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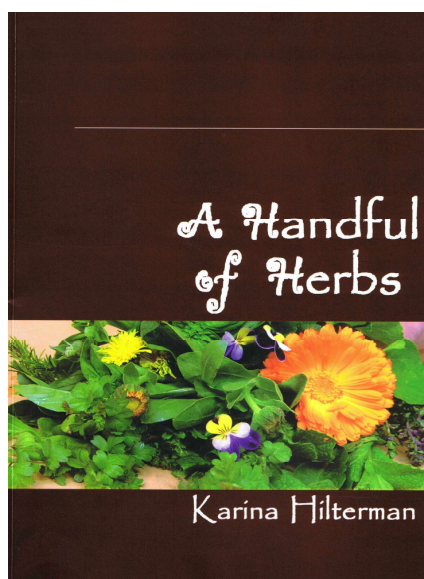
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A Handful of Herbs

Karina Hilterman. Published by Karina@Lavender Hill, 2004
(<http://www.lavenderhillherbals.com>) and distributed by Southern Publishers Group
(hub@spg.co.nz). ISBN 097516130X. Contains 64 pages. Price \$24.95

This charming New Zealand book was easy to read and I really enjoyed it, especially when I found some pages on lemon balm which is growing like wildfire in my garden. According to the book, “a strong infusion of lemon balm can be used as a compress on insect bites, and as an infused oil it can be used as an insect repellent.” I must try it against sandflies the next time I go to the West Coast!



The book is suitable for anyone interested in herbal alternative/complementary medicine, aromatherapy, gardening, or cooking. If you are interested in some or all of those things, then you will probably love it.

The author, Karina Hilterman, sounds interesting too—she claims to have healed herself of SLE simply by using garlic and *Echinacea*. Then, wanting to share her enthusiasm and knowledge, she became a qualified Medical Herbalist (Diploma in Herbal Medicine from Waikato Centre for Herbal Studies) and has conducted local workshops throughout New Zealand plus founded the annual *New Zealand Herb Awareness Week*.

Despite some initial doubts about the book’s unusual “flowery” font in brown, I got used to it. And, as an editor, I should also point out that there are a few typos. But, more seriously, whether some of the efficacies are as good as claimed is debatable (and perhaps not scientifically proven), although that is not really in the scope of this review. I cannot fault the stylish cover and pages—both are sturdy and the oversized cover feels like it would repel a spill, a useful consideration as it may live in the kitchen.

Two pages are dedicated to each of the 29 herbs (such as garlic, chamomile, and ginger) featured. Included amongst them are some weeds (e.g. chickweed and burdock) as well as plain old apple and cabbage. The book ends with useful Glossary, Preparations (very briefly telling you how to make an infusion, decoction, syrup, tincture, herb vinegar, herb wine, infused oil, compress, and poultice respectively), Australian and New Zealand Herb Societies, and Recommended Further Reading sections.

A strong feature of this book is its consistent use of headings throughout: Identification; Cultivation and Harvesting; Constituents (including active components); Therapeutic Actions; Medicinal Uses; Dosage (with cautions or

contraindications if applicable); Culinary Use (sometimes a recipe is listed); and Folklore, Mysticism, or Superstitions attached to the herb. Each herb is drawn, and short snappy sentences filled with facts and interesting side notes also enhance the book's readability.

In summary I think it is a good value book that introduces and summarises common herbs well while not bogging readers down with too much detail and jargon. Recommended.

Brennan Edwardes
Production Editor, NZMJ