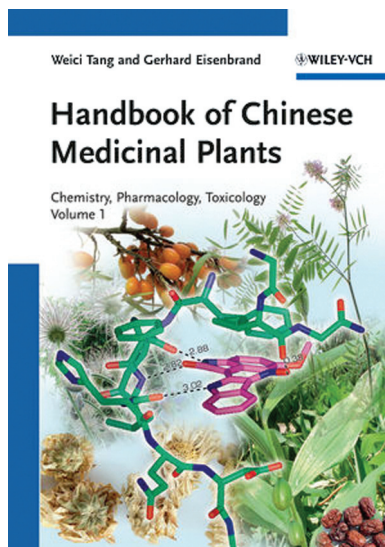


MNF Books



Handbook of Chinese Medicinal Plants: Chemistry, Pharmacology, Toxicology

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Vols. I+II

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In recent years, interest in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has

spread worldwide and is practiced today in many Western countries. The major reason for the high attention lies in its potential effectiveness against diseases that are difficult to treat or even refractory to standard therapeutic treatments. Therefore, it is an attractive challenge to provide an insight into the chemistry and pharmacology involved. This was done, for the first time, in 1992 by a monograph on herbal TCM by Wang and Eisenbrand. The same authors now present a two-volume handbook, covering the scientific literature up to 2009, where not only chemical and pharmacological aspects but also toxicology and molecular mechanisms are considered. The handbook contains 230 selected herbal items, mostly listed in Vol. I of the Chinese Pharmacopeia (2005 Edn.), and includes plant drawings and chemical structures of the most relevant constituents. It is of great value that risk-benefit aspects are also included. All drugs are listed in alphabetical order according to their systematic botanical names, from *Abrus cantoniensis* to *Ziziphus jujube*, providing comprehensive information available on TCM medications. The general presentation fulfills all

essential requirements, i.e. nice drawings of plants, correct chemical formulas regarding stereochemistry (with some exceptions), very few typos and, importantly, an objective description of the facts without any judgement of the presented data. The text is written in a continuous style, making it very fluid and easy to read. On the other hand this may also be a disadvantage, if the reader is only interested in a particular category of studies and therefore has to go through the entire section. A complete survey of the text will also be required, if one is interested in a particular medication, since, unfortunately, the information on treatment or disease related to a specific drug in the register is not sufficient. However, this minor criticism does not affect the high value of this two-volume handbook, which will certainly become a benchmark for TCM not only for medical doctors and pharmacists, but also for chemists, pharmacologists, toxicologists, as well as nutritionists.

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