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Book Reviews: Technical Books Section

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Editor's recommendation. This book is recommended by the editor. **QUITE IMPRESSIVE**

Medicinal Plants Of The World, Vol. 1 (Chemical Constituents, Traditional And Modern Medicinal Uses), 2nd Edition, *by* Ivan A. Ross. Hardcover, 7" x 10".
Humana Press Inc., 999 Riverview Drive, Suite 208, Totowa, New Jersey 07512. Publication Date March 6, 2003. xvi + 489 pages, ISBN 1-58829-281-9: E-ISBN 1-59259-365-8 (acid-free Paper). Price $99.95

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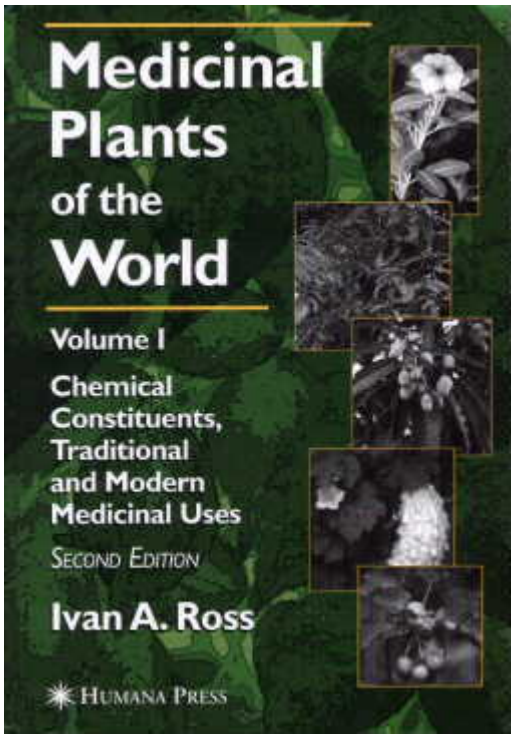

Ivan A. Ross



A native of Guyana, Ivan A. Ross is a biologist at the United States Food and Drug Administration. At the age of seventeen he was awarded a scholarship by the United States Agency for International Development to study agriculture at Tuskegee University. After completing his studies he returned to Guyana and was appointed to the Guyana Ministry of Agriculture. During his tour of duty, most of his time was spent in the isolated communities of the Aborigines population, incorporating modern agriculture and health care methods with the traditional system. Dr. Ross' interest in tradional medicine originated at this time. He Later entered the University of Maryland, College Park, where he studied animal science and biochemisrty. In 1987 he joined the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Food and Drug Administration, as a biologist in the Division of Toxicological Research. He is an active investigator and has published several research articles, primarily dealing with food safety. Other areas of his wide-ranging experience include Lecturer of Agricultural and Rural Development at the Gambia College, Gambia, West Africa, and seminars throughtout Gambia on food safety, health awareness, and agricultural techniques. When not in the laboratory, Dr. Ross is either farming or writing.

This is one of the most important books on medicinal plants that we have read in recent times. The author starts off the book with a chapter entitled "Nomenclature And Descriptive Terminology." In this chapter he has described the various terms used in botany. What are the various types of leaves, how they are attached to the stem, types of flowers and inflorescence etc. are some of the

things that have been described in this chapter. For someone who is not so well versed with the botanical nomenclature, this will act as a good starting point. Mere mention of these terms and their description is not sufficient to explain them adequately and so the author goes on to add illustrative diagrams. These diagrams go a long way in improving the understanding of these terms.

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Twenty-six plants have been described in this book in the form of twenty-six chapters. The layout of these chapters is quite impressive. The author starts off each chapter by giving the common names of the plant and the place where that name is used, followed by their traditional medicinal uses, chemical constituents, pharmacological activities and clinical uses and finally the references. A great deal of research has been done for each chapter. This can be judged from the fact that we were not aware of a lot of common names that prevalent in our country (India). This list of common names is quite exhaustive as is the list of chemical constituents. Despite being toxicologists, neither our peers nor we were aware of so many chemical constituents of each plant. The author must be congratulated for this. We feel that even in the other parts of the chapter viz. the traditional uses and pharmacological activities, a great deal of work has been done and on reading them one feels that this is as complete a description as one can get and that a better description is highly improbable.

The inclusion of color plates in the book was a very welcome sight. These color plates can go a long way in helping to recognize the plants when one actually sees them in the environment. In addition, there is a small photograph at the beginning of each chapter, which sets, so to say, the stage for the study of each plant

After going through the book we would say that this book is a must buy for all the botanists, toxicologists, pharmacists, students and others who deal with plants and who have to know every detail about the plants that are mentioned in this book.

Editor's Note: For review of Volume 2 of this book, please click here.

-Puneet Setia and Avneesh Gupta
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Dr. Avneesh Gupta is a Senior Resident doctor in the department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology at MAMC. His research interests include cranio-cerebral trauma. Dr. Gupta has written a very erudite thesis on cranio-cerebral trauma, which can be accessed by clicking here. He is associated with Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology as



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