



Our plants might be just the remedy

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TASMANIA could be about to find itself a centre of Chinese medicine.

As investors from the super-power sought out deals last week, the potential of the state's health products was also being sized up.

The CEO and chief scientist of Shanxi Everpride Pharmaceutical visited lavender and native pepper operations in the state's south.

The products are prized in China for their medicinal properties.

The Chinese contingent was a guest of Essential Oils of Tasmania, whose main export markets are Europe, the US and Japan.

Project Development Manager Troy Cook said the visitors had shown a strong interest in using Tasmanian produce for medications like antibacterial creams.

"The clean, natural environment, that's the main thing," Mr Cook said.

"There's lavender growing in China at the moment but it's not the best when you start to extract things from it."

Mr Cook said samples were being taken back to China for testing and representatives of the Tasmanian company would visit China next year.

Essential Oils supplier Diemen Pepper, believed to be the only exporter of the product in Australia, was also on the itinerary.

"They were pretty excited about it," owner Chris Read

said. "They're looking at Chinese medicine applications and they're keen to get a feel for the whole product."

Mr Read said expansion into China would need the establishment of orchards, with his product now harvested from the wild.

"If out of this visit comes some interest from Chinese investors that would be great ... but they're long-run opportunities."