

Community Empowerment Crucial for Orchid Conservation on Mt. Merapi

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The slopes of Mt. Merapi that have diversity potential have acted as a support to the lower areas of the mountain. But irresponsible use of the mountain areas often impacts negatively on the conservation area. So, cooperation is needed between stakeholders to restore the sustainability of Mt. Merapi.

“The area of Mt. Merapi is not free from damage and decrease in size due to the many groups that want to use it for its natural potential. So, conservation efforts on the top of the mountain are absolutely needed,” said Vice-Governor of Yogyakarta Special Region, KGPAA Paku Alam X, in his remarks read out by Head of Forestry and Plantation Agency of Yogyakarta, Ir. Sutarto, M.P., on Wednesday (22/2) at Faculty of Forestry UGM during a workshop that is a collaboration between the Faculty, Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, Mt. Merapi national park, and the local government of Wonokerto.

In the event, a handover of orchids was done to symbolise the release of the flora to the wild as a form of orchid conservation.

The Merapi slopes are known as the habitat of 95 orchids varieties, some of which are rare species. But recent conditions have decreased the number of orchids on the mountain.



This triggered the idea to adopt the orchids since 2 years ago where 28 adopters from Wonokerto village were given orchids seeds to cultivate outside Merapi. After the flowers grow well, these will be re-planted at the Mt. Merapi national park.

The people from Wonokerto made their own orchard green house. Village chief, Tomon Haryo Wibisono, said this was also a form of community empowerment.

“For us, this cooperation is very useful, because we cannot do it ourselves without the help of other institutions. I hope this cooperation will continue and be beneficial,” he said.

In addition, the cooperation between UGM, Mt. Merapi national park, and Wonokerto village also covers conservation of soil and water ecosystem. The community empowerment in the programme, according to Dean of Faculty of Forestry, Dr. Budiadi, S.Hut., M.Agr.Sc., was one of the most crucial factors for the success of conservation efforts.

“The active role of the local residents in the conservation of the forest will benefit the people themselves and their surroundings,” he said.

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