

# Bush Cosmetics



## The magical qualities of African plants

Southern Africa is renowned for its botanical wealth. To appreciate the magnitude and diversity of this natural resource one need only look to the Cape Floral Kingdom, a UNESCO World Heritage Site covering only 78,000 square kilometres, 30 000 square miles, and featuring over 9,000 plant species, 7,000 of which can be found nowhere else in the world! Table Mountain alone has over 1,500 species of plants, more than the entire United Kingdom.

It comes as little surprise then that the indigenous peoples of southern Africa have been tapping into the natural healing and cosmetic qualities of African medicinal and aromatic plants for thousands of years.

## Kalahari Tsamma Melon

The Kalahari tsamma is native to the Kalahari region of Southern Africa and has been used for over 4 000 years as a natural moisturiser.

The San people (Bushman) also use the fruit pulp mixed with water as sunscreen.



The growing trend of wellness in the wilderness has opened doors for exciting activities which can be incorporated into groups travelling to the Southern African bush regions.

Guided Bush Walks offer an opportunity to connect with the African bush, learning about its fascinating fauna and flora. Participants can smell and taste wild herbs, learning about their traditional uses, and explore the smaller marvels of the bush, from the magnificent tapestry of a spider's web to the microscopic world of the dung beetle.

## Marula Tree

Like most fruits, marula can ferment to create alcohol. The story goes that wild animals would get drunk by eating fruit that had dropped from the tree and was fermenting on the ground – specifically popular under elephants. The story was so powerful that it inspired a liquor like – the famous "Amarula" cream (very tasty – similar to Bailey's).

Marula oil is traditionally used as a skin moisturiser, a shampoo for dry hair, a base for soap and to massage babies. It hydrates and smoothes skin and reduces redness.



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## African Wild Potato

The African Wild Potato is a powerful antioxidant reputed to have anti-ageing effects. It may also reverse tissue damage and soothe muscle aches.

## Elephant Dung

Elephant dung might not be the most obvious source of bush medicine, but there are a few fantastic uses of elephant dung out there.

Light up a bit of dried dung, and the smoke will keep mosquitoes away for the entire night.

Inhaling the smoke of the dung is a wonderful way to heal a headache, also dulling toothaches and limiting other pains. Bleeding noses and sinus problems are also known to subside from elephant dung smoke.

## Did you know?

Some common collective nouns for the following Southern African animals are:

- A memory of elephant
- A journey of giraffe (for moving animals)
- A tower of giraffe (when the giraffe are standing still)
- A whoop of gorillas
- A cackle of hyena
- A leap of leopards
- A prickle of porcupine
- A crash of rhino
- A dazzle of zebra

There are even collective nouns for some trees in Southern Africa

- A dance of leadwood
- A stillness of baobab



## The Toothbrush Tree

Salvadora persica is an evergreen shrub with characteristic long arching shoots and has many uses both medicinal and as fodder.

The stem is what makes this tree famous yielding the chewing sticks that contain an antibiotic that keeps your mouth clean and also prevents toothaches. It was also found to contain active compounds which reduce decay, gum disease and plaque.