



The honeybush industry

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South Africa's honeybush industry is still very young and produces only a couple of hundred tonnes of processed honeybush tea each year. Most of this crop is exported to countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Japan, the UK and the USA.

As a unique and indigenous fynbos crop, honeybush has a unique selling point and significant potential to be marketed and positioned as a niche product in speciality tea markets around the world. As more people are discovering its pleasing taste and health-boosting potential, the popularity of honeybush tea is on the rise.

The growing demand for honeybush means that there are significant opportunities for growth and job creation in the industry, but it is also increasing pressure on wild honeybush populations. It is therefore imperative for the industry to switch to sustainable honeybush farming and move away from relying on wild-harvesting.

Currently, approximately 70% of honeybush tea is wild-harvested and the rest cultivated. The cultivated tea comes from a few farmers who have established successful honeybush plantations, as well as handful of community-based projects around Haarlem, Ericaville, Groendal and Genadendal. The industry is working towards cultivating more honeybush crop by involving more small and emerging farmers.

Cultivating honeybush on a larger scale will not only help to supply the growing demand for honeybush, but will also relieve the pressure on wild honeybush populations. The industry is also teaming up with local authorities in the Western and Eastern Cape to control and protect wild honeybush, thereby ensuring sustainable harvesting.

As a young industry poised for expansion, the honeybush industry also has a responsibility to ensure that it adopts biodiversity-friendly farming practices.





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