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Have laws to protect them, govt urged

THE Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) has urged the government to legislate an act to protect threatened plant species in the country.

Its Forest Biodiversity division director Dr Saw Leng Guan said the government should come up with a legal framework.

"The government and the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry need to revisit the legal framework concerning wild plants and initiate a legal provision pertaining to wild plants conservation to protect the endangered species," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

He said habitat loss was the primary factor endangering the wild plants. These included human activities, such as land-clearing and logging.

"The threatened plants need to be protected in their natural habitats, as opposed to replanting the species elsewhere. The plants are inter-dependant on the ecosystem, environment and other species. We may not be able to save a species by merely plucking them out and replanting it elsewhere."

Saw suggested practising the 'in-situ' (in position) method of hav-

ing a plant grown in its natural position and habitat.

"Ex-situ (off-site conservation of protecting an endangered species of plant outside its natural habitat) may lead to its extinction."

Saw also stressed on the need for a conservation programme in collaboration with the ministry to share information on the affected species.

"There must be a mechanism with the government on how to deal with threatened plants in a comprehensive manner," he said, adding that an adequate monitoring system was required to identify the threatened species and their habitats.