"The roots below still receive water but stop receiving food from the leaves above," he explained, adding that those trees were now beyond saving.

When *The Star* inspected the girdled trees, a notice from MBPP was found on one of them.

The notice, under Section 70A of Road, Drainage and Buildings Act 1974, was directed at an 83-year-old landowner and 11 others on Dec 9, ordering the cessation of earthworks.

It is believed that the notice was issued against hill clearing done nearby that has since stopped.

MBPP mayor Datuk Yew Tung Seang said the council had started investigations and consultations with experts.

"We formed a ranger team of 15 people comprising staff members and hikers to help keep an eye on hill activities," he said.

Arborist Mohd Dalikry Mohd Hydzir said the Forestry Department should be alerted too.

"Although the trees are dying, notices can be issued to stop them from being felled," he said.




**Along death row:** (Above) A hiker who stumbled upon the girdled trees inspecting the extent of the damage on the bark of a tree recently hacked off. A full grown tree (left) that was girdled earlier is infested with termites.  
— LO TERN CHERN/The Star