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An understanding of therapeutic plants is rapidly growing and changing, meaning it is vital that students and therapists in the field keep abreast of these developments for the benefit of their current and future patients. Fundamental to this is the need to have accurate and up-to-date text books. In this regard, the third edition of *The Constituents of Medicinal Plants* by Andrew Wherry has addressed a crucial need and is a welcome addition to my library. The new understanding of the therapeutic uses of plants has revealed several important issues that have the potential to impact on the quality, safety and efficacy of herbal products. It is essential that all practitioners and students of herbal medicine, whatever their philosophical leanings, have the tools to understand and manage these issues. An effective understanding of the science of modern herbal practice begins with a sound knowledge of the phytochemistry and related therapeutics of medicinal plants.

The new edition from Andrew is a comprehensive introduction to the wide range of chemical classes found in plants that are understood to confer their therapeutic activity. A major advantage is that the book assumes only a basic understanding of chemistry, making it an ideal primer for students and practitioners alike. However, it quickly brings the reader into more sophisticated territory without falling into the trap of being overly reductionist or technical. The book is full of many chemical diagrams and the wide-ranging discussion of pharmacological activities and safety considerations.

The new third edition has been thoroughly revised to incorporate the latest research. It contains a new chapter on resin and cannabinoid, and additional chapters on essential oil chemotypes, the important area of mushroom polysaccharides, together with a discussion of phytochemical synthesis and updates on the toxicology of plant constituents.

The author is a well-known and respected authority on medicinal plants with decades of experience in the field. Through his teaching in Australia and overseas, Andrew has helped to pioneer the scientific approach to herbal practice, without losing sight of its traditional underpinnings.

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