

# Aloe There!

AAMPS Newsletter

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## From The Editor

Welcome to the second edition of our AAMPS/PharmaConnect Newsletter. As one of the founders of AAMPS and co-editor of the second African Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AfHP2 as we call it!) I am privileged to say a few words about our work and more specifically what to expect in this excellent March edition of our newly launched newsletter.

AAMPS was born and dedicated exclusively to the preparation and promotion of African herbal quality standards and the development of an African Herbal Pharmacopoeia. AAMPS joined hands with PharmaConnect Africa in 2021. The purpose of this joint venture was to revive and expand work on AfHP2 as well as organize training and educational activities to promote the safe use of herbal medicines and related wellness products right across the region and beyond. It has been wonderful to witness the impact that this joint platform is having throughout Africa.

This second newsletter is dedicated to the Aloes botanical family. These plants, native to Southern Africa have had an immense impact on the global natural product industry. A multi-billion dollar industry which employs thousands of people particularly in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America has been built based upon these plants. Both the exudation from the stem and gel from the leaves are used in a wide variety of pharmaceutical products and health foods. Moreover both *Aloe vera* and more recently *Aloe ferox* are also key ingredients in the global natural cosmetic industry. Products made with these materials can be found in almost every health food shop and beauty store in the world. **What a gift from Africa to mankind!**



AAMPS founding partner and Co-editor,  
Denzil Phillips, in Kenya

## Meet Our Monograph Authors! - Yannick Woudstra and Olwen Grace

### Where are you based?

A: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

### Q: What Monograph are you working on?

A: Aloe ferox

### Q: Tell us one fun fact about the species that you chose.

A: Resin of Aloe ferox is used by some people to keep their skin white. Its stimulation for the breakdown of melanin has been clinically proven.

### Q: Why do you have such interest in this Species?

A: Not only is Aloe ferox a beautiful succulent with majestic spiky leaves, it is also a promising and exemplary case for sustainable trade of wild-harvested plants that can make a real difference to the local economy.

The global Aloe market is dominated by Aloe vera, but dependence on one species is risky. Aloe vera is furthermore often cultivated and distributed by large conglomerate organisations. Aloe ferox presents a local alternative with sustainable wild harvesting as its source and the species has a long history of medicinal use with indigenous Southern African people. With many documented uses, a diverse genetic pool presented by wild populations and the added benefit of supporting local livelihoods, Aloe ferox makes a great alternative to the global Aloe market.



Aloe ferox  
(South African  
National Biodiversity  
Institute)  
[accessed 11 March  
2022]

### Q: What uses does it have and have you used it yourself?

A: It is mainly known for its dried resins, also known as "Cape Aloes", which have been used for centuries as a laxative and for the treatment of various illnesses such as Malaria, through oral ingestion. It can also be used topically to stimulate the breakdown of melanin in the skin, an application that has found some popularity in South-East Asia. More modern uses involve the clear inner leaf tissue (gel) that can be used as a skin moisturiser but also a natural supplement in various foods and beverages, similar to the global use of Aloe vera leaf gel. This Aloe vera species is still dominating the European market, which may be partly due to the former restrictions on Aloe ferox global trade through CITES. As such, I have not tried out Aloe ferox products yet but this will shortly change as we are seeing Aloe ferox products appear on the European market now too.

## Q: What kind of research have you done into it?

A: At RBG Kew, we have mainly focused our efforts to the biosystematics and genomics of Aloe species. For this we have sequenced hundreds of genes across the Aloe genus and related genera to build an updated tree of life. Using these tools we have spent considerable efforts to develop a new molecular identification tool for aloes, including Aloe ferox. With this tool, any traded sample (such as an unidentified leaf) can be accurately assessed for its taxonomic status using modern DNA sequencing techniques.



Monograph Authors: Left to right: Olwen Grace and Yannick Woudstra

## Q: What are your thoughts on AfHP?

A: A great and admirable initiative that will help document the diversity of African herbals used for medicinal applications.

Africa is one of the most diverse continents and our hope is that the AfHP will stimulate a plethora of further research into its floral diversity and related medicinal potential. This can both help the global population in discovering new medicine and can help support local livelihoods to provide more income for the people knowledgeable and dependent on these plants.

## Q: In five years' time, what advances do you think this species would have made commercially and in research?

The recent exemption of Aloe ferox from the CITES restrictions will further open the doors to the global market for this species. More and more locally produced products are appearing on the international herbal medicinal and cosmetic markets. We expect the range of products based on Aloe ferox leaf gel will significantly increase both in diversity and popularity, in line with the growing popularity of Aloe vera. In research, we expect and hope that more efforts will be focused on the leaf gel properties as well, as has been done by Olwen Grace and her students for more than a decade now. We sincerely hope that local research programmes and universities will keep investing in the pharmacological and botanical research on this valuable local species. We also expect that the use of DNA-based identification tools will continue to be developed as a quality control for the global herbal market. An active research programme in South Africa on the bio-active components of Aloe ferox resins and other extracts will undoubtedly continue to yield exciting results including the discovery of more useful compounds

## Market Place Africa



STARGATE SCIENTIFIC



Would you like to advertise your African plant-based business, become a sponsor or feature in our next newsletter?

Email [info@pharmaconnect.co.za](mailto:info@pharmaconnect.co.za)

## Connect Conversations

PharmaConnect Africa webinars are shared as a series called Connect Conversations on Youtube. The webinars bring together stakeholders in the **biotech, pharmaceutical, cannabis and the wellness value chain from researchers, regulators, policymakers and companies.**

Our most recent conversation addressed the dilemma of pharmaceuticals as environmental pollutants. Representatives from the Department of Environmental Affairs and the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) shared overviews and possible regulatory interventions placed to assist in this growing concern. Mr Abel Kubare, a pharmacist in the United Kingdom, demonstrated the procedures followed to manage pharmaceutical waste in comparison to practices in South Africa and Southern Africa.

