

Newsletter

From The Editor

Denzil Phillips is in town, London that is. He suggests we meet on the Sunday afternoon. He flew in the day before from his retirement home in the islands. But Denzil Phillips doesn't really retire...he has reinvented himself and every time I meet him he tells me new stories of his adventures with plants;

where he studied (London), where he has lived (West Africa, among other places and for a long time), what projects he has worked on (sorghum for colours, shea butter and more lately Boswellia). He is a database of connections and he is generous in sharing them.

He tells me about his new interest and collaborations around African slave plants...these being medicines which the slaves smuggled with them on the perilous trip across the Atlantic. Presumably the slave traders were also plant medicines users and possible plant hunters and traders too.

So, today, there is a whole collection of plant species of African origin now naturalized in the Caribbean and Denzil works with other researchers on this. He also tells me about a recent documentary on using culinary and food plants of African origin in Africa, and how he hopes it will be one of many episodes.

We walk along the Thames river at Hammersmith and he tells me about the city and we talk about old connections and our work together on the #AAMPS AfHP.

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Editors Denzil Phillips (left) and Professor David Katerere in London, United Kingdom

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Newsletter

It has been slow going but it's picking up and the newsletter is really galvanizing the community of practice in medicinal plants. So this is how the ideas for this newsletter happened. Let's talk about myrrh, that mystical substance worth its weight in gold. We are pleased that it will be in the AAMPS newsletter. Also food, African food, so we meet Sipamandla, the girl from a village in dusty Eastern Cape who is taking her village foods to the city slickers in the fancy lanes and 'burbs. Last, talking legends, we talk to one...Trish Flaster. A leading light in the world where plants, plant use, culture and medicine / wellness meet, ethnobotany.

Enjoy. Be well.

David.

The Local Village



GMO free,vegan friendly sorghum flour used to make porridge,cookies ,cakes and bread

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Trish Flaster



USA born
Ethnobotanist and
advocate for quality
control and assurance
in the use of plant
medicines.

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Dating back to the birth of Jesus Christ in the Bible, myrrh has garnered value for its benefits as a fragrance, an embalming oil, even providing health benefits such as its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. Monograph authors Cica, Bartosz and Maik share their study on this versatile species in this month's issue.



Commiphora myrrha

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Meet the Monograph Authors



Maik Kleinwächter



Cica Vissiennon



Bartosz Lipowicz

Q: What Monograph are you working on?

We are the myrrh - **Commiphora myrrha** - team: Sue Canney Davison (University of Johannesburg, South Africa), Abdinasir Abdikadir (SoRPARI, Ethiopia), Maik Kleinwächter and Bartosz Lipowicz (both Repha GmbH – Biological Medication, Germany), as well as Cica Vissiennon (Leipzig University, Germany).

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

MK: When I was traveling for the first time to the town of Gode (Somali Region, Ethiopia), which is a famous location for the collection and trading of myrrh, a good friend told me that Gode is built near to the sun. Myself, as a German, can confirm this; it is incredible under which harsh conditions this species as well as its collectors are living and are able to survive. However, this also means that it may become a challenge to protect

and maintain this unique ecosystem, called the **Commiphora-Acacia dry forest**.

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

MK: Myrrh resin, like frankincense, displays a strong fascination to me, since it for thousands of years played a great role in the history of humankind. Since records began, the use of myrrh resin is documented for various spiritual, religious and medical purposes, and even the mixtures for embalming the Egyptian mummies contained it. What can I say, myrrh is simply the queen of medicinal plants.

CV: It indeed is fascinating that ancient physicians like Avicenna and Dioscorides have already praised myrrh resin for the medicinal properties we are still making use of today. It is a true pleasure to examine these more closely with today's means of medical research.

BL: In the bible, myrrh was one of three gifts brought to Jesus. Myrrh was considered valuable enough to account as a gift for the Son of God. You could argue that there is no other plant or plant material more valuable, so it is a true honor to be able to work with myrrh.

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

MK: Some of the traditional uses of myrrh are to treat inflammations in the mouth, and gastro-intestinal disorders. Yes, of course, I used pure myrrh resin and extracts of it, can recommend it to treat gum inflammations and travel sickness. It works very well.

BL: Due to the anti-inflammatory properties, I used a combinational herbal medicinal product containing myrrh against an inflammatory bowel disease.

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

MK: Currently, we are seeking to build up sustainable supply chains from the collecting areas to Germany; this encompasses direct trade relations as well as the strict application of Good Collection Practices and sustainable forest management.

CV: We have mostly been investigating the pharmacological properties of myrrh in relation to its use in gastrointestinal disorders like antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory activity by applying-

preclinical cell and tissue culture models.

BL: We investigated the phytochemical composition and anti-inflammatory properties of different myrrh extracts in vitro.

Q: What are your thoughts on AfHP?

MK: Very valuable initiative, since the proper use of medicinal plants and the related marketing deserves worldwide support.



Myrrh in its natural form, You cannot find better quality as at the origin, that is why we decided to go there, where the myrrh is growing. Copyright (MK)

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

I think that the focus of future developments must be put on the sustainable forest management and socioeconomic aspects. It is of high relevance for us all that we maintain the biological resource and make it possible to provide greater share of the value added to the pastoralist collectors.

Meet the Entrepreneur

Can you tell us about yourself and your background?

I was born in Lusikisiki in the Eastern Cape and studied community development and business in KZN. I'm passionate about food, equity and sustainability. I'm inspired by the African continent, its diverse cultures and its quest for social and economic unity and want to play a role in the implementation of free and fair trade across Africa.



