



## Rainforest Protectors of Sri Lanka

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### Declare the Endemic and Endangered Hora Tree as a Protected Species

July 29, 2015 - The Hora tree (*Dipterocarpus zeylanicus*) is an endemic tall canopy tree native to the Rainforests of Sri Lanka and listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is isolated to the highly fragmented Rainforests and a few private forest lands in the Wet Zone. It plays an important ecological role as the dominant native canopy tree in the old growth virgin Rainforests in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, many who do not understand the ecological value of the Hora tree, continue to cut down what is remaining and not committed to planting any new replacement trees. During a conservation expedition to Udakiruwa Rainforest - the last Rainforest in Uva Province and a highly bio-diverse area - volunteers of Rainforest Protectors were alarmed to see many giant Hora trees hundreds of years old, been cut down by individuals with the blessing of local authorities. It is a shame that world's tallest Hora trees at 60m height, situated only in the Udakiruwa Rainforest in Sri Lanka are being felled relentlessly due to the ignorance of local authorities and those trying to make quick money.



( Giant 60m tall Hora trees of Udakiruwa Rainforest - the tallest Hora trees in the world )



( Hora trees in Udakiruwa Rainforest that have been recently cut down and sold )

Unless the Ministry of Environment and Central Environmental Authority coordinate to immediately take action and declare the Hora tree (*Dipterocarpus zeylanicus*) as a protected species and grant the highest protection, Sri Lanka may soon lose this treasure forever. Legal protection should be followed up with notifying and educating the local authorities such as Grama Niladhari, Divisional Secretariat and District Secretariat offices of relevant areas of the importance and legal protection given to the Hora tree, and the need to preserve it for the future.

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