



American Chemical Society

Central Wisconsin Section



Herbal Products: They're Natural but Are They Safe?

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7:30 PM Tuesday, November 8, 2005
UWSP Science Building Room A107

6:00 Dinner
Hilltop Pub & Grill

Herbal products have become big business in the United States. Infomercials, radio and television commercials, and print ads trumpet the benefits of natural remedies for various illnesses or as aids for weight loss or in programs to stop smoking. These products are commonly described as "all-natural" and draw on the common belief that if something is natural it must be safe. But does this belief have any scientific basis? Native peoples often have used plants to treat disease or illness, and both traditional remedies and other plants have given rise to many of the drugs used in Western medicine. However, many natural materials are highly toxic, and some natural products are useful precisely because they are highly toxic. In this presentation, examples of both the beneficial and harmful compounds found in nature will be presented, along with a description of the strategies that are used to isolate biologically active compounds from natural sources.

Brief Bio:

David F. Wiemer received a B.S. degree in chemistry from Marquette University in 1972, before moving to the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana to pursue graduate study in organic chemistry. He received the Ph.D. in 1976 for work in synthetic organic chemistry under the direction of Nelson J. Leonard, and then continued his career with postdoctoral study at Cornell University under the direction of Jerrold Meinwald. He joined the faculty in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Iowa in 1978, and now holds the rank of professor. His honors include a National Institutes of Health postdoctoral fellowship, a fellowship from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, a University of Iowa Faculty Scholar Award, and a University of Iowa Collegiate Teaching Award. Dr. Wiemer is interested in the isolation, characterization, and synthesis of biologically active natural products and the field of chemical ecology. His research projects include studies of the chemical basis of host-plant resistance to defoliation by leafcutter ants and of natural insecticides and anti-fungal agents in general. He also is involved in the chemical synthesis of various terpenoids with anti-viral, anti-leukemic, and anti-proliferative properties and in the development of new methodology for organic synthesis based on organophosphorus chemistry.

Dinner will be at the Hilltop Pub & Grill Restaurant, at the intersection of I-39 and Hwy. 10 East. Dinner reservations should be made by contacting: **Steve Nieland at (715) 258-5525(office)**, or email **snieland@fmspecialty.com** by meeting time Tuesday, November 8.