

# Spicing things up in the garden

Participants learn tips and tricks to growing chilli at home

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FOR those who grew up on Nestle products, the burning question revolves around making the perfect cup of Milo and adding just the right amount of Maggi chilli sauce to the dishes.

These were among the common queries by participants during the StarLive talk Nestle Farming Guide session held at Menara Star in Petaling Jaya recently.

"Why do I have to put more spoons of Milo nowadays to make a good cup of Milo?" asked a participant.

Another asked: "Why isn't the

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chilli sauce as spicy as it used to be?"

Nestle Malaysia Berhad Group Corporate affairs executive director Zainun Nur Abdul Rauf said Nestle's product quality had not dropped but rather achieved an entirely new level.

"We are focused on making our products more nutritious.

"From time to time, we do for-

mulate our products to suit our consumers.

"For instance, our Milo product has less sugar content now and that is why some people prefer to add more spoons of Milo into their drinks," said Zainun.

Zooming on the efforts of the chilli farmers who are the key to Maggi's chilli sauce success stories, Nestle agricultural services manager Yong Lee Keng explained with a video presentation about the plight of local farmers and how important a chilli harvest was to them as it would determine if their children were able to go to school.

"These are the farmers that grow high quality chilli and supply it at a fair and stable price.

"This is the story behind Maggi chilli sauce; the favourite brand of Malaysians for over 20 years now.

"Nestle believes in creating shared value for everyone on the chain, we take care of the farmers

and in turn their harvest takes care of our consumers," he said.

During a demonstration of how to plant chilli, Yong reassured many participants and budding planters that it was possible to grow a healthy chilli plant in a flower pot, for the convenience of urban dwellers

"With the right care, chilli plants can grow well in our residential areas," he said while listing a few methods such as hydroponic planting.

Diagnosing each chilli plant problem that participants flung at him, Yong answered each question to the delight of fellow green fingers.

Ten lucky participants also walked away with grown fruit bearing chilli plants identical to the ones harvested for Maggi Chilli sauce.

Having enjoyed previous Star Live sessions, retiree Rafidah

Rashid persuaded her entire family of six to join in the lecture with her.

"I first started growing chilli from dried red chilli seeds, but I learnt today that it's better to get the seeds commercially like the Taiwanese-Malaysian kind, and a lot of care must be put into growing it," she said.

Retired accountant Anthony Gasper, 65, was encouraged by the session and said he would return to his passion for planting and use the techniques on his own set of plants.

"I learnt a lot about making bio-organic pesticides. They even gave us the recipe to make it ourselves. I am looking forward to trying it on my flowering plants at home," he said.

**StarLIVE is a free event organised by The Star. To receive updates on the next StarLIVE, email us at [starlive@thestar.com.my](mailto:starlive@thestar.com.my)**



(From left) Little Rayyan Razif, his mum Safura Sheriff, father Razif Rashid, grandmother Rafidah, grandfather Rashid Esoofi and twin sister Rayhana Razif admiring the Taiwanese Malaysian hybrid chilli plant during the session. — Photos: AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star



Yong enlightening participants on the immense effort farmers endure to create every bottle of Maggi chilli sauce.