DEDICATION

DR. BERNARD VERDCOURT
B.Sc., Ph.D., F.L.S.
PRINCIPAL SCIENTIFIC OFFICER (RETIRED)
KEW HERBARIUM, ROYAL BOTANIC
GARDENS, KEW, UNITED KINGDOM

For his outstanding field and herbarium research contribution towards the publication of the “Flora of Tropical East Africa” (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) from 1948 to 1950 at Amani Research Institute (Tanzania), 1950 to 1964 at the East African Herbarium, National Museums of Kenya (Nairobi) and 1964 to present (2009) at Kew Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, U.K.

A brilliant scientist, a prolific and dedicated writer, Dr. Verdcourt has todate revised and published over 60 family accounts, including major contributions to Leguminosae and Rubiaceae, amounting to between a third and one half of the whole Flora of Tropical East Africa (FTEA). Revision of our flora FTEA commenced in 1952 and is nearing completion. Thank you for your major contribution which has made FTEA project a success. Wishing you a happy 84th birthday and a prosperous retirement.
The material in this book should not be regarded as one person’s work, but rather as knowledge by and of the people of East Africa. The author is therefore, simply a conveyer of the vital information from the past to the present and future generations. It is my modest contribution to science for the development of East Africa through my forty years (1968-2008) of teaching and research in Botany at the University of Nairobi.

The book is arranged in a fairly simple method for convenience of all readers. Botanical (scientific) names are grouped into their respective families, e.g. all legumes are arranged alphabetically under their bean or pea family called Leguminosae. The families are also arranged alphabetically.

The non-flowering plants (fungi, lichens and ferns) are discussed first, followed by the Gymnosperms and finally the most common group called the Angiosperms (the flowering seed plants). In the Angiosperms, the Dicotyledon families are arranged first followed by the Monocotyledon families.

Each plant name (botanical name) is given its vernacular name(s) equivalent. The only vernacular name(s) included are those from the areas where the medicinal information was obtained. In a few cases, the medicinal value of the plant was provided but no local name was known.

Tribes living along the common borders have occasionally borrowed herbal knowledge from their neighbours such as Malawi, Zambia, Burundi or Rwanda. Political boundaries are artificial and have not been recognized by local communities, especially the pastoral tribes even within East Africa itself. In cases where herbal remedies of a plant have been provided by two or more tribes the descriptions given are composite, reflecting all the views from the different ethnic groups.

The third edition of the book, 2009 is being published 32 years (by University of Nairobi Press) after its first publication in 1976 (by East African Literature Bureau). The new edition has about 35% additional
herbal species, expanded herbal information of the old species and additional vernacular names. Botanical names and families have all been updated to the latest revised flora parts of the region. This new edition has a second introduction into the area of traditional medicine as practised by both indigenous and naturalised people of East Africa. The new edition has 2 maps and 207 plant images in colour, a new element not covered in the original publication. The revision of the book from the original 384-page edition to the present edition of over 500 pages was through a generous research grant from the Inter-University Council for East Africa in Kampala, Uganda.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to my employer the University of Nairobi for their continuous moral and financial support of this project since I joined them in 1968. My special thanks are to the current Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. George A. O. Magoha whose support has made this third edition of the book a success.

My association with the East African Herbarium (EA) at the National Museums of Kenya dates back to 1966 when I first joined them as a graduate Research Botanist. It is the largest Herbarium in Africa, founded in 1902, and most of my research activities have been based on their collections. I am grateful to my mentor at the EA, the late Mr. J.B. Gillett for donating his extra plant images from which I selected a few to complement my large stock of illustrations. I am also grateful to Drs. Siro Masinde and Geoffrey Mwachala for granting me full support and access to the Herbarium during the revision of this new edition.

The Nairobi University Herbarium (NAI) is an internationally registered teaching and research Herbarium (founded in 1957) of the University of Nairobi. My sincere thanks are to my long-standing and articulate research associate Mr. Simon Mathenge with whom I have worked since 1968. Support was also received from postgraduate students Mr. Bethwell Owuor and Ms. Judith Odhiambo.

Thanks to the following experts who candidly prepared the following sections of the book. Mr. Wilson Okach formerly of Geography Department, University of Nairobi prepared the two coloured maps of East Africa depicting both administrative boundaries and ethnographical areas of the region. Mr. Jonathan Ayayo of the E.A. Herbarium scanned many of my selected plant slides and photographs and produced the camera ready diskettes of 207 plant images. He also designed the cover page.

My son Mr. Steven Kokwaro, diligently keyed into his computer my accumulated additional data for the revised edition. The momentous task of typing, editing and typesetting the manuscript has been candidly accomplished by Ms. Barbara Owuor of the E.A. Herbarium, Mr. Godfrey
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Finally, my sincere thanks are to Prof. Leonard Newton of Kenyatta University who proof read the manuscript and made valuable corrections and suggestions.

John O. Kokwaro
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University of Nairobi
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