

**FOR YOUR
INFO**

***Cerbera odollam* (Apocynaceae)
Pong-Pong**

The plant belongs to the family *Apocynaceae* which is native to India as well as South East Asia. It can grow up to 10m tall and has white flowers with round green fruits like small mangoes. The plant secretes a milky white latex.

Usage: The fruits are used for manufacturing bio-insecticides and deodorants. The kernels of *C. odollam* contain a poisonous substance known as cerberin, which can cause disruptions within the heart.

***Haliastur indus*
Brahminy Kite or
Helang Merah**

The particular bird species is a common resident of USM usually seen soaring in small groups over mangroves and fishing villages. These birds have a nesting area within the USM campus and can be seen around the Student Affairs building and Desa Gemilang. They are very handsome birds of prey and have now become the mascot of our Apex university.

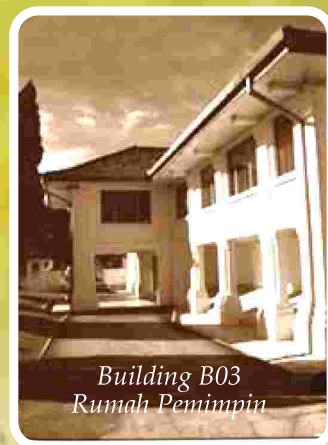
1938

The Minden campus still delights in retaining contact with its past, and adoringly maintains its humble history. It was once a busy army establishment and has more than its fair share of colonial buildings which bears the vintage mark of 1938. The 1938 signature has its own charm of antiquity and can be regarded as *de regueur* of the day.

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Building B10
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The **ECO** Bulletin



working together towards a sustainable future

**A WARM
WELCOME**

By Prof. Mashhor Mansor
School of Biological Sciences

On behalf of the Eco USM Team, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new first year students to our campus and invite them to be a part of our campus community. Most of you have already experienced your first university lectures since the new semester started on Monday 6 July 2009.

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ECO Bulletin welcomes contributions in the form of articles or photographs on ecological issues in USM. Kindly submit all articles and images to: **Prof. Mashhor Mansor**,
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The editor reserves the right to select and edit articles for publication based on space availability and topical interest. All articles must carry the sender's full name, address and telephone number. A pseudonym may be included.



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As APEX university students who are rated among the best in the nation, I hope you will enjoy and make the most of your campus life. However, besides learning new things inside and outside the lecture halls, also always be ready to contribute innovative ideas for the betterment of our campus, particularly in terms of its sustainable environment.

USM Vice-Chancellor Prof. Tan Sri Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak has reminded you about the role of students on the campus. He stressed on the healthy campus concept which includes components of ecological and environmental awareness. In addition, USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation) Prof. Asma Ismail has given her full support for Eco-Hub activities which would be organised for the new students. One of the activities is to expose students to the Eco-Trail.

Currently, one of the most popular packages started since April this year are the "Eco-Park Trails" at Zone-B at the USM Main Campus. It consists of four different trails, namely the Heritage-Trail, led by Mr. Rusli Jamaluddin, a lecturer from School Housing Building and Planning; the Bird-Trail, led by Mr. Hifni Baharuddin, a lecturer at the School of Biological Sciences; the Ethno-botanical Trail led by Ms. Sabrina, a research officer at the Eco-Hub and lastly the Durian Valley Trail led by Mr. Adenan Jaafar, also a research officer at the Eco-Hub.

One of the first group of participants for this package were the Science Mentors from Academy of Science which had visited Eco-Park on 20 June 2009.

The Eco-Trail is an interpretive trail where one will not only attempt to identify all plants and the animal species along the trail, but also to visualise how these species survive and function in an ecosystem. The correlation between living species and their environment will be further elaborated based on several ecological ideas and concepts. Although it is a secondary forest, the Durian Valley is one of the best forest ecosystems in the campus which has been restored and conserved.

In the Durian Valley, one can also observe a structural forest ecosystem where some of the plant species are relatively tall, reaching 50m in height with large canopies. Common trees which are present are the *cenderai* (*Grewia termentosa*) and common palm (*Caryota mitis*). durian (*Durio zibethinus*), *petai kerayong* (*Parkia javanica*), *petai* (*Parkia speciosa*) and *ketapang* (*Termilia catappa*), these being among the big trees listed. Some of the bird species have utilised the canopy zones as nesting, breeding and feeding sites. The area housing the Durian Valley and the Eco-Hub building can be considered one of the nearly perfect ecological sites on the campus grounds.

Several books which have been written about the campus are available as reference texts. There have been some instances where prominent scientists who happened to visit USM turned out to be keen bird watchers. From what I have learned, many have enjoyed the campus surroundings especially in the mornings where songs of birds are heard echoing in the serene environment. Some of the common birds that can be easily detected are the white-throated kingfisher (*Halcyon smymensis*), the black-naped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*), the magpie robin (*Copsychus saularis*) and the common myna (*Acridotheres tristis*).

The time has come for the initiation of a series of lectures based on some pressing environmental issues such as global warming, loss of biodiversity, alien species, haze and pollution, linking the campus environment as a micro-ecosystem to the macro-ecosystem of the world outside. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to write and present their ideas in this bulletin, which will in some way contribute to their knowledge on the ecology of a campus ecosystem. All information and knowledge garnered about the campus will be extremely useful to the campus authorities when they consider future plans on the physical development of the university.



Participants having their briefing about EcoPark from the Eco-Hub Coordinator



Mr.Hifni leading the participants along the Bird-Trail



Participants listening to explanation from Mr. Rusli pertaining to heritage building in Eco-Park



Assoc. Prof. Saad Othman, Eco-Hub Coordinator, was doing some briefing to participants before entering Durian Valley



Mr. Adenan Jaafar explaining about *Strobilanthes crispa* (pecah beling) to participants



Participants walking along Eco-Trail in Durian Valley



Science teachers enjoying their fruit party on the lawn of Eco-Hub under the sun

