

Activity Sheet 1.5

Press cuttings from the *Botanica Bugle*

Atonga

Botanica is fighting for the survival of one of its plants. The Atonga plant has long been used for its medicinal powers by rainforest dwellers. After it was discovered by scientists from Western countries, it was collected and used by drug companies to make best-selling medicines in the West. The drug companies did not worry about the future of the plant, and local people

also started collecting it, believing that they should get some benefit from it as well, not just foreigners. As a result, it was almost collected into extinction.

Botanists in Botanica keep specimens of the plant carefully guarded and they are trying to preserve its leaves, bark, branches and fruit. Only archive photographs of the plant in its natural habitat remain to remind people of Atonga about what can happen to precious resources when companies over-exploit them for their own purposes.

INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

The government of Botanica is looking for ways to continue the development of tourism in the country.

Although Botanica has long been neglected by tour operators and backpackers, the government intends to make it a first-class destination for tourists in this century. Botanica can offer sun, deserted beaches, lush rainforests, beautiful mountains and lakes, and fascinating deserts – everything that the tourists could want.

Work has already started on roads linking the major towns and cities with the forests and mountains; routes are being cleared through the rainforests themselves to allow jeep safaris to get close to the plants, animals and people of the forest; hotel building is under way. Many will be five star, so they will, of course, include luxury swimming-pools and golf courses. Botanica's beautiful lakes will become the water-sport enthusiast's paradise.