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KUCHING: The state government has allocated RM5 million for the setting up of an orchid garden in Semenggoh near here for research purposes, said Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg.

He said the orchid species in Borneo were quite different from those found abroad, hence it was seen as one of the biodiversity that needed to be studied because of its uniqueness.

“This orchid garden is not like a normal orchid garden, it will be equipped with digital tools to enable orchids to be analysed and also produced in large quantities and become economic research.

“Orchids can be cross-bred with other orchid species to produce hybrid orchids that can produce attractive colours, but then it has to be done through certain research. Through the research can you calculate the economic viability of having that orchid garden, so that our farmers have the option to grow orchids other than farming because the orchid market is global,” he said.

He said this after attending the Sarawak International Forest Day Celebration at the Industrial Forest Research Centre (IFRC) here.

At the event, Abang Johari also witnessed the exchange of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for biodiversity conservation in Sarawak between the Sarawak Forestry Department (FDS), Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Department (JPSM), Japan-Malaysia Association (JMA) and the World Wildlife Fund - Malaysia (WWF- Malaysia).

Apart from that, an exchange of the memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the same purpose was also held between FDS and Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) Inc. Pte Ltd. – Bernama