

A CLINICAL MATERIA MEDICA: 120 HERBS IN WESTERN USE

By **Jeremy Ross**

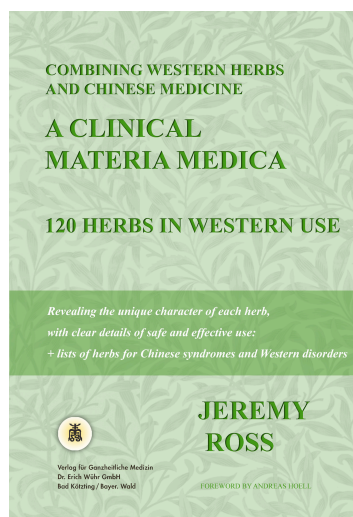
The latest book from Jeremy Ross *A Clinical Materia Medica: 120 herbs in Western Use* has now been published by the Verlag für Ganzheitliche Medizin Dr. Erich Wühr GmbH, Bad Kötzing. It is the second in his planned series of books on *Combining Western herbs with Chinese Medicine*.

True to his concept, Jeremy Ross discusses and unites traditional sources of Western herbalism, modern phytopharmacological research and traditional Chinese Medicine. Regarding these three vast subjects there is an extensive wealth of diverse and complex information to be found. Using his own models of combination and integration, Jeremy Ross succeeds in reducing this overwhelming mass of information into practical bitesizes.

The introduction starts by giving a neat overview of the structure of the book, together with the principles and practice of combining herbs, dosage and dispensing.

The core of this material medica is made up of 120 herbs, aesthetically and succinctly presented on two to three pages per herb. Each chapter has a clear structure, starting with botanical details and one of Inken Töpffer's fine illustrations. Following this, in well-arranged fashion, are important details on the herb according to the principles of TCM: temperature, taste, organ relationship, functions and actions. These are then summarized into tabular format, including Western uses.

At a glance one can not only access the traditional Chinese action and Western indications of one given herb, but also the respective herb pairs, which are the basic building blocks for a potential prescription.



Following that, the relationship to uses in Western and Chinese herbal practice is mentioned; both traditional and modern applications are thoroughly cited.

In special sections, some herbs are compared according to their similarities and differences, with Jeremy Ross differentiating between herbs with similar actions of the same category. This overview is most useful for everyday prescribing, as it greatly facilitates selecting one herb from a category of herbs with similar traits.

As to the phyto-pharmacological sections, they are kept clear and basic. Sections on "Dosage and Dispensing" as well as "Safety" are clearly laid out and comprehensive, and their content is reliable, well researched and very applicable. In this fashion, Jeremy Ross meets the needs of many fellow colleagues working with herbs, enabling them to base their herbal prescriptions upon solid therapeutic grounds.

The appendix *Herbs for TCM syndromes* features 125 syndrome combinations with details on symptoms, pulse and tongue diagnosis and a list of matching herbs. Certainly, such a list hardly replaces studying Western and Chinese medicine foundations on diagnostics and materia medica, but serves very well for quick referencing during a consultation.

At the end of the book there are even more tables and glossaries including abundant information, for example: one table comprises all 120 herbs according to TCM classification; one glossary includes Western indications with matching herb pairs; yet another glossary lists all herb pairs mentioned with Western indications for one herb. There are also glossaries on botanical, German, English, Chinese and pharmacological terminology.

Aided by the book's very appealing design, the author has achieved a highly successful portrayal of this multifaceted topic; there is much to be seen at a single glance and further information is rapidly accessible. No less impressive are Jeremy's thorough citations and numerous cross-references (about 1200), in which he brings to bear his expertise as a well-grounded teacher and established author of textbooks.

A Clinical Materia Medica is a true achievement; set at a high standard, it is clearly conceived for practice. I have my copy in daily use, and I continue to find valuable ideas for making up safe and effective prescriptions.

In summary, this is a reference book for Western and TCM practitioners as well as a fount of inspiration for phytopharmacologists working in science.

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