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Farah Fazwa showing a Kacip Fatimah sapling.
- **BERNAMAPIX**

FRIM project to boost supply of herbs

JEMPOL: A project to cultivate Kacip Fatimah, calamansi and lemongrass under an integrated planting system at a farm in Kampung Serting Ulu is expected to help boost the supply of high quality herbs in Malaysia.

It could also help boost the income of those in the B40 group, according to the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM).

Its senior research officer Dr Farah Fazwa Md Ariff said the farm is equipped with various facilities such as a nursery and a place to house saplings before they are replanted at the farm.

The 1ha farm has already grown 23,000 Kacip Fatimah, 6,600 lemongrass and 1,700 calamansi plants.

Farah Fazwa said a 10-year research has shown that Kacip Fatimah has various characteristics, including its superior growth rate and high content of phenolic oil and biomass.

The superior clone of calamansi contains linalool with a high chemical composition, making it ideal as an

essential oil.

A total of 100 individuals are taking part in the cultivation project, which is aimed at making FRIM's research findings more widely known.

Training courses are also provided for participants to enable them to learn about technologies in breeding, care, maintenance and cultivation techniques in the integration farm.

FRIM deputy director-general Dr Norwati Muhammad said a 2016 study showed that 73% of consumers in the peninsula used herbal-based products such as fragrances, health supplements, cosmetics and toiletries, which indicated that demand for herbal products would increase in future.

Another study by FRIM showed that 87% of Kacip Fatimah were sourced from forests, while the rest were being supplied by farms. This showed that herbal farming activities have the potential to supply raw materials with high commercial value, if it is well managed, she said. - Bernama