

Headline	FRIM Go for local species		
MediaTitle	The Star (Kuching)		
Date	04 Oct 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	NEWS	Circulation	293,375
Page No	S2	Readership	1,026,812
Language	English	ArticleSize	441 cm ²
Journalist	Sharon Ling	AdValue	RM 5,868
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 17,604



FRIM: Go for local species

One way to conserve while creating awareness about value and uses of trees

By SHARON LING
sharonling@thestar.com.my

KUCHING: Urban forests and parks should be planted with local forest species instead of imported landscape trees, says the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM).

Its director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod said this was one way to preserving local forest trees while creating awareness about their value and uses.

"We want to create urban forests and parks which we are trying to change from landscape trees to forest trees; in other words beautify towns and cities with whatever species we have.

"One reason for this is to preserve our heritage of trees. Secondly, we will create green lungs in urban areas. And thirdly, when the trees need to be cut down after 20 years or so, they can still be used in various industries and be a source of revenue," he told reporters after the opening of the Urban Forestry Conference 2012 here yesterday.

Abd Latif said landscape trees cost more to plant and maintain compared to local forest trees.

He said some imported trees could also be invasive species which would overrun local species.

"That's why we try to change to local forest trees. We should appreciate the species that we have in our country," he said.

He added that planting local trees would also be a way of introducing them to urban folk, including the younger generation.

"We want people to be able to identify local tree species and what they can be used for. This will create awareness and appreciation of local forest species as well as their economic value," he said.



Interesting read: Abd Latif (left) presenting some books to Natural Resources and Environment Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohamad Nor as Abdul Wahap looks on.

In line with this, he said FRIM would communicate with 151 local authorities in Peninsular Malaysia to advise them on planting local trees in urban areas.

"For example, we can tell them which trees are suitable and which ones have certain colours or flowers," he said.

Earlier in his speech, Abd Latif said urban forests and green spaces could help to reduce climate change

problems, flash floods and extreme heat.

He said research had also shown their benefits in improving the health and wellbeing of city dwellers.

As such, he said the conference theme, "Forest and Parks: Communicating Messages for Sustainability", was chosen to reflect the need to educate stakeholders and the public on long-

term management of forests.

"Urban green spaces need the help of the public to appreciate and not abuse these resources, thus sharing the responsibility of taking care of them," he said.

Campaign exceeds initial target of 26 million trees. See Page S5