

BOOK REVIEW

Aromatic Plants and Essential Constituents. Zhu Liangfeng, Li Younghua, Li Baoling, Lu Biyao, Xia Nianhe. Chinese Academy of Sciences: South China Institute of Botany. Hai Feng Publishing Company, Chinese National Node for APINMAP, 1993. (Price and ISBN not found).

This beautifully published survey of aromatic plants, their botany and chemistry, can be recommended to the teachers and researchers in aromatic constituents in plants. It is authoritative and exhibits much personal research into these economically very important plants.

As the foreword states: "China is well known for her natural aromatic resource and is becoming more and more important in international essential oil market." It is one of the main popular exports of China in recent years.

This monograph comprises information, often difficult elsewhere to procure—of more than 270 species and subspecies in a number of important families from the point of view of essential oils. The book has four sections arranged according to the utility of the aromatic species: 1) Fragrances and Flavours; 2) Medicinals; 3) Flowers and fruits; Other uses.

The interest is apparent in the following several aspects involved: 1) state of scientific research; 2) the first publication of the use of a number of indigenous aromatic plants; 3) and the value of these kinds of information to modern commercial and industrial entities.

As is well recognised, China is well supplied with aromatic plants which have long been employed in folk-medicine and household use. There is a valuable chapter on advances in techniques of analytic methods for studying essential oil composition.

This is the first of two volumes relating to aromatic plants and their constituents; the second is promised.

There can be no doubt that this scientifically critical volume will be a valuable addition to the modern, technical bibliography of this fast-developing field of ethnobotany as well as a rich contribution to our knowledge of the chemistry of many well-known and numerous poorly known aromatic plants employed in China and elsewhere. It is highly recommended to teachers and researchers in the fields of economic botany and ethnobotany.

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