

From bush to soap: Finding a sustainable solution to a problematic shrub

Beautiful News has released a short-film on Robert Richards who is turning *kraalbos* into soap. From the Northern Cape, Richards realised that, instead of removing the invasive plant from farmlands, it could be harvested and made into soap to treat skin ailments.



Robert Richards. Image: [Beautiful News](#)

The Northern Cape is a semi-arid region where cattle, goat and sheep farmers realised, in addition to the heat and water shortages characteristic of desert-like conditions, the area is also rife with *kraalbos*, a plant that is poisonous to unsuspecting animals when eaten.

Richards watched as the farmers uprooted the problem plant and created a near-disaster situation for themselves. A local resident, he realised that the mass extraction of *kraalbos* roots would leave the soil vulnerable to erosion that would devastate the traditional grazing routes. In discussions with indigenous families from Okiep near Springbok, Richards discovered the traditional practice of using *kraalbos* for its healing properties, treating skin ailments like eczema. Further research revealed scientific proof to support the statement.

Determined to provide a lasting, environmentally sustainable solution to the farmers' troubles, he developed a recipe for turning the shrub into an organic soap. Instead of removing the *kraalbos* from their land, concerned farmers can harvest and sell the leaves to Richards and used for trade and consumption alike.

As a result, the animals and soil of the Namaqualand region are safe, and the people living in the area have a new form of income. He concludes: "I've turned a pest into a solution for the people in my community."

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>