

PREFACE

This book will help to create a clear understanding of some of the herbal medicine that have been practiced by the Maroons over many years. The African slaves who were taken from their African homeland arrived in Jamaica with only the traditional knowledge that they had acquired through the ages. They were very familiar with the medicinal usage of herbs, plants and fruits that grew in motherland Africa. When they arrived to the West Indies, they found the same kinds of herbs, plants and fruit useful for medicine growing in abundance. Today, we continue to use these herbal remedies.

During the days of slavery and for sometime thereafter, the traditional knowledge of how to use these herbs played a vital role in the life of the Maroon communities. At that time in history, there was not easy access to medical doctors, therefore the medicine man or “bush doctor” was the person who continued African traditions. They were greatly respected and much sought after to heal people. The Maroons have over the years continued to experiment with many of these herbs. We have gained much more knowledge on how to use herbs for medicine, but we did not share this information with outsiders. The rise of new diseases, and increased outbreaks necessitated the need to share information. Today, much of the traditional knowledge we possess is now common shared knowledge to others. As a people we are proud of the progress that has been made by our forefathers. They have in no small way helped in the advancement of the healthcare of our nation. If we continue to appreciate what God has freely given to us than we can only be better off in the long run.

It is a custom of the Maroons, that whenever you cut down one tree, you remember to plant two more to replace the one you have destroyed. The herbs and plants will only take care of us, only when we take care of them. I sincerely hope that this book will be of use to those who read it. For those who helped compile the information you have my sincere gratitude. You have opened a door that will surely be welcome by the many that shall enter.

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