

# Cough cure 'tiger's milk' is a fungus

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IPOH: The "tiger's milk" which cured Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's chronic cough is a fungus found in Malaysian jungles, said local Chinese herbalist Liew Shou Lin, 63.

He said the Malays and the orang asli called it *kulat susu rimau* as according to folklore, the fungus would grow at the spot where milk from a tiger had dropped on.

He said the fungus grew well in cool and wet areas in the fringe of the jungle or rubber estates.

Dr Mahathir had during the opening of the International Convention on Biotechnology at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday, said that the chronic cough he used to suffer from stopped after a friend persuaded him to take Chinese medicine.

His friend had said the medicine was "tiger's milk" but was not willing to divulge its secret.

Dr Mahathir said that so far, no attempt had been made to analyse and identify the active ingredient or to test and produce the medicine commercially.

Liew said the *kulat susu rimau* belonged to the same family as the lingzhi (*gamoderma lucidum*), another popular fungus known for its various curative properties in treating ailments like insom-

nia, hypertension, chronic bronchitis, kidney infection, asthmatic cough and low blood cell count.

"The *kulat susu rimau* fungus is a local herb not found in the Chinese pharmacopoeia but its effectiveness in treating asthmatic cough, gastritis, and indigestion especially among infants, has been known not only to the older generation among the Chinese but also the Malays and the orang asli.

"The orang asli used to

collect the fungus for Chinese medical halls in towns and villages," he said.

He said the effective part of the fungus was its hard, tuber-like body found in the top soil.

The part is normally cut into pieces and boiled in water for drinking.

It can be ground into powder form and mixed with Chinese rice wine for external application to treat lumps, boils and sores, said Liew.