

## BOOK REVIEW

**Herbal Remedies, edited by Thomas Brendler, Dr. Jörg Grünwald and Christof Jänicke. 2nd Edition. Stuttgart: Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 1997. CD-ROM. DM 149 / US\$ 99. ISBN 3-7692-2221-0. In German and English.**

This is the completely revised and updated second edition of the Herbal Remedies CD-ROM. The publishers claim that it would comprise some 4,500 pages in printed form - this certainly takes up less room on the bookshelf, and is more reasonably priced. Information is given on more than 600 plants, including scientific names, common names, synonyms, related species, history and botanical details. Most of the entries have good quality colour photographs.

Information is given on botanical drugs, ingredients and active substances, pharmacology, indications, side effects, interactions, warnings, toxicology, etc. Indications are classified according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10). There is also an extensive bibliography, updated to 1997, with many references for each drug.

Installation is simple. It runs under Windows (3.x, or 95), and it needs about 16 MB of disk space. There is a choice of installation in English or German - having chosen 'English' it was a bit disconcerting to have a screen come up in *German* asking which was my CD-drive. However the text itself is fully in English, although occasional instructions turn up in German.

The user interface is very simple. As with most computer applications, the 'read me' help file was incomprehensible until one knew how to use the program. The simplest way, as always, is to give it to a 10 year-old child, and then ask to be shown how it works. I found no way to access the help file from the program.

It is possible to search by plant name - species names and English or German common names - by drug or compound name, and by indication. It is easy to switch from German to English and vice versa, with whichever language the program was installed. It is possible to set bookmarks, and to store one's own comments. One can easily print out a page or copy text to another program. What is missing is any sort of hypertext feature to allow one to go straight to another reference from anywhere in the program, and the search method is somewhat more cumbersome than necessary for a computer program. What I really miss

is the ability to type in any word and to obtain a list of places where it appears.

There is a vast amount of information provided on this CD, most of it very detailed. This is basically 'European' herbal medicine. There is some information included on Chinese and Indian medicine, but this seems very scant - there are remedies from Asian medicine which are becoming widely used in the West which are not mentioned here.

It is worthwhile having this CD for anyone with any interest in herbal medicine.

*Naomi Kingsley, Jerusalem*