

Headline **Botanist: Market the Bintangor tree extract as medicinal herb**
Date **06 Sep 2011**
MediaTitle **New Sarawak Tribune**
Section **News**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **46,471 / 164,773**

Language **English**
Page No **6**
Article Size **303 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **817**
PRValue **2,452**



Botanist: Market the Bintangor tree extract as medicinal herb

BY ONG WEI LING

KUCHING: Botanist Dr Paul Chai has suggested the Bintangor tree extract be promoted as a medicinal herb.

He said a comprehensive scientific research study on the plant found only in Sarawak, the *Calophyllum lanigerum*, whose extract is believed to have disease-curing properties for patients with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), will require about RM500 million to run its full course.

Chai proposed that an alternative way would be to promote the local plant as a natural herb and to market the product globally.

To fully document a specimen will require a large sum of money,

he said.

His comments were made yesterday during a question and answer session after a presentation on "Local plants and their potential for medicine and health supplements" at the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre.

The plant was first discovered in Bintangor and the research process of identifying its full potential as a cure for AIDS was carried out in the United States.

"The plant has an active ingredient which does not only have potential for treating AIDS but has other functions as well," he said.

Chai noted that it was interesting that the herb's ingredient could be synthesized and manufactured as a medicine.

The Sarawak Forestry Department had collaborated with the US AIDS International Association to carry out the research.

Instead of spending a large amount of money to run the research, the state government had employed foreign researchers on contract to discover the secrets of the plant, he said.

"The potential is not only in AIDS treatment but there is unlimited potential yet to be discovered which we will discover in due course," Chai said.

He also highlighted plants that could have undiscovered benefits such as the mangosteen, eggplant, ladies fingers, "kacang ma" and the herbs used in ethnic Hakka dishes.



CHAI giving a talk at the Sarawak Biodiversity Centre.