

Feedback: Sassafras Logging in Burma.

Tom Blickman of Transnational Institute (which Blickman describes as an Amsterdam based policy research institute, which - among other programmes - runs a program on drug policy) contacted Cropwatch on 5th Oct 2009. Blickman wanted to point out that the issue of trading safrole-rich oils for illegal drug manufacture is not just confined to Cambodia: Burma also suffers from environmental devastation because of the unsustainable harvesting of trees. Blickman has authored an article "Harvesting Trees to Make the Ecstasy Drug" which was published in *The Irrawaddy* on 3rd Feb 2009, and can be accessed at http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=15050 The informative article sets out a number of suggestions to tackle the issue: Blickman suggests that merely burning seized lots of Sassafras oil will not solve the problem.

Blickman also points out that from a drug control perspective, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime performed a study which was published in 2007: *Essential Oils Rich in Safrole: Survey on Production, Trade and Use in East Asia and South East Asia*, which can be ordered at the UNODC (<http://www.unodc.org/>).

Further, Blickman maintains that "alternative sustainable production of safrole-rich oils is possible. In China & Brazil, experiments with new sustainable plants and trees are well advanced-in particular some *Cinnamomum* species and the *Pimenta longa* (*Piper hispidinervium*), which has been introduced to Yunnan from Brazil, by the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden in China's Yunnan Province."

Cropwatch is grateful to Tom Blickman for his input, and for giving permission to pass on information and ideas on this matter.