

Medicinal plants used as home-remedies

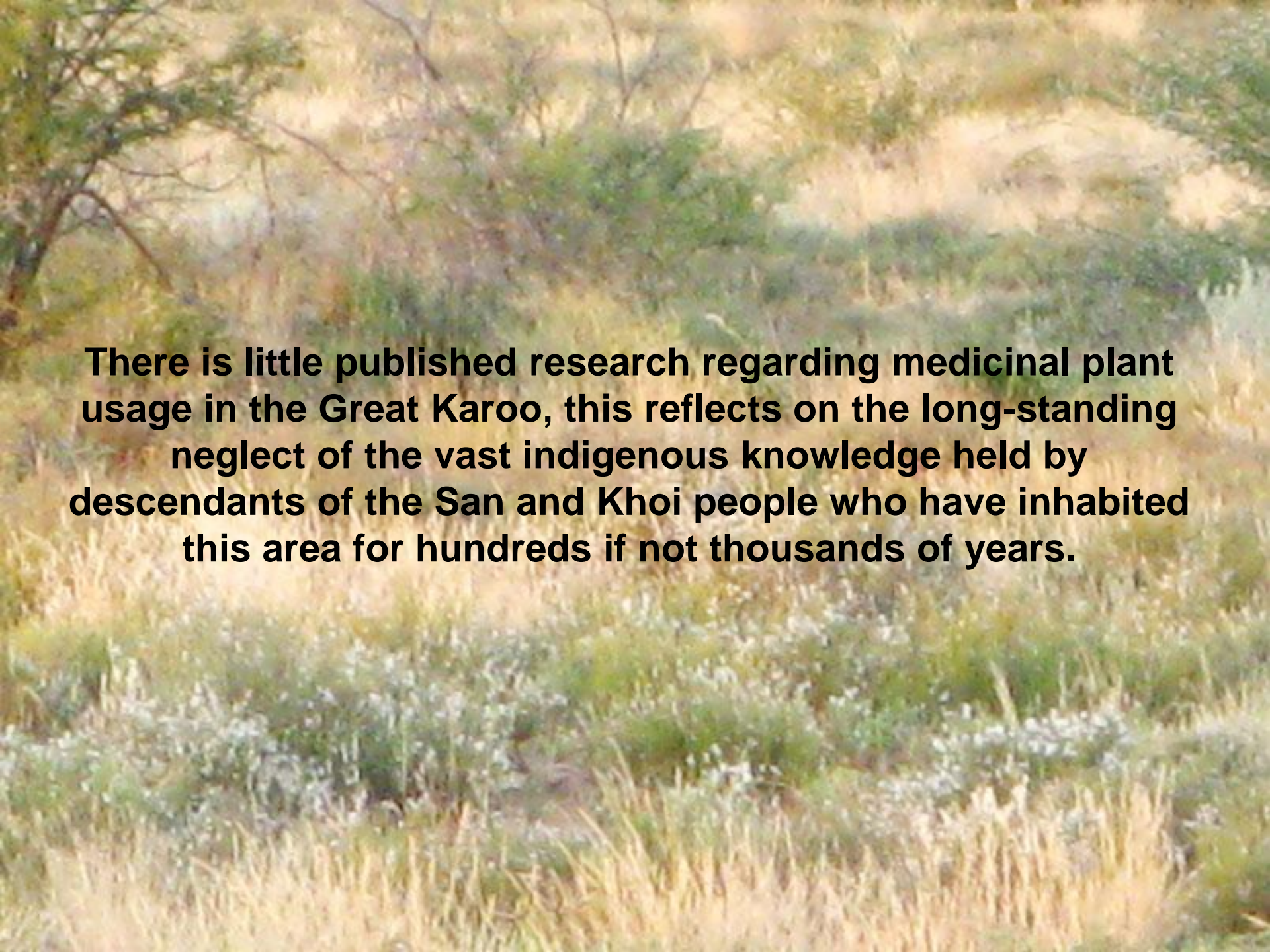
in the Graaff-Reinet area

Yvette van Wijk

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A photograph of a Great Karoo landscape. The foreground is dominated by tall, dry, yellowish-brown grasses. In the middle ground, there are several green, bushy shrubs and small trees. The background shows a hilly, dry landscape with more sparse vegetation under a bright, slightly hazy sky. The overall scene is a natural, uncultivated environment.

There is little published research regarding medicinal plant usage in the Great Karoo, this reflects on the long-standing neglect of the vast indigenous knowledge held by descendants of the San and Khoi people who have inhabited this area for hundreds if not thousands of years.

