

PLANTS *and the* PLAGUE

The Herbal Frontline

By Marcus Harrison

PRESS / NEWS RELEASE

Plague has gone down in history as one of the terrors of humanity, and if there was perhaps but one word to conjure fear in the minds of people centuries ago it would have been that of 'plague'. Without any understanding of germ-theory physicians could only attempt to deal with the visible symptoms of a plague attack and not overcome the bacterium at its' heart, *Yersinia pestis*.



Plants and the Plague looks at around three dozen plant species used in the herbal medicine response to plague and pestilence from the 14th to 19th centuries. The work also looks at the clinical background to the disease, past medical thinking on the plague, accepted courses of treatment formerly used, and numerous remedies that the selected herbal plants found their way into. It is a story of superstition, tragedies of error, and faith in misguided medical precepts, but also one of much bravery on the part of those doctors and physicians who stayed behind to treat the afflicted and dying in the face of this killer disease that still haunts corners of the tropical and sub-tropical world, even today.

The text of *Plants and the Plague* draws on, and quotes extensively from, over a hundred contemporary herbal, medical, and historical sources that reach as far back as the 14-15th century, and keeps as true as possible with the old herbal recipes, grammatical structure, and style of the language.

Plants and the Plague is a real 'must' for anyone with an interest in, or studying, the History of Medicine or Herbalism, and its' publication in February 2015 coincides with the 350th anniversary of the Great Plague of London although the book is not specifically about the 1665 London epidemic.

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