

# Negros mayor seeks DENR opinion on cherry blossoms

BY EUGENE Y. ADIONG ON APRIL 16, 2017 REGIONS

**BACOLOD CITY, Negros Occidental:** La Castellana Mayor Rhumyla Nicor-Mangilimutan will ask the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Protected Area Management Board for a dialogue to determine action on the existence of Palawan cherry blossoms in the municipality tagged by environmentalists as “bad for biodiversity.”

Mangilimutan issued the statement after environmentalists commented on social media that the flowers “should be eradicated because it is exotic and bad for biodiversity.”

The issue stemmed from the mayor’s posted photo on social media showing the Palawan cherry blossoms behind her and Kanlaon volcano looming in the background, with the statement: “Why go to Japan to see the cherry blossoms, we have it here in La Castellana town.”

She said she did not expect the post to go viral, which was carried by Choose Philippines and picked up by national television as well as other local and national media outlets.

The Palawan cherry blossoms can be found in Sitio Kalapnagan, Barangay Biak na Bato, a mountain village at the foot of Kanlaon volcano.

The mayor pointed out that the flowers have been in the area since way back “but it is only recently that it bloomed so well and in time for our Banana Festival thus helping in the promotion of the festivities. It has also lured in more local and foreign tourists who also wanted to see the flowers for themselves.”

“I think it is endemic and not exotic, Mangilimutan said, adding, “We should sit down and discuss what we have to do about this because we are not only talking about the area of Mount Kanlaon that is included in the territorial boundaries of La Castellana, but the whole protected area.”

“For now I am just happy that the blooming of the flowers, which is among the wonders of nature, has helped in the promotion of tourism for La Castellana town,” she said.

“Why is it that the environmentalists came out with their so-called findings about the Palawan cherry blossoms as being exotic when they have been there for so long? They should have done something about them long ago.”

Mangilimutan said she will also meet with the Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Council) to discuss what to do about the flowers and the environmentalists’ claim.

<http://www.manilatimes.net/negros-mayor-seeks-denr-opinion-cherry-blossoms/322480/>