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*Aspalathus linearis*

[Synonyms : *Aspalathus contaminatus*, *Borbonia pinifolia*, *Psoralea linearis*]

**ROOIBOSCH** is a shrub. Native to South Africa (particularly in the western Cape) it has small pea-like, sometimes violet-tinged, bright yellow flowers that have a vanilla-like scent. It is also known as Red bush tea, Rooibos (English, German), Rooibos tea, and *Rotbusch* (German).

*Linearis* means ‘narrow and nearly parallel sided’.

Rooibosch is a traditional herb for the South African Bushmen and Hottentots.

Now the dried fermented leaves and branches are used primarily as a flavouring (particularly in baking) and also to make a hot or cold drink.

Japanese research in the 1980s is said to have shown that the plant contains an antioxidant that is believed to be useful in retarding ageing. Certainly the fluoride content which is higher than that in traditional tea could help to protect teeth from decay – and the absence of caffeine would also be viewed by many as desirable.

Although not clinically tested rooibosch is said to be useful for treating diarrhoea, other gastric disorders and vomiting, and it is also thought to be of possible assistance in remedies for some allergic disorders, particularly milk allergy.