



NSSA CAPE BRANCH MINI-SYMPOSIUM

Spilling the tea on the health and nutritional benefits of South African herbal tea

The Cape branch of the Nutrition Society of South Africa (NSSA) together with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) hosted a mini symposium on International Tea day, the 21st of May 2024. The symposium focused on the latest research on the health and nutritional benefits of South African herbal tea. The symposium took place in Stellenbosch at the ARC's Infruitec-Nietvoorbij Olive Grove venue. The event was CPD accredited, free or

charge and was the first in-person event for the Cape branch in four years. Research experts from various fields gathered to "spill the tea" and share insights on honeybush and rooibos teas, drawing an audience of diverse researchers.

The academic programme kicked off with a warm welcome from NSSA Cape branch chair Malory Jumat followed by a short introduction to the NSSA including the society's background, aims, membership benefits, and instructions to the NSSA website for more information. Dr Cecilia Bester from the ARC and honorary member of the South African Honeybush Tea Association (SAHTA) then informed the participants of the rich history of honeybush tea and its industry, captivating the audience with tales of its unique heritage, production, exportation, and sales statistics. Dr Bester mentioned that though honeybush is not as widely consumed or studied compared to rooibos, SAHTA, along with government and research support is committed to making a success of the industry.

Prof. Dalene De Beer from the ARC then presented on the nutritional value and bioactive compounds found in both rooibos and honeybush teas. Her session underscored the significant health benefits these teas offer. Rooibos tea has undergone numerous in vitro and in vivo animal model studies and recently also human studies, which suggests that rooibos tea consumption improve lipid profiles, boost antioxidant status, and lower blood glucose levels in humans. PhD candidate Jade Tobin (ARC and Stellenbosch University Department of Food Science) introduced an innovative approach using nanocolloidal lipid carriers to enhance the delivery of polyphenolic-rich honeybush extracts in ready-to-drink beverages.

The symposium also featured a background on the unique tastes associated with honeybush tea followed by a tea tasting session led by horticulturalist, Bongwiwe Sokwaliwa from the ARC, allowing attendees to experience firsthand, the distinctive flavours of two different honeybush varieties. For many participants, it was their first tea tasting experience. Bongwiwe provided a lexicon and aroma wheel to guide them in identifying the unique aromas and tastes of each honeybush tea. Attendees described the honeybush tea as "fruity," with notes of "raisin" and "apricot". This special addition to the symposium left a lasting impression, with the memory of the experience lingering well after the tastes had faded. Thereafter, PhD candidate Catherine Smit from the Stellenbosch University Department of Physiological Sciences discussed the promising role of rooibos tea extract in combating neuronal toxicity linked to neurodegenerative diseases, highlighting its potential antioxidative benefits. Dr Mariska Lilly from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) concluded the academic part of the event with a presentation on the anti-inflammatory effects of rooibos and



NSSA Cape Branch committee members and speakers at the mini-symposium (from left – Dr Averalda van Graan, Chaterine Smit, Dr Mariska Lilly, Dr Cecilia Bester, Bongwiwe Sokwaliwa, Jade Tobin, Prof Dalene De Beer, Valmary van Breda and Malory Jumat



Bongwiwe Sokwaliwa guiding attendees through the honeybush tea tasting



honeybush teas on gut health, emphasizing their importance in digestive wellness.

The event wrapped up with a vote of thanks from NSSA Cape branch treasurer and secretary, Valmary van Breda. She also extended an invitation to attendees to enjoy refreshments in the aptly named Honeybush venue, providing an excellent networking opportunity to further discuss the insights shared. Feedback from the participants stated that it was “good to put a face

with the well-known names” in this research area and that the event was “very informative and interesting”. Overall, the event was greatly successful, shedding light on the impressive health benefits of South African herbal teas and sparking interest in their continued study and use.

Malory Jumat
NSSA Cape Branch Chair



NUTRITION SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA CAPE BRANCH MINI SYMPOSIUM



Bonus Sensory Activity : Honeybush Tea Tasting



The speakers



DR CECILIA BESTER

Honeybush: History of this unique tea and its industry



PROF DALENE DE BEER

Nutritional value and bioactives of rooibos and honeybush teas



BONGWE SOKWALIWA

Taste the uniqueness of honeybush



CATHERINE SMIT

The role of rooibos tea extract on the antioxidative capacity in neuronal toxicity associated with neurodegenerative disease



JADE TOBIN

Use of nanocolloidal lipid carriers as a delivery system for a polyphenolic-rich honeybush extract in a ready-to-drink beverage



DR MARISKA LILLY

Teatime for Your Tummy: Unveiling the Anti-inflammatory Power of Rooibos and Honeybush on Gut Health

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER YOUR ATTENDANCE



EVENT DETAILS

When: Tuesday, 21 May 2024 | 10:00 am - 13:00 pm

Where: Agricultural Research Council Nietvoorbij, Corner of Helshoogte Road and the R44, Stellenbosch Olive Grove Venue

Cost: Free of charge

CPD Accreditation: Earn 3 CPD points for attendance

Light refreshments will be served post event