

Preface

Although medicinal plants have a rich history of utilization in all cultures, no one knows when or where plants first began to be used in the treatment of various ailments. From the very beginning of human existence, humans have familiarized themselves with plants and have used them in a variety of ways throughout the ages. Primitive humans began to distinguish those plants suitable for nutritional purpose from others with a definitive pharmacological action. This relationship has grown between plants and humans, and many plants have come to be used as drugs. Ethnobotany is the traditional knowledge of indigenous communities, about the surrounding plant diversity, and the study of how the people of a particular culture and region make use of indigenous plants. The Himalayan region is among the largest mountain systems of the world, with uncounted and unique medicinal plant resources. Interactions between humans and the natural system help in maintaining the richness of species, communities, and genetic materials on both productive and wild lands. The Lesser Himalaya range is an extension of the mighty Greater Himalayas. The Lesser Himalayas have a unique ecology, vegetation, and diversity of medicinal flora due to tremendous variations in the altitude, climate, and associated wildlife.

The utilization of medicinal plants in modern medicine suffers from the fact that although plants are used to cure diseases, scientific evidence in terms of modern medicine is lacking in many cases. Different societies use plants according to their own beliefs, knowledge, and previous experiences. Their knowledge about the use of the plants is usually not known to other societies or to scientists. These hidden areas need to be explored. This book provides a brief introduction to the Lesser Himalayas' ethnobotanical aspects, marketing, and anthropogenic pressure on medicinal flora. It comprises 100 medicinal plant species, including pteridophytes, gymnosperms, and angiosperms (monocots and dicots), along with their scientific descriptions and traditional uses.

We have tried to convey a maximum of knowledge regarding medicinal plant diversity in a minimum of words. There is always room for improvement. Readers are the best judges to evaluate this effort. We believe readers have a moral obligation to convey suggestions for our book's future improvement. It would be our greatest achievement if this book could attract students of botany, biodiversity, plant taxonomy, ethnobotany, and ecology, as well as wildlife naturalists, tourists, and others who have some lovely feeling for nature.

Islamabad, Pakistan

Arshad Mehmood Abbasi, Ph.D.

Mir Ajab Khan, Ph.D.

Mushtaq Ahmad, Ph.D.

Muhammad Zafar, Ph.D.

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Abbasi, A.M.; Khan, M.A.; Ahmad, M.; Zafar, M.

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