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They do FRIM proud by bagging National Book Award

FOREST Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) driver Othaman Hasin and his wife Zawiah Ngah, who works as a FRIM research assistant, have done themselves and the institute proud by producing a pictorial book which won the National Book Award 2013 recently.

The couple took up the challenge posed by FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod, who knew of their passion for fruits, and encouraged them to use their knowledge, information and pictures to produce the book *99 Spesies Buah di FRIM*.

They took over a year to produce their first draft, which was edited by the FRIM DG and several other officers including two botanists.

Othaman, 58, and Zawiah, 43, who met in FRIM, were known to share a love for fruits and fruit trees. It was this interest that brought them together.

They enjoy taking pictures of various fruit trees and accumulating knowledge about the different types of fruit.

Winning the award has strengthened their resolve to work harder on the second volume. Both were proud of their effort and grateful to Dr Abd Latif and others who helped in the editing process.

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be able to write a book, let alone win an award for it. My wife and I could not have done it without the encouragement of the DG and also the assistance of others," said Othaman.

Othaman and Zawiah, who were accompanied by Dr Abd Latif and FRIM officers involved in the production and promotion of the book, received the trophy and certificate from Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah, at the awards ceremony recently.

This is the third consecutive year FRIM has won the National Book Award and this time around, the institute took home two awards — the Best General Book under the Book Industry Award (Science category) for *99 Spesies Buah di FRIM* and

the Premier Award (Research) for *FRIM Warisan Kebangsaan*.

Dr Abd Latif accepted the Premier Award from Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi for *FRIM Warisan Kebangsaan* at the award ceremony.

The award presentation ceremonies were held in conjunction with the 1Malaysia Book Expo 2013 and International Book Conference 2013, organised by the National Book Development Foundation at PWTC,

Kuala Lumpur from Dec 11 to 15.

"I am very proud of our achievements. However, there is still a lot to be done because FRIM has so much knowledge and information to share. We hope to continue producing books for future generations," said Dr Abd Latif.

Last year, FRIM was awarded the Best Technical Book Award for *Wild Orchids of Peninsular Malaysia*, co-authored by Ong Poh Teck, Peter O'Byrne, Wendy Yong and Dr Saw Leng Guan.

In 2010, FRIM received the award in the same category for *FRIM Tapak Warisan Semulajadi Negara*.

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Well done: Othaman (left) and Zawiah celebrating the award with Dr Abd Latif (centre) with their award.