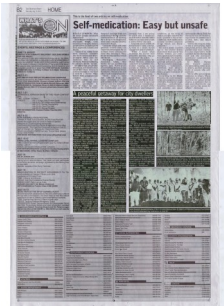


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A peaceful getaway for city dwellers

KUALA LUMPUR: The Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong is a green lung, an ideal place for city dwellers to rest their exhausted minds and bodies.

The 486-hectare forested area can be accessed from the city via two major routes in northern Kuala Lumpur - the Middle Ring Road 2 and Jalan Ipoh. The former mining land was converted into a forest research centre in 1929, and is among the world's oldest sanctuaries.

FRIM's Director-General Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod said the forested institute has nearly 15 million trees from 2,500 different species.

It is also home to about 100 species of plants threatened with extinction. He said trees here are conserved in an arboretum, or a botanical garden, and used for research in science, conservation of genetic resources, and exhibitions.

FRIM has built six arboreta since 1929. These arboreta house various families of trees, such as non-Dipterocarps (arboretum built in 1929), Dipterocarps (1939), Coniferatum (1949), fruit trees (1979), Monocot (1981), and Bambusetum (1994).

FRIM has always been a favourite destination among city dwellers for recreational activities such as cycling, jogging, family days and school camps.

This forested area is also popular location for photo shoots, especially pre-wedding, outdoor ones. Among other facilities here is a museum, nature education centre, camping

sites and a restaurant.

There are also six trails that have proven popular among visitors, both foreign and local.

In 2008, a 400m-trail, themed 'Rich diversity of Malaysian under-storey plants', was unveiled at FRIM's Botanical Garden in Kepong. Named the Razak trail, this is the only handicap-friendly jungle-trail in Malaysia.

The trail has 9,200 local plants and herbs, such as ginger, bamboo and orchids. The plants are conserved ex-situ, or away from their original habitats.

At the Keruing Trail, visitors marvel at the 'The View', a breathtaking geographical configuration in a valley, located inside the over 80-year-old forest.

At the Salleh Nature Trail, visitors can learn about FRIM's history. This is what makes the difference between a natural forest and farm forest.

The Engkabang Trail, meanwhile, is a wetland covered with grass and secondary jungles.

This trail has various species of fauna, particularly birds, as the area is surrounded by fruit arboreta and farm forest, making it popular among bird watchers.

For fitness enthusiasts, the Rover Trek offers a 3.5 km route for running. Runners can begin at the Jamek Mosque in FRIM, and pass by a waterfall, the Sungai Kroh camping site, and a 30m high canopy walkway, before arriving at Kem Perah.

Visitors can find several rich ecosystems, including those with migratory birds at the Sebasah Trail.

Visitors to this forested institute can also see a Malay traditional house. The Terengganu-style Malay house is built with wood, without the use of a single nail.

Growing awareness of nature-conservation issues has helped FRIM become a centre for education on nature.

FRIM's critical role in the World Environment Day celebrations on June 11, is evidence of this.

Themed 'Forest at Your Service', the celebrations drew 400 people to participate in the Guided Nature Walk and Eco Fun Run, among other activities.

Four days earlier, FRIM hosted a National Seminar on R&D Projects on Coastal Mangroves in Malaysia.

Its Pasoh Research Station, in Negeri Sembilan, have focused on research & development (R&D) on the forest's role in mitigating climate change in the country. - Bernama



A Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) guide briefs participants on flora and fauna in the World Environment Day celebrations organised by FRIM in Kepong recently. - Bernama photo

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Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) Director-General Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod flagging off participants in the World Environment Day celebrations on June 11.