

Book Review

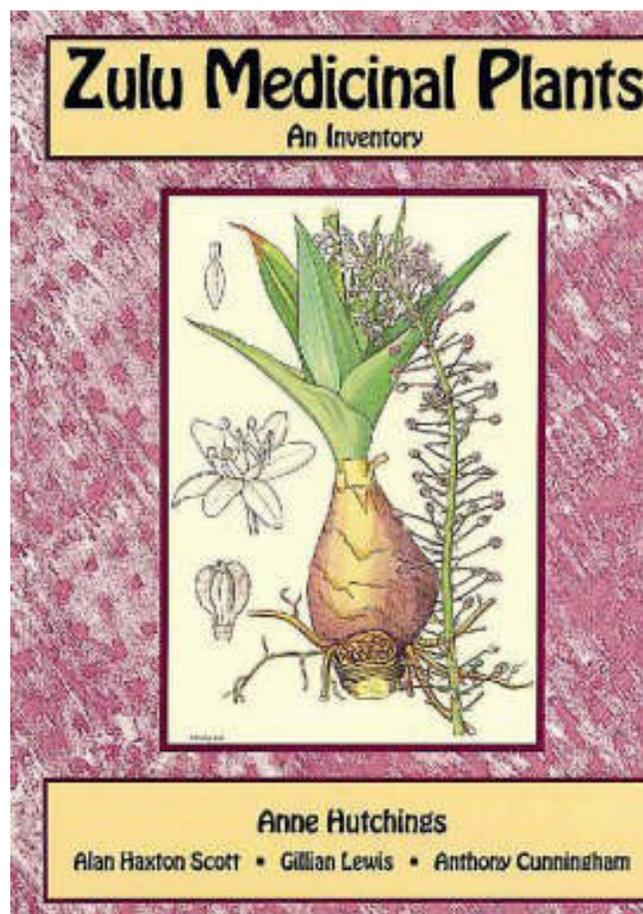
Book Review

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^bEnvironmental Futures Research Institute, Nathan Campus, Griffith University, 170 Kessels Rd, Nathan, Brisbane, Queensland 4111, Australia. Dear readers and Authors,



Zulu Medicinal Plants. An Inventory; 1996.
Ann Hutchings, Alan Haxton Scott, Gillian Lewis and
Anthony Cunningham.
University of Natal Press, South Africa.

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The African continent has a rich botanical diversity and wide ranging traditional medicine systems. Whilst South African ethnopharmacology has been better documented than for many other African regions, much of the traditional knowledge is still passed on orally and is yet to be recorded. Even amongst arguably one of the best known and studied African ethnic groups, the Zulus, much knowledge has not yet been documented. 'Zulu Medicinal Plants. An Inventory' provides an inventory of over 1000 Zulu medicinal plants. It provides an exhaustive literature review and in so doing documents the uses of approximately 25% of the entire flora of the Kwa Zulu Natal province. Medicinal plants are identified using not only species names and common English names, but are also using Zulu and Afrikaans. The book provides information on the traditional Zulu medicinal usage of each species, as well as the usage (where known) by other ethnic groups. The known chemical compounds are itemized and the biological properties and physiological effects are listed. Furthermore, the characteristic chemistry of each plant family, their bio activities, pharmacological usage and toxicities (where known) are provided. To enable easy reference to the species used for specific ailments, a table of Zulu, Xhosa and So tho usage is included. This book is an invaluable resource for anyone with an interest in the medicinal plants of this bio diverse region and how they are used in traditional healing. It is recommended for botanists, chemists, ethnopharmacologists and anthropologists. Whilst it is aimed at an academic audience, it may also be useful for knowledgeable lay persons with an interest in plants of this region.