AFRICA’S NATURAL RELIEF FOR Colds, FLU AND RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS

PELAGRONIUM
SIDOIDES

Pela Power™
EXTRACT

afrigetics
BOTANICALS
THE AFRICAN HERBS COMPANY
PRECIOUS PELARGONIUM

Africa’s natural relief for colds, flu and respiratory tract infections.
Africa’s natural relief for colds, flu and respiratory tract infections is a surprisingly rough-looking plant with a dainty flower.

Harvested in the wild mountains of the Eastern Cape of South Africa and Lesotho where they grow naturally, Pelargonium has been used by the region’s indigenous people for generations and has been proven to reduce the duration and severity of colds and flu, particularly those related to respiratory tract infections.

Also known as Umckaloabo or African geranium, Pelargonium is natural and safe and is therefore an ideal medicinal ingredient for children’s cough mixtures and airway preparations such as medicinal vapes. It has approval from the European Commission which deems it safe to use as a food supplement and herbal medicine.

Buying Pelargonium from Afrigetics is an investment in the people of Africa. It is also an assurance that the original, authentic root is harvested responsibly, respectfully and sustainably, and is processed naturally to make the most of the inherent medicinal properties.
Steve Hurt is the founder and director of Afrigetics Botanicals. His formal studies include an undergraduate degree in Environmental Science, postgraduate studies in Local Economic Development and informal studies in African pharmacology. “Pelargonium has the potential to become the next best thing in natural respiratory remedies. Its proven abilities to reduce the duration and severity of colds and flu means almost everyone can benefit from it. In a modern world where flu viruses are becoming stronger and respiratory infections seem increasingly prevalent, Pelargonium can offer safe relief,” says Steve.
From the people who harvest to those processing, packaging and marketing in the Garden Route of the Western Cape, the plant and its properties are handled with love and care, and respect for its heritage and medicinal value.
FLOWERS IN THE MOUNTAIN

The Pelargonium story begins with tribal women who journey on foot into the mountains to harvest the roots of this extraordinary medicinal plant that grows in the grasslands tempered by fire and ice.

They take only what they need, leaving the plant to recover and regenerate for the generations to come.

In addition to cash payment the women receive on delivery, the communities also benefit through a profit share agreement paid into a trust, which is used for the upliftment of their villages through community projects and infrastructure provision. An estimated 350 rural families benefit from the Pelargonium root harvest.
The roots find their way to our joint venture business partner, Kersten Paulsen and his team in Knysna in the Garden Route where they are hand-washed, sun and thermal dried and cut and milled into a top quality natural raw product ready for use in a wide range of medicinal applications. Passionate about Southern Africa’s natural heritage and the medicinal benefits of its plants, Kersten has been in the medicinal plant trade for nearly two decades. His expertise extend to all aspects of the trade from harvest to distribution and has through the years developed the best products using the best practices, incorporating the interests of all people and entities involved.
Afrigetics is a leading exporter of Southern African medicinal plant products to the international wellness and pharmaceutical industries, which includes bulk supply of raw material, extracts and finished products.

Respecting and preserving the culture and intellectual property of Pelargonium’s people, Afrigetics Botanicals completes the circle: bringing the authentic, quality product to the wholesale user yet ensuring the plant’s community continue to benefit.

In 2012, Steve Hurt was voted business man of the year as nominated by the George Business Chamber.

Afrigetics CC is currently a finalist in the 2017 PERA Business Awards, Western Cape.
Pelargonium sidoides is a small and humble shrub that grows abundantly in the sun warmed, stony soil of the South African Eastern Cape and Lesotho grasslands. Known locally by its common name, African geranium, it can be found nestled beneath tall grasses and aromatic floral neighbours on coastal slopes. The small indigenous herb has soft, velvety textured grey-green leaves and dark magenta coloured flowers. This insignificant looking plant however contains a treasure trove of medicinal compounds and has been part of local healing practices for millennia. Pelargonium is an example of nature’s immune boosting and pathogen fighting power. It is celebrated as Afrigetics Botanicals’ flagship commercial herb.
The original hunter gatherer inhabitants of Southern Africa, the Koi-san, knew of this herb and used it for the treatment of diarrhoea and dysentery. Knowledge of the small bush later fell into the hands of the Cape Dutch colonists, who christened it Rooirabas, perhaps for its red tinted tuberous roots. Herdsmen dubbed the plant “Kalverbossie”, meaning ‘calf bush’ and used the woody twisted underground rhizomes to treat stomach complaints in their animals. It served in Cape herbal medicine as a tonic for weakness, fatigue and in the treatment of gonorrhoea.

The ethnobotanical potential of African Geranium was brought to Europe in the early 1900’s after a young explorer called Charles Henry Stevens was treated in South Africa for his pulmonary tuberculosis by a local healer. A bitter tea made of the roots of the plant drove his illness into remission. He then used the Umckaloabo herb to develop “Stevens’ Consumption Cure” and marketed it in England. It wasn’t until the 1970’s, well after Steven’s death that the plant ingredient of his remedy was identified as Pelargonium.

