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ABSTRACT

Ethnopharmacological relevance: Data on the relative importance and research status of commercially relevant African medicinal plants are needed for developing new research strategies in order to stimulate much-needed ethnopharmacological research and to promote the commercialization of African plants.

Aim of the study: To present an illustrated bird's eye view and comparative analysis of the relative popularity and importance of commercialised African medicinal plants. A comparison is made between the general popularity and commercial importance of the species (as indicated by their footprint on the World Wide Web) and their scientific popularity and importance (as indicated by the number of research publications). The inventory and review is strongly focussed to cover all or most of the medicinal plant raw materials in the international trade that are exported from African countries, with less emphasis on those that are regularly traded on local and regional markets within Africa.

Materials and methods: The review is based on literature data, Scopus and Google searches, commercial information and the author's own experience and observations.

Results: More than 5400 plant species are used in traditional medicine in Africa, of which less than 10% have been commercially developed to some extent. Africa is home to more than 80 valuable commercial species that are regularly traded on

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