Medicinal uses of flowers

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Flowers in Agriculture

- Two types of plant/crops grown in agriculture for food or medicinal use:
 - Produced for leaves, stems, tubers
 - Produced for reproductive parts of the plant
 - » This always starts with the flower of the plant
 - » The part that is used may be the flower itself or the fruit or seed

Flowers are used in food and medicine

- Examples of food (vegetables and herbs)
 - Broccoli, cauliflower, artichoke:



– Saffron (<=name of food/spice; plant is: Crocus):</p>



Flowers are used in food and medicine

- Examples of medicine
 - St John's Wort (Hypericum perfoliatum)
 - » used to treat depression and nerve pain
 - Rose
 - » petals are anti-depressive
 - Chamomile
 - » Herbal tea





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- They focus on the medicinal uses of plants
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- Shanghai, China
- They focus on the medicinal uses of plants
- This is NOT an artform; rather it is science
- They have a museum:



Some "very strange" meds:

Also, lots of info on acupuncture





There is a lot of recorded history



Research into active compound today

- For each traditional medicine there is a long history of testing and documentation
- In most cases there was, in the past, no way to determine what the compound was.
- Today we have some modern scientific tools that allow us to identify the compounds.
 - Gas chromatography; Mass spectrometry, chemistry,...
 - These tools are being used at the TCMU to investigate what some of the old medicines are

Are the flowers having an effect on us?

- Of course, yes:
 - but is this our own perception? (i.e. a human trait rather than a trait of the plant?)
 - Is it possible for flowers to manipulate us (as a plant trait)
 - » Remember in the scent lecture you saw a plant manipulating a bee with its scent
 - Many of you showed clear signs of being manipulated by the plants when you we were selecting one for your needs.
 - » Makes you wonder: was it your needs that were being met, or the needs of the plant?

Medicines

- Compounds that have some effect on us in ways other than food
- Induces some sort of change in us

Chrysanthemum



Rose

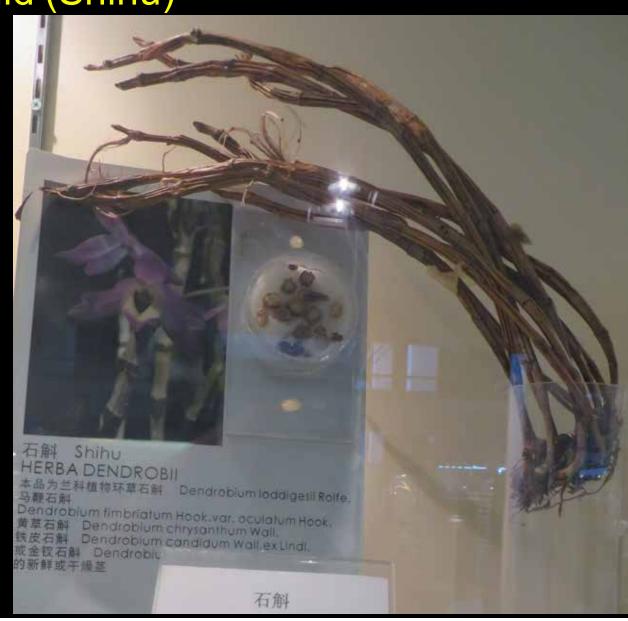


Magnolia



Dendrobium orchid (Shihu)

(The stem is used)



Note that much more is likely to be found

- We need to not forget what our ancestors learned
- We should explore what they observed; investigate using modern tools
- We should not get trapped in old beliefs! But they may offer a hint to us.

Speaker Introduction

Dr Robert Flannery, PhD

Presentation that involves medicinal use of a flower