



News: Woodanilling farmer Trevor Young and John Bartle with oil from the trees in the background. PICTURE: JOHN MOKRZYCKI

\$3.5m trial hopes to strike liquid gold

A \$3.5 MILLION Wheatbelt trial hopes to establish a eucalyptus oil industry potentially worth millions of dollars a year.

It aims to provide an important complement to traditional farm cropping systems and be a vital tool in the fight against the ravages of land degradation.

According to Department of Conservation and Land Management scientist John Bartle, a "euc-oil" industry could develop across southern Australia in a decade, and be worth at least \$100 million a year.

Eucalyptus oil is used mainly for pharmaceutical products.

It also has the potential to be used as an industrial solvent and degreaser.

The trial, involving the planting of 30 million mallee seedlings over five years on farms at Toolibin, Woodanilling, Esperance, Narembeen, Kalannie and Canna, will produce batches of oil for product and market development.

Mr Bartle said the challenges for the project were to breed improved oil-bearing trees and reduce extraction costs.

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