

Try gardening, advises PM

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Have a beautiful garden to come home to, a sanctuary for relaxation



Nature lovers: Abdullah and his wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah and Ali Rustam and his wife Datin Seri Asmah Abdul Rahman admiring a bloom at Taman Seribu Bungah in Ayer Keroh, Malacca, yesterday.

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MALACCA: The public have been urged by the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to decorate their homes with flowers and plants not only to beautify their houses but also for consumption.

Abdullah said if a home was decorated beautifully with colourful and fragrant flowers, one would return home to see them blooming and feel calmer and happier.

"Grow plants which not only flower but also bear fruits or vegetables that can be eaten, such as lady's finger plant.

"The lady's finger plant has a really beautiful yellow flower with a reddish centre, similar to a hibiscus. When it bears fruit, we can eat the fruit, which is the lady's finger," said Abdullah after launching the RM8.1mil Taman Seribu Bunga (Thousand Flower Park) in Ayer Keroh here yesterday.

Besides lady's fingers, he added, other flowering vegetables, which could be planted, were the bunga kantan and red chilli.

"This is, as (Agriculture and Agro- Based Industries Minister) Tan Sri Muhyiddin (Yassin) had called, an edible garden, so there are two benefits of doing this. For beautification and also for consumption," he said.

It was to the public's advantage, he added, that Malaysia's climate enabled flowers to bloom all year round, compared to other coun-

tries, where the flowers only bloom in certain seasons.

On the newly-launched park, which is expected to open to the public by the end of August, Abdullah said it could be a venue for visitors to spend their leisure hours.

When humans want to relax, there were many methods, including watching movies, spending time with children and another method, Abdullah added, was to take a stroll in a park to appreciate the beautiful flowers.

"It would also be good for other states to have such parks because we want to beautify (the country)," said Abdullah.

Earlier Abdullah and his wife Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah visited the 5.26ha park where Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam and the Prime Minister planted the Pokok Melaka and Pokok Raja Kayu.

Ali Rustam also announced that the park's 1,000th flower species - a white hybrid orchid *doritianopsis* was named Datuk Seri Utama Jeanne Abdullah after Abdullah's wife.

Ali Rustam said the orchid, which was cultivated three years ago, bloomed after Abdullah announced his marriage to Jeanne.

The couple also cut two cakes - one to launch the park and another as a gift to Jeanne, who received the Darjah Utama Negeri Melaka (DUNM), the highest honour in the state from Malacca Governor Tun Mohd Khalil Yaakob at Seri Negeri which carries the title Datuk Seri Utama.