

Why is Hoodia such a sought after weight loss supplement?

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**By Andrew Aitaken**

Hoodia Gordonii is an unambitious little South African desert cactus type plant that has a big future ahead of it. A gift from the native San people who live in the Kalahari Desert in South Africa, this tiny plant the natives' call "Xhoba" has already began impacting the world of weight loss with its extraordinary hunger stopping traits. What the Aboriginal San Bushmen have known for a long time and the rest of us are merely beginning to realize is that Hoodia has appetite suppressant qualities distinguished by plant scientists and named P57. This P57 active element has been examined, tested and identified to have the power to reduce calorie intake by up to 1,000 calories a day.

So will any South African cactus do when it comes to helping you to stay away from snacks? Indeed not, don't go to the local florist and buy yourself a desert cactus to eat. Of the succulent and asclepiad genus there are 2,000 species of ascleoiadaceae, divided into 300 genera, half from the succulent category. Hoodia Pseudolithos and Trichocaulon are members of the Trichocaulon sub-section from the Kalahari Desert region of S. Africa that touches Angola, Botswana and Namibia.

Hoodia Gordonii

is the name of the cactus you will want to get but don't plan on taking a outing to the South Africa and getting some Hoodia cacti for yourself; the Hoodia desert cactus are under strict control by the S. African government. It is considered an endangered plant and only Hoodia cactus farmers with certification may produce and sell the Hoodia.

Can Hoodia affect the world's obesity problem and help the planet be a slimmer place? Business organizations including, Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Phytopharm, Pfizer and most recently Slim Fast all believe so. All of these companies have banked on Hoodia's success and together have invested millions of dollars, wanting to corner the marketplace on weight loss. Looking at Hoodia's journey from Xhoba, plant of The San Bushmen to being today's miracle plant for weight loss we need to first look at where Hoodia's been over the past thirty plus years. The greatest amount of time, CSIR analyzed Hoodia to isolate the molecule p57, once they eventually obtained it; they then sold the rights of p57 to Phytopharm. In 1998 The Phytopharm Company leased marketing rights to Pfizer, who invested thirty-two million only to subsequently drop out of the scene because p57 was too

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expensive to synthesize as a pill. Pfizer's situation has now been taken over by The Unilever Corporation, the parent company of Slim Fast. Slim Fast at present plans on delivering a Hoodia weight loss supplement to nutritional stores in a couple years.

Almost a year ago, on November of 2004, the Hoodia plant contracted big media coverage when CBS's Sixty Minutes did a show on Hoodia's appetite suppressant qualities

. With the 60 minute TV

exposure, Hoodia was now wanted plant by dieters all-around the globe. People having a hard time staying on their diets desired Hoodia now, not in a couple of years, the secret was out and Hoodia was becoming an indispensable plant. I'm sure after that 60 minutes program was aired, numbers of dieters looked into moving to the Kalahari Desert and making themselves a tiny Hoodia garden of their very own. Luckily, as it is today there isn't a reason to go to that extent, where there is a consumer need; there are many businesses happy to fill that request. There were a few businesses that were informed of Hoodia before the news coverage broke and were in the right place at the right time. It didn't take long though for numerous other organizations to create associations with South African Hoodia Gordonii growers and get Hoodia supplements into stores. Nowadays there are numerous brands marketing both

Hoodia powder form and extracts

; how long

will the Hoodia plant supply last is the question on dieter's minds right now. The Hoodia Gordonii

succulent is a very hard plant to grow; the plants need very much care and management with irrigating, temperature and sunshine. Where it stands today there are only a couple of Hoodia harvesting centers in the South Africa and the Hoodia plant takes two to three years before it's ready to be exported. Taking this into account, the multi-million dollar question is, for how many months can the Hoodia succulent plant export continue? Because of this situation buyers should be aware if the Hoodia they are getting has been independently tested and certified to be pure

Hoodia Gordonii from

South Africa

. There are companies out there taking advantage of the great demand and interest in Hoodia and supplying a low quality product.

Andrew Aitaken is a contributing writer for the

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### **Hoodia Said To Benefit Appetite Suppression, But Experts Not Certain**

**By Angel Estrella**

Hoodia is characterized as a genus originating from a plant that, even though it is not in the same family, very much resembles that of a cactus. Hoodia plants produce flowers with vibrant colors and a pronounced scent. But that's not all. In recent years, much debate has surrounded Hoodia and its ability, or lack thereof, for suppressing the appetite and thereby contributing to weight loss. So, what's the real deal?

In Southern Africa, Hoodia is used to treat indigestion and minor infections. Over the years, there has been much research conducted to investigate its possible use as an appetite suppressant. In 2004, Hoodia became the major ingredient in certain diet bars and shakes. However, some experts still debate its validity.

Hoodia is still considered a mystery to much of the modern world. A large reason for this is the lack of scientific study, which could either confirm or deny the benefits or risks of using Hoodia as an appetite

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suppressant. As with any dietary supplement or ingredient, individuals should become fully aware of Hoodia prior to using it for any reason and this includes weight loss. Many products claim to suppress an appetite but, with little evidence to back up that claim, individuals cannot possibly know whether or not a product is even effective or safe.

While little remains known about the complete effects of Hoodia, including potential treatments for indigestion or infection or even it's ability to suppress the appetite, individuals who are searching for a way to lose weight will continue to await further testing. With obesity on the rise, many individuals find themselves more susceptible to the medical problems associated with being overweight. With so many diet products on the market, it is often difficult to distinguish from those that really work from those that do not. But one thing is for certain. As long as there are problems with weight gain and obesity, products will be sought that promise to curb appetites and help to knock off those unwanted pounds. However, what we have to be careful of is which of those products we use and why we believe them to be safe.

This article is intended to be used for informational purposes only. It is not to be used in place of, or in conjunction with, professional medical advice or a doctor's recommendation regarding the use of Hoodia. Prior to beginning any treatment program, including that which involves Hoodia, individuals must consult a physician or a nutritionist for proper diagnosis and/or treatment.

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