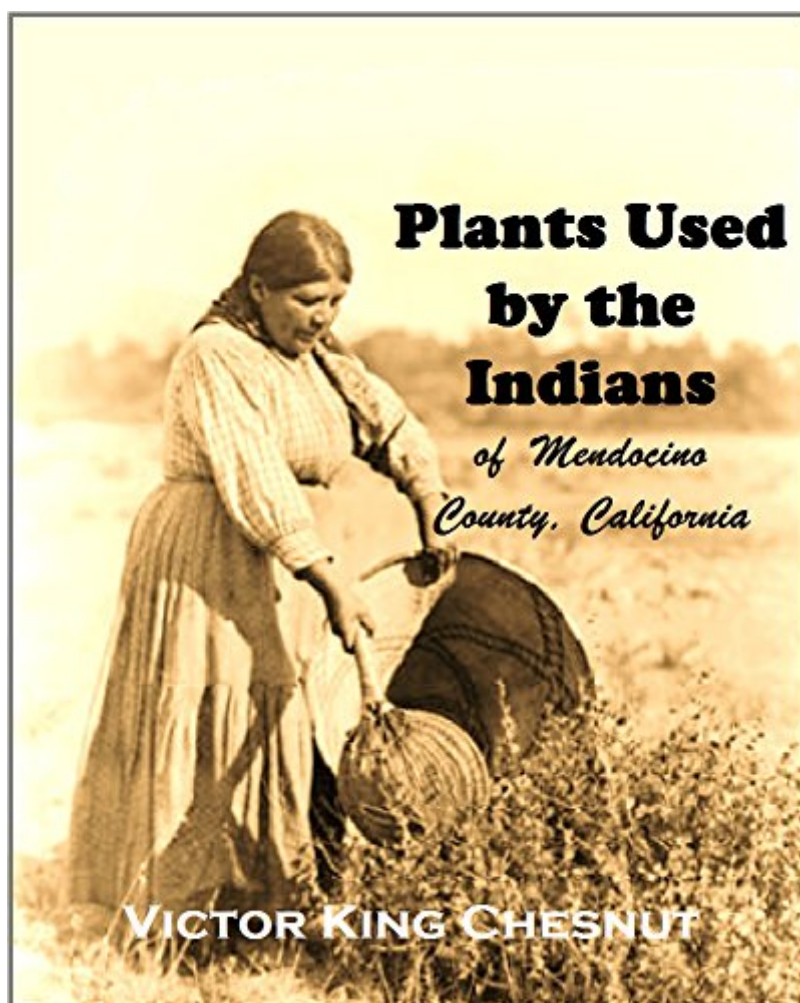


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Plants Used By The Indians Of Mendocino County, California (1902)



Synopsis

Victor K. Chesnut, 1867-1938, was a botanist who worked for the Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture from 1894-1904, and as a professor of chemistry and geology at Montana Agricultural College (Montana State University) from 1904-1907. Following his work in Montana Chesnut relocated to Washington, DC where he finished his career working in a variety of positions for the USDA. While in California during the summers of 1897 and 1898, and incidentally in the summer and winter of 1892, the writer had opportunity to make some inquiry into the native uses of plants in the Round Valley Indian Reservation, and in July, 1897, similar inquiries were made at Ukiah. Both of these places are in Mendocino County, which stretches as a band 60 miles broad for 84 miles along the coast, about midway between San Francisco and the northern border of the State. The method of inquiry which the experience of 1897 proved to be most satisfactory was first to make a fairly complete set of the native plants, and then to take notes on these from representative Indians, refraining as far as possible from asking questions which would lead to an expected answer. By allowing the Indians to do most of the talking, and checking by means of printed blanks the information given by a dozen or more Indians about a single plant, it is hoped that the truth was generally obtained. In a similar way medicine has yet much to learn from these Indians. The direct stimulus for the work was obtained from two visits made to these various tribes by the writer in 1892 for the purpose of collecting anthropological and ethnological data for the World's Fair at Chicago in 1893, and from a study of Mr. F. V. Coville's Notes on the Plants used by the Klamath Indians of Oregon.

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Customer Reviews

Absorbing compilation of primary source material highlighting some important aspects of original
First Nation plant culture flourishing at the onset of encroachment.

This book is well-written insightful with a good format

This is a good book for plant people. The author has provided plants and their uses amongst Native
peoples. The information should be taken for what it is, an outsiders perception of Native botany
and cultural practices. That said this book seems real, down to the racist slurs used by the author
regarding native peoples. No sugar coating here, a true European colonial approach to the world.

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