

Joint Event

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&

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Medicinal plants of the Bible - Past, present and future

The Holy Land is located in the cultural continuum between ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. It is logical to assume that the main medicinal plants used were similar throughout this region. The main species were represented in the families *Solanaceae* and *Lamiaceae*. However, references to medicinal plants in the bible are uncommon and do not reflect the long-term and regular uses of these plants. While many plants mentioned in the bible have and had medicinal uses most are not mentioned within a pharmacological context within sacred verses. The main medicinal in the bible are hyssop, myrtle, myrrh, Balm of Gilead and mandrake. The first four have other ritual uses. The present day use of the plants will be surveyed to compare them to their ancient applications over the Middle East. It appears that the only plant group that has a pharmacological future, as a potential source of bioactive compounds, is the species complex known as myrrh (*Boswellia* spp.).

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