



TENAGA
NASIONAL BERHAD

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MALAY MAIL

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Youth learn to conserve fireflies

TNB Foundation students promote love for environment,

caring for species in natural habitat

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A GROUP of Tenaga Nasional Berhad Foundation (YTNB) students recently took time off from their daily grind of lectures and tutorials to engage in firefly conservation efforts by planting 51 Berembang trees at the Firefly Tourist Centre in Kampung Kuantan.

Organised annually by TNB's Corporate Social Responsibility Unit, TNB Research Sdn Bhd's (TNBR) collaboration with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) aims to promote a love of the environment by conserving fireflies in their natural habitat, as their average lifespan is at six months.

The dominant firefly species there is *pteroptyx tener*, with a smaller number of *pteroptyx*



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: YTNB student Mohammad Nor Adlan, 21, planting a Berembang tree on the bank of Sungai Selangor

— Pic: SHAHIR OMAR

valida and *pteroptyx malaccae*.

"We've been organising this project annually for the past three years, with initial research beginning in October 2009 for an 18-month period,"

said TNBR senior researcher Shahril Mohd Hussin.

"We focus on this particular area regularly because of its environmental diversity."

Phase One of their 2009



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Staff banking on next generation



DESPITE carrying out this particular Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project annually for the past three years, Tenaga Nasional Berhad Research (TNBR) senior researcher Shahril Mohd Hussein (*above*) said this year's *Jom Tanam Pokok Berembang* event marked their first-ever tree-planting session with university students.

"Past tree-planting sessions involved the local community and our staff but the youth from our foundation proposed to get themselves involved this time around," he said.

"We thought it was a great idea, as we want coming generations to understand the importance of preserving nature."

UKM lecturer Prof Madya Dr. Norela Sulaiman said the Higher Education Ministry granted the university a community grant in 2011, allowing researchers to educate locals further about nature conservation.

"We will guide them in re-planting Berembang trees along the riverbank and ensure they do not float away," she said.

"We need a more sustainable way to conserve trees and fireflies," she said.

"We're also cooperating with TNBR to publish books and pamphlets so that awareness can be created not only among the locals here but also nationwide."



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Aiming high for greener tomorrow

THE 10 students who participated in the programme already have plans of their own to encourage local environmental conservation efforts among members of their own generation once they complete their studies overseas,

The students, aged 19 to 21 said they were grateful to be part of the environment-based project.

One of them, 19-year-old Sabahan Deserie Donis Ebin, who recently finished her Australian Matriculation (Ausmat) at the International Education College (INTEC), said she enjoyed

the session as it was her first-ever experience.

"I'm excited to be involved in this once-in-a-lifetime experience," she told *The Malay Mail*.

She said being part of the project also encouraged lively student interaction during the conservation efforts.

Sharan Raj, 19, said organising projects like this was crucial in reminding future generations about the importance of nature conservation.

"I've been living in the city for a long time but after today's event, I've now realised that I'm a nature



DESERIE: Participation in project provides a genuine peer-bonding experience

SHARAN: Has been converted into a lover of nature thanks to project

SHAZWANI: Hope younger generation to make effort to be more involved

lover," he said.

Su Amirah Shazwani, 21, said members of this generation should make the effort

to be more involved since the RM50 entrance fee to the firefly area is reasonable.

"I think they should take

the initiative and experience nature themselves, given that it is quite affordable," she said.



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study focused on plot research, natural habitat and biological needs to determine the diversity and population of fireflies; Sungai Selangor's water quality and pollution levels; the microbenthos population and mineral content in sediments; as well as seed growth research and to monitor the growth of trees.

"We previously wanted to cultivate 'Berembang' trees in a laboratory but have yet to receive the necessary budget," said Shahril.

He said Phase Two will involve continued research of Phase One and firefly rehabilitation efforts; educational programmes for the local population, especially the youth, about the uniqueness of fireflies in Kampung Kuantan; and to spread awareness among locals about the importance of habitat conservation and preservation of firefly species. Phase Two was

still being planned and was subject to further discussions with the state government.

Earlier this year, TNBR sponsored the same programme in collaboration with UKM, when 120 trees were successfully planted around the river bank.

Through a committed RM1.5 million contribution, TNB executed various other projects in ensuring conservation of *pteroptyx tener* and its habitat in Kampung Kuantan.

Shahril said presently, UKM is trying to obtain corporate funding for public education, which aims to teach children how to obtain seeds so they can carry out conservation efforts themselves.

Following this was an afternoon *gotong-royong* effort by students to clean up the Jamil Muhammadiyah Mosque nearby, as well as a firefly-watching session along Sungai Selangor in the late evening.