

Headline	New tree species for the timber industry found		
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# New tree species for the timber industry found

**Larissa Lumandan**

KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Sabapuri Nursery SBH (SNS) have discovered a new tree species to serve as raw material in the timber industry.

The tree, known as 'Pokok Sungkai' or '*Peronema Canescen*', is originally from Borneo and can be found growing in Kalimantan.

Agriculture and Food Industries Assistant Minister Datuk Sairin Karno said the dependence on a single species would pose a risk to the forest plantation industry.

"Threats such as diseases and insects could harm the industry. Therefore, the search for a new species for forest plantations is crucial.

"I would like to congratulate both UMS and Sabapuri Nursery for successfully finding a new species of tree for this purpose.

"I also understand that a committee has been formed with members from UMS, Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB), Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and Sabapuri Nursery SBH to run researches on the tree.

In their research, they had found the tree is of good quality equivalent to the teakwood, he said, when officiating at the National Seminar for Sungkai at the university's postgraduate auditorium, here, Wednesday.

According to him, the tree species was first brought into Sabah in the year 2000 and several companies during that time had

started to plant the tree on a smaller scale.

Based on earlier research, the tree is found to have clear annual rings, which are rarely found in other tropical species of trees, and are capable of producing beautiful patterns.

"Besides that, the wood is also white in colour which is fancied by the Japanese and Koreans. The light weight of the wood also makes the transportation process more convenient especially for those who live in flats in well-developed countries," he said, adding that the wood can also be used in producing musical and sports instrument.

The trees also grow faster with some achieving up to 30 centimetres at the age of 13 years, he said.

Apart from that, the trees can also be planted at roadsides as boundaries, riparian reserves and steep areas as well as for agro forestry purposes.

On the event, Sairin said he hoped it will benefit all the participants and act as a platform for them to exchange new ideas for the success of the industry that is capable of contributing to the nation's income.

There were 10 papers presented during the event by experts from Indonesia, government as well as private agencies.

A total of 60 individuals who are participating in the two-day programme will also visit the 'Pokok Sungkai' plantation farm in Kampung Nanapad, Kinarut.

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**Sairin (first from right) during the visit to one of the exhibition booths.**