

Medicinal Foods of The San people of Africa

Assessment 4 - Presentation -Medicinal Foods

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The San



Formerly known as

‘Kalahari Bushmen’¹

Also known as Basarwa²

The original Batswana of Botswana and inhabitants of Namibia and South Africa also³



A rich knowledge of using medicinal foods ³

- The Khoi people of the Cape of South Africa referred to them as Sanqua - people (qua) that anointed themselves with bushes (San) ⁴
- Powdered aromatics with fat for massage ointments
- Plants were classified as male or female
- Energy medicine/ touch therapy and Aromatherapy also used



Medicinal Food	Uses of the medicinal food
<i>Acacia erioloba</i> - Camelthorn ⁵	Fresh roots chewed for strong pain of the chest, stomach or head ⁵
<i>Albizia anthelminica</i> - Worm-bark ⁵	Inhaled smoke from burning roots stops nosebleeds ⁵
<i>Aloe Zabrina</i> - Zebra Aloe ⁵	Multiple uses including leaf gel for burns and skin ailments ⁵
<i>Boophone disticha</i> (L.f.) ⁴	Hallucinogenic; eternal life symbol; used in trance dance healing rituals ⁴
<i>C. Travaalensis</i> ⁶	Roots with <i>O. paniculosa</i> for menstrual pain and lower blood pressure ⁶
<i>Combretum imberbe</i> - leadwood ⁵	Leaves chewed to remedy coughing or a bad cold ⁵
<i>H. Gordonii</i> ⁶ <i>Hoodia pilifera</i> L.f. ⁶	suppresses hunger substitute for food and water ^{4 6}
Devil's Claw (<i>H. procumbens</i>) ⁶	intestinal disorders, gall bladder disease and gall stones, kidney conditions, diabetes and atherosclerosis.
<i>L. javanica</i> ⁶	Leaves for everyday tea & to treat coughs, colds & bronchial problems ⁶
<i>Ozoroa paniculosa</i> ⁶	Lowers bp, diabetes, menstrual pain and alleviates general fatigue ⁶
<i>Sclerocarya birrea</i> ⁵	Bark for diarrhoea, diabetes, fever, malaria; roots: sore eyes ⁵
<i>Terminalia sericea</i> ⁵	Bark/leaves; root decoction - persistent cough, fevers and Malaria. ⁵
<i>Ximenia caffra</i> - Sour plum ⁵	Ointment from kernels for wound healing; root decoction for chest ⁵
<i>Ziziphus mucronate</i> - Buffalo Thorn ⁵	Gonorrhoea ³



Hoodia gordonii

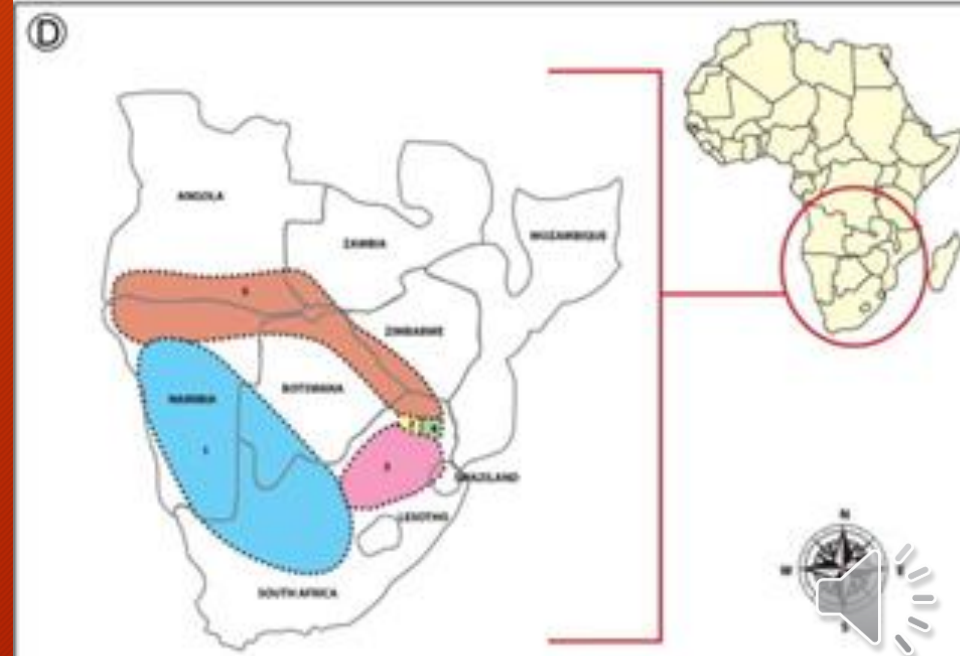


- Leafless columnar succulent with spines ⁶
- Spines removed, crushed, sundried and pulverised to powder ⁶
- This species only eaten in the Kalahari desert ⁷
- Traditional use - appetite suppressant ⁶
- Clinical research of crude extract in rats, shows efficacy for reduced dietary intake and reduced weight ⁷
- Various clinical trials using extracts show no efficacy for diet suppression ⁸



