



# Healing Plants: Medicine of the Florida Seminole Indians

*Alice Micco Snow, Susan Enns Stans*

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"In every profession there is usually an assistant. . . . And so it is that Seminole medicine men and women call upon people who have a special knowledge of certain plants, roots, barks, and other items that need to be collected for the medicine they make. . . . Alice Snow belongs to the very special small group of people who have this knowledge. It is with honor that I have known and worked with Alice for many years, and have seen how her endeavor to pass her knowledge to others will continue through the generations."-- James E. Billie, chairman, Seminole Tribe of Florida

"Seminole elder Alice Micco Snow and anthropologist Susan Enns Stans capture the essence of Seminole ethnomedicine and ethnobotany, providing a glimpse of a fascinating past, as well as a view of the vibrancy these traditions continue to have in contemporary Seminole communities."-- Cynthia R. Kasee, University of South Florida

The first published record of Florida Seminole herbal medicine and ancient healing practices, *Healing Plants* is a colorfully illustrated compendium of knowledge and practices passed down orally to Alice Snow from generations of her Native American ancestors.

The authors' overview of Seminole history, native medicine, and the life of Snow, a Seminole herbalist (illustrated with personal photographs) places the healing practices in their cultural context and describes actual treatments. Charts with plant names in Creek, Mikasuki, and English and lists of plant properties with their common and botanical names offer easy reference. Col Color photographs provide clear illustrations of many of the plants.

Herbal treatments include those intended for babies, for people who have had a hysterectomy, a stroke, blackouts or shortness of breath, "monkey sickness," alligator bites, or a speeding heart, people who have pain or have been ill for a long time, who like to sleep all the time or can't sleep because of worry or bad dreams, who are pregnant or "on the wagon" or have lost wives or husbands.

Alice Snow is both a traditional Seminole and a cultural innovator who combines old and new methods of preserving and teaching "Indian medicine." Her record of medicinal plants and remedies is her contribution toward helping the Seminoles to hold onto their past while living in the present and moving toward the future. Though the book does not reveal the tribal doctors' secret healing songs, believed to empower the plants, it provides Seminoles with a reference handbook of plants; it also offers medical professionals, herbalists, and the general public an understanding of the world of Seminole medicine.

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