

Malaysian state converts Ramadan food waste into fertilizer

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A Malaysian government initiative aims to reduce wastage, especially during the Muslim holy month when huge amounts of food are thrown away.

After breaking their Ramadan fast outside a mosque in Malaysia, people throw their leftovers into a machine that converts the food scraps into organic fertilizer for crops.

The modest government initiative in the central state of Pahang aims to reduce wastage, especially during the Muslim holy month when huge amounts of food are thrown away daily.

The mobile machine has been deployed at a park in the heart of state capital Kuantan during Ramadan where many families gather every evening to feast on cheap local dishes after a day of fasting.

It processes 25 kilograms (55 pounds) of scraps a day, said Sharudin Hamid, the state director of Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Corporation, which started the [pilot project](#) last year.

The amount is a tiny fraction of the more than 13,000 tonnes of food sent to landfills around the Muslim-majority country every day, even more during Ramadan, but Sharudin said it was helping to increase awareness about food wastage.

"The main objective is to ensure that the [waste](#) is not sent to landfills," Sharudin told AFP.

"This has had a significant impact on us, as people are becoming more aware of [environmental conservation](#), especially in terms of food waste reduction."

Food scraps are thrown into the machine where they are slowly mixed with rice husks and sawdust for 48 hours.

The brownish-colored waste is then packaged and given to farmers to use as fertilizer on their crops.

"Things that grow from that fertilizer can also become food, which again can be composted into fertilizer. So there's a natural cycle," said Abdul Shukor Mohamad Salleh, 27, as he bought local delicacies at a Ramadan

food market in Kuantan, one of many across the country.

On her small plot near the city, Zulyna Mohamed Nordin, 53, sprays organic liquid fertilizer derived from the recycled food waste on her vegetable, banana and pineapple crops.

She receives 30 kilograms of the [fertilizer](#) every month and slightly more during Ramadan.

"I have done away from using expensive chemical inputs since June last year. This is natural, organic, and boosts productivity," Zulyna told AFP.

"My leafy vegetables are bigger and greener."

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