

Against the Grain

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A Reference Book You May Have Missed

Marjorie Hlava

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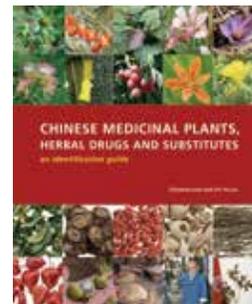
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A Reference Book You May Have Missed

by **Marjorie Hlava** (President, Access Innovations, Inc.) <margie_hlava@accessinn.com>

Chinese Medicinal Plants, Herbal Drugs and Substitutes: An Identification Guide by **Christine Leon** and **Lin Yu-Lin**. Publisher: Kew.

Place of publication: Richmond, Surrey, UK. Hardback, English.
ISBN: 9781842463871. UPC: 9781842463871. EAN: 9781842463871.



It's the organization of the book that sets this reference, *Chinese Medicinal Plants, Herbal Drugs and Substitutes: An Identification Guide*, apart from all the others. The listings include a wealth of well-done photographs of the plant in all its forms: living leaves, flower, fruit, as well as dried in crude form, decocted, carbonized and sometimes ground. Identifying the native habitat where the plant is found, the morphology, methods for decocting the pieces, harvesting, how to process, which parts to use (and not use), the common and botanical names including a full synonymy (botanical names change with amazing rapidity). Plant descriptions provide both a botanical and a layman's plant description. There is also a handy conservation status of the plant in China and globally. It is an indispensable guide for anyone working with traditional or herbal remedies. The items covered in the book are recognized in the **Chinese Pharmacopoeia (CP)** and western medical associations. It is the first botanically authoritative as well as

practical identification guide for traditional Chinese medicine. It is easy to read and beautifully illustrated.

The book is organized into major sections depending on the plant part most used: underground (rhizomes, roots, tubers and bulbs) above ground (aerial parts and whole plants), stems and woods, barks, leaves, flowers and their parts, fruits, seeds and other fruit parts. Each section is color coded at the page edge and then alphabetic order by their Pin Yin names as used in the CP2015. In addition there are three layout types for the pages:

Layout A — Single species which are not widely used outside of China,

Layout B — Comparative text for a pharmacopoeia drug obtained from more than one species not widely used outside of China, and

Layout C — A pharmacopoeia drug obtained from more than one species traded internationally.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the book is that it gives the official and unofficial substitutes.

This is a safety feature that most libraries will want to have available to their patrons. Use of potent "natural medicines" has high risk due to the similarities of the plants, especially when they are dried. Many of these plants are easily confused or adulterated with other plants making them unsafe or ineffective. There are many substitutions made and the user must be alert to which are effective versus those which are placebos or, worse, dangerous to the point of poisons.

There is extensive front matter and a very extensive 30 page index in this 806 page tome. The authors, **Christine Leon** and **Lin Yu-Lin**, spent 15 years collecting, assembling, testing, and checking the information contained in the reference. The work is the result of a joint project of the **Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**, and the **Institute of Medicinal Plant Development** at the **Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences**. The taxonomy and scientific nomenclature reflects current opinions by aligning with **Kew's Medical Plant Name System (MPNS)** portal which allows a cross walk from The Chinese Medical sources to Western Medicine. A significant bonus for the researcher and layman alike. 🌿

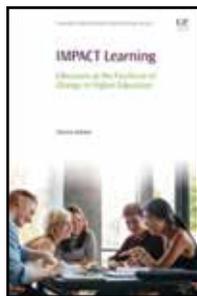
About the Book's Authors

Christine Leon is a medical botanist specializing in Chinese medicine. She has worked at the **Kew Royal Botanic Gardens** since 1997 where she helped establish the **Chinese Medicinal Plants Authentication Centre** at Kew, in partnership with the **Institute of Medicinal Plant Development** in Beijing, China.

Lin Yu-Lin is a Professor at the **Institute of Medicinal Plant Development, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences** and **Peking Union Medical College** known as the leading authority on Chinese medical plants and their *materia medica*.

Marjorie Hlava is the President of Access Innovations, Inc. where she is known for her work applying taxonomies and other controlled vocabularies to digital collections. She has a degree in Botany as her first love and continues to read widely on the subject.

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IMPACT LEARNING — by **Clarence Maybee** (978-0-0810-2103-3/978-0-0810-2077-7 **Chandos Publishing \$80.95**) — An amazing guide to breaking down the steps to getting the most out of teaching higher education students, incorporating the best of Purdue's university library system. This collection breaks down not just methods to reach out to the student population, but also to staff. A very useful read for those who are having issues with their outreach programs, or need more talking points for why there are so many nuances to working in the library, something many a librarian has

had to deal with. Basically, it serves as the best teaching guide to the process for using the IMPACT system, recommended for the librarian and the patron.



A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INFORMATIONISTS — by **Antonio P DeRosa**

(978-0-0810-2016-6/978-0-0810-2017-3 **Chandos Publishing \$79.95**) — The very concept of information is something that many take for granted, and why wouldn't they? It is so easy to go out and find whatever information you are looking for in this age of instant gratification. However, one might fail to consider that someone has to put that information there before you can access it; this can become especially problematic for those in the medical field.

This guide offers a two prong method for moving forward in the information field with medical professionals, not only offering methods to get your information to the public but also pointers on the best way to convey this, so that your readers will easily understand it. A useful thing to read for those both in the information management field and the medical field. 🌿