



Perfumes From Amazonian Aromatic Plants

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The economy of the Amazon region is primarily focused on producing commodities such as meat, soy, energy and ore from mining operations. Non-timber forest products occupying a negligible share (0.1% of total exports) in this economic context. To be preserved the Amazon must go through a Research & Development (R & D) process that would transform Biodiversity into Bioproducts for society. The P&DBIO - Research & Development Laboratory on Natural Bioactive Products in Santarém, in the heart of the forest, uses Biotechnology to standardize raw materials for the cosmetics and perfumery markets. The Brazilian cosmetic market is one of the most important in the world with US\$ 15 billion in sales in 2012, and it is also the most important in perfume market with sales of US\$ 6 billion. Nevertheless, almost all raw materials are imported and the Amazon practically does not participate in this market. An important item in the Cosmetic industry is essential oils. A thousand aromatic plants have been recorded in the Amazon, however only the essential oil of rosewood (*Aniba rosaeodora*) – an endangered species – is exported to the main perfumery companies. Barata et al. (1) cultivated cassava intercropped with rosewood in the Amazon leading to a sustainable procedure of trimming trees (4 to 5 years of age) producing a fragrant essential oil now in use for fine perfumes. This expertise has been adapted by Magaldi, a small enterprise in Maués in the Amazon, which is now exporting rosewood oil from the leaves at the price of US\$ 220/kg. In another agro-industrial project, the P&DBIO developed a priprioca (*Cyperus articulatus*) plantation having two family farms as partners in Low Amazon. The essential oil extracted from roots has economic importance in perfumery for its strong and pleasant smell, therefore, it was introduced in 2003, in the national cosmetic and perfumery industry. Our research group introduced the priprioca in the Western Amazon in a project involving cultivation, management and sustainable production of essential oil in order to improve its quality to the international market. The experiments leading to the harvest of 1,000 kg of rhizomes in 2014, giving an essential oil that is already being used to create fine fragrances. The technology from the agro-industrial project with P&DBIO partnership is about to be transferred to small local producers bringing economic opportunities to Amazon communities and thereby offering an alternative to the devastation of the Amazon forest.

1. Barata, Lauro E. S. *Ciência & Cultura*, 2012, **64**, 31-35.

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