

UGM Researchers Grow Superior Melon in Volcanic Ash

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A UGM team from Faculty of Biology, Dr. Purnomo, Dr. Budi Setiadi Daryono, M.Agr.Sc, and Ganies Riza Aristya, M.Sc., have developed a superior melon cultivar, TACAPA, that is planted in volcanic ash. Not long ago, Mt. Kelud in East Java erupted, spewing massive volcanic ash to distant areas. Farmers in Jamusan hamlet, Prambanan sub-district, Sleman regency, have grown the plant in a planting media that uses volcanic ash.

According to Budi Daryono, the project was funded by the LPPM UGM through a grant. There are three treatments made in the project. First, soil is added with volcanic ash, second, soil, volcanic ash and synthetic organic fertiliser, and soil and synthetic fertiliser.

“The results of the project is the melon has not much different characteristics in terms of size, taste, shape, or weight,” said Budi, Friday (25/7) at UGM.

Budi explained volcanic ash can be used as a mix in substitute of commercial fertiliser. This is expected to serve as giving public awareness in order that we don't always fear disasters. It is time to 'befriend' disasters, which can be done, among others, by making use of what is given to us during disasters.

“Indonesia lies in the Ring of Fire, so Indonesia cannot deny the presence of up to 127 active volcanoes here. Thus, we have to be ready at anytime,” he explained.

Dr. Purnomo added the cultivar is resistant to powdery mildew as well as potential to be developed

in karst area to conserve lands. "In the future we hope this can be developed better, especially in karst area to conserve the land," said Purnomo.

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