**NEUROLOGICAL STAMP**

**Rauwolfia serpentina (moonshine plant)**

The genus Rauwolfia was named after the 16th century German physician and explorer Dr Leonard Rauwolf. It grows in most tropical forests of the Pacific, South America, Asia, and Africa and there are more than 100 species. The plant—called chandrika or “moonshine plant” in Sanskrit—has long been valued in India as a sedative and hypnotic in the treatment of insanity, or “moon disease.” Its active ingredient reserpine, isolated from the root of the rauwolfia in 1952, revolutionised the treatment of mental illness and hypertension. Holy men in India, including Mahatma Gandhi, have reportedly chewed the root of the rauwolfia to help achieve a state of philosophic detachment while meditating. It is shown on a medicinal plant set of stamps issued by New Caledonia in 1988.

L F HAAS

33 Spieren G, Benten AL. *Neuropsychery centre comprehensive examination for aphasia (NCCEA).* Victoria: University of Victoria Neuropsychology Laboratory, 1977.