

Brief Documentation on Selected Timber-Related Plant Species with Commercial Value in Kubah National Park, Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive learning experience in biodiversity-related discipline is the only practical way to introduce students into the world of flora. Thus, this study was carried out at Kubah National Park as the park is known for its flora and fauna diversity to investigate plant species which are of timber-related importance. The study identified and documented seven different plant families with 12 species of timber-related usage at Kubah National Park.

Keywords: Biology, foundation, Kubah, Sarawak, timber

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is well known as mega diversity country particularly in East Malaysia including Sarawak and Sabah. Out of 18 million hectare (mil ha) of total forested area in the country including the 444 protected areas nationwide, five mil ha are managed by the respective federal and state forest authorities as resources for timber production (Cedergren, Falck, Garcia, Goh & Hagner, 2002; Lee & Watling, 2005; MNRE, 2015; Pakhriazad & Mohd Hasmadi, 2010; Teo, Chai & Phua, 2013). This gazetted area was known as one of the world's top timber producer in furniture and household industry-linkage (MTII, 2011; Pakhriazad & Mohd Hasmadi, 2010; SCMP, 2017).

Meanwhile, the remaining 13 mil ha areas are preserved and conserved as national parks and for wildlife including Kubah National Park (KNP). Generally, KNP in Matang, Kuching was established in 1989. The park is situated on massive sandstone ridge with its three mountain peaks, Gunung Serapi (911 meters, m high), Gunung Selang and Gunung Sendok (Abu Bakar, Radam, Samdin & Yacob, 2016; Boyce & Wong, 2008; Brahim, 2005; Das & Charles, 1993; Hanan, 2014; Kamri, 2013; Lateef, Sepiah & Bolhassan, 2015; Lesley *et al.*, 2016; Meekiong, Latiff, Tawan & Miraadila, 2012; Pearce, 1992; Poulsen & Leong-Škorničková, 2017; SF, 2003; Teo *et al.*, 2013; Wahab, 2012; Yee & Chin, 1989).

To date, the country is in ongoing transition becoming a developed nation and has exerted various pressures on local biodiversity, leaving many valuable heritages vulnerable with some even facing threats of extinction and habitats that are degrading problems (Demies, Lading & Silang, 2008; Teo *et al.*, 2013). As reported by the MNRE (2015), nearly half of the nation's plant diversity is facing various levels of threat. Therefore, documenting and recording the existence of timber-related plant species in KNP are timely.

In order to promote, inculcate and preserve awareness of the importance of ecology, biodiversity and environments to the students, among the action taken was by introducing the relevant topic and issues in the academic syllabus. On that note, further measures need to be adopted and practice towards the sustainable utilisation of the biodiversity resource on disseminating ecology, biodiversity and environment education such as Kubah National Park. The park was chosen since it promotes conservation education and nature study and serves as a recreational facility (Abu Bakar *et al.*, 2016).

The park was opened to the public in 1995. Ever since, the park has received increasing numbers of visitors owing to its exceptional biodiversity, ecosystem, ecology, environment, habitat, species and nature including plants, fungi, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects. The parks cover an area of 2,230 ha and comprise of heavily forested slopes and ridges of the Serapi range (Brahim, 2005; Meekiong *et al.*, 2012; Pearce, 1992; Teo *et al.*, 2013).