In the 1990’s, a German drug manufacturer, Schwabe Pharmaceuticals, developed a highly popular herbal cough syrup called “Umckaloabo” containing liquid extract Eps7630. In 2006, this company sold more than EUR80 million of this pelargonium based product. The drug is listed in the European and African Pharmacopoeia and has European approval as a herbal medicine and food supplement. Schwabe’s withdrawal of the patents for this medicine in 2010 has allowed other pharmaceutical companies to follow suit and explore the potential of this natural remedy.
SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

Afrigetics Botanicals recognises the immense value in South Africa’s indigenous medicinal plants and works in partnership with KP Botanicals to provide a sustainable long-term supply of wild harvested Pelargonium. Currently, P. sidoides is listed on the Red Data List of South Africa’s species as of ‘least concern’, they state that less than 5% of the local population is being impacted by harvesting (Red Data List, 2017). Even so, strict controls by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs require collectors to obtain a bioprospecting licence. Within the constraints of the Biodiversity Act, KP Botanicals identifies areas of wild cultivation and trains harvesters in rural areas to identify and collect the Pelargonium. Care is taken to prevent overharvesting of the underground tuberous roots and so to provide a supply for posterity, protect the herb from extinction and to provide an ongoing livelihood for local collectors. Many of the collectors subcontracted by KP Botanicals are elderly members in their communities with rich traditional knowledge of indigenous plants. Harvesters actively propagate the plant material as it is collected, by breaking off aerial shoots and replanting the cuttings. They leave the deeper, more mature roots in the soil, to allow for rapid regrowth after harvesting. In addition to supplementing their income, and under the stipulations of the Biodiversity Act, local collectors and land owners profit from a benefit sharing agreement where a rand value of their harvest is paid into a government controlled ‘Bioprospecting Trust Fund’ for distribution within the community.

Afrigetics Botanicals recognises that despite its best efforts, currently well managed wild stocks may be subject to depletion in the future and are actively working with the University of Stellenbosch towards refining a cultivation system for P. sidoides. Plant breeding practices will be used to identify cultivars with the highest levels of active ingredients and grow these on specialized farms in the Eden District using ecological cultivation methods.

With this aim in mind, our partners have entered into a benefit sharing agreement with the indigenous communities of Southern Africa who harvest our herbs through a network of 350 families. Furthermore, as licensed collaborators of a bio-prospectors permit, we are poised to continue unlocking the potential of Africa’s Green Gold, for many years to come.
Pelargonium acts by preventing bacteria from sticking to the cells lining the respiratory system and by stimulating white blood cells to attack and destroy these invading bacteria. The chemicals contained in this medicine also help to support the immune system by producing specific proteins, called defensins, to protect cells from invasion. The antiviral properties of P. sidoides lies in its ability to stimulate the body’s cells to produce interferon, a chemical that ‘interferes’ with virus replication. Its antibacterial effect is attributed to chemicals in the extract causing the tiny hair-like projections which line our respiratory tract, called cilia, to beat faster and to expel mucous. In addition, chemicals found in the plant have a mucolytic effect, helping to dissolve thick mucus in the airways.

There is no cure for the common cold, since it is spread by a virus, but Pelargonium has been proven to aid healing. This herbal medicine has been shown to be safe and effective and may form an important alternative to antibiotics.
Many pharmaceutical companies use ethanol to extract the active ingredients from the pelargonium root. These extracts have proven effective for the treatment of respiratory tract infections including bronchitis, tonsillitis, sinusitis and the common cold. Clinical trials have shown the medicine to reduce both the duration and severity of these illnesses. One such preparation, Eps7630, prepared by Schwabe Pharmaceuticals has been the subject of over 20 clinical studies, involving 9000 people.

Pelargonium’s success as a cold and flu buster is unsurprising as over half of general practitioner’s visits involve patients complaining of upper respiratory tract infections. Adults can suffer from as many as four colds annually and young children get up to 12 times per year. It is considered to be the single largest cause of work and school related absenteeism. Antibiotics are generally considered to be ineffective for most cases of colds and flu, yet treatment is clearly needed.

The dried rhizomes of P. sidoides contain a host of chemical compounds. Among these are polyphenols including gallic acids. Polyphenols are a group of plant chemicals which give foods a bitter taste, represent potent plant defence chemicals and often act as powerful antioxidants. Root extracts are rich in coumarins, including a unique phytochemical called ‘umckalin’. In addition, the remedy contains powerful flavonoids including quercetin, catechin and gallocatechin. These plant nutrients are responsible for vivid colour in fruit and vegetables and have anti-inflammatory and immune boosting properties.
Acute, self-limited viral infection causing upper respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, etc.)

Colds

Sudden, forceful expulsion of air from the lungs to clear material from the airways and protect the lungs from particles that have been inhaled.

Coughs

Type I reactions underlie atopic disorders, developing < 1 h after exposure to antigen.

