



## Desk Reference to Nature's Medicine

By Steven Foster, Rebecca L. Johnson

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For millennia, humans have looked to nature for remedies to ailments great and small. Long before formal science enabled us to take a systematic approach to medicine, healers used plants to alleviate pain, ease the symptoms of dozens of diseases, and treat complaints of every kind. And today, countless people still use medicinal plants, whether in traditional roles or as building blocks for new research and innovative drugs.

Featuring 350 full-color photographs, botanical drawings, and maps, this accessible, fact-filled book is based on the work of renowned botanical experts and presents alphabetically arranged, beautifully illustrated entries for hundreds of plants touted for millennia to soothe, even heal. Each is clearly described, with full details of its physical appearance and medicinal uses; its origins and geographic distribution, how it's harvested and used in conventional and alternative medicine, a range map; and more.

It's also a fascinating medical chronicle filled with informative sidebars on everything from ancient folklore to the latest research. Readers learn how aspirin evolved from a concoction of willow bark to the familiar white pill of today, how the foxglove's flowery beauty contributes to the potent heart drug digitalis, and how many other now common treatments have deep historical and cultural roots. It's a journey that starts many centuries ago in remote places like the Amazon rain forest, where shamans practiced their powerful curative magic of plants, and leads to the high-tech pharmaceutical labs of today's scientists working to discover new plant-based drugs that can be used effectively to treat diseases major and minor alike, from cancer to the common cold.

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## **Editorial Review**

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National Geographic's guide to medicinal plants introduces 150 of the most popular plants and herbs used as dietary supplements, among them aloe, ephedra, ginkgo, and peppermint. There are more than 80,000 known species of medicinal plants worldwide, but what this book lacks in comprehensiveness, it makes up for by presenting a wealth of essential information on the history, culture, folklore, and science of traditional and contemporary herbal medicine in all major culture areas of the world.

Emphasizing current research and therapeutic uses, the volume provides an A-Z listing of plants by common name. Information about each plant covers a two-page spread and includes traditional and current medicinal uses, common and Latin names, description, habitat, cultivation and preparation, research, and caution alerts. Color photographs, botanical illustrations, and range maps accompany the text, while sidebars offer interesting facts about biology, nomenclature, history, or folklore that add to a better understanding of the plant and its healing properties. Regional essays on the healing plants of Africa, Australia and New Zealand, Central and South America, China, Europe, India, North America, the Middle East, and Oceania provide insightful glimpses into the fascinating range and diversity of local health practices from around the world while also revealing the multifaceted roles that herbalists, healers, and herbal--medicine practitioners play in the lives of their patients. Reference tools include a glossary, Latin name index, and subject index.

This attractive and reasonably priced volume is recommended for most public library reference collections.

*Diana Kirby*

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## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Yael Whitehead:**

Nowadays reading books be than want or need but also be a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book that will improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with training books but if you want sense happy read one together with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. The Desk Reference to Nature's Medicine is kind of publication which is giving the reader erratic experience.

**Randal Revilla:**

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