

# Book Collections from the Washington Park Arboretum

LYN SAUTER\*

Within the next few months there will be exciting changes concerning the book collections from the Arboretum. As the result of a generous gift from Pendleton Miller, the Elisabeth Carey Miller Horticultural Library has been established. This means that heretofore scattered volumes can be brought together under the management of a professional librarian, and that funding will be available for expansion of the collections during the next few years.

Before considering the future, however, it is useful to look at the history and the development of the library. The Washington Park Arboretum has always had a collection of books, probably started with a few reference texts for the staff. There is in the Arboretum

greenhouse a well-used 1935 edition of L.H. Bailey's *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*, which may have been one of the first acquisitions.

When Brian Mulligan became the Arboretum Director in 1947, he started to enlarge the book collection. He began systematically to gather book dealers' catalogs from the United States and Great Britain and made an effort to procure books dealing with subject areas that support the ongoing work of the Arboretum. The library therefore has many excellent volumes concerning rhododendrons, in addition to works about camellias and roses. Many other significant genera are represented either by scientific monographs or popular treatises.

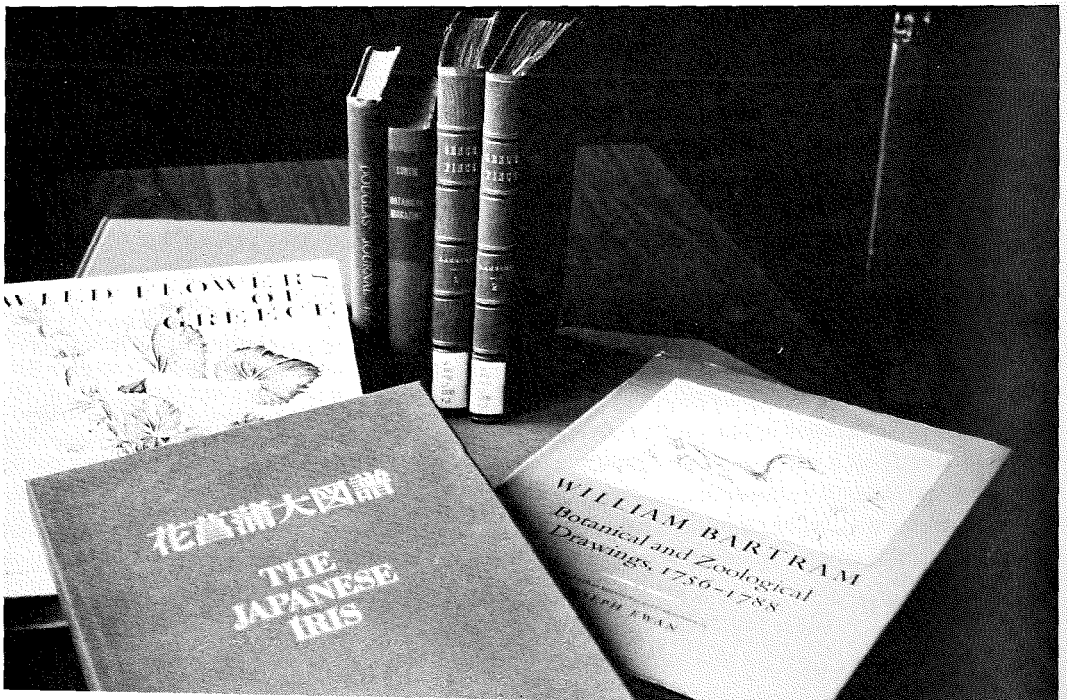
The floras of the western United States and eastern Asia, especially China, are well represented, as are those of many nations around the world. The collection of Tasmanian and New Zealand floras reflects the special inter-

---

\*Lyn Sauter, a graduate of the University of Washington School of Librarianship, is a library consultant who has served as librarian at the Arboretum for the past three years.

Some of the fascinating volumes in the Arboretum collection.

Photo: C. Antieau





Japanese iris from *The Japanese Iris*, a publication of the Japan Iris Society, edited by Kuribayashi Motojiro and Hirao Shuichi. Asahi Shimbun Publishing Co., Tokyo, Japan, 1971. Given in memory of Dr. David Metheny.

ests of Mr. Mulligan and Mr. Joseph A. Witt. Concerning woody plants, any standard encyclopedia and any work published by the Royal Horticultural Society has routinely and systematically been added to the library. While the bulk of the material deals with woody plants, there are biographies of famous plant explorers, histories of gardening, and specialty books on such diverse subjects as bonsai and rock gardening. The library also receives some 125 journals and newsletters, which have been put in storage after a year of exposure at the Arboretum Office.

Over the years the collection has grown, largely through contributions of money and books from both individuals and organizations. Mr. Witt has estimated that about 70% of the library has been developed from donations solicited by the Director and from other gifts. It

