Advances in Medicinal Plant Research
Edited by S.N. Acharya and J.E. Thomas.
Research Signpost India, T.C. 37/661(2), Fort P.O.,
ISBN 81-7736-255-0.

Plant-based neutraceuticals are as old as human life, and yet, as mentioned in the book’s preface, there is very little research-based information related to these products. Nonetheless, this is a growing area of research, where a large number of plants and crop species are potential candidates considered for providing value-added products and novel compounds with applications in medicine and therapy.

The purpose of this book is to describe some of the advances recently made in the field of medicinal plant research, namely with regards to sources of potential medicinal products, the effects of such medicinal products on human and animal health, and cultivation techniques to produce these compounds of interest. This book constitutes a comprehensive reference on the subject, with several chapters reviewing the current literature. Each of these chapters is written by authors with a high level of expertise in the various areas covered. A wide variety of plant species from various areas of the globe are included.

The book comprises twenty-one chapters covering a variety of subjects, starting with plant sources of medicinal and neutraceutical products (cannabis, Echinacea, tomatoes, soybean, fenugreek, red clover, alfalfa, rosemary, marigold, mushrooms, green tea, native Australian plants, Their medicinal and neutraceutical properties. The book also includes Small, which demonstrates how cannabis of essential oils, neutraceuticals, and functional as oilseed, hempseed, and seed oil. In Duttaroy, a critical evaluation of the validity of the claims made for Echinacea is discussed. This is followed by a chapter by Duttaroy, where tomato’s lycopene and other compounds have shown a role in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases as well as anti-thrombic effects.

Soybean’s isoflavones and their potential health benefits are reviewed in Seguin et al., which also includes a description of various environmental management practices that impact the isoflavone content in soybean. A chapter on the medicinal properties of fenugreek by Acharya et al. discusses fenugreek compounds that have been found to lower blood sugar and cholesterol concentrations, as well as their properties which could help treat diabetes, obesity, and coronary heart diseases. In Papadopoulos and Tsao, the properties of red clover isoflavones are reviewed. In particular, this chapter evaluates how phytochemicals contribute to the maintenance of health and the prevention of chronic diseases. In addition, the chemical properties and genetic variance of the isoflavones found in red clover are summarized. This chapter also describes the biological, genetic, and agronomic properties of alfalfa and its several secondary metabolites such as saponins and phytoestrogens which have applications in cholesterolemia and cancer.

In Bandara et al., rosemary’s essential oils with respect to their use in perfumery and food processing are discussed, with particular reference to their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.