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Herbs to Orchids: Botanical Illustration in the Nineteenth Century

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Herbs to Orchids

Botanical Illustration in the Nineteenth Century

An Exhibition
March 18, 1996
through
June 28, 1996

**The Watkinson Library at Trinity College
Hartford, Connecticut**

The Watkinson Library holds many important illustrated botanical works. A checklist of "Botanical Imprints in the Watkinson Library to 1800" (Watkinson Library Guide No.2) by Jeffrey H. Kaimowitz was published in 1982. The current exhibition was organized to highlight the nineteenth-century illustrated botanical imprints in the Watkinson Library.

The nineteenth century reached a high level of achievement in the art of botanical illustration. The sciences of botany and medicine, fostered by expeditions around the world, had utilized the art of the scientific illustrator for some time. Flower painting and art with botanical subjects, however, were newer and the combination of art and botany produced some of the most beautiful books and periodicals ever published. These include general treatises on botany (including the illustration of the "new" Linnaean system of classification), medical botany, books documenting scientific expeditions, books illustrating certain species or families of plants (such as roses, orchids, or ferns), decorative flower books, and periodicals dealing with floriculture and related fields.

While most book illustrations before the nineteenth century were woodcuts and copperplate engravings, additional print techniques were introduced in the nineteenth century including stipple engraving, aquatint, mezzotint, uncolored and hand-colored lithography and chromolithography. The perfection of stipple engraving, which made more subtle variations possible, was particularly well suited to botanical illustration. Lithography, invented at the end of the eighteenth century, involved drawing directly on the stone rather than cutting or etching the plate. An example, exhibited here, is the largest botanical book published with lithographic plates, James Bateman's *Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala*, printed in a limited edition of 125 copies.



In England, William Curtis founded Curtis's botanical magazine, the most distinguished and long-lived of a number of botanical periodicals (1787-1983). Curtis founded the magazine with a didactic and financial purpose and employed and trained the most important English botanical illustrators of the time, including Sydenham Edwards and James Sowerby. Each issue contained numerous plates, which were engraved until 1845 and after this date lithographed. Other important English periodicals include the *Journal of the Horticultural Society of London* and the *Floricultural Cabinet*. Among other botanical illustrators working in England were Miss S. A. Drake, Mrs. Augusta I. Withers, William Jackson Hooker (editor of Curtis's botanical magazine from 1826-1865 and first official director of the Royal Gardens at Kew), and Walter Hood

Fitch. Fitch, who was the principal artist of Curtis's botanical magazine from 1837 to 1877, worked on numerous books and probably was the most prolific of all botanical artists in the nineteenth century.

Perhaps the greatest botanical illustrator of all time was Pierre Joseph Redouté. Born in Belgium, the second of three brothers, all artists, he was trained by botanists in France. Some of his more scientific illustrations were for *Histoire des plantes grasses* by Augustin Pyramus de Candolle, the first publication Redouté illustrated entirely by himself, even executing the stipple engravings; *Histoire naturelle, agricole et économique du maïs* by Matthieu Bonafous; and *Flora boreali-americana* by Andre Michaux. Redouté's most popular works, including his book on the lily family, *Les Liliacées*, were completed under the patronage of Josephine Bonaparte. (Two plates from *Les Liliacées* from a private collection are exhibited here.) Redouté perfected the technique of stipple engraving and his works have a luminosity and perfection of line which places them among the most prized (and copied) botanical illustrations. Other important French illustrators of the nineteenth century are Pancrace Bessa, a pupil of Redouté, and Alfred Riocreux.



The flora and fauna of the United States had long been a subject for explorers and botanical illustrators from Europe. Publishing of important botanical works began in the United States in the early nineteenth century. Jacob Bigelow's *American medical botany* was the first color plate book published in the United States, and other books about American botany include those by William Paul Crillon Barton and Charles Sprague Sargent. With its large chromolithographs, *Victoria regia, or, The great water lily of America* by John Fisk Allen is a striking example of American botanical illustration.

Victorian gift books, small flower books, and books on the "language" of flowers were very popular in the nineteenth century in the United States and Europe. *Histoire des roses* by Charles Malo with illustrations by Pancrace Bessa is an excellent example of the small, sentimental flower book. *The Language of flowers*, probably based on a French version, was very popular in Europe and the United States. A version shown here is illustrated by Kate Greenaway, the popular illustrator of children's books. Of particular interest from a local standpoint is *The Voice of flowers* by Lydia Sigourney, published in Hartford in the 1840s.



