

Enriching nature

KEPONG: Three hundred volunteers braved a steep and slippery terrain to plant 500 hardwood tree saplings at the Kepong Botanical Garden in Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) last Saturday morning.

From college students to corporate executives, the volunteers planted three species of heavy hardwood – chengal, belian and balau – to help enrich the man-made forest.

“These hardwood species that you plant today are great species which can grow really huge and live for a long, long time,” FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod told the volunteers.

Besides hardwood species, FRIM also plants fruit trees to provide food for the animals such as monkeys and wild boars in the forest.

Abdul Latif explained that enrichment planting is an important technique in forest rehabilitation, where valuable species are introduced without eliminating the existing trees in a secondary forest.

Such techniques help enhance the vale of secondary forests and prevent their conversion to other land use, thus reducing deforestation, said Abdul Latif.

Apart from tree planting, four guided nature walks along the Razak Trail, which is disabled-friendly, were also held to celebrate International Day of Forest.

“We have ramps along the trail and the trees are planted at the eye-level (for those in wheelchair) so that they too can enjoy nature,” said FRIM corporate management head Norhayati Nordin.

In addition, children aged seven to 12 joined a flora colouring contest at the garden’s lakeside while others took part in a botanical hunt.

Formerly a degraded land with sterile mining pools in 1929, FRIM has been successfully rehabilitated since and is now a popular spot for nature lovers, joggers and meditation practitioners.

The 544.3ha campus is surrounded by the Bukit Lagong Forest Reserve.



Volunteers planting Belian, whose timber is immune to termite attacks and fungal infestation, at Field 54 to help enrich the forest at FRIM last Saturday.