

# History of Plants



The first text ever written about plants in medicine is on clay. It comprises a set of tablets engraved with cuneiform letters and its writers, the Sumerians, compiled it some 3000 years B.C.

Thus begins the official history of phytotherapy, although it is known that, in fact, man made very early use of plants, both as food and as remedies.

Since then, man has continued his unbroken quest for a better knowledge of plants, their secrets and their beneficial properties. Nowadays, science is making such strides that new horizons are opening up for phytotherapy: new, cutting-edge scientific methods of gaining knowledge of the active principles of plants, the discovery of new properties, new and more convenient forms of use designed to suit the needs of modern-day life. Plants have now become actual medicines.

## A FEW DATES:

**3000 B.C.** : The first known compilation, on clay tablets, of plant formulae listing up to 250 plant species (discovered in 1948 - Mesopotamia).

**1500 B.C.** : The Ebers papyri of the Pharaonic civilizations mention several hundred medicinal plants.

**400 B.C.** : Hippocrates, the illustrious Greek physician, seeks to explain the virtues of plants and writes the "*Corpus Hippocratum*", which deals with about 250 "*simples*" (the first plants traditionally used).

**1st century A.D.** : Dioscorides, another Greek physician, writes his famous "*De Materia Medica*", listing 600 "*simples*", destined to remain, for centuries, the reference work on plants.

**During the 2nd century** : Galen, yet another Greek physician, codifies the use of plants and develops a large number of magistral formulations.

**15th century** : Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama bring medicinal plants back from their voyages. People talk about the "***Plants of the Discovery***".

**16th century** : Paracelsus defines the notion of an active principle. Research into plant morphology is performed in order to explain their therapeutic activity. People talk about the "***Theory of Signatures***".

**1986** : In France, the Ministry of Health suggests regulations to cover Product Licenses for plant-based patent medicines.

## The Other Medicine

"Standard" or "chemical" medicines are often set up against phytotherapy. Yet there is a place for each of them in the therapeutic weaponry available to us nowadays. While it is a fact that "standard" pharmacy has held center-stage for nearly a century because of the excellent results that it has made it possible to achieve in many spheres, nonetheless, little by little, unwanted side effects have crept in that nowadays sound a call for caution.

"Health" medicines, the fruits of phytotherapy, offer primary treatments whose gentler action will help you to prevent illness and treat chronic problems such as arthrosis or insomnia, for example. For this purpose, phytotherapy acts in depth, without attacking the body and by stimulating good reactions. The result: more effective and longer-lasting action, and above all free from side effects.

## Phytotherapy's Success

Our era is deeply marked by the quest for a healthier life, a return to nature, to essential values. With its deep, gentle action, phytotherapy emerges as the ideal answer to the "modern-day ills" characteristic of our society, such as stress, sleep loss or weight gain.

Phytotherapy's success is also explained by the level of technical and scientific expertise nowadays achieved in this field. Agronomy, chemistry and pharmacology, as they advanced, have made it possible to develop safer, more suitable and more effective therapeutic and pharmaceutical forms.

Because their action is so gentle, the health medicines derived from phytotherapy are your day-to-day allies. Children, like their parents, can thus enjoy phytotherapy's benefits. Do not hesitate to ask your pharmacist for advice. As a well-informed scientist, he will be able to guide your choice.

## A Recognized Science

It was in 1986 that phytotherapy was officially recognized as a medicine in its own right by the Ministry of Health in France. By way of incontrovertible proof of their efficacy, the medicines recommended in phytotherapy all have specific active principle contents, which means that they contain active substances in greater or lesser, but always known, concentrations.