



11 MAY, 2025

Growing zesty success through ginger farming

The Sun, Malaysia



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Side-hustle farmer initially grew vegetables such as bitter gourd, okra, spinach and chillies before settling on current cash crop

KUALA LUMPUR: As the cost of living continues to rise, more Malaysians are turning to side ventures to supplement their income, including one Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) employee who found promise in agriculture.

While many turn to gig economy jobs, 40-year-old Khairul Azwan Mohamad Hasbor chose to pursue farming, a field he has steadily grown into since 2019.

Born and raised in Sungai Besar, Selangor, Khairul Azwan initially cultivated crops such as bitter gourd, okra, bottle gourd, ridge gourd, wafer spinach, spinach, aubergine and chilli.

In October last year, he expanded into ginger cultivation, a decision that proved fruitful when his first harvest delivered impressive returns last month.

Operating his farm in Kampung Sungai Panjang, Sungai Besar, he said he prepared for the ginger venture by attending a three-day course organised by the Crop Industry Development Division at the Serdang Agricultural Complex last October.

"I also gathered knowledge from Google and YouTube and visited friends' farms to learn from their hands-on experience," he told Bernama.

"Honestly, I had no prior experience in planting ginger, so I sought guidance from the Sabak Bernam District Agriculture Office. They gave significant support, especially with funding. I just had to put the plan into action," he added.

He allocated 2.4ha for the project,



Following the success of his first harvest, Khairul Azwan plans to expand his cultivation area. – PIC COURTESY OF KHAIRUL AZWAN

although only 0.4ha was used in the initial phase, planting about 10,000 Thai ginger plants, which are highly sought-after in local markets.

"Young ginger can be harvested after three to four months, while mature ginger typically takes seven to eight months," he said.

Following the success of his first harvest, Khairul Azwan plans to expand his cultivation area.

The young ginger was sold to wholesalers and at nearby markets, fetching between RM7 and RM10 per kilogramme.

"Seeing the ginger harvest for the first time from my own efforts, I feel a deep sense of satisfaction and pride," he said.

He currently runs the farm with help from two workers.

The father of two shared that one of the main challenges in ginger farming is bacterial infections affecting the plants.

"My routine includes spraying insecticide two to three times a week," he said.

Despite the hard labour and harsh weather, he expressed gratitude for the strong support from his family, friends and the Sabak Bernam Agriculture Department.

The potential of ginger farming was recently highlighted by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who encouraged rural communities to seize the opportunity to cultivate the crop, which has strong demand in markets such as China, Europe and the US, particularly for cosmetics and pharmaceutical products.