Hoodia gordonii
By Stacy Brossy
• General Info
• Medicinal uses
  – Appetite depressant
• How it works
• History
• Problems with making into a diet supplement
Basics:

• Apocynaceae, milkweed family, known for producing poisonous latex.
• Other names: xhooba or ghaap
• Kalahari semi-deserts of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, and Angola.

Looks like a cactus, spiny water collecting succulent stems

Takes 3 yrs to reach maturity

Lives for 15-25 yrs

Produces flesh colored flowers that smell like decaying meat, attract flies that pollinate it.
• It was used for thousands of years by the San Bushmen people

• Appetite depressant and thirst quencher
  – indigestion problems
  – severe abdominal cramps
  – Indigestion
  – tuberculosis
  – hypertension
  – diabetes
  – small infections
• Makes a steroidal glycoside that affects the central nervous system messengers.
• Neuropeptites read the glycoside as a compact version of glucose so the brain receives a message that enough food has been eaten
• Causes appetite receptors to turn off, no more hunger pains.
• Studies show people taking small amounts of it over 4 weeks were consuming around 1000 less calories per day and significant weight loss
Why can’t I get some?

- P57 was isolated by a South African Council for Scientific Research (CSIR) lab in 1997
- Sold a patent for P57 to Phytopharm, pharmaceutical company in the UK
- Teamed up w/ Pfizer and Unilever to make an anti-obesity drug but ran into problems
  - There isn’t enough in Africa to harvest
  - Couldn’t synthesize it
  - Hard to cultivate
  - Possibly causes harm to the liver
Americans spend about 30 billion dollars on weight loss

• Supplement scams
  • many supplements claim to have hoodia in them, marketing the naturalness and the benefits that the San people are supposedly getting

• 80% don’t have any hoodia in them
In 2002 CSIR officially recognized the San people’s rights over Hoodia so they could get a percentage of the profits from any drugs made from it, but the drug hasn’t been made and most money doesn’t make it back because of legalities.