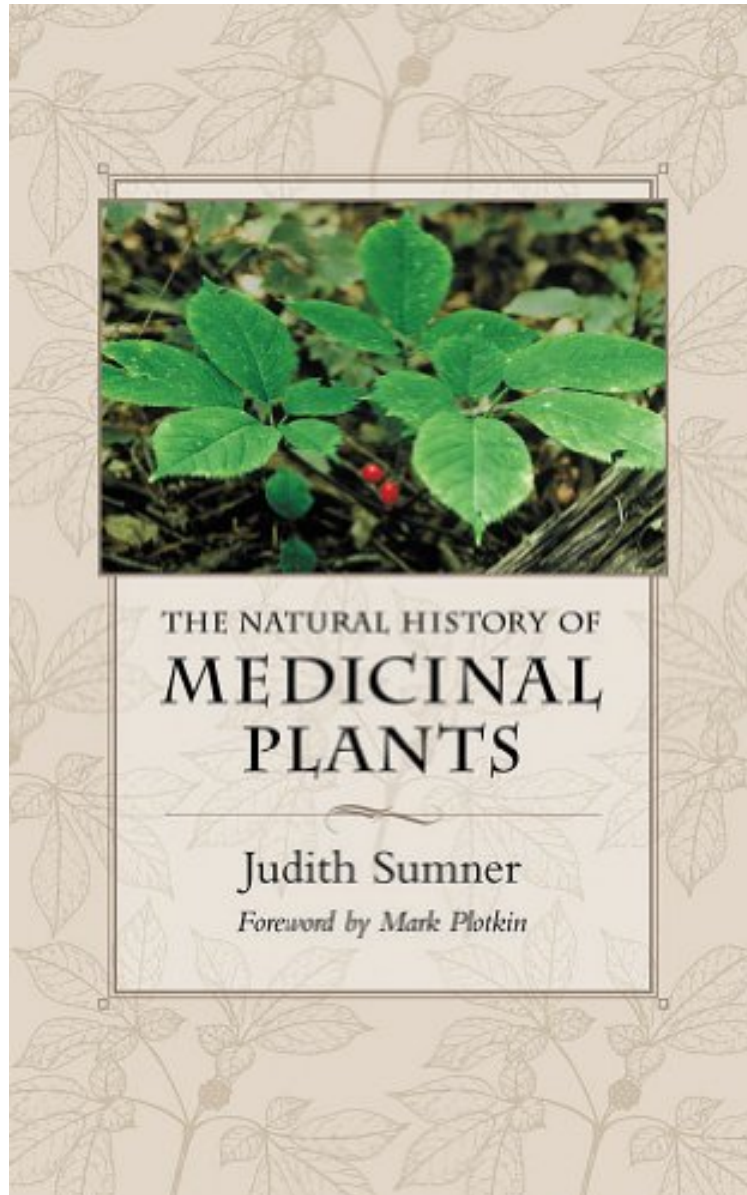


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The Natural History of Medicinal Plants

Judith Sumner

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Judith Sumner : The Natural History of Medicinal Plants before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Natural History of Medicinal Plants:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Everything you'd ever wish to know about medicinal plantsBy DeipnosophistA quick indexed and easy to read history of medicinal plants. Many you'll find in your neighborhood or nearby area.21 of 22 people found the following review helpful. I found a goldmine with this little bookBy misselaHaving an interest in the subject of medicinal plants, I have been looking for book that explained more about what compounds are in plants and how they affect not only people but nature as a whole. I was intrigued by the concept that plants produce these compounds as defense mechanisms for their own survival, and it is these same compounds that act as medicines (or poisons) when used by people. It also inadvertently explains plant companions for successful gardening. For instance, when Purple Sage leaves are crushed, they release a compound to nearby tomato plants to release their own insect inhibiting compounds. What a great book!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth a readBy Ayesha ErcelawnSome excellent chapters on chemistry of alkaloids, etc. Other chapter were more general than I expected. Discovered it through a bibliography in another book.

Wild and cultivated plants have provided humans with cures for thousands of years. Aspirin, for example, the most widely used drug in the Western pharmacopoeia, was first isolated from willows to treat fever, pain, and inflammation. Writing for the lay reader, the author surveys the history of the use of plants in medicine, the range of chemicals produced by plants, and the prospects for future discoveries.

From BooklistThe hidden chemistry of flora is revealed in this accessible introduction to the world of medicinal plants. Harvard botanist Sumner begins with an in-depth look at the folklore of herbalists in Europe preserved since the middle ages, and then discusses the discoveries of plant compounds such as alkaloids, which have been used for everything from easing people's pain (morphine) to driving them mad (ergotamine). Why plants produce these myriad compounds is still somewhat of a mystery, but Sumner explores such possibilities as defense strategies and chemical evolution. Some of her most interesting revelations are about the relationships that animals have with plants: their pharmacopoeia is much more advanced than we give them credit for. Sumner also provides a fair amount of information on what are now considered the most effective herbs for self-medication, and reminds readers that preserving biodiversity for the potential discoveries of yet more medicinal plants is a noble cause, even if it has a commercial bent to it, because plants literally contain the germ of continued life on this planet. David SiegfriedCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Some of her most interesting revelations are about the relationships that animals have with plants: their pharmacopoeia is much more advanced than we give them credit for.Booklist