By meeting with various members of the community who still use plants as remedies today – and there are many who do - and walking in the veld with others who can point them out in situ and discuss their uses, methods of preparation, and many tales surrounding the plants and the people who use them.

A preliminary database has been populated. Many of the vernacular names, uses and methods are common to those throughout the dryland areas from the Little Karoo in the Southern Cape to the Great Karoo at Graaff Reinet.

It is fascinating to note the variation in vernacular names according to region, as well as the supplementing of some plant species with those from the same family which occur in each region, or even with exotics.

**Is it
A Political
Or
An Academic
Conundrum?**



Graaff Reinet lies at the very heart of the Central South African 'BLANK' area with regard to Old & Modern publications on Medicinal Plants in S A!

WHY?

Visit to Kroonvale, Graaff Reinet



Rachel Moos – Liz van Wijk – Mercia Browsers

“We cannot pick plants easily now. We know where the plants grow, ‘maar ons is te bang om te pluk!’ A few years ago we were shot at on ‘Lokasie Kop’ by the owner of the land”

“If plants are found along the road we pick them & dry leaves in a paper “suiker sak””

“In the old days Wildeals was used In a house where the dead lay for family to say goodbye. ‘Maar nou wip hulle jou weg, en jy lê Klip-hard gevries tot die begrafnis!”

Workshop with Camdeboo Hospice



Started in 2005
House donated by Mrs Bonett
Covers large area - Geluksdal,
Umasizakhe, Jansenville,
Klipplaat, Aberdeen,
New Bethesda
24 Care-givers at present
HIV, TB, Cancer & Motorneuron
are major problems



The Hospice Workshop



Plan for the day

- Palliative Care Week – appropriate!
 - Pride in Indigenous Knowledge
 - Cultural History of the area
 - Value in knowing & teaching above
 - Youth need this affirmation
 - Pride in where one comes from
-
- Chop herbs & start Preparations
 - Bases – Water / Oil / Alcohol / Vinegar
 - Benefits of using Whole Plants
 - Plant remedies as Home First Aid
 - Cost factors
 - Packaging & preservation no need for refrigeration
 - Self esteem for terminally ill

Home remedies MADE & then USED by Hospice nurses

- 🍷 Slicing onion to make Cough Syrup
- 🍷 Using the Sugar & Rooibos Eye Bath
- 🍷 Tasting the IMITHI Cough Syrup



Trying out different methods of using the various Medicinal Plant preparations

- ❖ Hot & Cold Compresses using herbal decoctions
- ❖ Steaming over hot herbal decoction
- ❖ Soaking sprain or swelling in alternate Hot & Cold baths



SIMPLE is BEST

- ✓ Making sure everything is clean, & sterile but **SIMPLE**
- ✓ Using everyday utensils
- ✓ Making technology **SIMPLE**
- ✓ Sharing **ALL** Knowledge
- ✓ Using only **SAFE** plants
- ✓ Ensuring info given is in the **Public Domain**



A Walk in the Veld on Bloemhof Farm with Ennis Williams



**Ennis learnt
about plants
from his mother
who was a
'Voetvrou'**

**He believes
he is descended
from 'Bushmen'
and proud of it**

**He uses plants
all the time &
gives to others
without charge**

**-----
With Thanks to
Julian, Ann &
Walther Murray**

Ballota africana - Kattekruui



USES

Coughs
Colds
Influenza

Preparation

Tea
Infusion
Syrup

**Melianthus comosus -
Katjie-roer-my-nie**

Uses

Arthritis & Rheumatism

Poisonous (external use)



Datura ferox – Olieboom

Uses

**Ear-ache & Head-ache
Swelling**

Poisonous (external use)

