Branch control

A GROUP of University of Queensland researchers has helped discover a new plant hormone able to control the number of branches on trees.

The breakthrough has big implications for the forestry and agriculture industries because it could markedly increase yield and spell the end of labour-intensive pruning.

UQ associate professor Christine Beveridge said the hormone strigolactone could be added to plant buds to control branching. And the discovery could produce huge financial gains for the forestry and plant industries, she said.