

## SK St Andrew chosen for Forest Dept's orchid-herbs project

By Anthony Aga on March 20, 2019, Wednesday at 12:01 AM



Hamden ready to cut the ribbon to officially declare open SK St Andrew's 'Rangka Rumah Hijau Taman Orkid & Herba' project, as headmaster Angkau Raing (right) and others look on.

SARIKEI: SK St Andrew, Sare near here would be home to various species of orchids and herbs, as it has been chosen by the Forest Department of Sarawak as the site for a special agro-forestry project.

The school's greenhouse will be home to 30 species of orchids and also other flowers, as well as a host of medicinal plants.



Hamden (left) hands over the Forest Department's certificate for the orchid-herbs garden project to SK St Andrew headmaster Angkau Raing.

According to Sarawak Forest Department director Hamden Mohammad, the plants slated for the 'Rangka Rumah Hijau Taman Orkid & Herba' project are obtained from Sarawak Tree Improvement Centre in Sibu and Sabah Agroforestry Centre.

"The plants were supplied to the school early this month, and I'm glad that the planting has been progressing smoothly.

"If the project is successful, it will become the perfect reference for nature studies as the plant species are identified with both local and scientific names," he said during the official handover of the project to SK St Andrew yesterday.

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It is learnt that among the species of medicinal plants slated for the project are 'Kacip Fatimah' (*Labisia pumila*), 'Tongkat Ali' (*Eurycoma longifolia*), 'Mahkota Dewa' (*Phaleria macrocarpa*), 'Belalai Gajah' (*Clinacanthus nutans*), 'Daun Sambung Nyawa' (*Gynura procumbens*), and Medang Teja (a variety of cinnamon, *Cinnamomum iners*).

Additionally, Hamden said the orchid-herbs garden was among the department's educational in-situ projects for schools under its Communications, Education and Public Awareness (Cepa) programme. Another project under Cepa was School Forest Gallery, he added.

“The main objectives of the programme are to create a sustainable awareness among the students, teachers and the community in general, of the importance of forest resources, restoration and environmental conservation.

“In this respect, we need to emphasise to the public that forests are our invaluable asset – we borrow them from our grandchildren; thus, we must return them (forests) in perfect condition,” Hamden stressed.

He also felt that the programme was most appropriate as the young students would be able to send the message across more effectively upon becoming ‘environmental ambassadors’ within the community.

On SK St Andrew being chosen for the project, Hamden said the department received an application from the school in March last year.

The department was very supportive of the idea, he said, but to implement it, the school needed assistance from the private sector.

In this regard, Hamden said he was very grateful upon learning later on that two private companies – MM Golden (M) Sdn Bhd and WTK Group – had agreed to help.

“The greenhouse was ready last December. They (companies) began to deliver the planting materials in February,” he disclosed.