



# HerbClip™

Mariann Garner-Wizard  
John Neustadt, ND  
Cathleen Rapp, ND

Shari Henson  
Heather S Oliff, PhD  
Densie Webb, PhD

Brenda Milot, ELS  
Marissa Oppel, MS

*Executive Editor* – Mark Blumenthal

*Managing Editor* – Lori Glenn

*Consulting Editors* – Dennis Awang, PhD, Steven Foster, Roberta Lee, MD

*Funding/Administration* – Wayne Silverman, PhD

*Production* – George Solis/Kathleen Coyne

---

**FILE: ■ Botanicals  
■ Wellness**

**HC 010251-290**

**Date: October 14, 2005**

**RE: More Americans Using Botanicals to Stay Healthy**

Srejjic E. Botanicals for better health. *Health Supplement Retailer*. December 2004:20-25.  
[www.hsrmagazine.com/articles/4c1feat2.html](http://www.hsrmagazine.com/articles/4c1feat2.html).

Americans are discovering information that distant cultures have known for thousands of years: naturally occurring compounds from plants can provide effective, natural, gentle treatment for various health issues. Herbs can relax or stimulate, improve performance, treat the symptoms of illness, and generally promote good health. In this article, published in a dietary supplement industry trade magazine, the author examines some botanical case studies from around the world and various aspects of selling safe, effective products and educating consumers about their benefits.

Researchers have studied the traditional Chinese edible fruit Luo han guo (sometimes written *lo han kuo* or simply LHK; *Siraitia grosvenorii* syn. *Momordica grosvenorii*) of the family Curcubitaceae (pumpkin or melons) and its health benefits. These include being an expectorant to help clear the lungs of airborne pollutants. Clinical research has also revealed that the herb contains antioxidants that inhibit oxidation of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, that it may have anticarcinogenic effects, and that it contains mogrosides, naturally occurring sweeteners, that are 200 times sweeter than sugar.

Ayurvedic practitioners in India have used the root of the shrub called ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) in the family Solanaceae (nightshades) for its anti-inflammatory, antitumor, antistress, antioxidant, mental clarity-boosting, immune-enhancing, and rejuvenating effects. Clinical research supports its antioxidant and immune-boosting properties.

Peruvian maca (*Lepidium meyenii*) is a traditional food eaten by Incan people in the Andes for centuries. It has a reputation for its sexual-enhancement properties. Modern pharmacological studies and a few small clinical trials suggest that maca can help to increase libido, elevate sperm count, and improve sperm mobility. Noni (*Morinda citrifolia*) is a South Pacific fruit that has been used traditionally by Polynesians for a wide variety of uses, many of which have been heavily promoted by noni marketers. These include potential

antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, antitumor, analgesic, hypotensive, anti-inflammatory, and possibly immune-enhancing uses. There is a growing body of pharmacological literature on noni, but at present there is little evidence from controlled human trials published to date.

How can botanicals be safely marketed? And, how can consumers be educated about the benefits of the products? According to the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA), the only trade association that deals exclusively with herbs and botanical preparations, ensuring the safety of botanical products is "not something to be taken lightly."

"The safety of these items cannot be assumed," said Steve Dentali, AHPA's vice president of scientific and technical affairs. "The further you depart from a traditional use, the more evidence is needed to demonstrate the safety." And, some people suggest that the safety of a botanical must be backed by clinical trials to ensure suitability for retailing. (However, this stipulation may be a bit difficult to require in any future regulatory developments for the same reason that the safety of many common foods, spices, and culinary herbs has not been established in published clinical trials.)

How can retailers prepare to sell botanicals? Roy Upton, executive director of the American Herbal Pharmacopeia, suggests that retailers investigate the manufacturers and their quality control practices. AHPA's Steve Dentali suggests that retailers visit the areas where the herbs they sell or plan to sell are grown natively and used traditionally. "The closer you get to the people who are growing, collecting and harvesting it, the more you know about it," he says.

Other suggestions for retailer education include attending the annual conference of the American Herbalists Guild, taking classes and correspondence courses, and reading books.

How about consumer education? After all, "an educated buyer is a loyal buyer," according to Chuck Wurzbacher of Herbally Yours Inc. in Gilbert, AZ. Brochures, product sheets, and articles can be provided to consumers. In-store herb lectures, in-store displays, and annual herbal events highlighting the benefits of herbs also may prompt consumers to look into the benefits of botanicals.

Wayne Silverman, PhD, Chief Administrative Officer of the American Botanical Council, notes that herbal awareness has expanded. According to Silverman, *The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs*, a reference book and continuing education module for health professionals published in 2003, has received considerable attention in the media and by many professionals. The author concludes with a comment by Wurzbacher who believes that there are many countries where botanicals are part of the common culture and that the U.S. is behind in herb product usage. However, for the U.S. populous to increase its usage of botanicals "trusted formulations that show results and do not promise miracles" are needed.

—Shari Henson

Enclosure: Referenced article reprinted with permission from the *Health Supplement Retailer*.

---

The American Botanical Council provides this review as an educational service. By providing this service, ABC does not warrant that the data is accurate and correct, nor does distribution of the article constitute any endorsement of the information contained or of the views of the authors.

ABC does not authorize the copying or use of the original articles. Reproduction of the reviews is allowed on a limited basis for students, colleagues, employees and/or members. Other uses and distribution require prior approval from ABC.