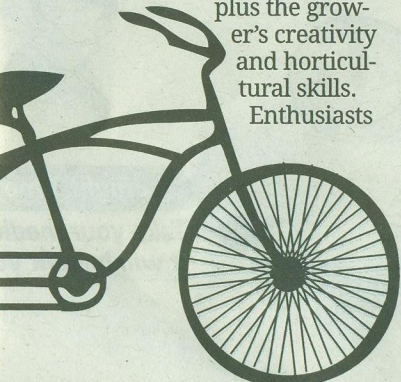


THE Malaysia Bonsai and Suiseki Society (MBSS) would like to congratulate and thank *Star2* contributor Kee Hua Chee for his beautiful article on bonsai, *Living sculptures* (*Star2*, Oct 24).

We'd like to dispel the misconception that the keeping bonsai is a high maintenance hobby. The truth is to create a successful bonsai, one requires a combination of the character of the original plant

plus the grower's creativity and horticultural skills.

Enthusiasts



# Malaysia boleh, bonsai boleh

would need to learn the proper techniques in watering, fertilising, wiring and pruning of the plants. Under proper guidance, there is a lot to learn, unlearn and relearn.

Malaysia is truly blessed with the abundance of bonsai species like *Wrightia Religiosa* (Water jasmine), *Triphasia Trifolia* (Lime Berry) and *Beackea Frutescens* (Cucur Attap) among others. We can proudly boast of the superior quality of our plants compared to similar species available in other South-East Asian countries.

Many of these species can easily be found in our backyards. It is interesting to know that our scientists in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Putra Malaysia are currently carrying out research on the medicinal values of *cucur attap*, including

its application as a facial cream, and as a herbal drink for lowering cholesterol.

Many are also of the mistaken view that bonsai cater just to old folks' fancies. And since it originates from China, the hobbyists are predominantly Malaysian Chinese. But, in Indonesia, there are hundreds of kampung bonsai clubs catering to ordinary folks; while in the East Coast of Peninsula Malaysia, Malay bonsai brothers are highly adept at the art. In fact, Malaysia has a bonsai master who hails from Kelantan.

Judging from past trends, we note that increasingly, Malaysians are drawn to this fascinating hobby regardless of race, religion and creed. Indeed this is a great unifying factor when enthusiasts in pursuit of fun and camaraderie

come together.

Members of MBSS have often made a strong presence in international bonsai shows held in Taiwan, China, Japan, and Indonesia, and Malaysia has earned a respected place in the bonsai global community. We are currently rated amongst the top five in the world, with China being the leader, followed by Japan, Taiwan and Indonesia.

This is a hard-earned accolade and we hope our government will also recognise this. MBSS strives to uphold and preserve Malaysia's premier standing in the bonsai world, with our "Malaysia *Boleh*, Bonsai *Boleh*" spirit, ever mindful that emerging nations like Vietnam and the Philippines are fast catching up.

Thank you and best regards.  
Maju Bonsai!

**WH Wong**