

31 MAY 2003

Ghani-Landscape

JOHOR TO PIONEER MALAYSIAN LANDSCAPE GARDEN CONCEPT

KUALA LUMPUR, May 31 (Bernama) -- Johor, which won the National Landscape Award three consecutive years, will pioneer the creation of Malaysian landscape gardens, said Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

He spoke to reporters after launching the landscape garden book titled "Seri Taman" in conjunction with Anjung Seri magazine's 10th anniversary at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

He said talented and creative people would be invited to come up with the concept of a Malaysian landscape garden. This will hopefully materialise in time for the next National Landscape Award, he added.

Seri Taman, written by horticulturist Abdul Rahim Mohd Rashid, provided guidelines to those interested in planting decorative trees and touched on planting techniques and pest prevention among others.

He said landscaped gardens with Malaysian identity were necessary as the country had a diversity of flowering, herbaceous and leafy plants. However, the local community was more inclined towards Bali, Japanese and English gardens.

"We can show the world the wealth of horticulture in Malaysian landscape gardens with their own texture, colour and smell," he added.

He said the Malaysian landscape garden concept should be implemented in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's wish to have Malaysia as a "Country in a Park" by 2005.

He said there were ongoing efforts towards this as many horticulturists and the rakyat themselves were keen to beautify their homes with attractive landscape gardens.

On Johor's proximity to Singapore, that was hit by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), he said although the state was SARS-free but efforts were underway to restore tourist numbers especially from the republic.

"We are free from SARS. Visitors are returning to spend the night in hotels but Singaporeans have yet to return as normal," he said.

Tourist arrivals dwindled the worst around March and April and he hoped things would return to normal once the World Health Organisation lifts the travel advisory against visiting Singapore, in 10 days time.

-- BERNAMA

FA KHY PC