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MyIPO approves registration of Litsara and Litsea as trademarks

THE Malaysian Intellectual Property Organisation (MyIPO) has approved the registration of Litsara as trademark in class five and for Sarawak, and Litsea as geographical indication last year.

Both registrations were approved for a period of 10 years from Jan 28 last year to Jan 28, 2021, and are made to the Sarawak government. Applications to register these two properties were made by Sarawak Biodiversity Centre (SBC) in January last year.

The Intellectual Property Certificates were presented to Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud by MyIPO chairman Datuk Abdul Manan Ismail during the opening ceremony of Bio-Borneo 2012 here yesterday.

Litsea is a plant species, *litsea cubeba*, growing wild in the highlands of Sarawak. It is traditionally used as food flavouring and medication for stomach ailments by the Bidayus and Orang Ulu. Essential oil extracted from the leaves and fruits is aromatic and has strong anti-microbial properties.

The SBC's analysis of this oil has identified a different chemical composition compared to litsea oil from other regions such as China, which is the main producer of the oil.

“The Chinese litsea oil has high citral content and consumers with perfume allergy have been warned to avoid using products containing citral.

The uniqueness of Sarawak litsea oil has potentially put it as an alterna-

tive source in the world market.

The chemical composition of Sarawak litsea has been confirmed by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) and Sirim Environmental Technology Research Centre.

Aside from the registration of Sarawak litsea, pharmaceutical and personal care products which utilise the essential oil will also carry the trademark litsara.

Sarawak litsea is among the 20 geographical indications currently registered in Malaysia. Other Sarawak geographical indications that have been registered are Sarawak *Dabai*, Bario rice, Sarawak pepper, Sarawak *Beras Biris*, Sarawak *Beras Bajong*, Sarawak Sour Eggplant and Sarawak Layered Cake (*Kek Lapis Sarawak*).