Founder and Owner of Local Village foods, Sipamandla Manqele

Tell us about your business?

Local Village Foods sources indigenous African commodities and creates food product offerings for health- focused & socially- conscious consumers ,starting in South Africa , but with ambitions to reach the African diaspora in US & European markets. Our range includes ancient grains , superfoods, gluten free flours, pastas , legumes , snacks, and beverages.

What made you start the business?

I come from a rural town endowed with natural resources, yet it's not prosperous, and I discovered this was not unique to my hometown but many rural communities in Africa. My objective for Local Village Foods was to use entrepreneurship as a vehicle for sustainable development.

My university studies inspired me to think about sustainable development, and my interaction and deep connection with friends who were from other African regions challenged me to want to use indigenous foods as a vehicle to do that.

What sparked your interest in the products that you sell/services that you provide?



To the left: Whole tiger nuts extracted from Cyperus grass, native to Egypt.
Copyright : The Local Village

Our current product portfolio came about after exploring some African foods that I had not seen or eaten... this enabled me to appreciate the similarities that Africa has especially our foods and herbs. The other key thing was the fact that African indigenous ingredients are not easily available in the mainstream and we wanted to change that...

What problem(s) does your business solve?

- We want to ensure African indigenous ingredients are in the mainstream so that people who long for the foods they grew up eating can easily find them.
- We want to get as many small holder farmers to supplying us with these commodities so that we can drive economic activity in the rural communities.
- We provide a diet alternative for customers looking gluten free, vegan friendly products.



Which population group would particularly enjoy your products?

- Health-Conscious individuals.
- Individuals looking for diet alternatives such as gluten free, plant-based options and.
- African Diaspora looking for foods 'from home'.

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

The food industry is highly regulated and requires capital to comply with the regulation, which is not easily available in SA. We have however managed to partner with various stakeholders who have supported us greatly along this journey. Another challenge has been the difficulty for new entrants in the FMCG sector with limited capital; this has provided us with the opportunity to work on our positioning and differentiation in the market.

What do you need for your business to grow?

We need growth capital to invest in R&D, Marketing and Hiring key recourses to enable us to operate optimally.

Look into the future, what do you see?

I see us adding value to the lives of our customers by creating good and healthy foods and at the same time making a positive economic impact in the African continent and ensuring that African foods are featured on the global banquet table.



Green Snack Bar with amaranth and moringa and gluten free oats among other nutritious ingredients



Lastly, .What advice do you have for other entrepreneurs in Africa?

Start , pivot, start... make sure you keep going and value Collaboration.

Design Thinking Course

Are you an aspiring entrepreneur or innovator?

PharmaConnect-Africa in collaboration with Tshwane University of Technology and University Innovations Global present a **four-week Design thinking** course tailor made for entrepreneurs and innovators. This online course is now open for registration, email nano@pharmaconnect.co.za for more information.

Presented by:



Robert Geddes, UI-Global & AIC; Executive director of the Australian Institute of Commercialization (AIC), member of the Design Institute of Australia in the discipline of Industrial Design, (Anchor Trainer)



Prof David Katerere, TUT, Research Platform Chair, Pharmaceutical and Biotech Advancement in Africa at Tshwane University of Technology, mentor with The Innovation Hub company, a bioentrepreneur, author and researcher.

Learning outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you will have gained:

- A clear understanding of design thinking and the design thinking process;
- Quickly select the right ideas and do rapid prototyping;
- Understand design thinking application from international and local perspectives;
- Apply the various principles of design thinking to your business ideas;



Course fees

R4500 per delegate (\$ 315 USD)

Course material and/or other materials are included in the fee.

Course fees must be paid in full 3 days prior to course start dates. Proof of payment can be submitted to nano@pharmaconnect.co.za

Registration and enquiries can be sent to nano@pharmaconnect.co.za

Connect Conversations

This month's connect conversation was a part of the Cannabis Journeys series, in which medical cannabis is discussed at great lengths. In a recent Herbal Pharma Talk hosted by AAMPS, we look at some lessons on the importance of traceability in the Extraction process of herbal cannabis presented by Lorenz Minks.

Lorenz Minks is a representative of Cannavigia, a software company that digitizes standards, processes and develops regulations to improve transparency in the medical cannabis supply chain.

In this connect conversation, he discussed the importance of having traceable medicinal herbs and their formulations.

[Follow the conversation...](#)

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Meet The Legends



Trish Flaster
Botanical Liaisons, LLC Executive Director
Boulder, Colorado, United States

Trish Flaster is a past Adjunct Faculty member at Bastyr University and a Research Associate of the Missouri Botanical Garden. She is an Editorial board member of Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing, scientific board member for American Botanical Council, United Plant Savers, and American Herbal Pharmacopeia. Trish is skilled in botanical and chemical experience, she also consults in the Cannabis Industry on testing, supply chain, quality and research.

She is Chair of the Global review Board for PFC standards of American For Safe Access, a medical marijuana lobby group. Trish worked for Shaman Pharmaceuticals as their Botanical Sourcing Manager where she expanded their sustainable international agricultural programs, and developed their in-house botanical program. Prior to this she was the Botanist for Celestial Seasonings where she developed new ingredient sourcing, developed several quality control analytical test procedures, among other things.

This legend in ethnobotany is in conversation with Prof David Katerere.

To watch the interview, double click the image below:



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