

Rooibos potentially protects heart cells against excessive growth & cell death

Rooibos studies have shown its potential to protect the heart, but much is still unknown. Also, rooibos has previously never been tested in a model where heart cells are exposed to both cell death and excessive growth simultaneously.

Chronic high blood pressure, heart attack or heart failure, can cause heart cells to either undergo cell death or excessive growth. These weaken the heart and reduce its function. Expensive pharmaceutical drugs help, but often have toxic side effects. Studies in the last decade have shown that herbal or medicinal plants may be a better natural and affordable alternative.

Under the guidance of Dr. Gerald Maarman at Stellenbosch University, Pamela Sithelo investigated the ability of rooibos to protect heart cells, against the toxic effects of a molecule called angiotensin-II,

the same molecule involved in the development of high blood pressure. Heart cells were exposed to high levels of Ang-II to induce excessive growth and death, after which cell viability was measured.

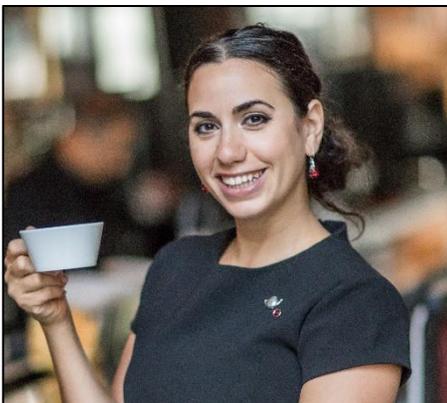
This study is the first of its kind demonstrating that rooibos prevents angiotensin-II (Ang-II) from causing excessive growth and death of heart cells. It was discovered that rooibos achieved this effect by protecting the energy producing structures in heart cells, maintaining normal cell size, and reducing cell death through the protective effects mediated via important heart-cell proteins.



Pamela Sithelo

For the first time, it has been shown that rooibos can protect heart cells in such harsh conditions. This study is a game-changer for the heart research field, as it suggests that rooibos may be an affordable, natural approach to help in the fight against heart disease.

Rooibos at the Baccarat



Gabrielle Jammal, a tea sommelier for the Baccarat Hotel in New York, found Rooibos as the most popular tea that she sells at the hotel. Rooibos tea is most often enjoyed by itself, but Gabrielle loves pairing it

with white and nutty cheese, or even chocolate, as a sophisticated take on dessert.

Guests often choose crème caramel Rooibos as a dessert tea for its sweet, creamy and totally thanks to a smooth-tastin caffeine-free rooibos. Another favourite of guests is turmeric chai Rooibos for its soothing nature accompanied with aromatic cardamom & warming ginger.

The tea also lends itself well as a flavouring for all types of

afternoon tea treats from éclairs to sorbets, honouring the legendary Baccarat crystal high tea service's heritage of creating culinary masterpieces.



Rooibos boom in Japan

The Japanese noodle company and restaurant chain IPPU-DO began offering rooibos tea for free in 2001 and today more than 130 of its restaurants across Japan do the same. Instead of serving water with their pork bone broth, which is a traditional favourite, they switched to Rooibos tea instead as they felt its clean taste complemented the dish better.



Over the years, Rooibos has carved a niche for itself as a refreshing health tea, which has resonated with the health-conscious Japanese market. The Japanese are spoilt for choice. They have more than 26 different types of tea to choose from, which range from their traditional green tea varieties to jasmine and barley tea or 'mugicha' as it is known among the locals, so Rooibos has been up against stiff competition.

Among the youth, our homegrown brew is also gaining traction as a ready-to-drink or frozen beverage, middle-aged women consume it specifically for its beauty and age-defying benefits, while the elderly drink it as a sleep elixir. The majority by far still favours the red, fermented Rooibos, but there is a growing interest in unfermented, green Rooibos too.

The Japanese only recently took notice of the risks associated with drinking too much caffeine. This has helped to increase Rooibos' appeal since it is caffeine-free. The general trend toward natural health and wellness products continue to exert a growing influence on purchasing patterns in Japan as more of Rooibos' health benefits become known in the East.

Rooibos Smoked Snoek



Ingredients:

The leaves from 10 rooibos tea bags
1 cup rice
1 cup brown sugar
Salt and pepper
800g fresh snoek, butterflied
1 lemon, sliced
4 fresh rosemary sprigs
4 fresh thyme sprigs
Salt and pepper
2 Tbs olive oil
Serve with apricot reduction and a green salad

Place the rooibos, rice and sugar into a roasting tray, then place into the braai, cover and heat until it starts smoking.

Place the lemon, rosemary and thyme into the cavity of the snoek and season with salt and pepper. Rub the outside of the fish with olive oil, then place the fish into the smokey braai (alongside the tray).

Close the lid and leave to smoke for 15 minutes or until the fish is cooked through.