



Mark Blumenthal Biography

Mark Blumenthal is the Founder and Executive Director of the American Botanical Council (ABC). An independent, nonprofit organization, ABC is dedicated to disseminating accurate, reliable, and responsible information on herbs and medicinal plants. Mr. Blumenthal is the Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of *HerbalGram*, an international peer-reviewed quarterly journal, the contents of which reflect the educational goals of ABC.

He is also Founder and Director of the ABC-AHP-NCNPR Botanical Adulterants Prevention Program, a consortium of nonprofit organizations that researches and educates industry members and other stakeholders on the adulteration of botanical raw materials, extracts, and essential oils in the global supply network. ABC is partnered with the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia and the University of Mississippi's National Center for Natural Product Research, a US Food and Drug Administration Center of Excellence in botanical laboratory analysis.

For six years he was an Adjunct Associate Professor of Medicinal Chemistry at the College of Pharmacy at the University of Texas at Austin, teaching a course entitled "Herbs and Phytomedicines in Today's Pharmacy."

Mr. Blumenthal is senior editor of the English translation of *The Complete German Commission E Monographs—Therapeutic Guide to Herbal Medicines* (1998), a rational system developed by German regulatory authorities for evaluating the safety and efficacy of herbal medicines. This publication was ranked second of the top medical books published in 1998. He is the senior editor of a follow-up publication, *Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs* (2000). He is also the senior editor of *The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs* (2003), a reference book published by ABC, which was accredited for continuing education for physicians, pharmacists, nurses, dietitians, and naturopaths. In addition, Mark co-authored the English translation of *Rational Phytotherapy: A Reference Guide for Physicians and Pharmacists*, 5th ed. (Springer-Verlag, 2004), a leading textbook in German medical and pharmacy schools.

With more than 45 years of diverse experience as an herbal advocate, consultant, educator, researcher, writer, and advisor, Mr. Blumenthal has an extensive comprehensive background in herbs and medicinal plants. Since 1988, he has been an educator and researcher in his role as Executive Director of ABC, and has written hundreds of articles, reviews, book chapters, and forewords on herbal subjects.

Mr. Blumenthal has extensive experience in the field of nonprofit work. In 1975, he was a founding board member of the Herb Trade Association (HTA) and was elected President of the HTA in 1977. In 1983, he was a founding board member of the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA), and he helped co-found the Herb Research Foundation (HRF) serving as vice president. In 1988, he founded the American Botanical Council, of which he remains the executive director and ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. Through his organizational affiliations, Mr. Blumenthal has been a leader in the herb movement in areas such as quality control of herbal products, ethics in labeling and marketing, legal and regulatory issues, and research and education.

In 1977, he began publishing *Herb News*, a quarterly herb publication of HTA designed specifically for the herb trade, allied industries, and health professionals. In 1983, he cofounded *HerbalGram*, which became the quarterly newsletter for AHPA and HRF. In 1988, with the formation of the ABC, *HerbalGram* became the lead publication and journal of ABC and HRF until 2002, when *HerbalGram* became affiliated solely with ABC.

In addition to *HerbalGram*, his articles on herbs and medicinal plants have appeared in numerous natural health and nutrition magazines popular in the 1980s and 1990s, including *Let's Live*, *Natural Health* (formerly *East-West Journal*), *Herbs*, *Longevity*, *Vegetarian Times*, and *Healthy Living*. His articles have been included in several medical and scientific journals including *Medical Nutrition*, *Allergy Research*, *Pharmacy in History*, the *Journal of Integrative Cancer Care*, and *American Journal of Natural Medicine*. For 11 years, he wrote a bimonthly column for *Health Foods Business*, and for 13 years he wrote articles for *WholeFoods Magazine*, a leading trade magazine for the natural foods and dietary supplement industries. He has contributed chapters on herbs to Reader's Digest's *Family Guide to Natural Medicine* (1993), *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide* (Future Medicine Publishing, 1994 and 2002), and the *Poisoning and Toxicology Compendium* (Lexi-Comp, 1998 and 2001), for which he wrote the chapters on herb safety, and the chapter on herb-drug interactions in a book published by The Canadian Medical and Pharmaceutical Associations, *Interactions Between Herbs and Conventional Drugs: Introductory Considerations*. He edited and wrote the forewords for the best selling *The Complete Medicinal Herbal* by Penelope Ody (Dorling-Kindersley, 1993), *Handbook of Psychotropic Herbs* (Haworth Press, 2000), and the foreword to the English edition of *Herbal Medicine*, 2nd ed. by R.F. Weiss and V. Fintelmann (Theime, 2000). He edited *Miracle Cures* by Jean Carper, *Herbs for Your Health* by Steven Foster, and *The Guide to American Folk Medicine* (Reader's Digest, 1999). He acted as general consultant to National Geographic's book, *The Healing Herbs* (2000).