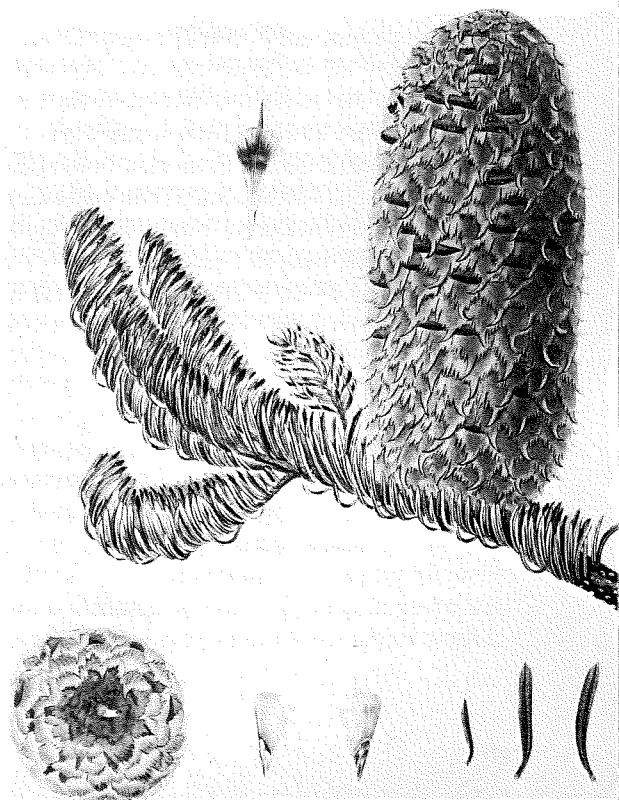
<sup>1</sup>Monroe, Robert D. "Nature is Revealed, Art Concealed." *Arboretum Bulletin* 40(4): 14-23, Winter 1977.

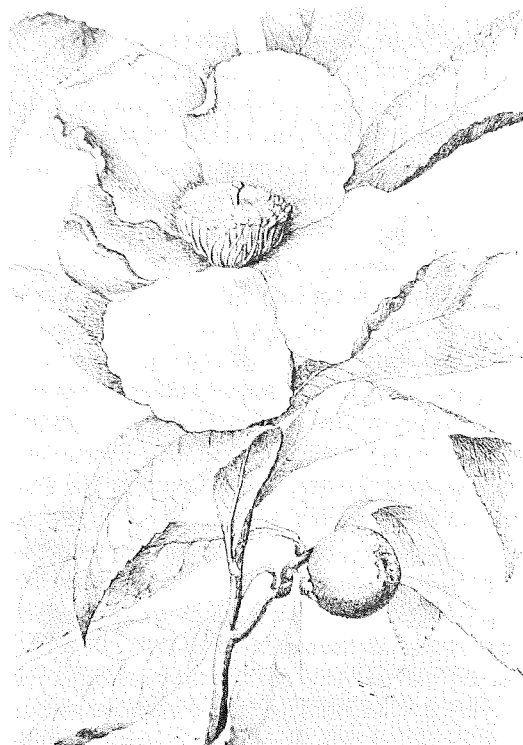
would be impossible to mention all of the people who have generously donated to the library, but Unit 41 of the Arboretum Foundation must be mentioned as a consistent contributor.

In 1968 a building called the "Club House" burned down over a weekend, and arson was suspected. The Director, concerned about certain irreplaceable books in the Arboretum Office and library,<sup>1</sup> made arrangements with Robert Monroe, Head of Special Collections at Suzzallo Library on the University of Washington campus, for storage of some of the more valuable volumes. Fifteen years later these are still stored in the subbasement of Suzzallo Library. The illustrations in this article are examples of the fine books and journals that are currently in storage.

Nearly three years ago, at the invitation of the new Director, Dr. H. B. Tukey, Jr., I began the task of organizing and cataloging the books at the Arboretum. Because about 25% of the collection had already been classified using the Library of Congress system, and because this system is the one most widely used for academic and technical libraries, I have continued to use it. At about the same time the decision was made to utilize the capabilities of the Academic Computing Center for the Arboretum's

*Abies nobilis*, from Aylmer Bourke's *A Description of the Genus Pinus*, in three volumes; Weddell, London, 1828-37.





**Franklinia**, from William Bartram, *Botanical and Zoological Drawings, 1756-1788*, edited by Joseph Ewan. Reproduced from the Fothergill Album in the British Museum by the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1968. A gift of the Bloedel Foundation.

planting records and teaching needs, and the Library followed suit. A special program called BIBLIO is being used (preliminary printouts of the library catalog are in the Arboretum Office). An inventory of all of the books from the Arboretum stored in the subbasement of Suzzallo Library has also been completed.

There can be no doubt of the depth and range of the present collection, and it has served us well and in many ways for nearly forty years. However, efficient use of this fine collection has been hindered by its scattered locations and cramped quarters. With the advent of not one

but two new buildings, the book collections will be able to better serve the diverse horticultural audiences of the Puget Sound region. Pendleton Miller's gift means that the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library will be able to house all of the collections including those now in storage. There will be pleasant areas for reading, study and research, and plenty of space and funding for expansion. For rare books, a special room with good security and environmental controls has been planned. The library will be staffed by a professional librarian as well as knowledgeable volunteers. This means that there will always be someone available to answer questions, and that the development of the library catalog will be continued and expanded.

When the new Visitor Center at the Arboretum is ready, a collection of reference materials will be developed. The Arboretum will have a printout of the complete library catalog, telephone access to reference information at the main collection, and eventually communication via computer terminals.

We hope that by means of these changes, the book collection which has been developing for the past several decades, and now has approximately 5000 volumes, can continue to grow and become a truly outstanding resource for Seattle and the Pacific Northwest.

*A Library Advisory Committee has been appointed by Dr. Harold B. Tukey, Jr. Chaired by Dr. William Hatheway of the University faculty, the Committee is composed of representatives from those groups that will use the library: horticultural organizations and garden clubs, and University faculty and students. The Committee would welcome any suggestions or ideas. Correspondence should be directed to Dr. Hatheway at the University of Washington, GF-15, Seattle, WA 98195.*

*"Books and gardens. They make a happy combination appealing to both love of knowledge and love of beauty. The botanic garden and library have always been civilizing and peaceful oases in a turbulent and threatening world."*

Ian McPhail,  
Morton Arboretum Librarian  
AABGA Bulletin, July 1981