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City Hall gets FRIM's help to green the capital

BRANCH BUDDIES: The institute to advise the city authority on the suitability of tree species for planting in different spots

VEENA BABULAL

CITY Hall will be inking a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) to green the city.

Mayor Datuk Seri Ahmad Phesal Talib said the institute was roped in for "tree care" as City Hall's earlier plan to hire arborists was hindered by current public service recruitment policies.

He said, until recently, getting on the green wagon was an uphill task as the city authority had only two arborists in its employ, compared with the 300 arborists Singapore is said to have on its payroll.

+ The bright side to the tie up was, City Hall could get the experts and consultants for the job.

"City Hall can also work on planting more trees of better quality in terms of shade and life span," he said at a mass tree planting exercise at the Police Training Centre (Pulapol) in Jalan Semarak, here, on Saturday.

FRIM is among those expected to advise City Hall on tree and shrub planting, transplanting, pruning, felling, watering, fertilisation, soil use and health.

The institute is expected to advise the authority on the suitability of tree species for different areas such as fields, large parks, lake gardens, playgrounds, river banks, road shoulders and common areas inside as well as outside buildings.

It is also expected to join the officers from City Hall's Landscape Department on visits.

City Hall is also planning to plant trees at a treatment plant in Pantai Dalam. It was inspired to do so after its representatives visited a toxic

lake in Bidor that was transformed into a green lung after trees were planted on its fringes.

At the tree-planting ceremony, Phesal took reporters by surprise by saying he was "happy to receive complaints and even outright objections on cutting and pruning trees".

"This is a positive development indicating that KLites are aware of the importance of trees," he said, adding that he wanted more non-governmental organisations to adopt lake gardens as well as large nature parks.

"About six parks are up for adoption there. Taman Metropolitan Batu and Taman Botani Perdana are among these," he said, adding that there were 18 lake gardens and parks suitable for adoption.

He said two banks had already adopted two parks in the city.

Phesal said he was glad to contribute the over 2,000 trees to the police training academy because he was sure that they would be in good hands.

The trees planted by about 500 trainees were Meranti Pahang, Meranti Tembaga, Merlimau and neem. Over 1,500 of the trees were flowering trees.

Centre commandant SAC Zukifli Mohamed said the additional trees planted on the hill overlooking the city would benefit the 4,000 trainees and their visiting families.

Zukifli hoped to make the park available for public use in the future.

The centre will soon be equipped with gazebos and flying fox equipment.

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*Datuk Seri Ahmad Phesal Talib (left), Zulkifli Mohamed (centre) and City Hall deputy director-general (project) Datuk Mohd Najib Mohd **plant and water a Meranti Pahang.** Pic by Mohd Fadli Hamzah*