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# Green lungs ripe for picking

**Yen Yen: Promote parks as tourists attractions**

**YENG AI CHUN**

**PETALING JAYA:** With nature on our side and the weather devoid of harsh extremes, Malaysia's local parks and gardens have the potential to become attractive tourism products, said Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen.

Community-friendly activities such as weddings, family days, cycling, arts and music can be among the highlights to be held in these green lungs to attract more local and international visitors.

"Our parks can be visited 365 days a year. We are also the world's 12th largest in terms of biodiversity and we have many parks," she said after chairing the Parks, Gardens & Flowers in Malaysia Development and Promotion's first meeting yesterday.

She likened Malaysia's parks, gardens and flowers to "low hanging fruits" ripe for picking and the attractions would just need to be value-added.

"I've also requested that parks and gardens have more activities like arts and music, as well as other interesting programmes.

"Have weddings like (local celebrity) Maya Karin, who held her wedding ceremony in the Forest Reserve Institute Malaysia (FRIM)," she said. (Maya got married in 2008.)

She stressed that people around the world enjoy visiting parks and having such a tourism product would attract international visitors, especially high-yield tourists.

To promote green lungs, a task force called Parks, Gardens and Flowers Tourism Malaysia had been set up, comprising FRIM, state governments, Kuala Lumpur City Hall and the Human Resources Ministry.

"We need a very strong garden maintenance human resource. At the moment, we believe the majority are foreigners who are considered labourers and non-skilled.

"We are going to propose to the Human Resources Ministry to develop a new skill called garden facilitators instead of 'tukang kebun'," she said.