Devil's Claw - *Harpagophytum procumbens*⁶

- A creeper with central underground tuber⁶
- Secondary tubers gathered and chewed,¹⁰ boiled,⁹ or sliced and dried⁶ and combined with animal fat as ointment¹⁰
- Traditionally treats intestinal disorders, kidney & gall bladder disease, diabetes, atherosclerosis⁶ high blood pressure,⁹ muscle & joint pain, menstrual & birth pain, fever, blood diseases and UTI's.¹⁰
- Topically to treat arthritis, pain, sores, ulcers, boils, wounds, burns and cancerous growths.¹⁰



Efficacy of Devil's Claw (*H. procumbens*)

- Clinical studies prove efficacy as an:
 - Anti-inflammatory (in vitro¹⁴ and in vivo animal and human trials) ^{10, 11, 14}
 - Analgesic (animal and human trials) ^{10, 11, 14}
 - Antioxidant (animal studies only) ¹⁰
 - Antidiabetic (animal studies only) ¹⁰
 - Chemoprotective (animal studies only) ¹⁰
 - Cardiovascular depressant (animal studies only) ¹⁰
 - Intestinal and Uterine contractive agent (animal studies only) ¹⁰
- Clinically ineffective as an antimicrobial ¹⁰



Boophone disticha

- Family Amaryllidaceae ¹⁵
- Used to poison darts and arrows, ^{15,16} as a hallucinogenic in trance dance healing rituals, as a symbol of eternal life ⁶
- Depicted in Rock art of the San people ¹⁶
- Deciduous large bulb with scales ¹⁶
- 2000 year old Khoi-San man mummified with Boophone scales ¹⁶
- The bulb is most often used and is uprooted in entirety when gathered ^{16, 17}
- The leaves flowers and roots are also used ¹⁶
- Those that grow in the shade are more potent as poison for hunting ¹⁶



Boophone disticha

- Bulb infusion - tonic & to treat epilepsy, stress, anxiety, depression, psychosis, insomnia, age related dementia, ¹⁶ gastrointestinal ailments and internal purification ¹⁷
- Scales - asthma ¹⁶
- Topically - wounds, boils, rashes, pain relief, drawing agent ¹⁶
- Leaves - to stop bleeding ¹⁶
- Clinical data shows efficacy for: depression, anxiety, cognition enhancing as an anticholinergic, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory ¹⁷
- Shows promise as an anti-cancer agent ¹⁷
- No efficacy data confirming treatment efficacy for epilepsy, asthma or gastrointestinal function ¹⁷



The San people face challenges

- Rapid Change ⁵
- Loss of interest - fewer trainees - loss of traditional knowledge ^{18,19}
- Extinction of medical plants through overexploitation ^{17,18}
- External interference ⁶
- Restricted access to traditional land and resources ^{2, 18}
- Decline in Credibility of traditional healers ¹⁹



Medicinal foods - Intellectual property & Ethics

- Bioprospecting ²
- Biopiracy ¹⁸
- Botswana - Convention on Biological Diversity ²⁰
- Industrial Property Act ²¹

- The biopiracy of Hoodia ²²



With a view to preserve and sustain the traditional knowledge of the San people

- Safeguard access ¹⁸
- Conserve biodiversity ¹⁸
- Embrace economic opportunities ⁶
- Engage in education of TK and its commercial value & IP rights ⁵
- Community gardens with traditional cultivation blended with modern propagation techniques ⁶
- Key is adaptability ¹⁹

Conslusion

- The San people - a rich tradition
- Hoodia - a dietary supplement for weight loss
- Devil's claw - a strong anti-inflammatory and analgesic
- Boophone - treatment for anxiety, depression & age related dementia
- Small sample of the pharmacopeia of the San people demonstrates their wealth of traditional knowledge

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