Mr. Blumenthal currently serves, or has previously served, on the editorial boards of the following publications: *Alternative Therapies*, *Integrative Cancer Therapies*, *Nutrition Business Journal*, *Vegetarian Times*, *Natural Health*, *Let's Live*, *Protocol Journal of Botanical Medicine*,

Herbs for Health, Nutrition Science News, Journal of Herbal Pharmacotherapy, Integrative Medicine Practitioner, Delicious Living, Alternative Medicine, and others.

He is a former advisor to the Center for Alternative Medicine at the UTHealth School of Public Health (Houston, Texas), and a member of the original steering committee of the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia. He has served on the Board of Advisors for the Center for Integrative Therapies in Pharmaceutical Care for the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, the Complementary and Alternative Medicine Programs at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. He has served on various advisory panels for botanicals at the US Pharmacopeia.

Mr. Blumenthal consulted on the final draft of the World Health Organization's "Guidelines for the Assessment of Herbal Medicines" (1991). He has participated as a reviewer of research grant proposals made to the Office of Alternative Medicine at the National Institute of Health (now the Center for Complementary and Integrative Health at NIH). He testified before the Presidential Commission on Dietary Supplement Labels, presenting an overview of the Regulation of Botanicals and Phytomedicines in Europe, to assist the Commission in its goal of providing truthful and accurate information to consumers making informed healthcare choices. He has testified twice before the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy on issues of developing incentives to stimulate botanical medicine research and programs and herbal medicine for continuing education. In 2001, he testified before the House Subcommittee on Government Reform in the US Congress, speaking on international regulation of herbal medicines.

Mr. Blumenthal is instrumental in creating one of the first of a series of home-study courses in phytomedicines for continuing education for pharmacists, produced in conjunction with the Texas Pharmacy Foundation. He co-created the first-ever continuing education course for pharmacists in the Peruvian Amazon, ABC's "Pharmacy in the Rainforest" series of ecotours.

In addition to his current activities in documenting the quality of botanical materials used in herbal products, in 1993 he initiated the Ginseng Evaluation Program, a large-scale study conducted by ABC that analyzed the identities and quality of over 500 commercial ginseng products sold in North America.

In recognition of his research, educational, and advocacy work, Mr. Blumenthal has received two honorary degrees: A Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine from the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (Toronto, 1999), and a Doctor of Philosophy from the National University of Naturopathic Medicine (Portland, OR, 2016).

Mr. Blumenthal is the recipient of numerous awards in the fields of medicinal plants, natural foods, and natural health. He was named to *Natural Health Magazine's* "Hall of Fame" (March 2001) in acknowledgement of his pioneer work in the fields of education on herbs and natural medicine. Also in 2001, he received an honorary award as an "Industry Innovator" by *Nutraceuticals World Magazine* for his creation of the American Botanical Council and its educational work. In July 2005, Mark was presented with the Lifetime Leadership Award by *Nutrition Business Journal*, the industry's leading resource for financial information in the nutrition and natural products industries. He was awarded the esteemed Varro E. Tyler Prize from the American Society of Pharmacognosy in 2010. In 2017, he was

named Outstanding International Ethnopharmacologist of the Year by the Indian Society of Ethnopharmacology.

A popular speaker on herbal issues, Mr. Blumenthal has made hundreds of presentations to universities, professional and trade associations, and numerous consumer, pharmacy, nursing, medical, regulatory, agricultural, nonprofit, and industry groups. He has been a sought-after guest on radio and television talk shows and has appeared on an estimated 400 programs. He and ABC are also major sources of information for journalists, editors, and freelance writers. He is quoted extensively in articles for the trade and popular press.

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