



# Herbal & Traditional Medicine

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Cosmeceuticals are hybrids between drugs and cosmetic products and are able to enhance both health and beauty by external application which is very important for women specially. Everyone wants to look presentable else; it does affect one's self-esteem and confidence level. South Africa has tremendous plant diversity that is largely untapped in terms of its potential for medicinal and cosmeceutical purposes. With about 25 000 known species, this country is third only to Brazil and Indonesia as far as biodiversity is concerned. It constitutes about one tenth of all plant species in the world. Whether searching for ways to treat serious diseases like cancer and tuberculosis (TB), or formulating new acne creams and toothpastes that fight gum disease, one can be convinced that solutions can be found in South Africa's indigenous plants. The vast traditional knowledge about SA's plants is still untapped, and there is a huge amount of work needed to verify if and how traditional remedies and local plants actually work. The synergy of usage of plants traditionally coupled with all the rare plants found in this country prompted us to evaluate the potential of unexplored plants and develop products which can be applied topically. A number of plants have been proven to have effect for skin- problems for example melasma, spots, pigmentation, acne etc. and effective cosmeceutical-prototypes products have been prepared from those. Not all work; what are bring to the lab, on average only 2% reach a stage which are subjected to clinical studies. Due to the already existing products in the cosmetic market, one needs to check carefully how well the efficacy of newly invented SA indigenous plants; compares with the available ones. Secondly a few of the medicinal plants do not go further due to its sustainability (bark and roots of the plants may not be sustainability) and the toxicological profile of the samples. The key national benefit through these activities is the benefits that may be realised in bridging the gap between farmers, researchers and customers. By adding value to the local indigenous plants one can interest pharmaceutical companies to help in the development of novel cosmetic products. South Africa does not benefit enough from local resources choosing rather to export. We can therefore not derive the value benefits third parties add to the resources in turning them into products. The result is that some of the local cosmetic companies import foreign products and we lose