

Japanese Herbs for Liver Health • Green Tea Health Benefits • Kudzu Reduces Alcohol Consumption

HERBALGRAM

The Journal of the American Botanical Council

Number 73 | USA \$6.95 | CAN \$7.95

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Conservation

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Display until May 1, 2007



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Correction

The article titled "FDA Denies Medicinal Value of Smoked Marijuana" by Mariann Garner-Wizard, which was published in *HerbalGram* 72, incorrectly states that US Representative Ron Paul, MD, is a Democrat when in fact he is a Republican.

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HerbalGram® is printed on recycled paper at Branch-Smith Printing, Ft. Worth, Texas

Published by the American Botanical Council, P.O. Box 144345, Austin, TX 78714-4345.

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Fikrat Abdullaev 1943–2006

Fikrat Abdullaev, PhD, head and founder of the Experimental Oncology Laboratory at the National Institute of Pediatrics in Mexico City and a tireless proponent of saffron (*Crocus sativus* L., Iridaceae) as a dietary agent for cancer prevention, passed away on July 17, 2006, at the age of 62. His death was sudden and unexpected. Dr. Abdullaev was an innovative and free-minded scientist who inspired other researchers in their pursuit of plant-based biopharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals.

Fikrat Abdullaev was born on October 18, 1943, in Baku, Azerbaijan. He received his bachelor's degree in chemistry at Baku State University in 1965, with a focus in biochemistry and molecular biology. In 1970, he obtained his doctorate from the Institute of Botany at the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, and in 1989, he earned a doctorate in biological sciences from the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in Kiev.

His professional and scientific career

began in the former Soviet Union, first at the Institute of Genetics (1966-1970) and later at the Institute of Botany (1970-1973) at the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences in Baku. He then worked at the Institute of Molecular Biology of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow from 1973-1976. From 1976 to 1986, he was associate professor and head of the Molecular Enzymology Laboratory at the Institute of Physics of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In 1986, he became head of the Genome Biochemistry Laboratory in the Institute of Botany at Baku. At that institution, Dr. Abdullaev conducted several experiments with saffron extract, investigating its abilities for preventing the development of diseases such as cancer.

He was a visiting scientist in the Department of Biochemistry of Stockholm University in 1979 and at the Institute of Biochemistry at the University of Munich in 1982. Dr. Abdullaev traveled to Rutgers University in New Jersey to further his research in 1990, joining Gerald Frenkel and his team in the Department of Biological Sciences and co-authoring 3 pioneer papers, which together with those of S.C. Nair and co-workers in India first described the antitumor effects of saffron extracts. This research initiated a search for the responsible saffron constituents, saffron's mechanism of action, the specificity on different cell lines, and its *in vivo* effects in animal models, leading to about 40 experimental and review articles with various research groups in Greece, Spain, Hungary, India, Iran, Japan, Azerbaijan, Mexico, the United States, and other countries.

In 1995, Dr. Abdullaev moved to

Mexico as a researcher in the Department of Research and Postgraduate in Food Science at the Autonomous University of Querétaro. Since 1997, he was head and founder of the Experimental Oncology Laboratory at the National Institute of Pediatrics in Mexico City. His research in Mexico focused on nucleic acid and protein biochemistry, selenium and saffron biochemistry, chemical toxicity and cytotoxicity *in vivo* and *in vitro*, and mechanism of antitumor effects of chemical and naturally occurring agents. He was a tireless proponent of the virtues of saffron as a chemopreventive element of the diet and one of the engines of saffron research all around the world.

Dr. Abdullaev co-chaired the 1st International Symposium on Saffron Biology and Biotechnology, held in Albacete, Spain, in October of 2003, and he planned to co-chair the second such symposium in Masshad, Iran, in October 2006 under the auspices of the International Society for Horticultural Science. He was author of over 120 scientific papers and abstracts, and several patents.

Dr. Abdullaev was married to Zemfira Nagieva and is survived by his two daughters and four grandchildren. He was a loving husband, caring father and grandfather, and an excellent person, full of compassion and acceptance of others. He delighted everyone with his scientific sharpness, experience, kindness, and excellent sense of humor. Those who had the privilege of being his friends are devastated by his loss.

Allah rahmat elasin. (May God rest his soul.) HG

—Jose-Antonio Fernandez, PhD,
University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain

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