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Rośliny przyprawowe – rośliny lecznicze jako motyw ekslibrysu

Spice plants – medicinal plants as a motif in exlibris

SUMMARY

Many plants that man has known from the earliest times of humankind also have a place in contemporary official medicine, although now they are less frequently used in a direct way. They do, however, form a basis for producing many composite drugs, as well as pure isolated medicinal substances, which are easy in dosage and thus make the therapeutic process easy to control. Many of those plants are staple components of our diet, as well as spices that are used in our kitchens on an everyday basis. They add flavour and aroma to dishes and also keep food from decaying. Additionally they function to stimulate digestion by increasing the secretion of saliva, and digestive juices in the stomach and in the gall bladder. They also regulate the bacterial flora of the digestive tract, which has an impact on the level of general health of a person.

Most of today's spices from Asia, Africa and Europe have been known since antiquity, where they were used in the cultures of ancient Egypt, Sumer, Assyria and Greece. To a large extent, the spread of those spices is attributable to the Arabs, and later to European explorers. The stock of spice plants grew even larger after the discovery of America by the Europeans. The value of spices was so great that special expeditions were organized to obtain them, and their importation into Europe cost many a human life; however, this contributed to many exotic species finding their way into, for instance, the court of King Władysław Jagiełło.

Recent years have brought about discoveries of many new compounds in spice plants, which has allowed such plants to acquire new uses in treatment. One of these involves the rhizome of ginger, which is used as an anti-emetic in motion sickness in the form of the "Avioplant" preparation. The medicinal and spice plants presented in the paper have been comprised in thirteen exlibris dedicated to Mario de Filippis, the greatest collector of bookplates in the world, and also an excellent restaurateur from Arezzo near Rome.

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