

Bioprospecting the Rainforest in a Meaningful Way

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Abstract

For millennia, people has been studying nature in a never ending search for solutions to their problems. Also known nowadays as bioprospecting which can be best described as the exploration of biodiversity for commercially valuable genetic and biochemical resources. The Borneo rainforest is estimated to be 130 million years old, teeming with new species and natural solutions. Mindful of the rising global concerns on biodiversity and also, mandated by a state law, the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre conscientiously practice a meaningful approach of bioprospecting; traditional knowledge with access and benefits sharing. It is in the interest of the Centre to ensures that biodiversity is sustainably explored to discover useful natural products, and to recognize the important ownership of indigenous communities' knowledge on biodiversity as a way to direct scientific research. SBC works on a basis of partnership in a variety of screening campaign formation for bioactive organisms and compounds from a repository in SBC Natural Product Library and targeted collection from the rainforest.

Biography

“The rainforest is a fascinating place and to be able to learn from it, is really an extraordinary privilege”. Yeo is a biochemist who had worked at The Scripps Research Institute (USA) experimenting on a cholera vaccine produced in plants. From vaccines, he went to attend graduate school in 1993 at the Department of Immunology at University of Washington, Seattle, where he studied cancer immunology. In 2000, he returned to Sarawak to take on a post-doctoral post at a local university to work on the Nipah virus. In 2002, he joined the State Government of Sarawak as a senior research officer at the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre. Currently, Yeo is the CEO and he drives the Centre’s bioprospecting programs in the spirit of the Convention on Biological Diversity.