

FROM OUR BOOK-SHELF

SKIN-IRRITANT AND SENSITIZING PLANTS FOUND IN INDIA: By P. N. Behl, M. B., F. R. C. P. (Edin.) and R. M. Captain, Ph. D., assisted by B. M. S. Bedi, M. D. and S. Gupta, Ph. D. First Edition; Published by: Dr. P. N. Behl, Dermatologist; Irwin Hospital, New Delhi, 1966.

This well-written monograph very lucidly describes 270 plants responsible for irritating and sensitizing the skin. India, being a vast country, has an astronomical number of irritant and sensitizing plants, weeds as well as shrubs. The problem of phyto-dermatoses and phyto-photo-dermatoses is huge in our country.

Skin specialists and general practitioners are often handicapped in such cases because their knowledge of the chemical constituents, baffling vernacular names and characteristic botanical features is inadequate.

The authors have very concisely described each plant under the following headings; botanical name, vernacular name, botanical features, distribution, chemical constituents and dermatoses likely to be caused. Excellent photographs, including a nice colour plate of the marking ink dermatitis, have been given. This monograph is profusely illustrated and includes numerous attractive plant sketches.

These illustrations will enable practising physicians to recognise the offending plant.

Common offending families of irritant plants have been given in Table I while Table II mentions offending vegetables; fruits, oils, spices, condiments, woods, flowers, shrubs, cacti, succulents, grasses and weeds. Table III gives irritant parts of various plants.

Bibliographical references and a glossary of botanical terms have been given at the end of the main text. The book is well-indexed and the get-up is excellent. The authors no doubt deserve praise for bringing out such a fine monograph combining botanical and dermatological information, for the ready reference of dermatologists and general practitioners. This unique treatise will definitely serve the purpose for which it is meant.

—S. J. YAWALKAR
