

Foreword

At first glance, “*A Guide to Medicinal Plants: An Illustrated, Scientific and Medicinal Approach*” appears to be a medical compendium of plants intended as a guide and reference resource for professionals in the field. To my delight and I am sure of anyone who picks up this book, I discovered it contains nuggets of information that would interest a great many readers, from schoolchildren to teachers, from undergraduates to researchers, from home-makers to business people and of course, the healthcare professionals.

It is an authoritative and well-researched work on seventy-five, mostly familiar plants that have medicinal value. These grow well here and in the tropics. Although there have been books on medicinal plants published locally, none can match this comprehensive work which, as the authors state, is the first of its kind.

It contains information in well laid-out sections that would interest the healthcare professionals and at the same time, provide the general public valuable insights into the traditional use of plants as medicines. Today such plants are being studied intensively to elucidate their bioactive composition in the hope of discovering novel therapeutics and potential cures for major diseases such as cancer and AIDS.

This guidebook is user friendly. It provides the reader the ability to identify the seventy-five plants through their scientific, vernacular and common names as well as through the descriptions and high quality photographs. Readers are also free to go straight to the section that interests them most. A strength of this book is the detailed references provided for each plant and these are provided towards the end of the book for the serious reader or researcher.

One word of caution that the authors themselves have provided in the text but is worth repeating. Do not mistake this scientific book for a do-it-yourself medication guide. As the authors aptly state, “the information collated is not meant to be a guide for self medication by consumers or for treatment by healthcare professionals.”

I commend the authors for this labour of love and have no doubt that this book will be much sought after by both the healthcare professionals and the lay public.

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