

Medicinal Plants in Australia. Volume 4 – An Antipodean Apothecary

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This comprehensive reference work transcends being a mere list of medicinally beneficial plants, becoming instead a quite engrossing read. You can easily lose yourself in chapters entitled “A desire for dirt?” or “Pituri: A mysterious narcotic” filled with details and hundreds of color illustrations. In 12 chapters, this book covers the wide range of decidedly different plants from Australia, and their utilization by natives and visitors over centuries. Williams delicately balances many details from ethnographic, historical, pharmaceutical, and other sources, creating a book that certainly looks beyond Australia’s borders. She also describes many animals and their relationships to plants, such as the “ravenous” termite called the Mastro (*Mastrotermes darwiniensis*), known to digest “car tyres, electrical and telephone cables, bitumen, rubber, and PVC pipes.” This book should find a happy place on many a reference shelf where it will rarely gather dust.

— Edward Valauskas, curator of Rare Books, Chicago Botanic Garden