

Headline	No more cars in Lake Gardens		
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# Choosing trees over traffic

The Taiping Municipal Council has closed a stretch of road in the town's Lake Gardens to motorised vehicles as part of efforts to protect 120-year-old rain trees. >2&3



**Picturesque setting:** Visitors along the Jalan Pekeliling at Taiping Lake Garden having a picnic under the shades of the park's iconic 120-year-old rain trees while enjoying a scenic view of the garden and the lake. — SAIFUL BAHRI/ The Star

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Taiping Lake Garden's popular raintrees are 120 years old and the council hopes they will live for another 100 more.

## No more cars in Lake Gardens

Taiping Municipal council says traffic could potentially harm the park's 120 year old rain trees

BY CHAN LI LEEN  
lleen@thestar.com.my

PART of Taiping Lake Gardens will be closed off to motorised vehicles from today onwards in a move to preserve its precious rain trees.

Taiping Municipal Council President Datuk Abd Rahim Md Ariff said a 630m-stretch of road, which makes up about a quarter of the entire Lake Gardens loop, will permanently become a pedestrian walk and cycling path after that.

"There are about 15 rain trees, all of them more than 120 years old. Their roots are very sensitive and any vehicles that pass through impact the roots underneath."

"We are hoping that by closing off the road, the rain trees can live for another 100 years," Abd Rahim said.

The closure, he added, also

means that Taiping folk have another spot to exercise and enjoy the scenery.

According to Abd Rahim, the decision to ban motorised vehicles was made after consultations with several quarters including the National Landscape Department, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and public interest groups.

"We are working closely with the department and FRIM."

"In fact, this move is based on their recommendations," he said.

"This decision has been a long one in the making."

"It has taken us some time to come up with the new ruling because the state government's approval is required and changes in the by-law must be gazetted," he added.

> SEE NEXT PAGE



The branches from the trees grow so low that they almost touch the lake's water. – Filepic



The serene Taiping Lake Garden is a very popular destination for locals and tourists alike. – Filepic



Abd Rahim says the decision to ban motorised vehicles was made after the council consulted with various bodies and public interest groups.

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## Most Taiping folk welcome closure of road

### > FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Abd Rahim also said recent tests carried out on the 15 rain trees showed that, except for one or two trees, the density of their trunks looks fine for now.

Lauding the council's initiative to preserve the rain trees, housewife Satia Kaur, 61, said nowhere else are there such beautiful rain trees surrounding a lake.

"The place is really picturesque. You can see the rain trees from one end to another.

"It is also better to close the road because right now, we have to keep looking out for cars or motorcycles.

"Sometimes, there are even lorries that speed past.

"There is no peace when you are trying to relax," she said, adding that the area used to be also frequented by mat rempit.

Media relations executive Choo Pei Wei, who likes to unwind and

enjoy the natural beauty of the Lake Gardens on weekends, said the step taken by the council to preserve the rain trees is necessary.

"As it is, the branches of trees along that section of the Lake Gardens are growing really low.

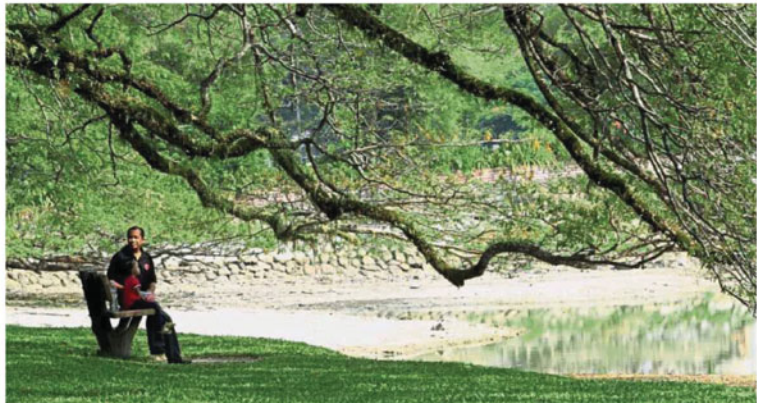
"They are almost touching the surface of the water and eventually some may obscure the view of motorists. To close off the road would be the best thing to do, as cutting down the trees is not an option," Choo said.

Established in 1880, the Taiping Lake Gardens is one of the oldest in Malaysia.

What was a disused mining area was transformed into a nature sanctuary.

From the lake, one can stroll to the Taiping Zoo.

It is also the gateway to Maxwell Hill or Bukit Larut as it is known today.



Taiping residents interviewed say that they agree with the council's action to protect the rain trees.