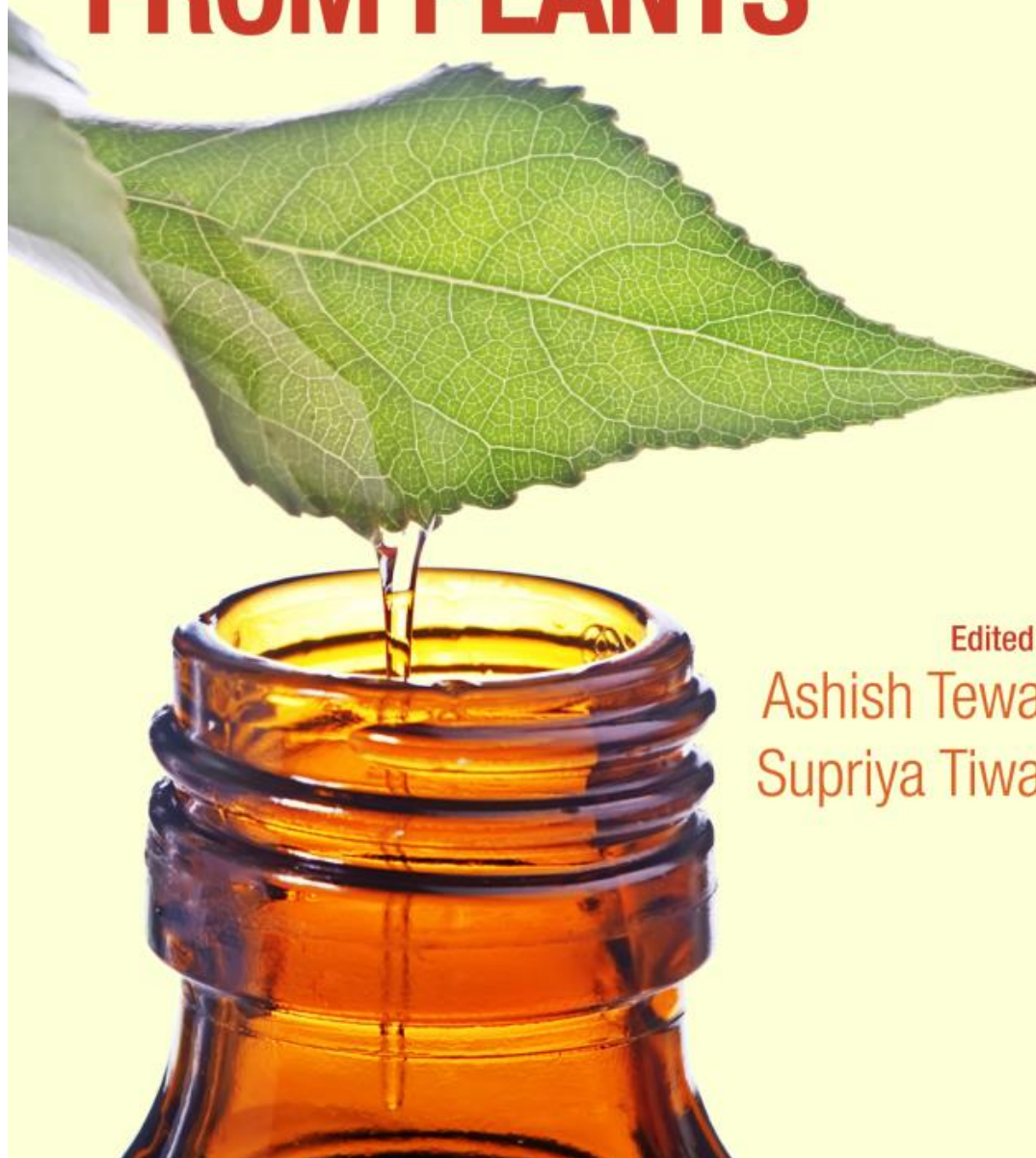




# SYNTHESIS OF **MEDICINAL AGENTS FROM PLANTS**



Edited by  
Ashish Tewari  
Supriya Tiwari



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**ASHISH TEWARI**  
**SUPRIYA TIWARI**



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# Medicinally important constituents of tulsi (*Ocimum* spp.)

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Plants are the primary sources of medicine. From ancient times, plants are used as a source of medicinal value. Rigveda, which was written around 3500–1600 BC in India, also describe the use of plants as a medicine (Sirkar, 1989). However, in Ayurveda, detailed study about properties of plants as a source of medicine were revealed. This is supposed to be the basis of medical sciences. Ayurveda takes a holistic approach to health and disease. It increases the resistance against diseases by healthy lifestyle practices, instead of curing it (Vishwabhan et al., 2011). Ayurveda designs were based on consumption of fresh, minimally processed foods. Nowadays, plant research influences the world, and various evidences have been collected to show the potential of medicinal plants used in traditional systems. The most advantages of medicinal plants in various treatments are their safety in addition to low cost and easy availability around the world (Heinrich et al., 2009). Among all medicinal plants, the plants of genus *Ocimum* belonging to family *Lamiaceae* are very important for their therapeutic prospects. *Ocimum sanctum* (Holy basil) or Tulsi is one of the aromatic plants from this family (Lawrence, 1978, 1980, 1986, 1988).

Among all the species, *Ocimum basilicum* (sweet basil or basil) has the most commercial importance all over the world. It is usually known as “Vishnu Priya” in Sanskrit, “Kala-Tulsi” in Hindi and Basil in English (Mohan et al., 2011). Tulsi is an erect annual herb with sweet fragrance. The plant height is approximately 30–100 cm, growing in abundance near cultivated field gardens and wastelands. Its leaves, branches, seeds, and whole plant are useful. Tulsi plant or Indian Basil is an important symbol in the Hindu religious traditions (Tandon et al., 2004). Three main species of