

techniques in the design of safe and biologically contained transgenic plants have been summarized in the concluding chapter of the book.

The technology and theories behind different recent bioprocesses are clearly explained in this volume and this can serve as an excellent source of information for all individuals interested in the application of biotechnology and genetic engineering in the production of novel products.

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**F. Gaedcke, B. Steinhoff and H. Blasius, editors. Herbal Medicinal Products, Medpharm, Stuttgart, Germany, CRC Press, Boca Raton, USA, 2003 (xiii + 177 pp., \$47.96, ISBN 3-88763-098-X and ISBN 0-8493-1023-7)**

Herbal medicinal products are becoming more widely accepted as alternatives to medicinal prescriptions, due to growing awareness among peoples towards health and natural therapies. According to a study on the use of natural medicines which is performed regularly by German Institute of Demoscopy Allensbach, about two-thirds of German population prefer medicines from natural resources to chemically defined medicines.

There are often uncertainties about the interpretation of basic terms related to manufacture, quality and correct labelling of herbal medicinal products. This book on Herbal Medicinal Products clarifies these uncertainties, increasing transparency in the herbal medicinal products market and supporting an adequate scientific discussion related to herbal medicinal products. The book has 11 colour photographs, 37 figures and 30 tables. After a compilation of basic definitions, it describes the rules for correct labelling of herbal drug preparations in the subsequent chapter.

In the case of herbal medicinal products, the herbal drug or herbal drug preparation in its entirety represents the active substance. The quality of the herbal active substance must be assured in a way that consistent therapeutical success is guaranteed from batch to batch. Chapter 3 of the book focuses on this important aspect, i.e. quality assurance of herbal medicinal products, which include quality assurance of herbal starting material, herbal extract

and the finished herbal medicinal product. The legal provisions relating quality and safety of herbal medicinal products are discussed in the individual chapters.

An overview of the European marketing authorisation system is given in chapter 5, which covers the topics on directives relating to medicinal products, centralised, decentralised and national procedure, herbal medicinal working party and future of marketing authorisation. The book provides summarized information on the herbal medicinal products worldwide in the concluding chapter. The activities of the World Health Organization in relation to herbal medicines are also addressed.

It is hoped that this book may serve as a guideline for pharmacists, drug experts, students and all concerned with herbal medicinal products in industry, research, universities, regulatory offices and health authorities. It can also serve as a practical handbook for the qualitative assessment of individual products in pharmacies and medical practice.

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**N.J. Russell and G.W. Gould, editors. Food Preservatives 2nd Ed., Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York, USA, 2003 (xv + 380 pp., £99.00, ISBN 0-306-47736-X)**

The preservation of food has been carried out by man using various means for many hundreds of years in order to ensure a supply between growing seasons. Developments in food processing also have an influence on the use of food preservatives. As demand has increased for a wider range of different, often processed products, and with longer shelf-lives, chemical preservatives have become widely used. Different preservatives achieve best results under different conditions, so the food industry has the opportunity to select the most appropriate preservative for the function required. However, the current trend is to use minimal use of chemically preservative, which has implications for the storage and safety of food products.

The problems in food preservation may be caused by wide range of reactions such as physical, chemical, enzymatic and microbiological. These various reactions are, therefore, targets for effective food preservation. They may be prevented or minimized by a range of formulation,