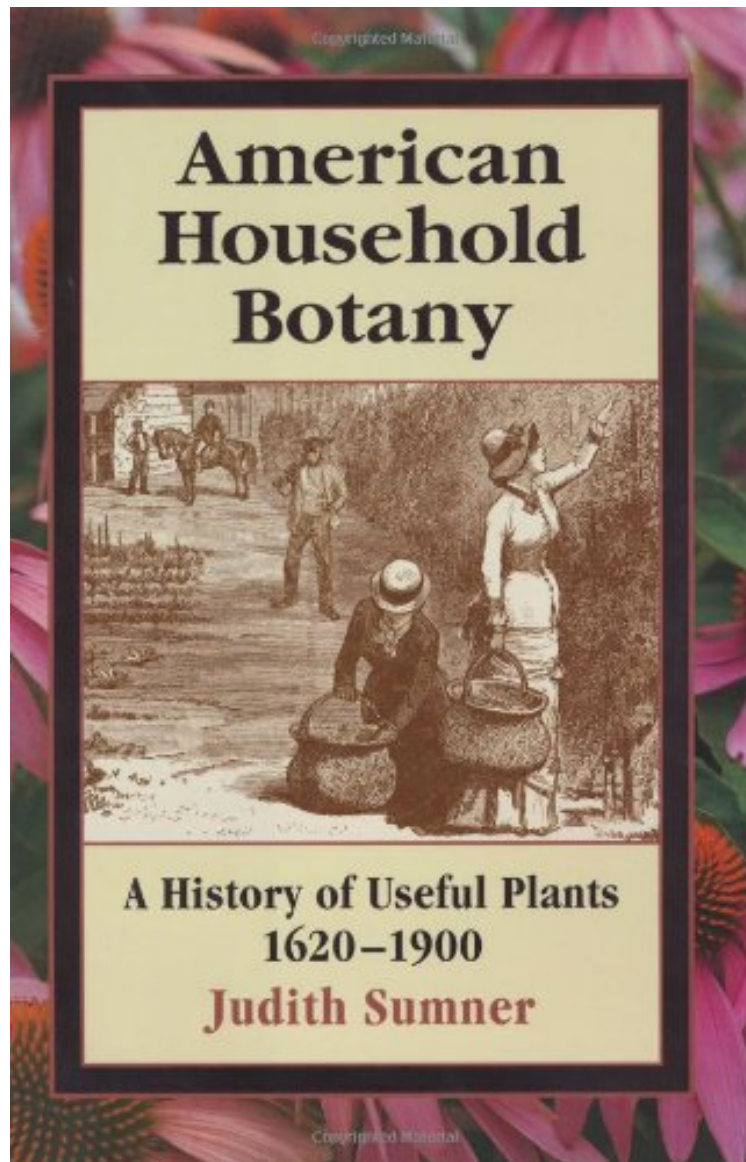


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## American Household Botany: A History of Useful Plants, 1620-1900

Judith Sumner

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**Judith Sumner : American Household Botany: A History of Useful Plants, 1620-1900** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Household Botany: A History of Useful Plants, 1620-1900:

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In this fascinating book, celebrated author Judith Sumner rescues from the pages of history the practical experience and botanical wisdom of generations of Americans. Crossing the disciplines of history, ethnobotany, and horticulture --- and with a flair for the colorful anecdote --- Sumner underlines a part of the American story often ignored or forgotten: how European settlers and their descendents made use of the "strange" new plants they found, as well as the select varieties of foods and medicines they brought with them from other continents. From "turkie wheat" (corn) to "tuckahoe" (a Native American source of starch), Sumner describes the transition from wonderment to daily use, as homesteads were built upon and prospered from the plants of the New World. It is a remarkable story of the interdependence of plants and the American home. Historians, herbalists, home gardeners, and ethnobotanists will find *American Household Botany* a treasure trove of original research and insight.