**JOIN THE Conversation!**

**PHARMACEUTICALS AS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS - WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING?**

- Pharmaceuticals have long half-lives in the environment, leading to accumulation and detectable, biologically



Visit the Youtube channel to access the recordings of this intriguing conversation below.

[Visit channel](#)

## Meet the Entrepreneur - Dr Nyarai S. Paweni

### Tell us about yourself?

Dr Nyarai S. Paweni

I am of Zimbabwean descent, seeker by nature, lover of laughter, words, meditation, music, dancing, travel, concerts/festivals, markets, nature, family/community.

My background is multi-faceted in medicine, non-profits, marketing and public relations as well as living in several countries. This has enabled me to have a great appreciation and compassion for many different perspectives and ability to interact with wide range of people as well as enjoy different cuisines and music genres.



### Tell us about your business?

As the founding director of Sage ReStorative Health, it is built on the tenants of naturopathic medicine. Our private practice is focused on life-style/functional/holistic medicine. In order to make a meaningful impact in the world and our lives, Sage ReStorative is all about enhancing wellness by focusing on holistic health, first prioritizing well-being in all its forms. I amplify my work through the Natural Therapist Council of Zimbabwe (NTCZ) and Traditional Medicine Practitioners Council of Zimbabwe (TMPC) boards. And if you want to learn more, check out our work with the Councils. In addition to the many collaborative workshops, we've been featured on radio, online and print media.

### What problem are you solving?

Disease prevention and it's management in a personalized and wholistic way that empowers people on their journey to vibrant health body-mind-spirit.

### What made you start the business?

My drive for personal healing along with wellness, social justice and community sustainability led me to start Sage ReStorative Health and also realizing the great need for wholistic medical care in Harare.



## What do you need for your business to grow?

There are many things we need as a growing business, however our top three (3) needs include:

1. Enhancement of our digital footprint to provide access to a global wellness dispensary and telehealth care.
2. Additional support staff to ensure our clients/patients' needs are fully supported and in a seamless approach.
3. Access to funding to enable our reach and natural medicine far as it is wide.

## What are your current challenges and how are you solving them?

Challenges are two-fold.

- Limited ability to collaborate with peers - connecting into a space for mutual learning and sharing of knowledge.
- Continuous learning of indigenous medicine and plants to expand the global dispensary
- Trying to manage and grow the practice under economic challenges that are unique to Zimbabwe.

## Look into the future, what do you see?

More integrative medical care delivery with cohorts of natural/holistic practitioners working in collaboration a diverse range of medical professionals to provide the public with true quality integrative care.

## What advice do you have for other entrepreneurs in Africa?

Network – Network-Network and collaborate as often as you can. While we worry about financial capital to start/grow your business, don't dismiss your social capital as it is a powerful tool to build your business and knowledge base.

[Visit website](#)



## Sage ReStorative Health Natural Medicine Wellness & Health



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## Country Focus -Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in Southern Africa. The capital and largest city is Harare.



The Zimbabwean National Plant, The Flame Lily  
(*Gloriosa superba*)  
(African Flame Lily - Flowers - Africa, 2022)

- **Population:** 14.8 million
- **Health Professionals:** 1, 414 medical doctors, 15, 353 nurses, 1, 401 Pharmacists and 55,000 traditional healers.
- **Ethnic Groups** - Main minorities and indigenous peoples: Ndebele and Kalanga (2.2 million), Tonga (around 140,000), Shangaan (Tsonga)(around 5,000), Venda (91,400) and whites less than (29,000).
- Main languages: Shona, siNdebele, English.
- **Popular species:**
  - *Androstachys johnsonii* (aphrodisiac)
  - *Brachystegia boehmii* (sexually transmitted diseases)
  - *Bridelia mollis* (cough)
  - *Coleochloa setifera* (pneumonia)
  - *Commiphora marlothii* (sexually transmitted infections)
  - *Corchorus tridens* (backache)

1. Cia.gov. 2022. Zimbabwe. [online] Available at: <<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/zimbabwe/>> [Accessed 15 March 2022].

2. Krugerpark.co.za. 2022. African Flame Lily - Flowers - Africa. [online] Available at: <[https://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa\\_flame\\_lily.html#:~:text=The%20Flame%20Lily%20is%20the,to%20then%20Rhodesia%20in%201947.>](https://www.krugerpark.co.za/africa_flame_lily.html#:~:text=The%20Flame%20Lily%20is%20the,to%20then%20Rhodesia%20in%201947.>)> [Accessed 15 March 2022].

3. [https://www.thepatriot.co.zw/old\\_posts/the-mystic-flame-lily-and-its-medicinal-qualities/](https://www.thepatriot.co.zw/old_posts/the-mystic-flame-lily-and-its-medicinal-qualities/);

4. [minorityrights.org/country/zimbabwe/](http://minorityrights.org/country/zimbabwe/); [pcz.co.za](http://pcz.co.za)

5. Maroyi, 2013

## Upcoming Events

- 30 March 2022 - AfCANN Hemp and Cannabis Symposium (Agric Collge, Lesotho)
- 1 April 2022 - AfCANN Hemp and Cannabis Symposium (CSIR Conference Centre, Pretoria, South Africa)
- 6 April 2022 - AfCANN Hemp and Cannabis Symposium (Harare Institute of Technology, Zimbabwe)
- All events will be hybrid and you can join using the link below
- To RSVP, send an email to [nano@pharmaconnect.co.za](mailto:nano@pharmaconnect.co.za)

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