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Tongkat Ali rises to the occasion

KUALA LUMPUR: The Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (Frim) believes it has made a 'breakthrough' in producing an active substance from *Eurycoma Longifolia* Jack, better known as the 'Tongkat Ali' plant.

Frim director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod said the substance was three times more nutritious than those produced by a naturally-grown 'Tongkat Ali' plant.

He said the active substance was produced from Tongkat Ali's hairy root and processed by the institute's tissue laboratory, using a special bio-reactor.

"The strength of Tongkat Ali's active substance, produced using the bio-reactor, is three times greater than usual," he told reporters after opening the 12th Herbal and Aromatic Plants seminar here yesterday.

He said the bio-reactor method would also shorten the time needed to harvest Tongkat Ali yields.

"It usually takes seven to eight years before the hairy root could be harvested from a Tongkat Ali plant, but by using the bio-reactor, the process takes just six months," said Abd Latif.

He said, the method would also enable profits from Tongkat Ali-based products, valued about RM100 million annually, to be increased by several times. - Bernama