

SANDALWOOD—AND ITS SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

A Western Australian company that successfully promoted emu oil to the world's cosmetics and therapeutics industry has embarked on a new venture that will put the State to the fore as the leading supplier of another native oil—sandalwood.

Albany-based Mt Romance Australia Pty Ltd and CALM have signed a contract for the supply of up to 1,000 tonnes of sandalwood a year. The value of the contract is conservatively valued at \$40 million over 10 years.

Mt Romance was awarded the contract following a nation-wide call for expressions of interest in the production and marketing of sandalwood oil.

The company was selected from a highly competitive range of proposals. The selection criteria addressed several points including the location of processing facilities, competitive pricing, technical and marketing expertise, and the quantity of sandalwood to be processed.

Mt Romance has an active research and development program that is continually identifying and creating new sandalwood-based products.

Although the main focus is on the cosmetic and therapeutic uses of sandalwood, the company's long-term aim is to become a major supplier of sandalwood oil to the international perfume and pharmaceutical industries.

The contract also opens the way for the development of a stronger domestic market for sandalwood oil and products, not only in WA,

but also in Australia as a whole.

Essentially, this will be a 'new' market for sandalwood products, which, ironically, were one of the first exports of the Swan River Colony.

The contract represents the realisation of a policy of value adding to WA sandalwood wherever possible. It would also complement the State's traditional markets in Asia.

The contract is expected to provide an additional incentive for farmers to incorporate sandalwood into their tree crops programs.

CALM has developed new techniques that make it possible to grow sandalwood as a tree crop. It is now one of the major supplementary species the Department is offering to farmers who are establishing maritime pines under the State Salinity Action Plan.

Apart from its economic value, sandalwood planting contributes to restoring the biodiversity of the Wheatbelt, because it occurred there naturally before the area was cleared for agriculture.

It is expected that a further 50 hectares of sandalwood will be established this year on cleared farmland as part of CALM's maritime pines project.



Above right: *Sandalwood tree*

Right: *Sandalwood flower*

Photos – Jiri Lochman



Winner of the 1998 Alex Harris Medal for excellence in science and environment reporting.

# LANDSCOPE

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What does the future hold for our karri forest? Research provides some interesting insights. See page 18.



The photographic excellence of WA team Babs and Bert Wells was driven by a love of the job. See page 10.



Many WA women have played important roles in the conservation of our natural resources. Some of them feature in our story on page 41.



'Growing Gnangara Park', on page 35, continues the story of WA's largest proposed outer suburban native parkland.



Partnerships are important. Many private sector businesses and individuals are active partners in protecting our natural heritage. See page 47.

## FEATURES

**FOR THE LOVE OF THE JOB**  
MANDY CLEWS.....10

**THE KARRI FOREST: 2095AD**  
JACK BRADSHAW, MARTIN RAYNER & MARGARET KIERATH..18

**RETURN TO LILLIPUT**  
NEVILLE MARCHANT.....28

**GROWING GNANGARA PARK**  
CARIS BAILEY.....35

**DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY**  
TAMMIE REID, SUZANNE CURRY & MANDY CLEWS .....41

**TAKE YOUR PARTNERS**  
SUZANNE CURRY.....47

## REGULARS

**BUSH TELEGRAPH**.....4

**ENDANGERED**  
STIRLING RANGE TRAPDOOR SPIDER.....27

**URBAN ANTICS**  
BIGFOOT TALES.....54

## COVER

The Dampier collection returns briefly to Western Australia for an exhibition at the WA Museum. The specimens' scientific interest is limited, but their historical significance is immense. The illustration is of the *Sturt-pea*, and Dampier was the first person to collect this unusual but magnificent plant. (See page 28)

Illustration by Philippa Nikulinsky



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