

Preface

A. L. Tommie Bass died in August 1996, about eight years after the original manuscript of this volume was completed. Since that first publication date, there has been a heightened interest in herbal medicine and a corresponding diversity of approaches. This diversity, along with limited legislative controls, has allowed questionable practices to emerge; some, in fact, appear to be downright fraudulent. There is, we believe, a greater need now than in 1988 to investigate many of the current recommendations. Because society only has limited scientific resources for such studies, we must judiciously use other means to assess herbal medicine. The experience and knowledge of "old-timers," like Mr. Bass, is one. New uses, or those unknown to Bass, are not necessarily invalid; however, if they have no scientific basis, and if they are absent from the historical record (and here we include Bass) or if they have not been generally mainstream in the past when herbs were in everyday use, we must be extra-cautious before accepting them.

With more and more claims being made nowadays suggesting that the use of an herb in times past justifies current usage, a careful examination of the historical record is needed. For instance, textbooks written by critically minded authors who do not slavishly copy from others should be used. We believe that the texts we have employed fit into this category. Additionally, for practic-

ing herbalists in particular, it is not enough to know that a continuity of reputation exists; it is also important to know the nature of the preparation and the dosage recommendation for particular uses, as well as to consider the roles of patients' expectations and placebo responses in the past.

The corrections to this printing have concentrated on current knowledge of chemical constituents and related studies. This presented a challenge, if only because of the rapidly expanding database on many herbs, which provides contradictions as well as clarification. A recasting of the text was not possible, and hence small corrections and updates have been undertaken without references. However, information sources can be readily tracked through some recently published reference books and increasingly accessible computerized databases such as *Current Contents* and *Medline*. Key references include N. G. Bisset (ed.), *Max Wichtle, Herbal Drugs, and Phytopharmaceuticals* (Stuttgart: Medpharm, 1994); A. Y. Leung and S. Foster, *Encyclopedia of Natural Ingredients Used in Food, Drugs, and Cosmetics* (New York: Wiley, 1995); and C. A. Newall, L. A. Anderson, and J. D. Phillipson, *Herbal Medicines: A Guide for Health-Care Professionals* (London: Pharmaceutical Press, 1996). We have also consulted such specialist serial publications as *Adverse Effects of Herbal Drugs* (vols. 1–3, 1992–96). In addition, more popular, but not necessarily advocacy, books have been used such as V. Tyler, *The Honest Herbal* (New York: Pharmaceutical Products Press, 1993); and *Herbs of Choice* (New York: Pharmaceutical Products Press, 1994).

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