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**Changi tree sculptures, sapling now at Singapore Zoological Gardens**

By Bridgette See, Channel NewsAsia

SINGAPORE : Remember the 150-year old tree in Changi that was cut down by a developer two years ago?

Well, its legacy lives on, in the form of nine sculptures which were unveiled at the Singapore Zoological Gardens on Wednesday.

The artworks were carved from what remained of the tree - the Hopea Sangal - after it was felled in 2002.

Its nine pieces, representing different periods of its 150-year old history, are now installed at the zoo.

There is also an education programme to boost awareness of Singapore's flora and fauna heritage.

The efforts have received a thumbs-up.

"It is very meaningful and very beautiful because it tells men not to cut down trees."

"Maybe this will prevent people from cutting down other old trees in Changi."

A seedling from the tree was also handed over to the zoo to be planted.

The only reason why the Changi tree is not extinct in Singapore is because of a group of nature lovers from the Nature Society and the National Parks Board.

They collected the seeds in what is known as a salvage operation before the tree was cut down by a careless developer.

Angie Ng, Nature Society, said: "We were going around Changi looking out for heritage trees and we came upon this very tall and very old tree. It was fruiting at the same time so we picked up the seeds."

Thanks to such efforts, more than 20 seedlings are now thriving.

Sharon Chan, Assistant Director of Central Nature Reserve at the NParks, said: "Salvage operations is actually moving, transplanting of native saplings from one site to another site. In areas of development, we would go in to look for native saplings and then remove it, because if we do not they will be lost."

NParks carries out such salvage operations on a regular basis.

Last July, for the first time, a developer actually chipped in when the Education Ministry was planning to construct an adventure camp in Bukit Timah.

Native wild orchids at the site were salvaged before the bulldozers moved in.

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They are now being nurtured at NParks' Bukit Timah nursery, where more than 50 other native species are kept.

Susanna Ho, Co-Curricular Activities Branch of the Education Ministry, said: "We thought it would be good to have some hands-on experience ... in all our courses we conduct we can share with other schools as to how to do a salvage programme and encourage them to do likewise." - CNA

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