

# **A Review of the Bioactivity of South African Herbal Teas: Rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*) and Honeybush (*Cyclopia intermedia*)**

## **abstract**

Rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*) and honeybush (*Cyclopia intermedia*) are popular tisanes in their native South Africa and have a growing worldwide market. Both herbal teas are used traditionally for medicinal purposes and are rich in polyphenols with rooibos a rare source of the dietary dihydrochalcones, aspalathin and nothofagin.

The principal polyphenols in honeybush include the xanthone mangiferin and the flavonones hesperitin and isokuranetin. Despite their divergent phytochemical and nutrient compositions, rooibos and honeybush share potent antioxidant and antimutagenic activities *in vitro*. Animal model studies indicate both herbal teas possess potent antioxidant, immune-modulating and chemopreventive actions. However, human studies of rooibos are limited and of honeybush are absent. No adverse effects of rooibos or honeybush consumption as tisanes have been reported.