Betulinic acid, first extracted from an African tree in the Rhamnaceae, *Ziziphus mauritiana* Lam., is available in quantity from the European white birch, Betulaceae *Betula papyrifera* Marshall, it is found in the bark which this birch sheds naturally and causes its white appearance. It has been found to induce apoptosis, cell death, in melanoma cells without impacting healthy tissue, is moving towards clinic trials for humans and may also become a preventive for melanoma as an ingredient in suntan lotions. This compound has already shown promise against specific strains of HIV and may lead to further understanding of a mechanism involving a post binding step in replication of the virus.

Additional information on betulinic acid including comments from John Pezzutto of the University of Illinois at Chicago, whose lab led the melanoma research, can be found in the electronic news magazine *Environews* at:

- More on Betulinic Acid and Melanoma

Scroll down to the article titled: Barking Up the Right Tree. Then check:

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Journal article on betulinic acid and melanoma:


Journal articles on betulinic acid and HIV:
