



Herbal landscape as a model for ethnobotanical analyse. (Poster)

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Introduction

Introduction The mechanisms by which humans identify and choose such specific resources like medicinal plants, remain largely unknown. Seen as a physical part of the traditional landscape, medicinal plants have never been described by researchers as an integral part of a (wild)cultivated field perceived as a well-stocked pharmacy available at hand. **Objectives** To fill in this epistemological gap, we introduce the idea of the herbal landscape, which provides ethnobotanists with a new model for understanding the mechanism of perception of medicinal plants. **Methods** The argumentation in this poster is based primarily on HERBA (the database on digitized Estonian herbal lore, ca 7 800 texts) and the personal fieldwork of the authors during the summers of 2007–2009 in several parts of Estonia. **Results** The herbal landscape can be divided into specific smaller units according to several natural and cultural boundaries. The natural boundaries are, for example, the habitat (community) and geographical range limit of plants. Cultural boundaries are, for example, the cultural space that influences the person, the peculiarity of a given language, and the availability of education, popular books and other media regarding plant use. **Conclusion** Herbal landscape can be defined as a mental field associated with plants used to cure or prevent diseases and established within specific cultural and climatic zones either personal or shared within certain group of people. Taking this into account can help to explain why original knowledge of plants gleaned by one set of inhabitants may be clearly distinguished from that of close neighbors. **Keywords:** ethnomedicine, Estonia,

Objectives

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Selected References:

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<http://herba.folklore.ee>

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