



The Business of Botanicals

Exploring the Healing Promise of
Plant Medicines in a Global Industry

Ann Ambrecht

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**A provocative investigation into the global business of
herbal supplements and products—questioning whether it delivers on
its healing promise to consumers, suppliers, and the environment.**

Using herbal medicines to heal the body is an ancient practice, but in the twenty-first century, it is also a worldwide industry: In 2019, consumers spent over \$9 billion on herbal supplements. Yet most consumers know very little about where those herbs come from and how they are processed into the many products that fill store shelves.

Author Ann Ambrecht, director of the Sustainable Herbs Program of the American Botanical Council, reveals the inner workings of a complicated industry, with players that range from small farms where herbs are harvested by hand, to wild collectors who gather herbs using traditional practices, to industrial production fields where herbs are harvested by combines. Her investigation brings up questions about whether the health benefits of medicinal herbs can be preserved when production expands to an industrial scale. Ambrecht shares stories and insights from the people and places she visits around the world, including:

- An industrial facility in New Jersey that produces herbal supplements on a factory floor the size of a soccer field
- A mid-scale herb processing company in Poland struggling to implement rigorous fair-trade certification standards
- A mission-driven farm in Vermont building a network of herbalists committed to buying certified organic and domestically grown herbs for their products
- An ecologically conscious herb company working to protect endangered hornbills in India by creating a market for the fruit of the bibhitaki trees in which they nest

The Business of Botanicals is the first book to explore the interconnected web of the global herb industry and its many stakeholders, and will be an invaluable resource for consumers who want to better understand the safety and efficacy of the products they buy.

To request a review copy or author interview, please contact: Christina Butt, Senior Publicist, (802) 295-6300 ext. 127, or cbutt@chelseagreen.com



Ann Ambrecht is a writer and anthropologist (PhD, Harvard 1995) whose work explores the relationships between humans and the earth, most recently through her work with plants and plant medicine. She is the director of the Sustainable Herbs Program of the American Botanical Council and the co-producer of the documentary *Numen: The Nature of Plants*. She lives in central Vermont.

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