



Awakintle Park

By Anna Vivienne



NATURE'S kaleidoscopes of colours are the most beautiful offering the world has for us. The blue sky that can turn slate-y, the green leaves that can go orange and then red and then brown, colourful flowers and butterflies ...it's all there for us to enjoy.

As a child, the wonder of nature never failed to amaze and delight me and I am still being pleasantly amazed at all the beauty around.

For most of us who are curious as to how creation started, well a walk down the Garden of Evolution at the Lagud Seberang Agricultural Park in Tenom may well give us some answers if not more questions.

Evolution is change in the heritable traits of a population (flora and fauna) over successive generations. The continuous frequencies of genes over time may result in the evolution of the certain species or development of new species from existing ones.

Be that as it may, during a recent visit to Lagud Seberang, I traipsed into the evolution garden and stared at the display of the formation of the earth; from dusts to moss to grasses and trees to dinosaurs. The interesting transition from one type of vegetations to another is clearly shown.

To add a touch of reality, the effigies of a Brachiosaurus and a Stegosaurus, or what look like them, are also found there, standing proud over some fossil plants. They look almost lifelike, towering over their visitor (me!). I almost willed them to utter a roar or maybe several ear-rending roars. Alas they were still as they should be, being made from some concrete. Anyway, if they had so much as uttered a squeak, I could have fled in a jiffy. They were almost lifelike.

Walking past the two still beasts, I came upon the pond where water lilies grow. They are not the average water lilies though. The leaves are as big as a tray, maybe bigger and the flowers are almost as huge. And they are thorny. As I stared down at the leaves (freaky, I thought) a frog jumped in and out again. I waited for the next passer by (maybe a snake, make my day) but nothing came up, so I walked past.

Several minutes later, I walked out of the evolution park and went to look at another area where various types of gardens are shown off. Actually, the park's main objective for the garden is as a sample for visitors who are at a quandary as to how to design their garden. Well, they should come and look at these gardens. They are beautifully made. The gardens are actually planned spaces, set aside for the display, cultivation, and enjoyment of plants and other forms of nature. The gardens incorporate both natural and man-made materials.

The gardens are not actually recognised as 'a garden' but little enclosures within gardens that have its own identity.

The shades and enclosures are places that visitors can sit on and rest. While resting they can enjoy the scenery, mostly green, around them.

There are also food-producing gardens there such as fruit trees and vegetables

Next, I walked into the Hybrid Orchid Centre. This centre covers four acres of the park and boasts 400 species of Orchid.

I was not able to cover the whole area...but I managed to walk around the front side of the centre. The various types of orchids came in different sizes; really beautiful and they came in different colours, too. They are really dazzling.

After getting all dazzled by the orchids, I visited the Bougainvillea Court, Hibiscus Garden, Lily Glade, the cactus area and the Ixora Garden.

The flowers there were in their full glorious splendour, so much so that I had to sit down every few minutes. Does sensory overload tire you?

I especially loved the hibiscus garden. As a child, I lived in a house that was surrounded by hibiscus plants with colourful blossoms. During my walk around the park I was hit many times with déjà vu. I love that park, take a walk in this park if you happen to come to be there.

Oh, by the way, the Park is in a 500-acre of land and is managed by the Sabah Agriculture Department. It is part of the 1,500-acre Lagud Seberang Agriculture Research Station and was launched in March 2001 by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

And Tenom is located about four hours drive by road from Kota Kinabalu city. Buses and hired taxis are available at the bus terminal near KK's Merdeka Field.

Go on, have fun at the park.

