

REVIEW & C AFRICA

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PHARMACEUTICAL & COSMETIC REVIEW AFRICA

*Improving
skin health
by promoting
indigenous
plants and
traditional
knowledge
in Africa*



BOTANICA
— NATURAL PRODUCTS —

Natural is a necessity for African consumers

New measures to **step up quality control**

Touring *packaging trends* on the continent



Made in Africa

A producer of speciality plant extracts for personal care applications, Botanica Natural Products (Botanica) is ideally positioned to assist brand owners in meeting the needs of African consumers for more diverse and high quality, natural and organic products.

Photography by Morgan Cardiff

Concerns ranging from holistic health and the environment to sustainability and social responsibility are not exclusive to the Western world. African consumers are also becoming more discerning in their skin, hair and personal care demands, seeking products that celebrate their culture, heritage and the botanical richness of Africa.

Enter Botanica, a South African-based, family owned social enterprise established in 2009 with the focus on developing a variety of interesting African ingredient concepts. Located in rural Limpopo, the company offers both organically certified and conventionally produced plant extracts for use in a variety of personal care applications.

'We aim to produce cosmetic ingredients that are effective, affordable

▲ **ABOVE**
Bulbine frutescens plants are cultivated on a 10 hectare plantation near Botanica's production facility

▼ **BELOW**
Botanica's *Bulbine frutescens* is cold pressed in its HACCP compliant factory in Limpopo

and organically certified. Our mission is to improve skin health by promoting the use of indigenous plants and traditional knowledge from Africa,' says Will Coetsee, managing director at Botanica. 'Our agricultural processes used to cultivate 10 hectares of *Bulbine* and *Moringa* plants are Ecocert approved. We also distribute a range of actives for cosmetics, throughout Africa and further abroad.'

Botanica's innovative plant extracts are marketed and supplied to personal care manufacturers in Africa, Europe, the US and Asia. 'At least 90 percent of our sales are exports,' he adds. 'Currently, our largest customer base is located in West and Central Africa, with our market share growing steadily in East Africa.'

IMPROVING SKIN'S APPEARANCE

Africa's search for a safe and relevant alternative to traditional skin lightening ingredients is finally over with the launch of Botanicalite. This

active, which has been developed and tested in South Africa, is suitable for use in even tone skin care products.

The active is formulated using a targeted extract from the leaves of the Carob tree, *Ceratonia siliqua*. By inhibiting the production of melanin in a safe manner, Botanicalite has been proven to address severe pigmentation issues in African consumers. It is naturally plant derived, irritant-free and cost-effective. The efficacy of three percent Botanicalite in a cosmetic formulation to inhibit tyrosinase has been verified in South Africa during independent *in vitro* and *in vivo* tests. *In vivo* protocol saw the Botanicalite formulation tested against three commercially available skin lightening actives, namely Arbutin, Kojic acid and Niacinamide. Results showed even toning and brightening of the skin after 28 days of use of Botanicalite and, when used in conjunction with Niacinamide, positive results were seen after only 14 days.



◀ Leaves from the organic *Bulbine frutescens* plants are washed before processing



SHARING KNOWLEDGE FOR INNOVATION

BOTANICA IS HOSTING its second technical conference at its production facility in Limpopo, South Africa, on 6 and 7 September. The focus of the conference will be natural active ingredients produced and distributed by the company, which are used in skin and hair care products. About 20 participants from Europe, West Africa and South Africa are expected to attend to gain access to expert scientific information and presentations on its range of natural active ingredients and applications. Participants will also tour the company's production facility and its cultivation fields.

LEAF JUICE FOR COSMETICS

The company's flagship offering, BotanicaTimola is a cosmetic raw material extracted from the South African indigenous plant, *Bulbine frutescens*. It has a long history of traditional use in South Africa as an effective remedy for various topical skin, scalp and hair conditions. This is as a result of its healing, soothing and moisturising qualities.

'This unique product has shown to be highly effective as an active ingredient in skin and hair care formulations, even when used at a small percentage,' says Michel Colson, technical director and co-founder of Botanica. 'It is available in two grades. BotanicaTimola is the more refined, processed grade, which is marketed as an active, while BotanicaSap is designed as its cost-effective alternative and aimed at the soap industry.'

Through the commercialisation process, the company developed and patented the extraction technique of the water-based BotanicaTimola. This is to ensure the product can be marketed to the cosmetics industry as an active ingredient.

SELECTION OF AFRICAN OILS

Moringa oil, widely recognised and highly prized for its antioxidant and skin rejuvenating qualities, has been naturalised in Africa for over 500 years. Botanica offers an organically certified variation of this oil, which is extracted from the



▲ All specification tests on BotanicaTimola are done in house and each batch is issued with a certificate of analysis

seeds of the *Moringa oleifera* trees on its 10ha plantation in Limpopo.

'Our oil is high in antioxidants, has nourishing and emollient properties and can be used in a number of cosmetic applications including creams, lotions, liquid soaps, liquid foundations, massage oils, leave-in conditioners, relaxers, hair dyes and other applications,' Colson explains. 'Moringa oil also moisturises dry skin, improves the appearance of wrinkles, minimises age spots as a result of acne or hyperpigmentation and rejuvenates ageing skin.'

The company also sells Marula oil for use in cosmetics which is extracted from the kernels of the fruit of the marula tree, *Sclerocarya birrea*. The tree is indigenous to southern Africa and parts of East and West Africa.

Botanica's Marula oil is a filtered, high quality cosmetic grade; it is unrefined to ensure its active ingredients and the antioxidant fractions are preserved. Colson

adds: 'Our oil is microbiologically controlled and has full traceability. The powerful antioxidants and high levels of omega fatty acids found in good quality, unadulterated Marula oil are known to restructure and regenerate skin cells, while protecting it against the damaging effects of the environment. When used in topical applications, the oil has been shown to improve skin hydration, smoothness and reduce redness. It is suitable for all skin types, particularly reactive and sensitive skin.'

A COMPANY WITH A CONSCIENCE

As an ethical and socially responsible business, Botanica operates according to the highest ethical standards and ensures that ethical practices exist throughout its value chain, from production to end-use. The company's organic production methods also ensure the sustainable preservation of biodiversity. As a result of these and other ongoing efforts, Botanica has won several awards. These include the Indigenous Plant Use Forum's Best Indigenous plant product for 2014; the SEED Initiative's Social Enterprise and Accelerator Awards; and an AfricaGrowth Institute Business Innovation Award. •

“BOTANICALITE HAS BEEN PROVEN TO ADDRESS SEVERE PIGMENTATION ISSUES IN AFRICAN CONSUMERS”

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