

**Medicinal Plants of the World, Volume 1, Second Edition.**

Ivan A. Ross. Humana Press, 2003. ISBN 1-58829-281-9. \$99.50

This book provides information on 26 well-known plants that are used around the world for treatment of diseases. The species are *Abrus precatorius*, *Allium sativum*, *Aloe vera*, *Annona muricata*, *Carica papaya*, *Cassia alata*, *Catharanthus roseus*, *Cymbopogon citratus*, *Cyperus rotundus*, *Curcuma longa*, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, *Jatropha curcus*, *Lantana camara*, *Mucuna pruriens*, *Mangifera indica*, *Manihot esculenta*, *Momordica charantia*, *Moringa pterygosperma*, *Persea americana*, *Phyllanthus niruri*, *Portulaca oleracea*, *Psidium guajava*, *Punica granatum*, *Syzygium cumini* and *Tamarindus indica*. The format is the same for each species: a list of common names around the world, a botanical description, traditional medicinal uses in various countries, a list of chemical constituents by name, brief descriptions of publications on a range of pharmacological activities and clinical trials, a list of references. There is an introductory chapter for non-botanists that discusses the various botanical terms required to understand the botanical descriptions. A glossary at the end explains various other terms. Small color plates of all the species, except

*Cymbopogon citratus* and *Curcuma longa*, are also included.

There is a lot of information in this book. It is interesting to read about the different names and uses of these plants around the world. The list of names of chemical constituents has its limitations since often one has no idea what type of compound is being described. It would also be better to use Greek letters and proper punctuation in chemical names. The principal interest in the book lies in the wide range of biological activity which has been described for these plants. In view of the fact that so many people depend on plants like these for drugs it is encouraging that positive results have been obtained. The author highlights some of the important discoveries on the rear cover. It is a pity he did not do this in the text since it is often difficult to decide what is really important when reading through a long catalogue of test results. Some critical input by the author would have been helpful for readers, especially those with a less biological background.

Joe D. Connolly

Department of Chemistry, University of Glasgow

Glasgow G12 8QQ, UK

E-mail address: joec@chem.gla.ac.uk