

New Book, "Bush Medicine of the Bahamas" is the 2012 Recipient of Mary W. Klinger Book Award for Outstanding Book of the Year

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December 03, 2012, 7:29 am -- [/EPR NETWORK/](#) -- Ethnobotanist, Jeffrey H. McCormack, Ph.D., says that what makes "Bush Medicine of the Bahamas" unique is its innovative, multi-faceted, cross-cultural approach that integrates oral history with botany, anthropology, and pharmacology. Its integrative approach and readable style make it especially appealing to Caribbean travelers, herbal practitioners, and educators. It also serves as a guide to medicinal flora.

The residents of the Bahamas practice a form of traditional medicine using tropical plants for curing diseases and treating ailments. On his website (<http://www.bushmedicine.org>) lead author, Jeffrey H. McCormack, Ph.D., writes that the enslaved African ancestors of the Bahamian people brought to the New World a practical knowledge of medicinal plants, and a legacy of "medicinal plant literacy" that helped them "read" and recognize the potential healing qualities of the many new and unfamiliar plants of the Bahamas. Under the influence of European and colonial practices, their diverse beliefs and healing practices were then simplified, distilled, transformed, reformulated, and further refined by generations of experimentation. This distinctive form of medicine is of value today for what it tells us of a unique culture, traditional healing, and the therapeutic value of their plants.

"Bush Medicine of the Bahamas" is the recipient of the 2012 Mary W. Klinger Book Award for outstanding book of the year, awarded annually by the Society for Economic Botany. The book has also been selected for the 19th annual Virginia Festival of the Book held in Charlottesville, Virginia, March 20-24, 2013.

Dr. McCormack says that the book is a comprehensive treatment of Bahamian bush medicine, dedicated to the preservation and continued use of this knowledge before it is lost. Chapters explore the cultural roots, principles, and practice of bush medicine. The materia medica covers 120 medicinal plants and 22 non-botanical remedies, including details of administration and dosage, pharmacology, and cross-cultural uses of bush medicine. Throughout the book, colorful oral histories provide details of the healers' practices and glimpses of the culture of San Salvador Island in the Bahamas. What makes the book sing are the oral histories and personal stories. As internationally-celebrated nature writer Gary Paul Nabhan has written, "... what beautiful stories they are, some of them with healing power in their own right."

This book can also serve as a field guide to medicinal flora and will therefore be of interest to nature-minded travelers throughout the Caribbean. Currently, it is available through several distributors in the Bahamas and U.S., and online at <http://www.bushmedicine.org/orders-retail.html>

Published by JHM Designs Publications, Charlottesville, VA, this is a large hardcover book (9" x 12" x 1") of nearly 400 pages, including 161 illustrations (104 in color). Additional illustrations include photographs of bush medicine practitioners and island landscapes where they harvest their plant medicines. A dictionary of Bahamian dialect is included in the appendix. There are four indexes including common name, scientific name, subject index, and index of medicinal plants according to principal uses.

Excellent advance reviews from Gary Paul Nabhan, James A. Duke, Rosita Arvigo, and Roy Upton. For example: "This is the most comprehensive and richest ethnobotanical presentation on traditional bush medicine that I have seen ..."

The lead author, Jeffrey Holt McCormack, Ph.D., is formerly a faculty member at Middlebury College, and the University of Virginia. Trained in natural products chemistry and physiological plant ecology he has worked in the fields of sustainable agriculture, genetic preservation, plant breeding, and ethnobotany. Co-author, Kathleen Maier, P.A., RH, is a nationally known herbalist, and recipient of the first Medicinal Plant Conservation Award bestowed by the United Plant Savers. Co-author, Patty Wallens, M.A., has a background in medical interviewing and home-based counseling.

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