
Dr M: Look into export of coconut shoots

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LANGKAWI: The Prime Minister has suggested that coconut trees be felled for their shoots which can be processed and canned for export.

Datuk Seri ~~Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said as salads were popular with Europeans, the coconut delicacy could be a hit with them.

He said the felling of coconut trees for their shoots could be carried out every two to three years.

"I'm no expert on agriculture, but I think my suggestion should be seriously studied by the Agriculture Ministry," he said when launching the two-day International Coconut Festival at Taman CHOGM yesterday.

Also present were Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid and his deputy Dr T. Marimuthu.

Fiji, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Maldives, Seychelles, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Asia Pacific Coconut Community are also participating in the festival.

Among the aims of the festival is to find ways to diversify the uses of coconut and encourage related cottage industries such as handicraft.

Dr Mahathir said he was pleased with the ministry's efforts to revive the local coconut industry.

Sanusi, in his speech, said efforts would be made to make the festival an annual or biennial affair to further stimulate interest.