

Sandalwood giant can smell big dollars in warts

By Matt Brann Tuesday, 11 December 2012



A young Indian Sandalwood plantation in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. (TFS)

Researchers in the US who are working on a drug to treat warts are getting excellent results from Indian sandalwood oil.

It's good news for those with warts and also good news for those growing Indian sandalwood.

Tropical Forestry Services (TFS), is the world's biggest producer of the timber and owns plantations in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Head of Global Products with TFS Mario Di Lallo, says the early results on patients have been promising.

"It shows that if you apply sandalwood oil to a wart for 7-10 days, that wart will turn black and fall off and doesn't seem to come back.

"So the team at ViroXis Corporation are trying to prove conclusively that a sandalwood oil treatment will kill warts."

Mr Di Lallo says the clinical study is presenting TFS with a very profitable alternative market.

"Anything that leads to a greater return for our growers and stakeholders is welcome by TFS and I think the medical market will pay a higher price (for sandalwood oil) than a perfume manufacturer," he said.

"So we've got perfume manufacturers and all sorts of potential customers coming to us and wanting to do business, so we're really looking forward to next year's harvest and beyond."

Sandalwood oil is commonly used in incense sticks, perfumes and other cosmetic products, but according to ViroXis (which is conducting the trials), the "global HPV common warts market could absorb up to 240 tonnes of oil per year at premium prices".

In a statement from ViroXis, it says there are currently no approved prescription drugs to treat HPV skin warts.

It says it will test three strengths of the Indian sandalwood treatment on 180 patients, with the results of the study to be known by the end of 2013.

President & CEO of ViroXis, Ian Clements, says "based on promising data in previous clinical trials with sandalwood, we are optimistic that the anti-viral activity and favourable safety profile of this essential oil will lead to a new and effective treatment for this highly prevalent and often painful and difficult-to-treat condition."

Tropical Forestry Services owns land and grows Indian Sandalwood in the Ord Valley region of Western Australia, in Katherine and the Douglas Daly region of the Northern Territory and also the Burdekin in Queensland.

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