Allergic Asthma

Inflammation of the sinuses, most commonly caused by viruses or allergies.

Sinusitis

Inflammation of the nasal mucous membrane.

Rhinitis

Inflammation of the pharynx.

Laryngitis

Inflammation of the voice box.

Pharyngitis

Sore throat is pain in the posterior pharynx that occurs with or without swallowing.

Pneumonia

Acute inflammation of the lungs caused by infection.

Treatable Conditions
Three-Way Effect

Pelargonium has been shown to have a three-way effect

**Antibacterial**

The Pelargonium sidoides extract prevents bacteria from attaching to cells in mucous membranes.\(^1\)

Pelargonium sidoides extracts inhibit the adherence of bacteria such as *Streptococcus pyogenes* and *Helicobacter pylori* to epithelial cells in vitro.

Furthermore, ciliated cells isolated from the nasal epithelium enhanced their ciliary beat frequency in the presence of these extracts, which should allow a better removal of excess mucous and bacteria.

**Antiviral**

Similarly, Pelargonium sidoides prevents viruses from attaching to the mucous membrane cells and stimulates the body’s immune system in such a way that both bacteria and viruses are prevented from multiplying.\(^1\)

In vitro, the extracts show efficacy against cellular infections with influenza virus, HSV, EMCV, RSV, coronavirus, parainfluenza virus, and coxsackie virus, and this appears to be mainly mediated indirectly by inhibition of virus attachment and spreading.

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**Expectorant**

The extract acts as an expectorant, allowing the body to expel contaminated mucous, making conditions less suitable for the multiplication of the bacteria and viruses – can only find animal data.

The three-way effect attacks the acute infection at its root, the stabilisation of the immune system prevents a re-infection and the vicious circle of infection, a short recovery phase and new infection is broken.
Innovation in Product Development

Pela-Power™ is our standardised dry powder extract of Pelargonium sidoides (Umckaloabo). Its active ingredient, umckalin, has a long history of efficacy in the treatment of colds and flu, especially for bronchial related ailments. Pela-Power™ contains more than three times the active ingredient content of dried pelargonium roots: standardised for Umckalin 300ppm. Pela-Power™ is suitable for further processing into liquid extracts or for capsules and tablets.

Through research and innovation we strive to take our wild harvested raw materials and transform them into innovative products for the global wellness industry. Our nutraceutical inventions include medical devices, ointments, processed and packaged foods, capsules and formulations.

We also work in partnership with other research institutions such as the CSIR to commercialise their research into African herbs and foods.
Licensing & Quality Control

Our raw materials are tested for active ingredients, steam-sterilised on request and, undergo stringent quality control testing in some of South Africa’s most advanced laboratories (all of which are SANAS and ISO accredited). This ensures our produce meets the highest standards, according to the WHO (1988) regulations, as laid out in the African Herbal Pharmacopoeia (2010), and conform to the international standards of botanical identification (HPLC). In addition, we are committed to abiding by the international standards set out in ISO 22000 (which includes HACCP protocols), and have entered into an agreement to have ascertained this certification within 2018.

For better service delivery, our produce is expertly packaged and palletised to withstand the toughest road, air and sea voyages—dutifully arriving at their global destinations in prime condition. We offer the following optional quality control data upon request: allergen statement, source questionnaire, source – Halal, vegan and vegetarian specific, method of analysis, flow diagram, residual solvent, GRAS statement, material safety data sheet, specifications sheet and banned substance letter.
In striving to continually improve our services we have now gone the extra mile to ensure that our palletization is truly world class. Our company offers packaging solutions that will withstand the toughest journeys by road, air or sea. Better packaging of your goods means fewer troubles further down the line by reducing the exposure to moisture (especially on sea cargo), damage by poor third party handling and general accidents that can occur during transit. Speak to us about your packaging requirements and we will listen to your every need.

Afrigetics Botanicals is export ready. Since June 2008 we have successfully delivered over 900 consignments by air, sea and courier to North America (USA, Canada), South America (Brazil, Argentina), West Europe (Germany, France, Italy, UK), Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Russia), Asia (China, Korea) and the Middle East (Iran). Our logistics training is compliant with INCOTERMS 2010 and we have substantial experience in all aspects pertaining to the export process - which is faithfully carried out by VDM Cargo Solutions.

**LOGISTICS**
- International sea and air freight forwarding
- Customs clearing
- Warehousing (bonded and duty paid)
- Cartage (deliveries)
- Marine and airfreight insurance
Franco van der Merwe, owner of VDM Cargo Solutions started his career at Customs in 1991 as auditor in the Excise department followed by a stint as a Customs import inspector before entering the private sector.

Over the past 27 years he has gained valuable experience in all aspects of imports and exports, from framing entries to heading up operations for a major clearing and forwarding house in South Africa.

His passion for the industry and his clients ultimately led him to start VDM Cargo Solutions.

Through his vast experience and impressive network of dynamic industry partners, he has a clear understanding of client expectations and therefore forms an integral part in the logistics supply chain of our clients.
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