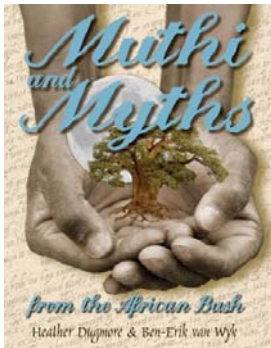


## MUTHI AND MYTHS FROM THE AFRICAN BUSH



*Muthi & Myths from the African Bush* (available in English and Afrikaans) contains fifty-two compelling tales that will lead you on a journey of discovery of the African continent. No ordinary journey, it tracks the ancient grail of traditional African medicine or *muthi*. Along the way you will discover more about yourself and about life as a human being. Several of the stories are about plants found in the Karoo.

The journey takes one year, with one story for each of the fifty-two weeks. Many of the stories, inherited through Africa's oral tradition, are between the book's covers, committed to paper for the very first time.

*Muthi & Myths from the African Bush* is co-authored by writer Heather Dugmore and botanist Ben-Erik van Wyk.

*Heather Dugmore discusses the background to the book:*

Africa is widely regarded as the ancestral tree of humankind and the cradle of the first signs of creative thinking and culture. One of the earliest manifestations of creative thinking is the medicinal plant grail.

It took millennia of trial and error by the continent's earliest medical practitioners, notably the Khoisan, to work out which plant was best suited to the treatment of any number of mind, body and spirit diseases.

They achieved this because traditional people are highly observant of their surroundings and would draw many clues from nature. The colour or appearance of a plant, for example, often indicates its medicinal application. Hence the electric red African flame tree is used to treat inflamed 'red hot' wounds.

In this book we have brought to light the deep history of a sample of the thousands of indigenous medicinal plants of Africa. The focus is towards Southern Africa because this region is a hotspot of cultural and botanical diversity. It is home to the world's most ancient culture – the Khoisan people. It also contains ten percent of the world's plants on less than two percent of the earth's total land surface. With that, we invite you to join us round an African fire as we begin the grail.

*Note: Muthi & Myths is published by Briza and is now available in bookstores countrywide or through [kalahari.net](http://kalahari.net) or directly from Briza [www.briza.co.za](http://www.briza.co.za) or phone Briza on 012 329 3896  
Retail price: R199.00*

About the authors:

## BEN-ERIK VAN WYK

Ben-Erik van Wyk is Professor of Botany at the University of Johannesburg. He specialises in plant taxonomy (the naming and classification of plants) as well as ethnobotany and medicinal plants.

This has taken him to remote corners, where he documents precious indigenous plant knowledge to ensure that it will not be lost to future generations. Many of the stories recorded in this book came to light during his interactions with healers, shepherds, holy men and botanists over the past two decades.

After studying professional forestry and nature conservation at Stellenbosch University (1976-1979), Van Wyk completed his M.Sc. degree in Botany at Stellenbosch University (1983) and a Ph.D. at the University of Cape Town (1989).

As a scientific author, he is credited with over 200 research papers in scientific journals, over 300 lectures at national and international conferences and 11 books. These include, 'Medicinal Plants of South Africa' (1997), 'People's Plants: a guide to useful plants of southern Africa' (2000), and two international co-productions 'Medicinal Plants of the World' (2004) and 'Food Plants of the World' (2005).

## HEATHER DUGMORE

Born and raised in Johannesburg, journalist and author Heather Dugmore graduated with a journalism degree from Rhodes University in the Eastern Cape. She now lives in the Karoo, in the Renosterberg mountains between Middelburg and Graaff-Reinet.

"We must take root and grow or die where we stand," her many times great grandfather, Henry Hare Dugmore, who lived in the Eastern Cape in the 1800s, once wrote. She took his advice and took root and stock of the continent's extraordinary medicinal plant heritage.

In collaboration with Van Wyk, she has written a considerable amount about indigenous African plant cures or *muthi*, including a monthly column called 'Bush Medicine' in Country Life magazine and a bi-monthly column called 'Bush Lore' for the Endangered Wildlife Trust magazine, Vision.

Dugmore has spent much time with traditional healers (*sangomas*) and traditional doctors (*inyangas*), and her encounters played a guiding role in one of her previous books, 'Big Cats of Mala Mala', which includes an exploration of lions, leopards and cheetah in African mythology.

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