

Pineapple Skin Galore

Jalaludeen Rajagobar, Nizar

Lim Shu Zhe, Dylan

Lim Shu Chuen, Derric

With the rapid increase of industrialization and modernization, the consumption of domestic materials for development increases accordingly. Due to limited wood supply, humans resort to using minerals and plastics on a large scale. Unfortunately, most plastics are non-environment friendly. Minerals will also deplete eventually. Therefore, the solution is to develop composites, preferably using biodegradable resins. This project aims to produce a composite board using pineapple skin which is an abundant waste. A mixture of polybutylene succinate (PBS) with dried, ground pineapple skin (as filler) was heat-compressed to make an innovative thermoplastic biodegradable composite board. A preliminary investigation (tensile test, flexural test and impact test conducted) using 10% fibre-loading samples showed that fine-particle (< 500 microns) samples have better mechanical properties compared to the coarse-particle (500 -1000 microns) samples. Further tests (using fine-particle filler) also showed that the 10% fibre-loading composite has better mechanical properties compared to the 15% and 20% fibre-loading composites; while it is more cost effective when compared to the 5% fibre-loading. The melt flow rate of the composites decreases as the percentage of fibre-loading increases. For the water absorption test within 3 weeks, the average percentage of water absorption for the 10% fibre-loading composite is only 5% of its weight. Hence, it can be concluded that this innovation is a suitable alternative material to be used in the furniture industry, flooring, for interior decor purposes, for making souvenirs and other applications. This waste-transformed biodegradable pineapple skin composite board is feasible for mass production to fulfill the demand of the whole world.