



# *Ethnobotanical Leaflets*

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Carbondale, IL 62901, U.S.A.



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## **Potions, Poisons, and Panaceas**

### **An Ethnobotanical Study of Montserrat**

By David Eric Brussell

Foreword by Richard Evans Schultes, Harvard University

Preface by J.-P.Theurillat, Conservatoire Botanique, Geneva, Switzerland

This ethnobotanical study of the island of Montserrat is an engaging catalog rich in information about plants and the integral part they play in Caribbean culture, history, and folklore.

In addition to twenty-four color plates and fifty-two black-and-white photographs, Brussell's study contains an exhaustive list of 378 botanical entries, featuring 282 species of ethnobotanically important plants representing 78 families.

David Eric Brussell begins this volume with an informative summary of the previous botanical research of the flora of Montserrat conducted by early scientists and explorers. He then describes his own collecting methodology and looks at the significance of the Study area's geography, climate, vegetation, and history. His extensive catalog of the plants and their uses, however, comprises the major portion of the book, with the appendix listing all the collected plants as well as the author's field collection records.

Of particular note is Brussell's investigation of the flora in regard to Caribbean culture. As a result Of his extensive interviews with the West Indian people, Brussell was able to observe their myriad utilizations of the plants in voodoo rituals and practices and as medicines and foodstuffs. Informants also reported using some plants its aphrodisiacs and poisons, insecticides and insect repellents, dyes, building materials, and industrial chemicals.

Brussell's research suggests that further pharmacological investigations of Montserrat's bioactive plants may yield new medicines, noncarcinogenic insect repellents, or environmentally safe insecticides.

David Eric Brussell is the senior biologist at Pacific Quest, Inc., Haleiwa, Hawaii, and an adjunct assistant professor of plant biology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

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