

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, 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 who shall enter.

Col. Wallace G. Sterling

Colonel. Wallace G. Sterling
Leader of the Windward Maroons

FORWARD

On behalf of the Portland Environment Protection Association (PEPA), I would like to thank all those who contributed to making this book a reality. This book is the vision of Miss Summer Austin and I am very happy we have been able to make it come to life. Summer's research with both the herbalists and Dr. Thomas, as well as her determination to make this book happen, has been invaluable. I must also thank the United States Peace Corps who placed Summer with PEPA to our mutual benefit.

I want to especially thank the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Office of the Environment, not only for providing the grant for this project but for the assistance of their staff. Mr. Howard Batson and Mrs. Karen McDonald-Gayle really provided terrific support and encouragement to get this book completed. Also Summer and the research of Dr. Thomas have been critical and we could not have brought this book to life without you, I truly want to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

I also want to thank the Institute of Jamaica, The University of the West Indies at Mona and of course the herbalists and illustrator who devoted their time, talent and energy to this important initiative.

Harvey Webb, CEO
Portland Environment Protection Association