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'Maintaining green lungs a collective effort'

KUALA LUMPUR: Trees in urban areas not only beautify the city but also play a part in contributing to the index required to achieve a healthier standard of living.

According to Mohd Afendi Hussin, a senior assistant research officer (Urban Forestry Branch) of the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), everyone must see the need for trees or green areas in the city as a shared responsibility, which requires the involvement, understanding and diversity of disciplines from various sections of society, including urban planners, engineers, architects, property developers, arborists, private sector, community leaders and the public.

"The real function of trees planted in the city is not just as a decorative element or purely cosmetic in nature. The tree canopy provides shade to the urban area and helps protect dwellers from the scorching sun.

"This helps reduce the increase in temperature in the city and also reduces the phenomenon of the formation of heat islands in urban areas," he said in a statement yesterday.

Apart from that, he said the presence of shady trees in public parks attracts visitors for recreation and picnics.

It encourages interaction and various positive activities that help strengthen community values, family and friendship, and contributes to improving the quality of life of residents.

Mohd Afendi, who is also an

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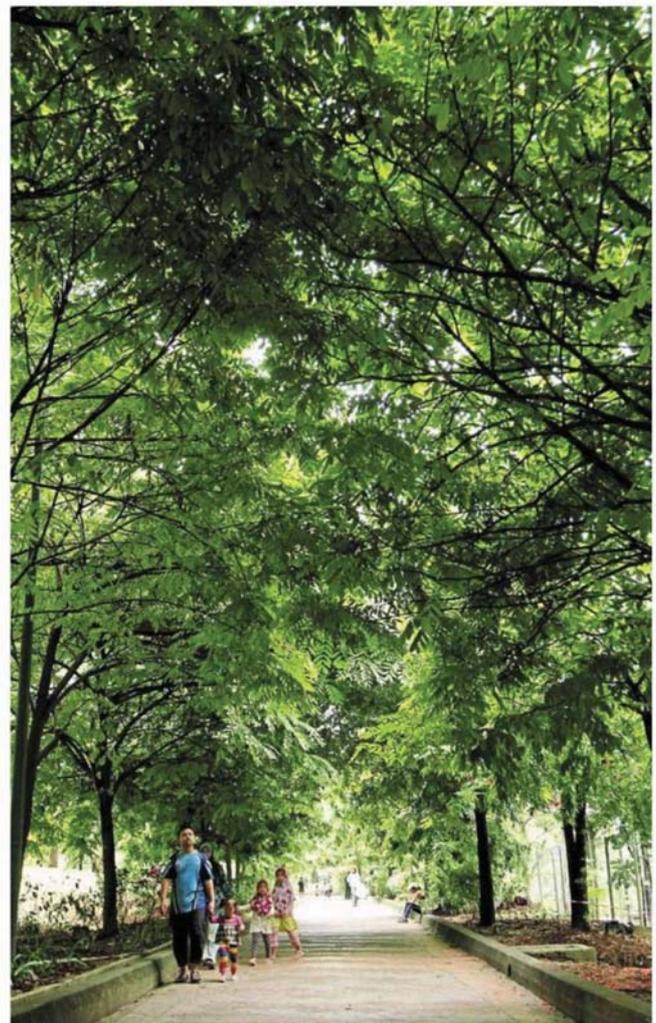
Mohd Afendi Hussin

arborist, however, said that not all trees grew perfectly; some grew with a good structural appearance while others might need some help and treatment.

He said if there were conditions or shapes of tree structures that could cause disturbance or risk, the trees should be managed in accordance with appropriate arboricultural practices.

"Many factors contribute to tree failure, including limited planting space, root pruning without considering the tree's ability to support the weight of the canopy and disturbing their standing, storms, injuries to tree trunks, compacted soil, excessive and careless pruning," he added.

According to him, caring for trees using the best arboricultural practices can help make them healthier, fertile and safe, as well as reduce risks, thus enabling the trees to live longer in urban areas. — Bernama



Green lungs: Families taking a stroll at the Perdana Botanical Garden, formerly known as Taman Tasik Perdana. — YAP CHEE HONG/TheStar