

Headline	Treasure trove of flora and fauna		
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Treasure trove of flora and fauna

THE Forest Research Institute Malaysia is a treasure trove of numerous unique plants.

Visitors are encouraged to take note of announcements should they wish to visit during flowering season which varies according to species.

Here are five which can be found within the institute's borders:

Ceylon ironwood (*Mesua ferrea*)

- Native to Sri Lanka, India and parts of Southeast Asia.
- Found in evergreen forests especially in river valleys.
- Wood is very heavy, hard and strong hence its name.
- Seeds and heartwood (core) has anti-inflammatory properties.
- Essential oil used to cure coughs and indigestion.

Kapur (*Dryobalanops aromatica*)

- Only found in Sumatra, Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo.
- Typically grows in clusters on hillsides.
- Name comes from fragrant resin produced by tree.
- Famous for "crown shyness" with treetops not touching each other.
- Wood is hard and heavy, suitable for construction.

Jelutong (*Dyera costulata*)

- Native to Southeast Asia including Borneo and Peninsular Malaysia.
- Typically grows at low level in tropical evergreen forests.
- Sap was important in manufacturing of chewing gum.

- Heavy flowering creates effect of "snow" as white flowers blanket ground.

Bayabusua clarkei

- Named after late Temuan forester Baya Busu.
- One of very few monotypic (single type) plants and unique to Malaysia.
- Only found in Tapah (Perak), Baling (Kedah) and FRIM.
- Resembles a thin and featureless vine, except for bright red flowers.
- Fruits are up to one foot long and bell shaped.

Giant bamboo (*Dendrocalamus giganteus*)

- Native to Myanmar, Bhutan, China and Thailand.
- Prefers humid growing conditions and is among fastest growing plants.
- Grows in clumps and can reach up to 30m in height.
- Extended flowering cycle with 29, 40 and 43-year intervals.
- Has variety of uses including food, furniture and construction.

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