A number of fine scientific nineteenth-century botanical books resulted from government sponsorship of the study of native natural history, such as Manuel Blanco's *Flora de Filipinas* and Claudio Gay's *Historia fisica y politica de Chile*. The many illustrations in Blanco's work are lithographs; engravings, some of them after drawings by Riocreux, are featured in Gay's massive study. Other splendid books were published to document the work of expeditions. Karl Ludwig Blume's *Flora Javae* includes both engravings and lithographs. Mentioned above for the importance of its large lithographed illustrations, *The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala* by James Bateman, depicting the orchids of Central America, is a superb example of the art of the botanical illustrator. The combination of the drawings by Miss Drake and Mrs. Augusta Withers with the lithography of Maxim Gauci sets a high standard for all types of botanical illustration.

A selected list of artists, a brief bibliography, and a checklist of titles displayed in the exhibit follow. In the list of artists, reference is made to the author or to the title of the publication in which the artists's work appears. The checklist should be consulted for full citations of the publications.

SELECTED LIST OF ARTISTS

Bessa, Pancrace

1772-1846, French.

SEE: Malo; Michaux, F. A.

Curtis, John

1791-1862, English (no relation to William or Samuel Curtis).

SEE: Curtis, J.; Curtis's botanical magazine, 1825.

Drake, Miss S. A.

fl. 1818-47, English, "of Turnham Green."

SEE: Bateman; *Journal of the Horticultural Society of London*, 1847.

Fitch, Walter Hood

1817-1892, English, born in Scotland.

SEE: Badham; *Curtis's botanical magazine*, 1856; Hooker, *Century of ferns*.

Redouté, Pierre Joseph

1759-1840, b. Belgium, worked in France.

SEE: Bonafous; Candolle; Michaux, A.; Michaux, F. A.; Redouté.

Riocreux, Alfred
1820-1912, French.

SEE: Decaisne; Gay; *Journal de la Société Impériale et Central d'Horticulture*, 1860; Sargent.

Sharp, William
1803-1875, Anglo-American.

SEE: Allen.

Sowerby, James
1757-1862, English.

SEE: Woodville.

Sowerby, John Edward
1825-1870, English (grandson of James Sowerby).

SEE: Sowerby, J. E.

Withers, Mrs. Augusta I.
fl.1829-1865, English.

SEE: Bateman.

FOR FURTHER READING

Blunt, Wilfrid and Stern, William T. *The Art of botanical illustration*. New Edition, revised and enlarged. Kew: Antique Collectors' Club in association with the Royal Botanic Gardens, 1994.

Buchanan, Handasyde. *Nature into art: A treasury of great natural history books*. London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1979.

Rix, Martyn. *The Art of the plant world: The great botanical illustrators and their work*. Woodstock, New York: Overlook Press, 1980.

Saunders, Gill. *Picturing plants: An analytical history of botanical illustration*. Berkeley: University of California Press in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1995.

Sitwell, Sacheverell. *Great flower books, 1700-1900*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990.

Sotheby's. *A Magnificent collection of botanical books...[from the library of]... Robert de Belder*. London: Sotheby's, 1987.

CHECKLIST

This is a short-title checklist of Watkinson Library materials displayed in the exhibition, "Herbs to Orchids: Botanical Illustration in the Nineteenth Century." In the case of multi-volume titles, the number of volumes is given and, unless noted, the library's holdings for such titles are complete. The Watkinson Library collections include many more nineteenth-century botanical publications than could be displayed in this exhibition, and most can be located by searching the Trinity College online catalog.

Allen, John Fisk. *Victoria regia, or, The great water lily of America*. Boston: Dutton and Wenworth, 1854.

