

Old traditions bring new health benefits for New Zealanders

Artemis – named in honour of the ancient Greek goddess of nature, wilderness and healing plants – is one of New Zealand's leading traditional plant medicine company. All its products are made in New Zealand, yet the company is deeply rooted in proven European healthcare traditions.

Its founder, Sandra Clair, grew up in Switzerland, where plant-based medicines co-exists with modern drugs and are widely integrated into contemporary health treatments. A chance encounter with a renowned Swiss traditional herbal medicine expert in 1992 triggered a deep passion for natural medicine, inspiring Sandra to embark upon an apprenticeship to learn centuries-old knowledge.

During this time and in subsequent tertiary studies in Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand, Sandra gained in-depth knowledge about plants' unique properties, their medicinal actions and the techniques for harvesting and preparing the highest quality plant medicine. She also learned how using healing plants daily could support good health, vitality and quality of life.

Sandra emigrated to New Zealand in 1995, where she found superb medicinal plants growing wild in Central Otago's alpine environments. She began creating a professional range from Swiss formulations several centuries old and quickly gained a reputation for her therapeutic products.

Demand quickly grew, resulting in Artemis being founded in 1998 and becoming New Zealand's expert in traditional plant medicine for self-care. Yet the business has never been solely focused on commercial success; Sandra is driven by a desire to make it easy and pleasurable to look after one's health. She believes pharmaceutical drugs have their place but that expertly-formulated plant medicines offer a healthy and safe alternative to deal with many common health issues.

More than two decades on, Artemis health products are sold locally and globally in pharmacies, health stores, and online. All products - which range from oral liquids, medicinal teas and remedial creams - are made from organic and wild-harvested medicinal plants sourced from accredited suppliers in New Zealand and Europe.

The company was named one of the top 10 New Zealand businesses in the 2015 Westpac Business Growth Awards. It was the winner of the Deloitte Fast 50 Award in 2012 for the "Fastest Growing Manufacturer in Otago and the Lower South Island". Within the same year, Artemis was also announced the winner for ethical and environmentally responsible business practices in the Westpac OBIZ Ethics awards, proving that a business can be both successful and ethical. In 2016 Sandra was selected by the New Zealand Ministry of Health as a member of the Permitted Substances Subcommittee and in 2018 she was selected by the University of Canterbury as 1 of 28 alumni ambassadors, out of a pool of 120,000. She is currently completing a PhD in Health Science.

There's still a way to go before plant medicine becomes part of New Zealand's medical mainstream, but Artemis's success shows how increasing numbers of Kiwis are recognising – and benefiting from - plants' healing and health-giving properties.

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