

PM: Let's turn backyards into garden paradise

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MALACCA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday suggested that Malaysians turn their backyards into gardens which they can enjoy after a hard day's work.

"There are many homes in the country with ample land surrounding them, especially in urban areas," the prime minister said when addressing more than 1,000 people at the opening of the city's latest tourism attraction, Taman Seribu Bunga (Garden of a Thousand Flowers) here.

Present were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam and his wife, Datin Seri Asmah Abdul Rahman.

"However, the land is left untended and it is sometimes overgrown with creepers and weeds.

"Why don't we plant flowers? They not only beautify our homes but looking at the flowers and greenery is calming."

Abdullah, who was accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Jeanne Abdullah, said plants such as ladies fingers produced beautiful blooms apart from being edible.

"Even chillies can make your homes beautiful. They are green, then turn yellow and red when they ripen. The colours are magnificent."

Abdullah said Malaysia was blessed with a climate suitable for plants that flowered throughout the year.

"Even in Japan, they do not get the opportunity to see the Sakura flower bloom all year. It happens only in September.



(From left) Datin Seri Asmah Abdul Rahman, Datuk Seri Jeanne Abdullah, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam admiring the orchids at the Garden of a Thousand Flowers, Malacca, yesterday. — Bernama picture

"But in Malaysia, flowers bloom all-year round and we should take this opportunity to beautify our homes and country with them."

The 5.3ha garden, which has 126,000 flowering plants, is 5km from the Ayer Keroh toll plaza and a 30-minute drive from the city centre.

In conjunction with the opening, the country's first *Doriteanopsis* orchid hybrid was named after the prime minister's wife.

The *Doriteanopsis jeanne abdullah* was among the thousands of flowers in the garden and was in honour of Jeanne's first official

visit to the historical state.

The four-petal orchid has three colours — yellow, purple and white — and is the offspring of two orchid species, *Doriteanopsis purple chem* and *Doritisanopsis yellow*.

Malacca mayor Datuk Zaini Md Nor said the cross-breeding process began in 2003 and the orchid started flowering last year.

The hybrid was registered at the Penang Botanical Garden two weeks ago.

"*Doriteanopsis jeanne abdullah* will be registered as the first *Doriteanopsis* in Asia with the

Singapore Botanical Garden, then first in the world with the London Botanical Garden," said Zaini.

There are about 90 types of orchids in the garden, which opens to the public on Aug 31.

Earlier, Jeanne was conferred the state's highest award, the Darjah Utama Negeri Melaka, which carries the title "Datuk Seri Utama".

The award was bestowed on Jeanne by Malacca Governor Tun Khalil Yaakob at Seri Negeri.

Present were Abdullah, Ali and the governor's consort, Toh Puan Zurinah Kassim.