

# **MEDICINAL PLANTS**

*in the*

# **SOUTH PACIFIC**



**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**  
Regional Office for the Western Pacific

MANILA

WHO Regional Publications  
Western Pacific Series No. 19

# MEDICINAL PLANTS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

**Information on  
102 commonly used  
medicinal plants  
in the South Pacific**



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ISBN 92 9061 118 9  
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## Preface

For thousands of years, herbal medicine has been used throughout the world to keep people healthy and to help them in the fight against disease. Medicinal plants are an important resource which can be mobilized to contribute to the attainment of WHO's goal of health for all.

Living in a region with abundant natural resources, people of the South Pacific have traditionally used the plants growing around them as medicine. Although modern medicine is now available in all South Pacific countries, strong cultural beliefs, coupled with the easy availability and long-recognized benefits of medicinal plants, mean that herbal medicine continues to play a major role in health care.

Traditionally, knowledge of medicinal plants and their use has been transferred orally from generation to generation. The South Pacific countries, however, are made up of many isolated islands. This isolation has limited the spread of information on herbal medicine within the area, even between neighbouring islands. Other parts of the world are even less familiar with medicinal plants of the South Pacific.

With the publication of this book, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific, aims to record current knowledge on medicinal plants from all areas of the South Pacific. The book presents information and colour pictures on 102 species of South Pacific medicinal plants, in an attempt to bring information on their easy identification, composition and use to a wider audience and to contribute to the health of people living in other parts of the world where the same plants may be found. It is also hoped that it will encourage governments and health workers in South Pacific countries to formalize the use of traditional plant-based remedies in their health care services.



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