- Badham, Charles David. *A treatise on the esculent funguses of England*. London: L. Reeve, 1863. Second edition.
- Barton, William Paul Crillon. *A flora of North America*. Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1821-23. 3 v.
- Barton, William Paul Crillon. *Vegetable materia medica of the United States*. Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1817-18. 2 v.
- Bateman, James. *The Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala*. London: Ridgway, 1843. Edition limited to 125.
- Bigelow, Jacob. *American medical botany*. Boston: Cummings and Hillard, 1817-20. First edition. 3 v.
- Blanco, Manuel. *Flora de Filipinas*. Manila: Establecimiento Tipográfico de Plana, 1877-83. 4 v.
- Blume, Karl Ludwig. *Flora Javae et insularum adjacentium*. Leiden: s.n., 1828-58. 4 v.
- Bonafous, Matthieu. *Histoire naturelle, agricole et économique du maïs*. Paris: Huzard, 1836.
- Candolle, Augustin Pyramus de. *Plantarum historia succulentarum. Histoire des plantes grasses*. Paris: A. J. Dugour et Durand, an VII [1799-1805?]. 2 v.
- Curtis, John. *British entomology*. London: Printed for the author, 1823-40. 8 v.
- Curtis's botanical magazine*. v. 10 of New Series, v.52 overall. London: Sherwood, Jones, 1856.
- Curtis's botanical magazine*. v. 12 of Third Series, v.82 overall. London: L. Reeve, 1856.
- Decaisne, Joseph. *Le jardin fruitier du Muséum*. Paris: Didot, 1858-63. 5 v.
- Duppa, Richard. *The classes and orders of the Linnaean system of botany*. London: T. Bensley for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816. 3 v.
- The Floricultural cabinet, and florist's magazine*. London: Whittaker, Treacher, 1833-59. v. 1-27. (Note: Watkinson Library lacks v. 27).
- Gay, Claude. *Historia física y política de Chile*. Paris: En casa del autor; Chile: En el Museo de Historia Natural de Santiago, 1844-71. 28 v. and atlas (2 v. plates).
- Gerard, John. *The herball, or, Generall historie of plantes*. London: John Norton, 1597.
- Hooker, William Jackson, Sir. *A century of ferns*. London: W. Pamplin, 1854.
- Hooker, William Jackson, Sir. *Flora boreali-americana; or, The botany of northern parts of British America*. London: H. G. Bohn, [1829]-1840. 2 v.
- Journal de la Société Impériale et Centrale d'Horticulture*. Paris: La Société, 1855-66. v. 1-12. (Note: Watkinson Library lacks v. 9-12.)
- The Journal of the Horticultural Society of London*. London: Published for the Society, by Longman, 1846-55. v. 1-9.
- Language of flowers*. Illustrated by Kate Greenaway. London: G. Routledge, [188-?].
- Maddock, James. *The florist's directory, a treatise on the culture of flowers*. New edition, improved, by Samuel Curtis. London: John Harding, 1810.
- Maling, E. A. [Miss Maling]. *The indoor gardener*. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green, 1863.
- Malo, Charles. *Histoire des roses*. Paris: L. Janet, [1818].
- Michaux, André. *Flora boreali-americana*. Paris: Bibliopola Jouanaux junior, 1820. 2 v. Identical with the first edition of 1803.

Michaux, Francois André. *The North American sylvia*. Philadelphia: D. Rice & A. N. Hart, 1859. 5 v.

Pratt, Anne. *The flowering plants, grasses sedges, and ferns of Great Britain*. London: F. Warne; New York: Scribner, Welford, 1873. 6 v.

Rand, Edward Sprague, Jr. *Flowers for the parlor and garden*. Boston: J. E. Tilton, 1863.

Robinson, John. *Ferns in their homes and ours*. Salem [Massachusetts]: S. E. Cassino, 1878.

Sargent, Charles Sprague. *The silva of North America*. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1890-1902. 14 v.

Sigourney, Lydia Howard. *The voice of flowers*. Hartford: H. S. Parsons, 1848, c. 1845. Seventh edition.

Sowerby, John Edward. *The grasses of Great Britain*. London: J. E. Sowerby, 1861.

Thorton, Robert John. *Botanical extracts; or, The philosophy of botany*. London: White, Johnson, 1810. 2 v. and atlas.

Vignettes from Mr. Bateman's Orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala. London: Cook, 1844.

Watson, William. *Cactus culture for amateurs*. London: L. Upcott Gill, 1889.

Watson, William. *Orchids; their culture and management*. London: L. Upcott Gill, 1890.

Wolfe, Richard J. *Jacob Bigelow's American medical botany, 1817-1821*. North Hills, Pennsylvania: Bird & Bull Press, 1979.

Woodville, William. *Medical Botany*. London: J. Phillips, 1790-93. 3 v.

CREDITS

Co-curators of this exhibition are Alesandra M. Schmidt, Watkinson Library Assistant Curator, and Trudy B. Jacoby, Trinity College Library Slide Curator. Ms. Schmidt arranged, installed, and described the exhibition and prepared the catalog checklist. The catalog essay, list of artists, and bibliography were prepared by Ms. Jacoby. The catalog was designed by Julia Vecchitto, Trinity College Art Director, and printed by Central Services. Photographs were taken by Philip J. Duffy, Trinity College Audio/Visual Department Director. Web site design and scans by Cedric Howe '96, Trinity College Slide Collection. Publication of this catalog was made possible through the support of the Trinity College/Watkinson Library Associates Fund.

