SMC achieves success in waste reduction

By Peter Boon

SIBU: Since looking East and adopting Takakura Home Method Composting (THMC), the local council has achieved a remarkable success in waste reduction.

Sibu Municipal Council (SMC) assistant secretary Yong Ing Chu said yesterday the method had proven effective, vowing to bring down further the town's waste generation.

"Thanks to the method, the daily generation of domestic waste accounts to about 130 tones a day in spite of the increase in population. And we are committed to bringing it down further to green up the town," he told reporters.

The composting method focuses on simplicity and low production cost in converting organic waste into compost, he said.

"Perhaps, this is why it is gradually gaining popularity among the local populace," Yong said.

He recalled that they had distributed 338 seed baskets and 50 per cent of the people were still practising.

He figured that others might have given up as they were not successful or had worms in their compost.

Its inventor Koji Takakura responded: "With proper management, it is possible to overcome such problem. I have visited several places where they do not have worm problem."

Takakura revealed that he would codify (document) his tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge (manual) as a guide to those trying out his method.

He, however, revealed that he hoped to get the Japanese version published in September to get feedback from the people there before translating it into other languages.

"The book will also document my personal experience in Japan, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines."

Yong disclosed that there will be 21 participants for the technical seminar on home composting today.

They comprise four volunteers from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) while the rest are locals.

On Thursday, the group will visit various composting sites here.

The entourage also has a courtesy visit to SMC deputy chairman Daniel Ngien.

Last year, Takakura introduced his method to the public during the "Jica Partnership Programme (JPP) Community-based Solid Waste Management System Development Project in Sibu Municipality."'s seminar on effective management of composting centre and home method composting Sibu LA21 at Taman Perpaduan Li Hua, Poh Yew Road here.

THE RIGHT WAY: Takakura expounds on the correct ways to attempt his composting method.

SIBU: This riverine town moved up another notch in international recognition as it has been made a model town for the low-cost green technology - Takakura Home Method of Composting.

Its inventor Koji Takakura disclosed yesterday that Sibu would be made the core centre for the knowledge to be cascaded to other parts of the country.

"To do that, they are training locals comprising NGOs and Sibu Municipal Council (SMC) staff to be competent in the world-renowned composting method through technical seminar on home composting."

He hoped that the knowledge would be extended to the whole state and eventually, nationwide.

"Since a network has been established here, authorities or NGOs in other places in the country keen on the project, can visit Sibu to see for themselves the development thus far."

"And if they are still keen to expand the initiative, they can choose to come here to seek advice or contact "Kitakyushu Initiative."

Takakura told a press conference.

As the programme collaboration between SMC and Kitakyushu Initiative, supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was completed, it was necessary to train local experts to ensure the continuity of the method, the founder said.

Project leader of Kitakyushu Municipal Government Yusuke Mitoma clarified that there was still possibility of them coming here in the future if the need arose.

SMC assistant secretary Yong Ing Chu interjected: "After the training, this selected group would provide ground technical support."

Yong added that a local authority from Kampar, Perak, had expressed interest in the method.

Takakura said as this would be the last visit here; he would transfer all his knowledge so local experts would be able to ensure the continuity of his method.

"All the techniques would be revealed in the seminar including trouble shooting methods. Trouble shooting would ensure that those trying the method do not hang their boots when faced with problems," he explained.

The Japanese expert was pleased to note the commendable success rate among those who attempted his technique.

He was optimistic that the success rate would grow over time, praising SMC for its hard work in promoting the initiative.

He said his method was most effective in countries like Malaysia due to its climate, adding that some modifications were made to the method in Japan to adapt to the colder climate.

Takakura disclosed that micro organisms required for the composting could be found locally.

"In some places, it is really difficult to find good micro organisms that help the composting process," he admitted.

Among those present were Kitakyushu International Techno Cooperative Association environmental education officer Hiroko Yanagida and JICA programme coordinator (Malaysia office) Murakami Koari.