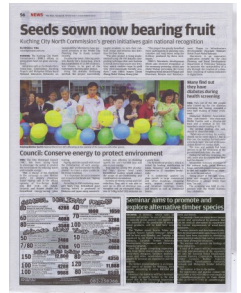


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## Seminar aims to promote and explore alternative timber species

**KUCHING:** A seminar, which aims to promote and explore the use of alternatives to naturally grown pioneer tree species as raw materials in the production of wood-based products, will be held here next week.

The "Rubber wood, Acacia, Palma and Sarawak Pioneer Species Seminar", which will be held next Monday and Tuesday, is organised by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia, Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

Over 100 people comprising representatives from forest-related agencies, experts, researchers, designers, furniture manufacturers and other wood-related industry players in Sarawak are expected to join the seminar.

The timber-related industry is an important source of income for Malaysia, with exports amounting to some RM20bil per annum.

However, the industry will face shortages of supply or quality timber in the near future due to the increasing importance given to the conservation of the environ-

ment and forests.

Fortunately, there are many lesser-known species and agricultural by-products that can be used as alternative to supplement the current requirements of wood-based industries.

Various research and development initiatives by local universities and research institutions have been successful in identifying wood-based products that can be produced from these alternative resources.

The seminar will present the findings of those initiatives.

A total of 18 papers will be presented by not only representatives of the organisers but also the Sarawak Forest Department, Sarawak Forestry Corporation, Malaysian Timber Council, Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority Sarawak and Malaysian Timber Industry Board.

The seminar is free to the public.

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