

Headline	Arborist plants happy thoughts		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	28 Dec 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	304,904
Page No	1,3	Readership	1,026,812
Language	English	ArticleSize	314 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	Eileen Ng	AdValue	RM 14,623
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 43,869



NATION



## Arborist plants happy thoughts

Some may call it crazy but a tree whisperer is coaxing greenery to grow up strong and healthy. >3

# Arborist plants happy thoughts

## Tree whisperer coaxes greenery to grow healthy daily

By EILEEN NG

eileen@thestar.com.my

**KEPONG:** Some may call it crazy or ridiculous, but "tree whisperer" Mohd Afendi Hussin swears by his methods.

Mohd Afendi Hussin spends at least half an hour talking to plants daily as part of his routine to ensure they grow up strong and healthy.

The 47-year-old arborist, who has been working with the Forest Research Institute Malaysia since 2005, has a simple explanation for what he does.

(An arborist studies trees, shrubs and other plants to ensure the health of the flora under his care.)

"We exhale carbon dioxide when we talk and plants absorb it. In a way, we are feeding them to become healthier," he said in an interview yesterday.

Mohd Afendi's routine involves cooing and cajoling the trees, espe-

cially the young and newly-planted ones, to "please grow".

For flower and fruit plants, he talks softly to them and urges them to "flower", while telling mature trees "you have served well and you are very good".

His daily duties also include carrying out health inspections on trees at the institute and training people on landscape work.

He also provides technical expertise to other government agencies, local authorities, private companies and the public.

A passionate nature lover, Mohd Afendi likened plants to humans, pointing out that both species share many similarities.

"Just like humans, plants also need to eat, drink, breathe, grow and get attention and love. Plants will react

better if you are close to them and attend to them regularly," he said, adding that his family was used to his habit of talking to plants.

He once went out of his way to help put upright a number of trees which were felled by strong winds.

"When people asked me why, I replied that those trees are just like people – they are meant to grow upwards," he added.

Mohd Afendi said he would get upset when people don't appreciate the role of plants to the eco-system. He also does not like those who abuse trees.

"Plants play a huge role in maintaining a balance in the eco-system, especially in the urban and developed areas.

"We will become a more pleasant and happier society when we are surrounded by greenery," he added.

Headline	Arborist plants happy thoughts		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	28 Dec 2012	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	304,904
Page No	1,3	Readership	1,026,812
Language	English	ArticleSize	314 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	Eileen Ng	AdValue	RM 14,623
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 43,869

