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THE DIVERSITY OF PLANTS FOR A DIVERSITY OF CHALLENGES

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It is estimated that there are about 368,000 species of flowering plants, of which over 28,000 species have medicinal properties and of these many might have uses in cosmetics. The compounds in plants that contribute to their use in cosmetics often play a role in the plants interaction with its ecosystems. Understanding how plants deal with different ecological challenges can assist us identifies other plants that could contain new compounds for use in cosmetics. Using a greater diversity of plants from different countries can also contribute to the economy of that country as well as support the conservation and sustainability of habitats in those countries as well as livelihoods. This talk will provide an overview of some of the projects being undertaken at Kew that further our knowledge about plant chemistry and plant structure that could contribute to new cosmetics. Examples will also be given of issues associated with the authentication of plants entering the trade and being used in research projects. This includes not only the identification of the species and the appropriate names being used but also the quality of the plant material entering the trade

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