

**FOREST PLANTATION DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA AND THE
POTENTIAL OF RUBBERWOOD AS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF
TIMBER IN THE FUTURE**

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ABSTRACT

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Forest plantation development is a relatively new sector in Malaysia. Although trial planting of various indigenous and exotic species has been carried out since the early 1900's, commercial forest plantation only started in the 1950's with the planting of teak in Kedah. Through the 1960's and 1970's, several attempts were made to establish commercial forest plantation mainly by the Forestry Departments in Peninsular Malaysia and by government corporations in Sabah. The Federal government has provided several incentives in the form of tax relief to encourage investment in this sector. Some state governments, on the other hand, also allocated land for forest plantation purposes. In the 1980's, the rapid development of the timber-based industry also saw the discovery of rubber wood as an important source for furniture manufacturing as the result of rubber wood availability from large replanting programme. The rubber wood industry has now matured into billion ringgit foreign exchange earner. However, the long term supply of rubber wood is now in question as a large percentage of the old rubber areas have been converted to other more profitable crops such as oil palm. In view of the increasing importance of rubber wood industry, steps have been taken to find new rubber clones which can produce high latex yield as well as high wood volume at the shorter rotation. Through the early selection and trial planting, several clones from RRIM 900 series and the newly launched RRIM 2000 series have been identified for future replanting programme. The planting of these latex-timber clones provides intermediated income from tapping while ensuring higher timber volume at shorter rotation to 20 years.