

UMS pushes herb awareness, knowledge



BETTER GROWTH ... (from right) Low, How, Ismail and Sahana planting the 'Tuuwan-uan' in FKSU main compound.



PROUD MOMENT ... (seated from left) Low, Ismail, How and Sahana with guests and participating students of FKSU EcoCampus Day.

By DK RYNI QAREENA

KOTA KINABALU: A faculty in Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is branching into planting of herbs and starting an EcoCampus.

The faculty of humanities, arts and heritage has been among faculties which conducted research on the subjects but became the first to introduce a formal study.

Dr How Siew Eng, the director of the EcoCampus management centre, said: "We are proud to be going into studies of herbal plants because this is

an area usually assigned to science-related faculties."

Being the first arts faculty of UMS to show interest on natural herbs, vice chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr. D Kamarudin D Mudin commended the faculty and hoped that such effort would enhance awareness and knowledge on natural herbs.

"This will provide knowledge to people of UMS on the various plants and traditional herbs and medicines that we have in UMS.

"It will also increase awareness to love and preserve these plants," said Kamarudin in his

speech delivered by director of EcoCampus management centre, Assoc Prof Dr How Siew Eng.

He added that a number of institutions in the university had conducted multiple joint researches on natural herbs which have been proven to bring substantial benefits to human beings for over a thousand years.

"I was informed that FKSU will be planting six herbal trees on the faculty's main compound; known as Tuuwan-uan (*Syzygium leucocylon*) by the Kadazan-

dusun natives, these herbs are an important heritage of Sabahans," asserted Kamarudin.

Earlier, a talk was presented by research fellow of Borneo Heritage Research Unit from UMS Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Julius Kulip on the importance of natural herbs to humans.

"Natural herbs are not only important in the natural system but also provide benefits to humans especially as the nutrition is scientifically processed.

"Researchers from UMS including Mr. Julius have

worked hard in creating herbal products from Sabah which have gained medals in innovation competitions in UMS level as well as internationally," he stressed.

The programme yesterday was jointly organised by Borneo Heritage Research Unit and UMS Chapter of the National Professors Council.

Meanwhile, Julius stressed that knowledge on the importance of traditional herbs needs to be enhanced to maintain local herbs consumption and preserve these resources from extinction.

"The herbs and Sabah traditional medicines found in UMS can be divided into two categories - planted and grown naturally.

"There are approximately 115 species of medicinal herbs that can be found here where 95 grew naturally while 20 were planted," he disclosed.

Also present were FKSU dean, Prof. Dr. Ismail Ibrahim, Borneo Heritage Research Unit Chief Assoc. Prof. Dr. Low Kok On and deputy director of Institute for Tropical Biology and Conservation, Dr. Sahana Harun.