

# Jatropha seed changes woman's life

**Bongani Hlatshwayo**

production of oil which I produce from seeds of the jatropha tree. Basically, I adopted this trade from my late grandmother who used to produce the oil, so I saw it as an opportunity to supplement my salary," she explained.

Her grandmother did it for home use, but Shungube saw it as a business venture. She is currently employed as a full-time security guard. The finished product has been tested and approved by the Council for Scientific

**Research conducted by the universities of Natal, Johannesburg and TUT, show that her product is a biofuel**

and Industrail Research and has been put up for sale at pharmacies in the Nkomazi region - 80ml costs R40 and 100ml costs R80.

"I went to China with the product and they expressed interest in it, and now that it has been approved, the export market is the next step. I will also be producing five-litre containers and taking them to Swaziland where there is a huge demand for it.

"This is pure oil - the seeds are picked, ground, cooked and left to cool with no preservatives or chemical additives. It is very good for the skin as it is natural. As you can see, I now do it manually with a grinding stone and pots, but it needs machinery if I am to cater for a big demand.

"My ultimate dream is to reach the entire international market," she said.

She owns a 10-hectare tract of land where she plants the trees, harvests the seeds and carries out the rest of the production processes at home.

"It has made a difference to my life as I personally financed the fencing of my farm, installed a transformer and employed 15 casuals on weekdays, depending on the business at the time.

"I need to industrialise my product and have machinery for supplying in bulk. My growth was not instant, but gradual and I will grow until I have my own transport and marketing personnel, then the sky is the limit," she ended.

She plants 100 trees per hectare, in total she has more than 1 000 from which to harvest the seeds in April. It has a high concentration of oil and the family is using this for subsistence living - it is said to have been used since days of old as a lotion for newborn babies and seniors, for the growth and repair of hair. She has attended training courses on business management, marketing and record keeping, arranged by Small Enterprise Development Agency. The training has been crucial as it has made her visible and able to advertise her products.

She was influenced by the local media, including Ligwalagwala FM, *Mpumalanga News* and *Lowvelder* which have featured her extensively. The Encolin company has also assisted her with this venture.

All nine provinces already have access to her products, especially Kimberley and KwaZulu-Natal, which contact her personally, hence her plan is to build a factory for export purposes.

Research conducted by the universities of Natal, Johannesburg and TUT, show that her product is a biofuel that could be used as a cosmetic, so it could be sold to large corporates.

The SABS has approved its usage.

There's a wide-scale interest from large manufacturing petrol companies in buying the oil, provided she can supply it on a large scale. She is currently being assisted by the Department of Minerals and Energy to obtain an export licence.



Ms Julia Shungube with the pot in which she cooks the seeds.

**MBANGWANE TRUST-** There is a tall, remarkable local woman with a mind that thinks far beyond her confines - she is none other than Ms Julia Shungube, who has found inspiration in the jatropha tree, which has made a difference to her life. She has become a prolific producer of oil in her region and has cosmetic products out in the market.

Operating as Siphandane General Trading, she produces what has become popularly known as Umhlafulusha Oil. She attained success in 2010 when she was named Top Entrepreneur: Young Processor. She walked away with a whopping cash prize of R25 000 at the annual Female Entrepreneur of the Year Awards, provincially organised by the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land administration (Dardla).

"That prize money came in handy as I was able to erect a borehole on my farm for the



The seeds of jatropha.