Preface to the Second Edition

More than 12 years have passed since the first and very successful attempt was made to reproduce the thin layer chromatography (TLC) separation of 170 medicinal plant drugs in the form of color TLC fingerprints in a book. The reproduction of natural color photographs in UV 365 nm was a difficult undertaking at that time due to the relatively unsophisticated film and filter technology. The first German edition of this book with its appended English translation met with worldwide acceptance in the field of natural product chemistry and has remained an indispensable aid in the laboratory analysis of medicinal drugs.

Due to the higher demands now placed on plant drug quality, the introduction of herbal preparations with medicinal significance, and the increasing number of phytochemical preparations, the analytical and standardization procedures of the plants have gained even greater importance. We have tried to do justice to this development in this second edition.

This TLC atlas now includes about 230 medicinal plants of worldwide interest. The photographs of the TLC fingerprints and the descriptions of the characteristic compounds of each plant extract are a quick and reliable source for the identification and purity check of plant material and phytopreparations.

Most of the TLC systems are standard systems and have been optimized when necessary. In spite of other available analytic techniques, such as gas chromatography and high performance liquid chromatography, TLC still remains a most useful, quick, effective, and low-cost method for the separation and identification of complex mixtures of herbal drug preparations and plant constituents.

The authors are most grateful to Ms. Ute Redl for her comprehensive technical assistance. We also thank Ms. Veronika Rickl not only for the excellent quality of the photographs, but also for the layout of the TLC fingerprint pages in the book and for the drawing of the chemical formulae.

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