

# Jackfruit Wood to Prevent Bubonic Outbreaks

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YOGYAKARTA - UGM's plan to develop the jackfruit as cultural plant in Yogyakarta is welcomed by Sleman Regent, Sri Purnomo. According to the Regent, jackfruit is not only useful as a raw ingredient for food but also as tool material and furniture. "We need to encourage jackfruit wood furniture producers in that direction," the Regent said in a discussion taking place at Koesnadi Hardjasoemantri Cultural Center, Tuesday (24/1).

Although jackfruit wood furniture is still below teak furniture in popularity, but the Regent is optimistic jackfruit wood furniture will receive positive response from the public if dissemination and promotion are done well.

Heritage buildings observer, Dr. Laretna Adhisakti, said that actually since long ago many buildings in Java has used jackfruit wood. Even cattle pens use jackfruit wood. "It is now rare for new buildings using the wood. But in fact, I've found old buildings made of jackfruit wood. Even many cattle pens used jackfruit wood," she said.

A historian, Arif Akhyat, M.A., said that in the 1870s, jackfruit wood was widely known in Java Island. At that time teak in Java was exported in large scale by the Dutch to Europe so that the supply of teak timber was low. Even in Jepara, teak wood supply was used up. "So, jackfruit wood is the solution," he said.

The choice for jackfruit wood is not made rashly. It started from the Dutch cultivation system where housing and road construction absorbed a large number of manpower. To accommodate the workers, a temporary bambo home was made. But many workers had been infested with bubonic plague after they stayed in the bamboo houses,. In fact, the disease became widespread in society. "Eventually, the bambo was replaced with jackfruit wood so it was not encroached by mice. With jackfruit wood, the house was not eaten by insects. So, jackfruit wood can reduce pestilence attacks," he said.

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