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# Medicinal Plants Of The Mountain West



## Synopsis

In the first update since the original printing in 1979, renowned herbalist Michael Moore adds another twenty years of research and expertise working with medicinal plants to his classic *Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West*. In this greatly expanded revised and enlarged edition, the book covers the entire range of medicinal herbs found in New Mexico, Arizona, west Texas, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and California.

## Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Museum of New Mexico Press; Rev and Expanded ed. edition (August 18, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0890134545

ISBN-13: 978-0890134542

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.2 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

An excellent book for beginners, experienced herbalists, and other medical professionals alike. This book, like Michael Moore's others are seldom available used because people keep them and use them a lot. They are usually the most worn from use on any herbalist's shelf- including mine. *Medicinal Plants of The Mountain West* has lovely and useful illustrations to aid identification. More photos would help though. The text is lucid, funny and very helpful. Beginners will find step by step instructions on harvesting with care and attention to protecting habitat, medicine making, clear and detailed information on judicious medicinal use, and plenty of food for thought on history, health and healing and how your own body works, as well as gentle and experienced guidance through the sometimes confusing state of herbal medicine in the market economy Western world. Unlike many other herbals, this book clearly and simply explains how and when to use herbs (and when not to use them) as herbs- not as "little" drug replacements. Herbalists and other health care practitioners will find an amazing amount of helpful clinical detail and creative approaches to therapeutics. Although this book that is often placed in the Field Guide section of the book store it is a concise yet articulate

materia medica based in the authors extensive experience as a therapist, harvester, and medicine maker. Doctors, pharmacists, nurses, and allied health professionals will find this book to be an oasis of sane, seasoned advice on how to use herbs and how to understand what your clients are taking. Amidst the onslaught of nearly useless books on botanical medicine written by journalists and pharmacists who couldn't tell a chickweed from an oak tree, and whose personal and professional experience practicing herbal medicine is usually less than Peter Rabbit's cup of chamomile tea, Michael Moore's books offer clinical experience grounded in Western science and traditional cultural use. His writing encourages cultural competence, treating Native and Latino plant medicine with care, and respect. Many of us have been waiting along time for this second edition. Buy it, use it, share it

I'm an amateur, but an experienced amateur. My father is a botanist, and my nextdoor neighbor grandma raised a family during the Great Depression using local wild plants for food. So I grew up a fair hand at recognizing plants in my native midwest, especially food plants. But medicinal plants....Fifteen years ago, my wife & I moved to a cabin on Pikes Peak bordering a vast national forest, and I started to learn the local plants using not Grandma, but guidebooks. Gradually, I became knowledgeable, especially about wildflowers & food plants. Then someone introduced me to locally gathered mullein (or velvet dock), and I ended my struggles with antihistamines. That put me on the lookout: there's good meds in them thar hills! If you buy only one book on medicinal plants of the Rockies, this is the book. (I know only the 2nd edition.) Moore has clearly collected, prepared & prescribed these herbs. It's readable (and I am NOT a botanist), even enjoyable -- I find myself skimming around just for the fun of it. I've checked out several books on Rocky Mountain medicinal plants, and this one beats the others for completeness and comprehensiveness. It gives solid descriptions of the plants' types of environment & geographic locations. In general and for each plant, it gives good descriptions of how & when to collect, how to prepare and how to use & not use. (These plants can be VERY potent, and they sometimes have dangerous look-alikes.) Moore discusses the various subspecies -- which are best, which are common, which are endangered, where they're found. I've used Moore and found him quite helpful in the central Rockies, on the western slopes and down into northern New Mexico. I suspect he's good in the northern Rockies, as he mentions these regularly and they're on his maps for each species. So if you only buy one book, buy this one. But #1: The pictures are clear, but black & white. For me, I can have trouble going from them to real-live plants in color. In the field, I usually carry a couple of guidebooks with pictures or drawings in color, for example, *Plants of the Rocky Mountains* and *Guide to Colorado*

Wildflowers: Mountains (Guide to Colorado Wildflowers. Vol 2. Mountains). You probably want to check , maybe local National Park, Monument, Forest professionals for the best local books. But #2: Herbal medicine comes from many, many traditions collected by many, many investigators from many, many sources. With so many "local" plants coming from Europe & Asia, these traditions are truly world-wide. Additionally, there's a growing scientific literature on what's effective. All this information is widely scattered. For example, Moore doesn't include goldenrod. But I found it in *Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Rockies* (see my review), dried some, and it stopped a couple of colds dead, when nothing else helped. While Moore mentions research data, a book like *Prescription for Herbal Healing: An Easy-to-Use A-Z Reference to Hundreds of Common Disorders and Their Herbal Remedies* mentions more, and includes many plants found in the Rockies. But #3: No book is entirely comprehensive in the sense of safety. For example, Moore has a great entry on chokecherry (wild cherry bark). Chokecherry bushes & trees have various cyanide compounds. Moore states that these are safe, even for children. I collected some local bark and tried it. Like Moore said, it smelled wonderful, tasted wonderful, felt wonderful in my throat -- WAY beyond anything I've ever had from my local herb stores. And it REALLY didn't do well in my tummy. As always with a first use, I tried only a little. So I checked around and found in, among other places, the Kerry book mentioned above, that only COMPLETE drying or VERY LENGTHY boiling (esp. at high altitudes) destroys the cyanide. So various rules of thumb include: Don't buy one book, check out many. Find people who are knowledgeable. Go slow & be careful. Use common sense. If something doesn't seem right, don't do it. OF COURSE: check with a doctor for any medical condition that even MIGHT be serious. Take all cautions seriously. Stuff like that. But I've also found good meds in my mountains. An aside: Moore mentions food use, but this isn't the book for that. Locally, I prefer *Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Rockies* and *Edible Native Plants of the Rocky Mountains*.

Many books on herbs run to the quaint, the cute, or the amusing and are light on solid fact. Consequently, those with an interest in herbal medicine may be viewed with disdain or humor by some. This is a detailed, clinical account of the potential medicinal uses of a wide variety of plants found in the mountain west. I think it is exactly the sort of book you want if you think herbal medicine should be taken seriously. If you are looking for a reference book, then this will fill your needs well. I guess was looking for something more in the lines of informative but entertaining. Nevertheless this book has helped me prepare interesting and informative ID tags for a number of the plants I've either planted, or tolerate in my garden. Personally, if I'd read more of it before buying, I might not

have. Regardless, I am keeping it, a decision that weighs heavily as my bookshelves begin to groan under 35 years of accumulation.

Michael Moore is a delight to read. He offers much information on his website and in his books. Humor is injected freely into his text, but his viewpoint on many herbs is that of someone who really does use them and knows what he's talking about. It's clear that he's confident in his approach, knowledgeable and, best of all, willing to share. He tells four methods of collecting, followed by an intense listing of herbs and their actions. Each herb lists a great general reference guide - one of the more honest ones out there, making it a true favorite. On some of the herbs I would have liked the information to be a bit longer, but overall it's an excellent job and a guide I'll keep returning to.

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