SA's new power plant
International companies clamour for products made from buchu

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A SOUTH African herb, first used by the San to make tea, is taking on international status as a treatment for a wide range of ailments including arthritis and high blood pressure.

The called buchu — a rosy green plant about the size of a lavender bush that belongs to the mint family — is believed to have anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial properties.

A company based in Paarl, outside Cape Town, is producing buchu tea and has established a business in the country.

The company, named International, has established a factory in Cornwall, England, which is preparing to launch its own line of buchu products.

"We are very excited about the potential of buchu," said Jane Sanders, a spokesperson for International.

"This is a huge opportunity to introduce a natural product with proven health benefits to a global market," Sanders said.

The company has been recognized as a valuable herb for traditional and herbal medicine organizations, such as the American Herbal Products Association.

"This is an exciting time for buchu," said a spokesperson for the organization.

"It is a powerful herb with a long history of use in traditional medicine, and we are confident that it will have a significant role to play in contemporary medicine."