

REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION

PLANTS OF THE GODS

Their Sacred, Healing, and
Hallucinogenic Powers



RICHARD EVANS SCHULTES,
ALBERT HOFMANN & CHRISTIAN RÄTSCH



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"A visual, spiritual, and intellectual feast, *Plants of the Gods* is the best book ever written on hallucinogenic plants."

Dr. Mark Plotkin, Conservation International,
author of *Medicine Quest: In Search of Nature's Healing Secrets*

"Carefully researched, beautifully written, and abundantly illustrated, this book reminds us that the use of hallucinogenic plants has been a fundamental part of the human experience for millennia."

Michael R. Aldrich, Ph.D., Curator, Fitz Hugh Ludlow Library



Three scientific titans join forces to completely revise the classic text on the ritual uses of psychoactive plants. They provide a fascinating testimony of these "plants of the gods," tracing their uses throughout the world and their significance in shaping culture and history. In the traditions of every culture, plants have been highly valued for their nourishing, healing, and transformative properties. The most powerful of these plants, which are known to transport the human mind into other dimensions of consciousness, have always been regarded as sacred. The authors detail the uses of hallucinogens in sacred shamanic rites while providing lucid explanations of the biochemistry of these plants and the cultural prayers, songs, and dances associated with them. The text is lavishly illustrated with 400 rare photographs of plants, people, ceremonies, and art related to the ritual use of the world's sacred psychoactive flora.

A specialist in the cultural use of psychoactive plants, Christian Rätsch is the author of numerous books, including *Marijuana Medicine*, *The Dictionary of Sacred and Magical Plants*, and the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Psychoactive Plants*. A resident of Germany, he is currently serving as the president of the German Society for Ethnomedicine. Richard Evans Schultes (1915–2001) was a Jeffrey Professor of Biology and Director of the Botanical Museum at Harvard University (Emeritus). Albert Hoffmann, discoverer of LSD, is a retired research biochemist who lives in Switzerland.



HEALING ARTS PRESS
ROCHESTER, VERMONT

Cover artwork: **Center:** Huichol yarn painting chronicles the creation of the world.
Left: Stylized glyphs depict various hallucinogenic plants, from an early sixteenth-century Aztec statue of Xochipilli, the ecstatic Prince of Flowers.

Cover design by Nora Wertz
PRINTED AND BOUND IN ITALY

ISBN 089281979-0



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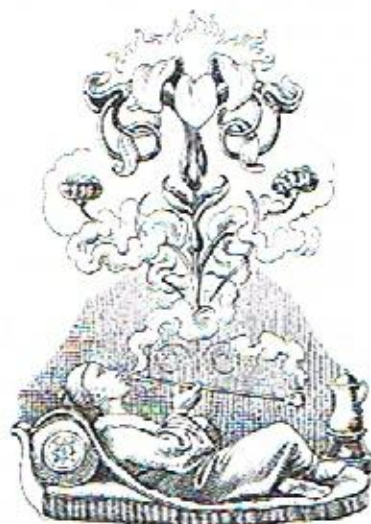
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The dreaming smoker stretched out comfortably on his chaise enjoys visions induced by Hashish. This engraving is from M. von Schwind's Album of Etchings, published in 1843.



Page 4 left: The witches of medieval Europe induced inebriation with a great variety of brews, most of which had at least one of the Nightshades as a psychoactive constituent. During their intoxications, they engaged in many aspects of hexing, both malevolent and benevolent. This illustration, a woodcut, published in 1459, portrays two witches calling for rain and thunder, possibly during a dry spell, and preparing a brew to help them achieve this goal.