From BooklistSumner examines nearly two hundred years of American know-how, offering a captivating perspective on how plants have been used in the home. The foodstuffs of Native American agriculture and the gardens of European settlers are first studied, from the preparation of many kinds of grains to arrays of fruits, berries, and vegetables found in the kitchen gardens at Monticello. Early "herbals" and cookbooks provide background, which is supplemented by descriptions of botanical aspects such as toxic compounds or helpful medicinal properties. In great detail Sumner traces and documents preservation methods and wine making, and analyzes how the evolution of aromatic herbs and spices influenced the tastes and culinary habits of immigrants to the New World. A chapter on domestic medicine covers a fascinating cornucopia of plants cultivated for health, nourishment, and healing. Species that produce wood, fiber, and textiles are accorded equal attention. Attitudes toward the landscape and individuals who spread the word about botanical pursuits round out Sumner's well-researched study. Alice JoyceCopyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Sumner's findings make interesting reading. -- Suzanne Hively Cleveland Plain Dealer 20041007 Historians, herbalists, horticulturists, ethnobotanists, cooks and home gardeners will find many items of interest written in a delightful and useful manner in this comprehensive book. -- Joanne S. Carpender National Gardener 20041021 She has gathered often quite obscure information from a huge number of both primary and secondary sources for *American Household Botany* in order to tell utterly fascinating tales of ethnobotanical history. HortIdeas 20041216 Engaging and enlightening. -- Ilene Sternberg Wilmington News Journal 20041216 A fun and hearty read. -- Marion Owen UpBeet Gardener Newsletter 20041203 This is a treasure of original research and insight. -- Russell Studebaker Tulsa World 20041211 It is a remarkable story of the interdependence of plants and the American home. Historians, herbalists, home gardeners, and ethnobotanists will find *American Household Botany* a treasure trove of original research and insight. Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation Newsletter 20050209 Historians, herbalists, ethno-botanists, and even home gardeners will find [this book] a treasure trove ... an absolute joy to read. -- Larry Cox Tucson Citizen 20050210 The book traces the history of the immigrant's dependence on these unknown resources and provides a very well written lively history of the settler's numerous ways of coping with and utilising plants. -- Michael Heinrich Journal of Ethnopharmacology 20050308 Readers will discover many interesting tidbits about the geographical origins, folklore, and uses of particular plants. ... Readers will gain a good general introduction to plant science and discover the multitudinous ways in which plants play a part in people's lives. -- D. H. Pfister Choice 20050322 It makes a great gift for anyone who loves history or gardens or both. -- Mary Ann Newcomer Idaho Botanical Garden 20050329 History underground is unearthed in Judith Sumner's latest contribution to American studies. ... isn't nearly as dry as its title implies. In fact, the subject matter can get a bit dirty. -- Suzanne Moore Wichita Falls Times Record News 20050403 Sumner is an accomplished storyteller who weaves together fascinating information about plants and people. -- Linda Askey American Gardener 20050520 The subject as presented here is more than a factual history; it places these plants in the daily activities of people, from chores to rituals, and anchors them in a realistic landscape that has room for beauty as well as utilitarian function. -- Kim Long Bloomsbury 20050524 A sprightly tome, well written, and well researched, covering a range of topics... fascinating. -- Marvin J. Caldwell Taxon 20050211 Well documented, authoritative, eminently readable, and a good resource for several disciplines. -- Joann Karges Sida, Contributions to Botany 20050923 The book begins with foods cultivated by Native Americans, then discusses garden plots of European settlers that provided wood, fiber, and textiles. It gracefully merges history, ethnobotany, and horticulture, all spiced with colorful anecdotes. American Herb Association Quarterly Newsletter 20050101 *American Household Botany* is a great way to while away an afternoon. Each page is permeated with an abundance of fascinating facts and figures. ... [It] will amaze, delight, and inform. -- Lynette Walther Camden Herald 20060729From the AuthorJudith Sumner teaches medicinal botany at the Arnold

Arboretum of Harvard University and at the Garden in the Woods, the botanic garden of the New England Wild Flower Society in Framingham, Massachusetts.