

## **Tyler's Herbs of Choice. The Therapeutic Use of Phytochemicals, second edition.**

Robbers JE, Tyler VE. Haworth Press Inc, Binghamton, New York, 1999.

Hardcover, 287 pages. US\$49.95 (softcover, US\$19.95).

This review of medicinal herbs appears to be intended for both an educated public audience and health-care professionals. It provides a well-written overview of the key issues related to herbal medicine, including herb quality, theories of herbalism, herbal dosage forms, and regulation. However, the regulation chapter explains the system in the United States and will not be very helpful for Canadian consumers. Each of chapters 4 through 12 focuses on problems related to a specific physiological system (such as the digestive and cardiovascular systems) and consists of a review of the safety and efficacy of the herbs commonly used to treat specific conditions within each category. The information provided is accurate, concise, objective, and often delivered with a sense of humour that makes the read both informative and entertaining. All chapters are completely referenced, and an extensive index facilitates access to information about specific herbs. Although the book does not claim to be comprehensive, it is clearly complete enough to satisfy the needs of any consumer and to provide a useful overview for a general health-care practitioner.

Hospital pharmacists will find this book an accurate and concise overview of the scientific evidence for the safety and efficacy of medicinal herbs. Information about each herb's pharmacology, adverse effects, and potential drug interactions

is provided. However, it does not contain as much detail, nor is it as comprehensive, as some other books available on this topic. For someone who knows nothing about herbal medicine, this is a great book with which to start. It would also be useful for pharmacists who interact with a wide range of patients who may be taking a variety of herbs for many different conditions. However, drug information pharmacists and pharmacists looking for in-depth information about herbs commonly used by specific patient populations will need additional reference material.

Overall, this is an excellent overview of the medicinal use of herbs. It is well written, entertaining, and — most important — accurate and objective. It is a great book to recommend for educated patients and general health-care practitioners, including pharmacists who see a wide range of patients.

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