

Planting the Seeds of Cross-Disciplinary Teaching & Assessment

Dr Derek Scott (d.scott@abdn.ac.uk) & Dr Alison Jenkinson (a.jenkinson@abdn.ac.uk)

School of Medical Sciences and

Mark Paterson, Curator, Cruickshank Botanic Garden, University of Aberdeen

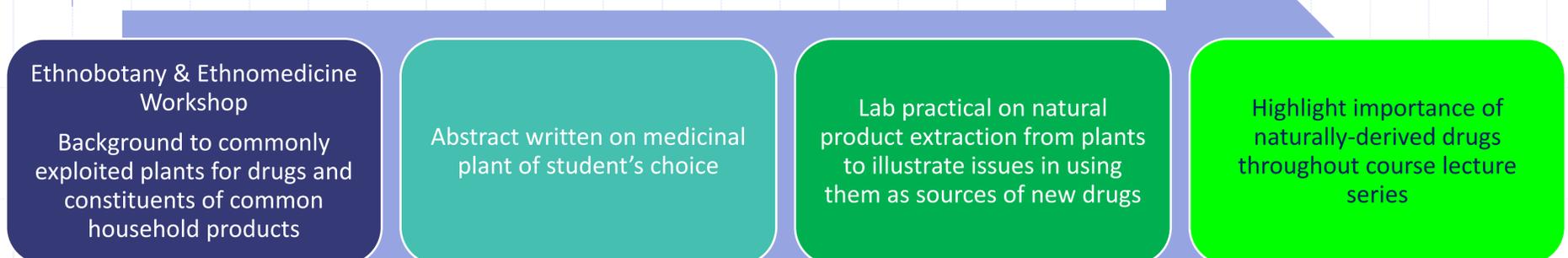


Introduction and Aims

- ◆ The School of Medical Sciences has traditionally had little interaction with Cruickshank Botanic Garden until the current academic year.
- ◆ Curriculum reform at UoA – breadth in curriculum, awareness of world events and issues.
- ◆ Pharmacopoeia exhibition at University Library – perhaps not exploited enough?
- ◆ Gardens underused by other disciplines apart from expected ones such as botany?
- ◆ Aim to understand origins of some of the more commonly-used drugs, and consider drug development issues



What did we do?



Positive outcomes

- Practical helped them understand difficulties of developing a new drug
- Abstract choice and originality (>60 different topics)
- Students engaged and interested
- Easy to mark, provide rapid and useful feedback

Negative outcomes

- Seasonal difficulties in obtaining plant material in Aberdeen!
- Some students irritated by challenging nature of natural product extraction
- Too much choice?
- Did we engage the entire class to same extent? – varied backgrounds and big class.

Conclusions

- We feel this educational exercise has been a success for staff and students and has shown how cross-disciplinary collaboration can facilitate teaching a large, diverse class, while allowing students choice in their assignment and enabling timely feedback via assessment in a novel way.
- Not perfect, but some good outcomes that we can build on.
- Added breadth to curriculum
- Increased volunteers for Botanic Garden
- Engaging and allows use of imagination/ originality
- Strengthened links between School of Medical Sciences and Botanic Garden
- Encouraged others to look at resources we already have and ask whether we could use them more effectively?