

Book Reviews

Medicinal Plants of the World. Volume I: Chemical Constituents, Traditional and Modern Uses. Second Edition. By Ivan A. Ross. Humana Press, Totawa, NJ. 2003. xv + 489 pp. 16.5 × 26 cm. ISBN 1-58829-281-9. \$99.50.

The use of herbal medicine and nutritional supplements is on the rise. Ivan A. Ross takes advantage of this growth and of the significant amount of new data accumulated to update and expand this second edition of his much acclaimed first edition. The contents of the second edition include a chapter on nomenclature and descriptive terminology, then chapters on *Abrus precatorius*, *Allium sativum*, *Aloe vera*, *Annona muricata*, *Carica papaya*, *Cassia alata*, *Catharanthus roseus*, *Cymbopogon citratus*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Curcuma longa*, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, *Jatropha curcas*, *Lantana camara*, *Mucuna pruriens*, *Mangifera indica*, *Manihot esculanta*, *Momordica charantia*, *Moringa pterygosperma*, *Persea americana*, *Phyllanthus niruri*, *Portulaca oleracea*, *Psidium guajava*, *Punica granatum*, *Syzygium cumini*, and *Tamarindus indica*. In addition, 10 pages of glossary and 20 pages of index are included.

Each chapter on a particular plant species contains the following sections: common name associated with each country in which the plant is used, botanical name and description, origin and distribution, traditional medicinal uses, chemical constituents, pharmacological activities, clinical trials, and literature references. There are 24 colored illustrations and 3498 references cited in the book. These references, with the title of each citation, would be valuable to investigators. On the whole, the depth of the reviews is good.

The key features of the book are its exhaustive yet concise presentation of scientific plant-use data from many sources, a wealth of practical ideas and theoretical information that suggests new opportunities for further studies, detailed information about the uses of each plant in different countries, extensive presentation of

pharmacological effects and clinical trials, identification of the chemical constituents of each plant, complete cross-referencing of common names to country and scientific name, a comprehensive index that includes significant terms, symptoms, and treatments, and extensive references to chemical constituents.

The second edition contains new information and references on the immunomodulatory activity present in *Allium sativum*, *Mangifera indica*, *Punica granatum*, and *Abrus precatorius*; the antidiabetic effects of *Momordica charantia* and *Mucuna pruriens*; the cholesterol lowering effect of *Allium sativum* and *Moringa pterygosperma*; the antiinflammatory activity found in *Mangifera indica* and *Abrus precatorius*; and the antitumor effect of *Moringa pterygosperma* and *Abrus precatorius*. There are also important new findings concerning the antiherpes simplex virus activity of *Mangifera indica*, the anti-Parkinsonian activity of *Mucuna pruriens*, the antiviral activity of *Phyllanthus niruri* and *Jatropha curcas*, the hyperthyroid regulating properties of *Moringa pterygosperma*, and the antioxidant activity of *Mangifera indica*, *Punica granatum*, *Psidium guajava*, and *Allium sativum*. The last plant is highlighted for its possible value in the treatment of unstable angina pectoris, of sickle red blood cell dehydration, and of several other conditions.

This authoritative and comprehensive book is recommended to those working in the field of medicinal plants, as researchers, educators, or other professionals with an interest in plants as medicines or sources of medicines.

Govind J. Kapadia

*Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
School of Pharmacy, Howard University
Washington, DC 20059*

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