Herbs to Orchids

Botanical Illustration in the Nineteenth Century

Image Gallery

[click on blue numbers to see images]

- [#1](#) **Curtis's botanical magazine.** London, 1825. *Iris longispatha*. (Illustrator: John Curtis.) (purple)
- [#2](#) **Curtis's botanical magazine.** London, 1856. *Rhododendron hookeri*. (Illustrator: Walter Fitch.) (deep pinkish red)
- [#3](#) **Curtis's botanical magazine.** London, 1856. Bell-flowered Rhododendron. (*Rhododendron campanulatum*.) (Illustrator: Walter Fitch.) (lavender)
- [#4](#) Woodville, William. **Medical botany.** London, 1790-93. (v. 3) Yellow Gentian. (Illustrator: James Sowerby.) (yellow)
- [#5](#) Woodville, William. **Medical botany.** London, 1790-93. Red or Corn Poppy. (Illustrator: James Sowerby.) (orange)
- [#6](#) Michaux, Francois Andre. **The North American sylva.** Philadelphia, 1859. (v. 2) *Franklinia*. (Illustrator: Pierre Joseph Redouté.) (white)
- [#7](#) Michaux, Francois Andre. **The North American sylva.** Philadelphia, 1859. (v. 2) Mountain Laurel. (Illustrator: Panrace Bessa.) (pink)
- [#8](#) Bigelow, Jacob. **American medical botany.** Boston, 1817-20. (v. 1) Common Cranesbill. (*Geranium maculatum*.) (blue)
- [#9](#) Puydt, Paul Emile de. **Les orchidées histoire iconographique.** Paris, 1880. Orchid. (*Dendrobium calceolaria hook.*) (yellow)
- [#10](#) Puydt, Paul Emile de. **Les orchidées histoire iconographique.** Paris, 1880. Orchid. (*Aerides fieldingii lindley.*) (pink)
- [#11](#) Puydt, Paul Emile de. **Les orchidées histoire iconographique.** Paris, 1880. Orchid. (*Cypripedium sedeni.*) (pink)
- [#12](#) **Journal of the Horticultural Society of London.** London, 1846. (v. 1) *Achimenes patens*. (Illustrator: Miss Drake.) (purple)
- [#13](#) **Journal of the Horticultural Society of London.** London, 1847. (v. 2) *Azalea ovata*. (Illustrator: Miss Drake.) (pale pink)
- [#14](#) Barton, William Paul Crillon. **A flora of North America.** Philadelphia, 1821-23. (v. 3) Large Yellow Lady's Slipper. (*Cypripedium pubescens*.) (yellow)
- [#15](#) Duppa, Richard. **The classes and orders of the Linnaean system of botany.** London, 1816. (v. 1) *Viola tricolor*. (purple and yellow)
- [#16](#) Candole, Augustin Pyramus de. **Plantarium historia succulentarum. Histoire des plantes grasses.** Paris, [1799-1832?]. (v. 2) *Cactus cochenillifer*. (Illustrator: Pierre Joseph Redouté.) (pink)
- [#17](#) Candole, Augustin Pyramus de. **Plantarium historia succulentarum. Histoire des plantes grasses.** Paris, [1799-1832?]. (v. 2) *Cactus opuntia tuna*. (Illustrator: Pierre Joseph Redouté.) (yellow)
- [#18](#) Sargent, Charles Sprague. **The silva of North America.** Boston and New York, 1890-1902. (v. 5) Dogwood. (*Cornus nuttallii*.) (Illustrator: drawing by C. E. Faxon, engraving under the direction of A. Riocreux.) (black and white)
- [#19](#) Bateman, James. **The orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala.** London: Ridgeway, 1843. Orchid. (*Laelia superbiens*.) (Illustrator: Miss Drake.) (pink) (n. b.: photo of illustration in Blunt, col. pl. 91, p. 255)

#20 Bateman, James. **The orchidaceae of Mexico and Guatemala**. London: Ridgeway, 1843. Orchid. (*Odontoglossum grande*.) (Illustrator: Mrs. Augusta Withers) (yellow and brown) (n.b.: photo of illustration in Blunt, col. pl. 89, p. 251)

Photographs by Philip J. Duffy, Audiovisual Department, Trinity College.

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Publ. by J. G. Fisher & Co. 1820





Gentiana lutea

Published by D^r Woodville, August 4. A 792.



P. J. Berolani del.

Robert Smith sculp.

Franklinia.
Gordonia pubescens.



Bosya del

Gambel sculp

Mountain Laurel.
Kalmia latifolia.



Fig. I.



Fig. II.



Fig. IV.



Fig. III.

Geranium maculatum





CYPRIPEDIUM PUBESCENS.

PENTANDRIA
MONOGYNIA



Love-in-idleness

VIOLA TRICOLOR



CACTUS cochemillifer.

CIERGE à cochenille.



CACTUS *Opuntia luna.*

CIERGE *raquette luna.*

P. J. Rollet del.



G. F. Tuckerm. del.

W. H. Peck sculp.

CORNUS NUTTALLII, A. N. S.

A. M. S. P. 1847

Eng. R. Tuckerm. Paris