Cadaba aphylla - Swartstorm

Uses

Back-ache, Head-ache, Excema
Chases away Tokoloshe

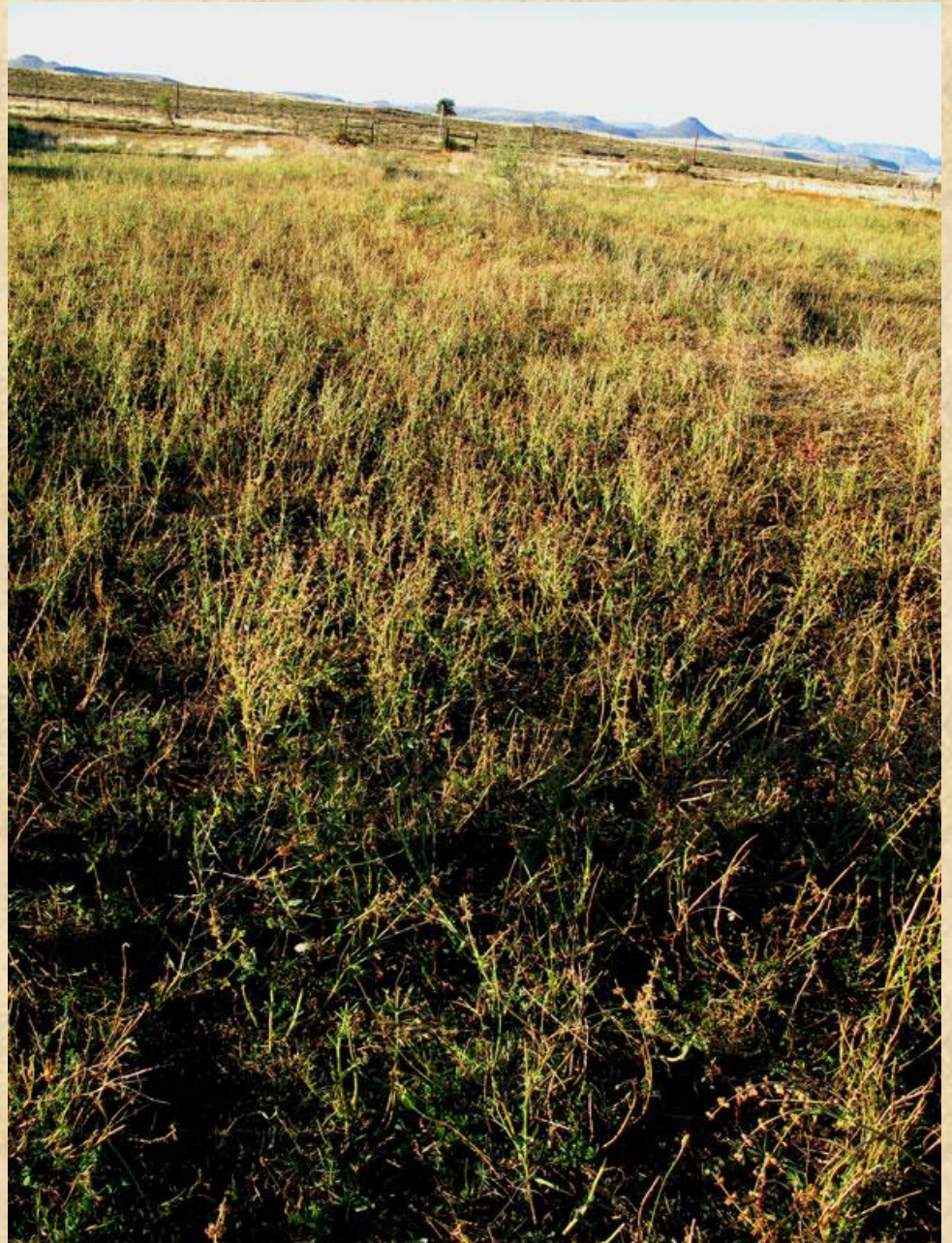
Found only in shelter of larger shrubs



Salvia cf aurita – Kankerbos

Uses

Cancer & Asthma



Indigofera cf meyeriana – Louhoud

Uses

Flatulence

Diabetes

Use the root only – not sustainable
Plants deep rooted & slow growing



Hermannia cf flammea – Kwaaiman



Uses

**Colds, Bronchitis & Influenza
Fever (Beverasie)
Stomach problems
Sore throat**

**Use stems & leaves – sustainable -
BUT readily grazed by domestic
stock & slow growing with very
deep roots, long-lived**

**Interesting chemically -
Produces a burning sensation in
The mouth & throat – described as
'lekker!'**

Collecting Medicinal plants today in the Graaff Reinet area

Problems

- ⊙ Unless one lives on a farm where you are allowed to collect it is almost impossible to pick plants anymore
- ⊙ All land is either in Nature Reserve & people not allowed to pick, or it is privately owned and entry is forbidden
- ⊙ Only place to pick is on Road verges
- ⊙ Growing in townships impossible due to livestock roaming, children & dogs running & playing – soil is poor, no water

Results

- ✗ People pick illegally at night especially in Reserves
- ✗ Buy from relatives or friends in Baviaanskloof etc.
- ✗ Buy from hawkers in Oudtshoorn or George
- ✗ Order dried plants from Port Elizabeth or Durban
- ✗ Do not use Medicinal Plants anymore – buy from SPAR / Apteek
- ✗ Loss of Indigenous Knowledge
- ✗ Buy medicines from the 'Apteek' – go to the Clinic

Use of Animal substances

An unusually large number were reported

EG:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Aardvarkmis | – Flatulence |
| Bobbejaanmis | – Many Ailments (opwekker!) |
| Dassiepis | – Bladder & Kidney |
| Ystervarkpens | – Stomach-ache |

NB – No animal parts, only ‘mis’ & ‘pis’!
Therefore sustainable!

