

A Bit About Herbal Medicine

Herbal remedies are a hot topic throughout magazines and other advertisements. We see St. John's Wort as a depression remedy, Echinacea to help ward off colds and chamomile to calm us down after a long, stressful day. Herbal preparations are popping up all over grocery stores shelves and your local pharmacy. There has been an influx of alternative practitioners that have sprung up in the last few years and even some doctors are prescribing herbal remedies to their patients. What is herbal medicine? Herbal medicine is the use of herbs for their therapeutic or medicinal value. Some people call it plant or botanical medicine. This type of medicine is better used for keeping yourself in good shape so you do not get faced with a serious illness, even though there have been success stories of curing serious and chronic illnesses with plants. So what exactly are these plants called herbs? Herbs are plants or a plant part that has some sort of chemical substance that acts upon the body. Herbs can be taken in many different ways. They are found in capsules, teas, tinctures and other products like lotions and oils. Believe it or not, the oldest form of healthcare known to mankind is herbal medicine. Before pharmacies ever existed, people used plants to cure and treat illnesses and injuries. Plants were one of the most important things to man millions of years ago. They helped feed him, shelter him, clothe him and provided healthcare. It is thought that people learned which plants were poisonous based on how the animals around them acted after eating the plant. Even today, according to the World Health Organization estimates, around eighty percent of the world's population, a whopping four billion people, uses herbal medicine for some form of their healthcare needs. Many different alternative therapies such as acupuncture, oriental and homeopathy may have some sort of herbal component to them. Pharmaceutical companies use herbal components in some of their products as well. As an example, aspirin contains white willow bark. These companies know that plants have been in use for millions of years and that there must be a reason why, so they conduct large full-scale tests to see if they can use them in their products. One of the major areas that the pharmaceutical companies are looking at is the rainforest, as there are thousands of plants that have not yet been discovered. When there is destruction to the rainforest areas, we may never know if we have lost a plant that was a cure for a disease. People are becoming more interested in herbs as medicines, because they feel these are safer alternatives to a lot of the pharmaceutical drugs which have so many side effects. The truth is, though, plants are powerful medicines and need to be respected as such. Before taking any herbal medicine, it is important to check with your doctor or herbalist; because some herbs can interfere with medicines you may currently be taking. Also, not all plants medicines may be right for your particular condition. Herbal medicine will most likely be around for a long time, as long as we don't destroy all the plants!

About the Author

Electronic, internet, and print resources in agriculture and veterinary.

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