IMITHI

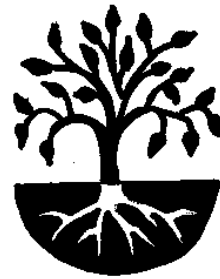
Amayeza



Talking to indigenous communities and Working with Hospice plus Municipal and Private clinics in the southern Cape; to identify, data-base, assess and then introduce simple, safe and affordable plant remedies for primary health care.

Empowering women and carers to confidently utilise simple and safe plant remedies for home care & first aid, based on culturally relevant Indigenous Knowledge Systems

IMITHI Amayeza



Research grant from IKS - National Research Foundation



Agricultural Research , George, LDU



Thembaletu Clinic, George



Municipal Clinic Sisters, George



Municipal Clinics & Hornlee Community, Knysna

Plants & Caves

There are 100's of caves or shelters in the Southern Cape, Little Karoo & Great Karoo, most with similar Vegetation. Comparing these plants with those used now as medicinal plants in the same area, is yielding Much interesting information



IMITHI Amayeza – Graaff Reinet

Plant	Info	Common	Ailment	Preparation
<u>FAMILY Anacardiaceae</u>				
Schinus molle	W E	Pepertak	Cold & Headache	Tea
<u>FAMILY Asteraceae</u>				
Artemisia afra	M B	Wildeals	Cough & stomach-ache	Make syrup
Conyza scabrida	W E	Oondbossie	Body chills & impotence	Make steam-pot & sit over it with blanket covering all
Conyza scabrida	W E	Oondbossie	Cultural beliefs	Mix with Swartstorm & Louhoud. Bathe all in the house. Tokoloshe will come, but get such a fright he will never come again!
Senecio rosmarinifolius	W E	Stinktontel	Boils, sores & Swelling	Crush & bind in place over the area
<u>FAMILY Fabaceae</u>				
Sutherlandia frutescens	R M	Kalkoenbell etjie	Diabetes	Drink bitter tea

Metadata attached to database re informants

	Self	Mother	Maternal GM	Maternal GF	Father	Paternal GM	Paternal GF
Surname							
Origin, Place							
Origin, Culture							
Plant knowledge							
Language							
Education level							
Religion							
More info							

Data made available for extraction

- Medicinal Plant species lists for given area / farm / reserve
- Lists of Indigenous Knowledge holders / Herbalists / Sangomas
- Lists of Common names & comparisons per area
- Traditional preparation methods / comparative frequency of similar usage & methods
- Lists of plants used for a particular ailment in one area / across a large area
- Contact details for farmers individuals / community groups / clinics / hospices
- Extract info re family groups and ancestors / family names and relationships
- Comparisons re changing habits in use of modern medicine and/or traditional
- Ideas for additions or changes to basic Home-remedies demonstrated at workshops / making sure they are culturally and historically appropriate

Adding value to this data?

How?

**This Knowledge is already in the Public Domain.
It is derived from a multi-cultural history & tradition.**

**BUT it is undeniably valuable
AND it is seriously undervalued!**

**If it is not used to genuinely add value
To both humans & the environment**

I believe It is being misused

“--- the widespread displacement of traditional worldviews by the Western worldview is probably the most dangerous undertaking humankind has ever attempted.”

“The many ‘components’ of nature for indigenous peoples became an extension, not just of the geographical world, but of human society. This is fundamentally difficult for Western Society to understand, since the extension of ‘self’ is through ‘hard technology’, not nature.”

IPR’s were established to protect individual inventions and inventors, not the collective, ancient folklore and TEK (traditional environmental knowledge) of indigenous and local Communities. would generally price them out of any effective (possibility of) using such instruments (IPR’s).

“Indigenous Traditions and Ecology” Ed. John A Grim; Harvard Univ. Press; 2001; ISBN 0-945454-28-7

Value Adding?

What sort of value are we adding?

**Who or what does 'added value'
ultimately benefit?**

**Who will dare to move beyond
our Western Worldview?**

Is it too late?